



## **Building Social Service Workforce Competencies In Europe and Central Asia**

Strengthening Interpersonal Communication and Community Engagement to Influence  
and Support Individual and Social Change in ECA

**Inception Report**  
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# Introduction

The Columbia School of Social Work (CSSW) and the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia (GHRCCA), under the direction of the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), submit this Inception Report as a deliverable for the project titled “Building Social Service Workforce Competencies in Europe and Central Asia” (“Building Competencies”).

In 2019, UNICEF identified priorities for social work development in ECA beginning with Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Albania. The “Building Competencies” project responds to those priorities, seeking to strengthen interpersonal communication and community engagement competencies (ICCEC) for social workers and other SSW professionals. The project aims to equip the SSW with basic knowledge and a core set of skills in ICCEC by developing a comprehensive training package to be piloted in Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Albania during a training-of-trainers in each country. This work will be informed by CSSW’s and GHRCCA’s academic experience, their international capacity-building initiatives, and the mapping completed by UNICEF ECARO and Oxford Policy Management (OPM). The training design will enable social work and social service educators and professionals to increase their knowledge and strengthen ICCEC skills while addressing social injustice, violence against children, interpersonal partner violence, stigma, and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, disability, poverty, and other factors in the context of ECA. The ultimate goal of the project is to contribute to changing the behavioral and social outcomes of vulnerable children, families, groups, and communities.

This inception report details the project’s approach to developing and structuring the training package, in addition to country-specific recommendations regarding social service workforce (SSW) competencies and training. Included are a project timeline, summary results from the project’s desk review and stakeholder consultation calls, and a detailed outline of the training curriculum.

## Desk Review

A desk review was conducted in accordance with Deliverable 1.1 of the project. The desk review focused on educational needs for strengthening ICCEC competencies of the SSW in ECA (with a particular focus on Kazakhstan [KZ], Georgia [GEO], and Albania [AL]), in addition to global practices on C4D and SBCC trainings for workers of human and social services.

## Methodology

For our desk review process, we began by creating a codebook with themes based on the UNICEF ECARO and OPM report. Then, we aimed to identify documents and resources that reflected current SSW development in KZ, GEO, AL, and Central Asia. We scanned 78 documents gathered from the EBSCOhost database, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance database, and UNICEF website. All the documents were published between 2009 and 2019 in English. Our key search terms included social work, training, social service workforce, education, certification, professional regulations, and curriculum in KZ, GEO, AL, and Central Asia. Among the 78 scanned documents, we identified 28 peer-reviewed articles, 41 organizational reports, and 9 curricula to further our understanding of the baseline level of SSW and social work trainings provided in target countries. A total of 52 documents were fully coded with the codebook given their relevance to desk review and project goals.

## Findings and Interpretation

Table 1 presents general characteristics of documents considered for the desk review. Key themes found in the codebook and confirmed through the desk review process were as follows:

- Educational needs for strengthening ICCEC competencies of the SSW in ECA;
- Influence of cultural norms and attitudes on SSW practice; and
- Global practices on C4D and SBCC trainings for workers of human and social services.

The full desk review codebook can be found in Appendix I.

Several sub-themes emerged from the documents reviewed. Various programs and policies related to social programming and the SSW have been implemented in ECA target countries. However, these programs and policies generally lack regulations requiring training and professional guidelines for social work and related SSW fields. Additionally, while some programs have reportedly helped meet needs of local communities, long-term changes and sustainability have not been measured. Overall, ECA countries considered in the desk review expressed a need for a more readily available and comprehensive curriculum to advance the skills of the SSW. Demand was high for information to help SSW providers serve an increasingly complex set of needs in each country, including but not limited to the needs of families and children; issues related to poverty; the prevalence of discrimination; access to services; promotion of conversations surrounding social justice; and the prevention of violence, interpersonal and otherwise. The OPM report in particular underscored the need for and value of skill-building in

interpersonal communication and community engagement. The first two themes, as well as sub-themes and key findings, are given in more detail below for ECA and pilot countries only. (Theme 3 was found to be addressed in the first two themes and did not end up warranting separate consideration.) Citations can be found for direct quotes only, whereas other sources' findings were merged for themes and are not explicitly listed (see Appendix II for complete list of documents reviewed).

**Table 1**  
*Desk Review Document Characteristics (n=78)*

Characteristics	n (%) Total
Type of document	
Reports	41 (52.5%)
Peer-reviewed articles	28 (35.9%)
Curricula	9 (11.6%)
Geographic focus	
Global	22 (28.2%)
Kazakhstan	13 (16.7%)
Georgia	11 (14.1%)
Central Asia	11 (14.1%)
EECA*	10 (12.8%)
Other/not specified	4 (5.1%)
Albania	4 (5.1%)
Eastern Europe	3 (3.9%)

\*Eastern Europe and Central Asia

## Theme 1: Educational Needs for Strengthening ICCEC Competencies

According to the GSSWA, the SSW is comprised of “paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental professionals and paraprofessionals working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families” (GSSWA, 2019). In ECA, the SSW specifically includes people with degrees in social work, psychologists, social pedagogues and teachers and school directors, sociologists, and, less consistently, community health workers, education mediators, and other allied professionals. SSW stakeholders include state universities, UNICEF Country Offices, government ministries, schools, and anyone performing social work functions, regardless of educational degrees. Services and programming include parent education, adolescent education, school delinquency prevention, prevention of child abandonment, specialized foster care and de-institutionalization, and services for children with disabilities and their caregivers, offered through schools, NGOs, and government ministries. Clients or service beneficiaries were reported to include women subjected to domestic violence, “street children”, “vulnerable families”, children and adolescents, especially girls, at risk of abuse, and their parents.

**KAZAKHSTAN:** “The introduction of social workers at the primary health care level has contributed to a rapid reduction in the number of children under the age of three in residential care, from 1,692 children in 2011 to 1,302 children in 2013. This initiative has strengthened the health system to interact with and enrich the capacity of the social welfare and child protection systems to identify risks; provide quality social work interventions; refer families to professional counselling and child-rearing advice; and facilitate access to social benefits and temporary housing.” (UNICEF, 2015, “Compendium of Promising Practices,” p. 110)

**GEORGIA:** “The synergetic efforts of state and non-state actors to develop specialized foster care has given children with disabilities the opportunity to live in family-based environments. Specialized foster care has become an important instrument in preventing new admissions to residential care.” (UNICEF, 2015, “Compendium of Promising Practices,” p. 154)

**ALBANIA:** “Some problem areas are left to NGOs and are not adequately covered by professional social workers in governmental services: ‘Child protection topic is better covered; it is part of the system and each municipality is required to have a unit with at least one employee who has to be a social worker. With Roma is a different issue, the majority of Roma issues are left to the civil society.’” (Interview with a Social Work Educator in Albania, as cited in Rogers, Salmon, & Završek, 2019, “Enhancing Professional Competencies,” p. 44)

ECA has been building momentum behind social work as a profession, which has created the need to support additional social work and SSW competencies. Social work was described as lacking in legal protections or standardization, though recent legislation appears to be responding by increasingly recognizing the profession in pilot countries, especially in Albania. All three pilot countries have institutions devoted to social work as a profession: the Georgian Association of Social Work (GASW), for instance, was established in 2004, has a code of ethics, and holds an annual conference. Similar social work-promoting functions occur within Kazakhstan’s National Social Work Resource Centre and the General Administration of Social Assistance and Services (GASAS) within Albania’s Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.

Of the pilot countries, Albania has the longest history of social work education, dating back to 1992. Social work education programs across ECA generally address child abuse and neglect as well as deinstitutionalization of children. Desk review documents revealed the need for more active learning approaches and field education strengthening within social work education, in addition to qualitative methods, participatory research, and human rights content. A lack of culturally relevant research, texts, and training materials in local languages was prevalent. A call for evaluation of social work education was expressed. In particular, stakeholders expressed concern about the discrepancy between classroom education (or in-service training) and real-life practice. UNICEF appears to play a significant role in challenging discriminatory social norms and building competencies in interpersonal communications and community engagement through C4D initiatives.

**KAZAKHSTAN:** “Participants and informants frequently mentioned competences in community engagement and outreach as lacking among the social service workforce. Some explained this in terms of a lack of recognition of these official functions among the roles and responsibilities of the social service workforce. Others refer to constraints such as lack of training, lack of resources and in rural areas, the sheer geographical distances involved and small numbers of children and parents, within target groups, in each individual village.” (OPM & UNICEF, 2019, “Enhancing Professional Competencies” [Kazakhstan], p. 9)

**ALBANIA:** “The biggest gap for social work students and future practitioners is the opportunity to practice necessary skills. The lack of infrastructure and resources for labs and fieldwork, as well as the very limited access to secondary data sources, leads social work students in Albania to graduate with more theoretical than practice-based knowledge (Dauti & Bejko, 2015).” (Dhembo, Akesson, & Cheyne-Hazineh, 2019, “Social Work Education in Albania,” p. 9)

**GEORGIA:** “Based on responses given in interviews, it seems that Georgian society is moving away from traditional community-based support by family members towards a locally, regionally and nationally planned community engagement that requires state funds; however, the case study findings cannot be generalised.” (OPM & UNICEF, 2019, “Enhancing Professional Competencies” [Georgia], p. 13)

## Theme 2: Influence of Cultural Norms and Attitudes on SSW Practice

This second theme related to cultural norms and attitudes are worth mentioning separately, though they pervaded discussions of SSW practice and education. In summary, each pilot country has institutions or organizations conducting research on social norms and ICCEC competencies. Those groups described as most vulnerable were ethnic minorities (especially Roma), LGBTQ individuals, children with disabilities, women and children generally (especially given widespread acceptance of violence against women and children and gender norms), people with HIV, people who use drugs, and sex workers. Schools, rather than parents, were described as taking primary responsibility for child development and transitions to adolescents. In addition, Western approaches to countering harmful social norms sometimes were considered contextually and culturally inappropriate.

**ALBANIA:** “The educators also emphasised the gap between normative beliefs about inclusion and actual discrimination: When you discuss issues like gender equality, Roma or disabled children at the level of principles, most students would agree that equality is the principle. When you refer to the examples from the everyday context, they realize that things they do in everyday life don’t necessarily encourage equal opportunities, and that they are not necessarily inclusive.” (Interview with a Social Work Educator in Albania, as cited in Rogers, Salmon, & Završek, 2019, “Enhancing Professional Competencies,” p. 43)

**GEORGIA:** “Georgian respondents also emphasise that a 4 -year social work training in itself has an impact on social values, and that some students internalize social work values; at the same

time, many of them reproduce harmful social norms. Respondents suggest that this indicates a need for more teaching on social values and behavioural changes in the curriculum..” (OPM & UNICEF, 2019, “Enhancing Professional Competencies,” p. 37)

**KAZAKHSTAN:** “...we observed that social work concepts are grounded in Western cultural assumptions and were often ‘lost in translation’ because of the cultural and contextual differences between the two countries. The US team worked with the Kazakh team and participants to explore English terminology that was not readily transferable to decide on meaningful Russian terminology that captured intent. We found that an ongoing and sustained dialogue between members of both teams was fundamental to clarifying cultural differences. Identifying ways to bridge differences and build common understanding while maintaining the integrity, principles, and values of the social work profession will be a continuing challenge as the profession evolves in Kazakhstan.” (Thorning, Shibusawa, Lukens, & Fang, 2012, “Developing a Train-the-Trainer...,” pp. 541-542)



## Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder consultation calls were conducted in accordance with Deliverable 1.3 of the project. In February and March 2020, the CSSW and GHRCCA teams conducted consultation calls via Zoom and Skype with key informants, or stakeholders, identified by UNICEF Country Offices. The objective of these consultations was to elicit stakeholders' views on target groups, content, topics, duration, and delivery for the training package being developed for SSW providers in KZ, GEO, and AL. The resulting data are being used to inform the development and implementation of the training curriculum, methods, feasibility, and sustainability.

Table 2 presents general characteristics of stakeholders and consultations. Specific organizations and roles are withheld in this report to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of stakeholders. Almost half (n=6, 46%) of the calls were conducted in Russian with stakeholders from Kazakhstan. Calls with stakeholders from Georgia and Albania (n=7, 54%) were conducted in English. All stakeholders held a Master's degree (n=8, 40%) or doctoral degree (n=12, 60%) in social work or a related field. Stakeholders were from academia, government ministries, or NGOs, enabling an array of perspectives from the SSW.

**Table 2**  
*Consultation and Stakeholder Characteristics*

Characteristics	n (%)			
	Total	Kazakhstan	Georgia	Albania
Consultations by country				
Number of calls	13 (100%)	6 (46%)	4 (31%)	3 (23%)
Number of stakeholders	20 (100%)	13 (65%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)
Language of consultations				
English	7 (54%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	3 (100%)
Russian	6 (46%)	6 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary organizational perspective				
Academia (i.e., university)	7 (54%)	4 (67%)	1 (25%)	2 (67%)
Government ministry	3 (23%)	2 (33%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
NGO	3 (23%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	1 (33%)
Educational background of stakeholders				
Up to Master's degree	8 (40%)	6 (46%)	1 (25%)	1 (33%)
Up to Doctoral degree	12 (60%)	7 (54%)	3 (75%)	2 (67%)

## Methodology

UNICEF ECA Country Offices provided a list (purposive sampling) of suggested stakeholders for phone consultations and connected identified stakeholders with CSSW and GHRCCA researchers via email in late January and early February. The research team developed, and UNICEF ECARO and Country Offices approved, a consultation call protocol intended to serve as a framework to guide discussions and allow for probing or follow-up questions as needed. (See Appendix III for the full Stakeholder Consultation Call Protocol.) For Kazakhstan, the protocol was translated into Russian and approved by the UNICEF Kazakhstan Country Office. Protocol sections, created to align with desk review codebook themes and informed by desk review findings, were as follows:

- Welcome and overview;
- Informant's background and experience;
- Informant's organization;
- Education needs for strengthening ICCEC competencies of the SSW in ECA;
- Influence of cultural norms and attitudes on SSW practice;
- Support (for the SSW or for the success of the curriculum under development); and
- Wrap-up.

CSSW and GHRCCA researchers scheduled individual Zoom and Skype calls with stakeholders to be audio-recorded and to last 60 to 90 minutes each. Stakeholders were given the protocol in advance for their reference and were encouraged to reach out before, during, or after the calls with any questions or concerns. CSSW and GHRCCA researchers conducted extensive note-taking on each call and identified common themes between calls to inform training materials. CSSW sent thank you emails with follow-up questions or comments within 48 hours of each call.

## Findings and Interpretation

Stakeholders shared expertise on the SSW, educational competencies, and cultural norms and attitudes to inform this project. Sections of the protocol that proved most valuable and informative are listed below with findings from each pilot country. Specific questions have been condensed below, while full questions are available in Appendix III. Recommendations derived from stakeholder calls and from the desk review are culled in a later section of this report. Expanded findings for KZ can be found in Supplement A.

## Kazakhstan

### The Social Service Workforce (SSW)

Who is part of the SSW?

**Kazakhstan:** According to stakeholders consulted in KZ, in total, there are 40,000 specialists of the social service system, only 10,000 out of whom are specialists with job functions of professional social workers. These include the following:

- Social workers;
- Psychologists;
- Speech therapists;
- Defectologists (specialists working with people with special needs and disabilities);
- Specialists and assistants in the social protection system;
- Social service workers of the health care system;
- Social pedagogues in schools;
- Social workers and allied professionals of institutions for children;
- Secretaries of protection of child rights;
- Probation officers; and
- Other specialists (even including massage therapists and librarians).

Stakeholders noted that social workers have not yet been introduced into child welfare sectors, as their functions are performed by other members of the SSW (e.g., Secretaries of Committees for the Protection of Minor's Rights). One stakeholder from Nur-Sultan expressed the need to introduce social workers to provide "assistance in obtaining benefits, comprehensive support for families, support for job placement, assistance in obtaining identity documents, and so on."

Stakeholders also explained the unique roles of social pedagogues in more detail. According to a stakeholder in Almaty,

"In the register of professions of KZ, there is a social pedagogue and a teacher of self-knowledge (учитель самопознания). Both functions can be performed by one person. Social pedagogue is a full-time position in schools with additional function of teaching self-knowledge lessons. Social pedagogues are dealing mainly with children from low-income families and children with deviant behavior."

Social pedagogues organize educational, leisure, and cultural activities and events at the educational organizations. The aim is to prevent antisocial behavior of children at risk. Additionally, social pedagogues assist children with special needs and from migrant families in their socialization. Stakeholders also noted the growing role of social pedagogues in schools in inclusive education and support for children with special needs, as well as in the primary identification and prevention of suicide and bullying among schoolchildren.

### Who employs the SSW?

**Kazakhstan:** As we learned from the desk review, there were two major waves in the development of social services in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Initially, professional social work services were organized by the civil society sector (i.e., local NGOs and international NGOs [INGOs]), which initiated a professional response to emerging social issues such as child protection, gender-based violence, human trafficking, violence, disability, and HIV. Later, state organizations began to provide social services to various socially vulnerable populations (An, 2017). In our consultations with stakeholders in KZ, we focused on current governmental service providers. According to these stakeholders, currently the main state agencies employing the SSW are as follows:

- Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (regional department of social protection and district employment centers);
- Ministry of Health (social service workers of the First Medical and Social Aid Centers in the policlinics, with an estimated 1,800 social workers<sup>1</sup>);
- Ministry of Education and Science (SSW in children's institutions, child protection, secretaries of protection of child rights, social pedagogues in schools);
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (probation services, services for minors in conflict with the law, and in the penitential system); and
- Ministry of Technology and Social Development (Committee of Family Gender Policy and Youth, Center for Support of Civil Initiatives, and services for socially vulnerable individuals and families).

These ministries regulate service providers at the national level and have regional departments throughout the country.

### Social Work Competencies

What competencies do social work programs teach?

**Kazakhstan:** Stakeholders identified 23 universities in KZ that are licensed for Bachelor's and Master's level social work education, only one of which has a PhD program in social work. Academic stakeholders informed us that the curricula of BSW programs focus on building students' generalist social work skills, while Master's level programs provide more in-depth information, specializations in working with certain populations, and more flexibility for elective courses. Stakeholders confirmed that KZ universities' social work programs teach the ethics of social work, social policy and related legislation, and social work theories. Only one stakeholder mentioned teaching case management competencies. Stakeholders noted difficulty in finding faculty who can teach direct practice and clinical skills to students.

According to a KZ stakeholder, with leadership of the Eurasian University and support of UNICEF, the competency-based education model of the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE,

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<sup>1</sup> According to stakeholders we consulted, the ratio of social workers to the population is 1 to 10,000 in the FMSA Center.

2015) was introduced and adapted for Bachelor's and Master's level social work programs in KZ. However, assessments of students' knowledge and skills at three universities showed a low level of required core competencies. The largest gaps in such competencies were "professional identity," "ethics and professional behavior," "assessment," and "interventions."

Stakeholders also noted competencies taught specifically to social pedagogues, including application of professional ethics, knowledge of developmental psychology theories, and diagnostic methods at different ages and stages of development.

What competencies still need to be learned?

**Kazakhstan:** Stakeholders were vocal about needs in current social work education in building the core social work skills, and they listed the following competencies that need to be improved through training and field education:

- Direct work skills (clinical skills);
- Interpersonal communication skills;
- Assessment skills, using standardized screening and assessment tools;
- Case management;
- Crisis interventions;
- Child abuse identification and response, especially in health care;
- Domestic violence and abuse;
- HIV responses;
- Stigma and discrimination;
- Multidisciplinary coordination and communication;
- Community mobilization and skills;
- Engaging local communities, specifically how to approach and engage local akimats (local municipalities);
- Management and supervision skills; and
- Research skills.

A stakeholder in Almaty explained,

"We teach some practice skills, but we need to strengthen this component in our training program. Our full-time teachers sometimes lack experience of direct work with clients. To solve this, we invite practitioners to teach practical classes for students. There are field supervisors, but many of them are lacking professional knowledge and skills to guide the students. Some students complain that they are given technical tasks on their field placement and are allowed only to observe, but not intervene. Thus, students may not have enough practical experience in the classroom and field placements."

Stakeholders also spoke about in-service training and continuing education. Many capacity-building activities and in-service training for social workers and social service providers were initiated by the civil society sector and INGOs. Stakeholders mentioned the Package of 14

Resource Modules for training of patronage nurses within the progressive home visiting model promoted by UNICEF in Kazakhstan and stakeholders (UNICEF, 2017). The package includes such modules as Communication Skills and Working with Stigma and Discrimination that were reviewed for developing the training curricula on ICCEC. The stakeholder representing social services in health care also informed us about the webinars on communication skills for health workers, which are available online on the [website of the Republican Center of Health Development](#).

## Content for New Curriculum

What topics, materials, or methods should the new ICCEC curriculum include?

**Kazakhstan:** KZ stakeholders recommended that the ICCEC curriculum include the following:

- Crisis interventions;
- Community engagement;
- Interdisciplinary and inter-agency work; and
- Communication skills and how they are best taught (at least two days).

Stakeholders emphasized the need for these skills among the SSW as a whole. As a stakeholder in Almaty explained,

“We are interested in participating in the training on interpersonal communication so that we can teach students this competence in our students of social pedagogy program. For some reason, the department of psychology of our university believe that psychologists are the only specialists who are dealing with communication skills and therefore, social pedagogues should refer clients to them. However, we believe that social pedagogues can also teach students communication skills. Therefore, we applied to the Ministry of Education a request to include the teaching communication skills in our curricula. Once we get approval, we can incorporate it in the curriculum and in the capacity building program for the faculty.”

What cultural or contextual norms, attitudes, beliefs, and practice with vulnerable groups should the ICCEC curriculum address?

**Kazakhstan:** The ICCEC curriculum should address traditional cultural norms related to gender roles (i.e., women’s roles) and distinctions between urban and rural areas. Stakeholders spoke mainly about the difference between cultural norms in the south and north of the country. Typical families in the south often consist of three generations and seem more traditional, where women may not have the right to make decisions, and all major decisions are made either by men or senior family members. This must be taken into account when developing the training. According to stakeholders, the process of interaction with this type of family takes more time, and it is necessary to take into account the presence and influence of older people. In contrast, according to a stakeholder from Nur-Sultan, in the north, families are mostly nuclear (i.e., consisting of two generations), more egalitarian in terms of gender roles, and generally considered to be easier to interact with.

None of the stakeholders mentioned the influence of beliefs related with other factors, such as race, ethnic group, sexual orientation, social-economic status, health issues, or mental health. However, the data from research by GHRCCA suggest that the most marginalized populations in KZ (e.g., key populations at risk for HIV such as sex-workers, people who use drugs, or LGBT individuals) experience extreme stigma, which prevents them from engaging with services (Mergenova et al., 2019).

## ICCEC Training Delivery

How should this training be delivered?

**Kazakhstan:** KZ stakeholders did not express any concerns regarding the originally planned 5-day face-to-face ToT. They did recommend to have co-trainers and to conduct the training in Russian. For South Kazakhstan, Kazakh is preferable as the language for the ToT. Delivery methods should include practice exercises, role play, reflection exercises, case studies, group work, and homework.

What might be barriers to participation in this training?

**Kazakhstan:** Barriers mentioned included possible restrictions from the administration in terms of workload, period of exams, and vocation period.

What advice do you have related to post-training support webinars?

**Kazakhstan:** Stakeholders supported the idea of having follow-up webinars. This format is becoming increasingly popular for distance-learning professionals. They recommended that the webinars be conducted soon after the training (i.e., no later than one month post-training) and that ToT participants be required to start implementing the course or its elements before the follow-up webinars so that the trainers could provide more targeted and practical guidance.

## Sustainability

How do you suggest making the training sustainable for the SSW?

**Kazakhstan:** Stakeholders suggested that working with university staff is more sustainable than with agencies' staff due to high turnover in social service agencies. They urged the course to be designed as a basic mandatory course for Bachelor's level social work and other relevant programs. In addition, stakeholders should be involved from different fields, such as education, social protection, health, and internal affairs.

How should trainers be selected to ensure training sustainability?

**Kazakhstan:** Stakeholders recommended a group size of no more than 30 to 35 participants and encouraged ToT participants be selected from among the following:

- Faculty of social work departments with experience in course design;
- Faculty of leading social pedagogy departments;

- Regional universities;
- Representatives from different regions (overall there are 14 regions and three cities of national status);
- Experience in in-service training delivery;
- A mix of academics and leading practitioners, since university teachers often lack practical experience, and since practitioners may lack theoretical knowledge;
- Practitioners from key governmental social service agencies, including primary health care;
- Participants from governmental agencies (to be prioritized);
- Members from professional associations; and
- Senior managers or heads of departments from key social service agencies for the opening or first day only.

A draft of the KZ ToT participation application form is included as Appendix IV.

## Next Steps

What do you advise as next steps in the development and implementation of this ICCEC training?

**Kazakhstan:** It was suggested that, during the training, participants form small groups or work in pairs to prepare and implement the training module(s) on building competencies in their universities or organizations. By the end of the training, the groups will present the selected training module or session, which they will deliver after the ToT. Later, during webinars, the groups or pairs of trainers will share the results of replicated training modules or sessions. It was also discussed with stakeholders from national level universities that they could include the “Building Competencies” course into a short-term certified training program or capacity-building in-service training for social service practitioners. In addition, the Ministry of Health is strengthening the social services provided by the first medical and social aid departments. The training course on the competencies will be very useful for capacity-building and continuing education for health department staff.

## Georgia

### The Social Service Workforce (SSW)

Who is part of the SSW?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders in GEO spoke of the SSW as primarily including social workers. They expressed their belief that the ICCEC ToT is arriving at an opportune moment given recent policy changes impacting the SSW in GEO. Social work as a profession is becoming more regulated, more expert, and less centralized within government social programs. New social workers are required to have social work degrees, while previously titled social workers are being offered a transition period to obtain degrees or certificates in shorter timeframes.



Who employs the SSW?

**Georgia:** The following sectors are among those that employ social workers in GEO:

- Government ministries (especially Ministries of Health and Education);
- Healthcare;
- Criminal justice (i.e., penitentiaries);
- Psychiatry;
- Child protection; and
- Local municipalities and communities (increasingly).

### Social Work Competencies

What competencies do social work programs teach?

**Georgia:** Two state universities in GEO provide Bachelor's and Master's level social work education, each with no specializations from which students can choose, and little specific practice skills instruction. Topics addressed may include values and ethics (including "gender-blind" and "anti-feminist" practice in some cases), working with communities and across sectors, policies, case management, and basic communication skills. Psychological approaches to social work are emphasized.

What competencies still need to be learned?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders suggested that students need additional practice competencies, including the following: interviewing and engagement skills, communicating with vulnerable groups, more critical considerations of values and ethics, more assessment skills, and clinical social work practice (e.g., mental health counseling skills for working with behavioral problems). One stakeholder expressed interest in community work, especially with ethnic minorities, as well as participatory action research to involve outreach with marginalized groups (e.g., LGBTQ youth). Lack of a sufficient number of field instructors and supervisors, in addition to a lack of adequate practice opportunities, was underscored. Stakeholders further commented that case examples taken from Western curricula are often not culturally relevant, so any curricula should incorporate local case examples from participants and stakeholders.

### Content for New Curriculum

What topics, materials, or methods should the new ICCEC curriculum include?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders recommended that the ICCEC ToT address the following competency-based content:

- Practical applications of practice skills;
- The helping process;
- Motivational interviewing;
- Ethics, values, and norms using a feminist lens;
- Working with vulnerable groups without judgment;

- Working in communities;
- Working on multidisciplinary teams;
- Interviewing skills;
- Crisis intervention communication;
- Self-presentation;
- Program monitoring and evaluation; and
- Skills measurement.

Stakeholders advised creating a case-based curriculum composed of participant case examples as well as provided case examples related to youth, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect. International examples should be given of multi-sectoral policy work. Community work, especially with vulnerable groups, should be taught in view of daily practical applications.

What cultural or contextual norms, attitudes, beliefs, and practice with vulnerable groups should the ICCEC curriculum address?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders noted the following tensions related to cultural norms and attitudes present among social workers in GEO:

- Feelings of hopelessness in social work's ability to help and in people's ability to change, especially among social workers separate from stigmatized communities;
- Internal conflicts with personal and professional values (e.g., "It's fine to be LGBTQ, but I don't want my children to be LGBTQ");
- Reluctance to acknowledge child abuse or stigma toward vulnerable groups (e.g., LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, people who are homeless, ethnic minorities such as Roma, women), while simultaneously acknowledging examples from case experience;
- Stigma and negative perceptions of social work clients (i.e., "Something is wrong with you");
- Sexist views that result in discrimination of women in the workplace, homophobic attitudes, and patriarchal norms;
- High tolerance for violence (against women and children in particular); and
- Resistance to challenging social norms.

In light of these observed tensions, stakeholders urged curriculum developers to *show* ToT participants what *can* be done and how through social work intervention and practice examples.

### ICCEC Training Delivery

How should this training be delivered?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders considered the ToT to be a successful training format in GEO. They urged the research team to offer the ToT in the latter half of June (not August) and in English with translation available. Stakeholders also recommended the following delivery methods for the ICCEC curriculum:

- Simulations of practice experiences;
- Case examples (provided cases as well as requiring participants to come to the training with and present cases of their own) and exercises applied in real practice settings, requiring the social worker to do something in response;
- Video recordings of participants practicing social work skills;
- Group work;
- Role plays;
- Participant presentations;
- Discussions
- Games and activities to develop skills;
- Follow-up homework; and
- Any other interactive methods to promote skill development and practice.

In addition, one GEO stakeholder suggested using some materials or information related to cultural norms and values from the WHO's "INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children" publication, which is available in multiple languages.

What might be barriers to participation in this training?

**Georgia:** GEO stakeholders recommended that the ToT *not* be held in August given anticipated vacation and leave time among potential participants.

What advice do you have related to post-training support webinars?

**Georgia:** Skype is the most familiar platform in GEO; however, Zoom can be used if sufficient guidance is provided.

## Sustainability

How do you suggest making the training sustainable for the SSW?

**Georgia:** Sustainability should be built into the curriculum. The following recommendations were provided:

- Ensure that universities and GASW staff participate in the ToT so they can replicate it;
- Require participating agencies and individuals to commit to replicate the training (or least pilot one module in their workplace) in a certain time period after training (e.g., July through September, excepting August);
- Engage in a partnership model with state social service providers and UNICEF;
- Engage university partners to co-train, co-develop, or give feedback on the curriculum;
- Provide high-level webinars on coaching, mentoring, and supervising (use Skype or provide guidance on using Zoom);
- Provide stakeholders with a report on project activities and progress; and
- Evaluate outcomes via pre- and post-tests.

How should trainers be selected to ensure training sustainability?

**Georgia:** Stakeholders from GEO recommended a ToT group size of no more than 20 participants composed of the following people:

- Representatives from different regions of GEO;
- People who can be practice instructors and supervisors in the field;
- Representatives from NGOs and government ministries that hire and supervise social workers (e.g., child abuse, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, housing at municipal offices, shelters for DV and trafficking victims);
- Long-term university educators;
- One or two representatives from the Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW) so they can replicate the training; and
- Civil society organizations.

One GEO stakeholder also recommended getting a commitment from governmental agencies via memoranda of understanding (MoU) to disseminate the training in their regions, for which she said they have resources.

### Next Steps

What do you advise as next steps in the development and implementation of this ICCEC training?

**Georgia:** The “Building Competencies” project team will contact stakeholders with any further questions.

## Albania

### The Social Service Workforce (SSW)

Who is part of the SSW?

**Albania:** The SSW in Albania includes the following:

- Psychologists;
- Social workers (now membership is possible in the new Order of Social Workers, presumably acting like a professional association of some kind);
- Child protection workers;
- Outreach workers and community service workers in local municipalities (some but not all of whom are also social workers);
- Criminal justice system workers (e.g., probation officers); and
- Some health care workers.

Who employs the SSW?

**Albania:** The following entities employ the SSW in Albania:

- NGOs and civil societies providing social services (NGOs being the most common employer of SSW, according to stakeholders);
- INGOs (e.g., Terre des hommes, UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision);
- Child protection organizations (NGOs and state child protection units);
- Residential and alternative care for children, including foster care agencies, day care services, and domestic violence and/or trafficking shelters;
- Local municipalities and community centers in local governments;
- State agencies (State Agency for Child Rights and Protection);
- Governmental institutions (e.g., Ministry of Health and Social Welfare);
- The criminal justice system;
- The healthcare system; and
- Education.

## Social Work Competencies

What competencies do social work programs teach?

**Albania:** AL has three universities with social work programs. Tirana University appears to be the largest, with three Bachelor's level programs, 11 Master's level programs, and one PhD program. Stakeholders spoke of a more psychological approach to social work education in Albania. Social work programs in AL teach the following competencies:

- Ethics, personal and professional values, and professional behavior;
- Basic social work and related social science theories;
- Social work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- Prevention, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and monitoring;
- Interpersonal communication skills (e.g., empathy, active listening, reflections, advocacy, conflict management);
- Direct practice methods and skills;
- Counseling and clinical direct practice;
- Case work and coordination of services;
- Working in child protection;
- Social work with groups;
- Social policy;
- Outreach work, including being part of communities where the social worker lives;
- Identifying social issues;
- Human behavior and development in environment;
- Qualitative and quantitative research methods and social statistics (promoting development and use of evidence-based practices, which are reportedly limited in AL);
- Working on multidisciplinary teams;
- Human rights and social justice;
- Knowledge of social work in special fields like education, justice, and healthcare; and
- Social planning.

Master's programs allow social work students to focus in greater depth on social administration, social policy, child and family issues, gender issues, and social behavior changes or change communication. In addition, the University of Tirana is currently offering online supervision for social workers in the field via the university's Moodle platform.

An in-service 11-module training program (16-day training) was implemented for child protection social service workers in collaboration with the academics of Tirana University in 2013. Currently, the program is implemented for capacity-building of public administration workers but not at its full length. Trainees are able to choose their modules of study.

What competencies still need to be learned?

**Albania:** Stakeholders in academic settings have collected feedback from students gauging student interests and needs related to educational content and skills. They suggested that social work students in AL could benefit from additional work on the following areas and competencies:

- Case management skills, especially documenting case notes and structuring their work;
- Facilitating interagency working groups and managing and coordinating multidisciplinary teams (e.g., case conferences as part of case management);
- Community engagement (from a less psychological perspective);
- Social policy legislation;
- Critical analysis of cases in social contexts, also in consideration of safety of clients and workers;
- Case presentations;
- Academic writing;
- Use of universal social work terminology;
- Cultural diversity and working with minority groups, including LGBT children and adults, people with disabilities, cultural minorities (e.g., Roma), and victims of child trafficking;
- Online abuse;
- Social work in healthcare settings;
- Intervention research;
- The role of social work in emergencies (e.g., earthquakes); and
- Supervisory skills.

Stakeholders also mentioned supervisory skills so that more people in the field can act as supervisors, even though guidance and manuals are available on this topic; the shortage seems to be an issue with number of people available, not so much a lack of guidance or interest. Counseling and social administration were mentioned *both* as current competencies *and* needed competencies, suggesting stakeholders may have differing perspectives on the degree to which these competencies are addressed sufficiently at different levels of social work education.

## Content for New Curriculum

What topics, materials, or methods should the new ICCEC curriculum include?

**Albania:** Importantly, Albania stakeholders are already working with UNICEF, other universities, and other partners to develop and implement not only pre-service education at universities but also in-service capacity-building trainings (e.g., case assessment, role of social workers in emergencies, group supervision, social planning, service planning, and burnout). Current efforts already underway in Albania should take precedence over and should guide development of this project's ICCEC curriculum.

Stakeholders suggested that the new ICCEC curriculum should have an acute focus on the *how* of social work functions and responsibilities, *not* the *what*. Social workers already know what their responsibilities are but could use guidance on how to carry out those responsibilities effectively. For instance, how does a social worker communicate with children and different age groups? How can a social worker work with families considered “difficult” or “not collaborative enough”? Guidance on exchanges between professionals in the form of peer-to-peer support (not to be confused with supervision) could be helpful in the creation of professional networks to support sustainable social work practice skills improvement. Child-friendly versions of documents like case plans and case management coordination were mentioned as needed, though this albeit valuable recommendation seems to fall outside the scope of this ICCEC curriculum.

What cultural or contextual norms, attitudes, beliefs, and practice with vulnerable groups should the ICCEC curriculum address?

**Albania:** Stakeholders identified the following groups as vulnerable in the Albanian context:

- Ethnic minorities (e.g., Egyptians, Roma, Greeks, Macedonians);
- Women experiencing domestic violence (for which there are response protocols);
- The elderly;
- Children (related to abuse, neglect, and risk of school dropout);
- People with disabilities;
- People using substances;
- LGBT individuals;
- Victims of trafficking; and
- Migrants, especially due to unsafe migration routes leading to increased vulnerabilities to child trafficking and other dangers.

According to one stakeholder, every municipality is required by law to conduct vulnerability mapping (i.e., identification of vulnerable communities). One stakeholder suggested that social workers do not hold stigma themselves because of their training in social work ethics; however, this stakeholder conceded that these same social workers may lack knowledge or competence in working with stigmatized groups.

## ICCEC Training Delivery

How should this training be delivered?

**Albania:** Stakeholders recommended holding the ICCEC ToT in English, with translation available if English proficiency is not made an explicit requirement for participation. The ToT should be held in mid-June or postponed until October or November, preferably. Delivery methods should emphasize adult learning skills through participant facilitation, presentations, and skills practice. One stakeholder suggested working in partnership with the local university to coordinate use of facilities.

What might be barriers to participation in this training?

**Albania:** University partners are not available July through September. No other barriers were shared or anticipated.

What advice do you have related to post-training support webinars?

**Albania:** Webinars seem to be familiar and successful tools in AL, allowing for greater flexibility on the part of participants. Still, webinars should not be scheduled after the first two weeks of June, according to one stakeholder.

## Sustainability

How do you suggest making the training sustainable for the SSW?

**Albania:** The “Building Competencies” team was urged to work with partners and leaders in AL who will make the training their own and carry it out beyond the original ToT. Members of the Order of Social Work and possibly the Association of Social Work may be established by law and prepared to partner within the next year.

How should trainers be selected to ensure training sustainability?

**Albania:** The ToT is considered a familiar format in AL. INGOs in AL are currently doing similar work and should be included in the identification of ToT participants. Stakeholders recommended selection of 20 ToT participants from a mix of academic (i.e., theory) and practice backgrounds, different sectors of the SSW, and different regions of AL. Participants with experiential knowledge should be treated as experts just as academics, though practical skills should be the ToT’s focus. SSW professionals in sectors working with vulnerable groups are often left out of capacity-building initiatives and, thus, should be included, including professionals working with children with special needs. People in higher-up administrative positions, specifically directors, should be excluded.

## Next Steps

What do you advise as next steps in the development and implementation of this ICCEC training?.

**Albania:** Stakeholders should be included in the project’s ongoing work to promote sustainability, relevance, and uptake.



## Recommendations

Findings from the desk review and stakeholder consultation calls aligned well and are presented below as recommendations for continued project work. Unless otherwise noted, a recommendation applies to all pilot countries.

### Logistics and Practical Needs

1. **Meet logistical and practical needs of anticipated participants.** Offer ToTs in primary local language, if possible, or in English with translation. In-person ToTs should not exceed 20 participants in Georgia and Albania, or approximately 30 in Kazakhstan. New communication and service delivery methodologies may need to be considered in light of the ever-changing conditions related to COVID-19.

### Education and Competencies

2. **Focus on practical ICCEC skill development.** Content should center on the “how” of practice skills (*not* the “what”), addressing the following: social work interventions and the helping process, ethics and values, case management, engagement, interviewing, assessment, work with vulnerable groups, facilitating group or team work, community engagement, and communication and intervention in crisis and non-crisis situations. While all pilot countries agreed strongly on the need for practical skill development, these skills are not uniformly developed across countries or even country regions, nor are they equally reflected in current social work curricula in pilot countries or ECA more broadly; therefore, the ToT curriculum should account for varying degrees of skill so that content and exercises are relevant across contexts.
3. **Rely on active and experiential learning approaches.** Participants should be engaging content through activities like case presentations, group work, role plays, discussions, homework, practice simulations and intervention exercises, and video recordings.
4. **Emphasize work with vulnerable groups and challenging stigma and social norms using real-life practice examples.** “Vulnerable groups” include children, women, people experiencing domestic violence, parents, ethnic minorities (e.g., Roma), LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, people with HIV, people who use drugs, sex workers, migrant workers, child trafficking victims, families considered “difficult” to work with, the elderly, and migrants. Harmful social norms include violence against women and children.
5. **Incorporate contextually relevant resources.** Have partners in-country review key materials and discuss use of language and word choice to ensure intentions are being conveyed appropriately and to help avoid imposition of Western practice models. Materials should be provided in local languages and adapted to local and regional contexts as needed. For example, case examples should be reviewed by stakeholders for their relevance or drawn from locally relevant practice and, especially, from participants’ own practice experiences.

## Sustainability

6. **Include a diversity of participants from various regions and sectors.** Participants should come from across country regions and from multiple sectors (i.e., government ministries, child protection, local municipalities, NGOs, and academia). Special consideration should be given to participants who can serve as supervisors in the field. All participants should be informed of the practice-heavy nature of the ToT.
7. **Integrate feedback, buy-in, and ToT participation from SSW leaders in pilot countries to promote sustainability, accessibility, and relationship-building.** Leaders may include representatives from the GASW and the General Administration of Social Assistance and Services (GASAS) within Albania's Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, and academia. Work with UNICEF and local stakeholders and partners to review the curriculum for relevant content and case examples, appropriate language use, and widely available access in online and other formats as needed. At a minimum, provide regular reports to stakeholders on project progress and activities.
8. **Consider and support ongoing supervision needs.** ToTs should build and strengthen skill development and competencies among participants, who may then become field instructors and supervisors, and among future pre-service and in-service trainees. Ongoing measures outside the curriculum are needed for long-term supervision to promote the sustainability of skills learned through the curriculum. Stakeholders confirmed that supervision is lacking in all three pilot countries.
9. **Provide follow-up webinars to reinforce content and build on longer-term needs.** Webinars may address supervision and should offer coaching and opportunities for peer support. Skype is the most familiar platform in pilot countries; however, Zoom can be used so long as sufficient guidance is provided in advance.
10. **Implement evaluation measures to assess outcomes.** Pre- and post-tests should consider skill development, long-term needs, and sustainability.

## ToT Participant Selection Criteria

In addition to the 10 recommendations above, we have compiled a list of recommended selection criteria for ToT participants (provided below), informed by feedback from stakeholders and UNICEF Country Offices. (\* is used to indicate mandatory criteria.) The full criteria are given in detail in Appendix IV: ToT Participant Application Form (English and Russian versions). Consideration should also be given to regional representation among ToT participants. In light of recent work and travel restrictions, the application form should assess applicants' access to technology for distance learning – not as an exclusionary criterion but rather to gauge needs.

## Description of the ToT Group Overall

- A mix of instructors and leading specialists in social services
  - Instructors (or representatives from national practice or policy level) who can disseminate knowledge in other universities
  - Practitioners from key agencies in various social service fields

- Representatives from different regions of each country

## Educational Qualifications

- \*Minimum Bachelor's degree in social work or social sciences
- Additional short-term certified program in the field of social work/social service

## Work Experience

### For university staff

- \*At least 3-5 years of teaching social work or related social sciences
- \*Teaching courses on social work and social service practice (including social work with children and families, child welfare and protection, disability, and related courses)
- Field instructors for social work students
- Experience with curricula and course design

### For social service workers/social service providers

- \*3-5 years of working in the field of social services
- \*Direct practice experience with vulnerable populations (e.g., families, children in institutions and foster care, juvenile justice, people with HIV, disabilities, or mental health)

### **And/or**

- \*Experience supervising social service workers or social work interns/students
- Social service agency experience at city or regional levels, serving vulnerable families and children (e.g., departments of social and health aids, departments of child protection)
- Working in the civil society sector or in a leading NGO that provides social or psychosocial services to vulnerable families and children (at a regional or national level)

## Training Experience

- \*Completion of capacity-building training in the field of social work/social services, organized by INGOs, over the past five years
- Completion of at least one training-of-trainers course
- Experience delivering in-service trainings for social workers/the SSW
- Experience with training modules' design and/or adaptation

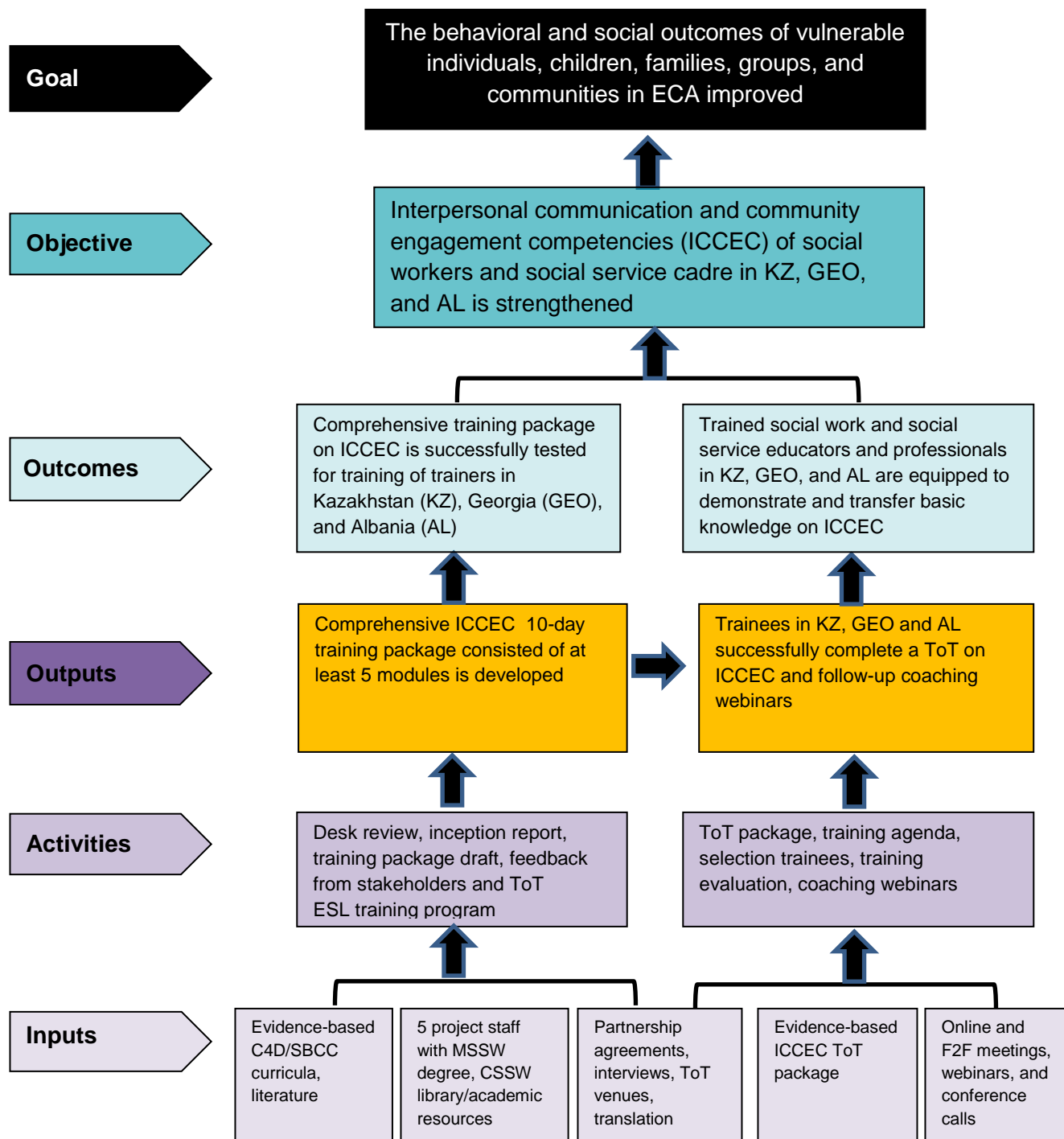
## Motivation

- Commitment to serve vulnerable groups
- Commitment to incorporate elements of ICCEC training into current curricula/classes that the applicant teaches or will teach and/or short-term certified program curricula/courses
- Commitment to deliver in-service trainings using the modules/materials of the ICCEC training for the SSW

# Project Approach and Structure

UNICEF Terms of Reference, desk review findings, and stakeholder consultation calls informed the project approach, structure, and logic model presented below. Pathways are shown between the project goal, objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities (see Figure 1). The fully detailed project framework can be found in Appendix V with a detailed timeline in Appendix VI.

Figure 1. Logic model



## Training Package Description

### Building Competencies: Interpersonal Communication and Community Engagement (“Building Competencies”) Train-the-Trainer Course

The training will be designed primarily as a pre-service course for students in social work and allied professions. The course may also be used for in-service education. The training package will strengthen basic competencies of a bachelor’s-level social worker in generalist practice.<sup>2</sup>

The training will be adapted to local and ECA contexts through the use of practice examples, such as those related to child protection, domestic violence, migration, social exclusion, stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poor families, and other marginalized groups, the influence of cultural and social norms, and other topical areas.

The 10-day curriculum will consist of 6 modules, similarly formatted, lasting 1 to 2 days each (totaling 60 hours).<sup>3</sup> The package will provide trainers with some flexibility in using the modules together or separately depending on their needs. In addition, the modules or training elements can be incorporated into existing curricula or trainings by local trainers and educators. The final training package will be prepared in PDF format for use in print and electronically.

The comprehensive training package will contain:

- Training curriculum and modules;
- Learning objectives or expected outcomes or competencies of the training program and specific objectives and outcomes or competencies of the modules;
- Training manual with detailed description of sessions and activities for each module;
- Handouts, including short reading materials, case studies, role play scenarios, tools for group work, practice exercises, and assignments;
- PowerPoint presentations (slides);
- Training assessment tools (pre- and post-tests to be administered immediately before and immediately after training, with recommendations as to how to use these tools); and
- Training evaluation tools.

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<sup>2</sup> “Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, social policies, and communities in a variety of settings in pursuit of social and economic justice. Generalist practitioners view people and systems from a strengths perspective in order to recognize, support, and build upon the innate capabilities of all human beings. They engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of individuals, families, and collections of people. Generalist practitioners engage in community development, organizational development, and evaluation in order to ensure that services are useful, effective, and ethical.” (Humboldt State University, 2019)

<sup>3</sup> Originally, project team members intended to develop a 10-day curriculum offered through a 5-day ToT. Ever-changing situations with COVID-19 are likely to interrupt the 5-day ToT originally planned; therefore, the project team is focused on developing the full 10-day curriculum and awaits further guidance on training plans and delivery modalities. Training content may also be modified to include online modules and modules covering social service delivery via phone, Zoom or Skype, and other platforms.

## Classroom Teaching Methods

The proposed teaching methods in the classroom will be based on adult learning models and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, represented by a four-stage learning cycle, as seen in Figure 2 below (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Various educational tools that simulate real situations in the practice of social services will be offered. These tools include but are not limited to case studies, case scenarios, role plays, reflection exercises, group work, and practical exercises. For reflections exercises, Gibb's Model will be applied (see Figure 3) (Gibbs, 1988).

Figure 2. Kolb's stages of experiential learning

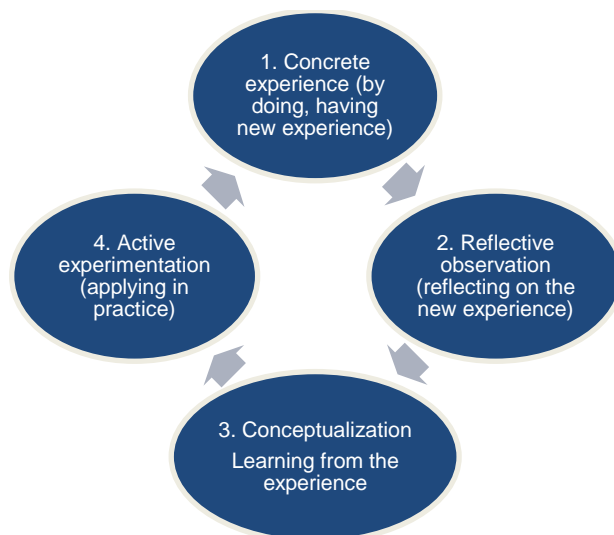
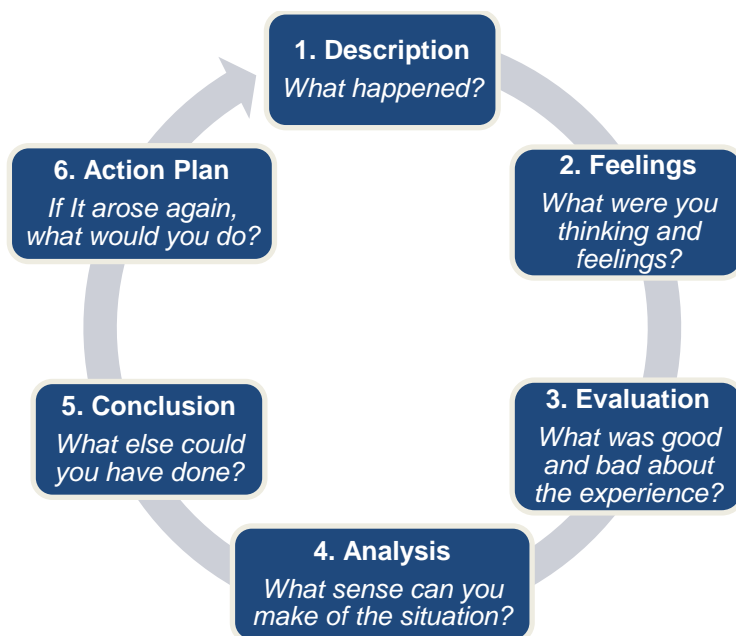


Figure 3. Gibb's Reflective Cycle



## Curricular Content

The curriculum of the ICCEC training will be developed in accordance with the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), updated in March 2019 (IASSW, 2019). Following the Standards, the training curricula will reflect, to the extent possible, the following areas or themes:

1. Social Work Profession: Understanding of injustice and discrimination; knowledge of human behavior in the social environment, person-in-environment, and individual and social determinants of behavior; and understanding of the influence of cultural norms and beliefs on human behavior.
2. Social Work Professional: Development of the responsible and reflective practitioner, practice skills with diverse groups, and cultural humility; and ability to apply ethical codes in practice.
3. Social Work Methods: Practice skills of engagement, assessment, and intervention; application of social work values and confronting injustice; and social work research skills.
4. Paradigms of the Social Work Profession: Acknowledgment and recognition of the dignity of human beings; interconnectedness across all systems at micro, mezzo, and macro levels; advocacy on behalf of marginalized and excluded people; respect for diversity; capacity-building; and empowerment of individuals, families, groups, and communities.

Best practices and training materials on communication competencies, C4D, and SBCC, developed internationally by UNICEF and other organizations, will be incorporated into proposed training content. The Council on Social Work Education's nine social work competencies model will be utilized for the design of the training (CSWE, 2015, p. 8) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. CSWE Social Work Competencies

<b>Competency 1:</b> Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	<b>Competency 6:</b> Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
<b>Competency 2:</b> Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	<b>Competency 7:</b> Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
<b>Competency 3:</b> Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	<b>Competency 8:</b> Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
<b>Competency 4:</b> Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	<b>Competency 9:</b> Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
<b>Competency 5:</b> Engage in Policy Practice	

Table 3 presents an abbreviated version of the “Building Competencies” ToT curriculum, *which is subject to change*. **The project team is currently revising the initial curricular outline based on findings presented in this report and suggestions from UNICEF and stakeholders.** Stakeholders in each pilot country will review drafts of the curriculum throughout the project.

**Table 3**  
“Building Competencies” ToT Curriculum Outline

Module	Core Competency to Strengthen	Specific Competencies
<b>Module 1</b> (1 day): Professional Ethics and Anti-Discriminatory Practice in Social Service Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</li> <li>• Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</li> <li>• Advance Human Rights and Socio-Economical Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on professional identity</li> <li>• Understand the fundamental values and ethics of social work</li> <li>• Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations</li> <li>• Identify ethical issues and dilemmas</li> <li>• Understand the importance of diversity</li> <li>• Maintain self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients</li> <li>• Value diversity and difference</li> <li>• Understand the impact of discrimination and oppression on social work clients</li> <li>• Advance human rights and social justice: anti-stigma, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression approaches in social service practice</li> </ul>
<b>Module 2</b> (2 days): Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups</li> <li>• Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a set of interpersonal skills to effectively connect and establish relationships with diverse clients</li> <li>• Value diversity and difference</li> <li>• Communicate nonverbally and using body language</li> <li>• Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients</li> <li>• Display attributes of an effective social worker</li> <li>• Use nonverbal and verbal communication skills, attending behaviors, active listening skills, empathic listening, asking questions, reflections, and basic motivational interviewing skills</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to use role induction and orienting clients</li> </ul>
<b>Module 3</b> (1.5 day): Interpersonal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of human behavior theories that guide social work practice (ecological theory, strength-based and resilience perspectives, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs)</li> <li>• Value diversity and difference</li> </ul>



Skills in Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</li> <li>Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ interviewing skills for conducting intake and biopsychosocial assessments</li> <li>Interview for compiling ecomaps and genograms</li> <li>Use strength-based language in standardized screening tools</li> <li>Communicate action plan goals and objectives and choose interventions in partnership with clients</li> <li>Use SOAP notes skills for case documentation</li> </ul>
<b>Module 4</b> (2 days): Interpersonal Communication Skills in Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervene with Individuals, Families, and Groups</li> <li>Advance Human Rights and Socio-Economical Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate knowledge of human behavior concepts and theories (cognitive-behavioral approach, child development, family life cycle, family systems, child development, attachment theory)</li> <li>Value diversity and difference</li> <li>Communicate in crisis interventions</li> <li>Communicate in case management</li> <li>Demonstrate counseling skills</li> <li>Use inter-disciplinary collaboration to achieve better outcomes for clients (case conferences)</li> <li>Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients</li> <li>Communicate client's progress and demonstrate ability to end services effectively</li> <li>Communicate with children, families, people with special communication needs, and groups (e.g., in group interventions)</li> </ul>
<b>Module 5</b> (2 days): Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage, Assess, and Intervene with Communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and define "community" and factors influencing social change</li> <li>Apply techniques and methods for connecting with communities, facilitating work with communities, and empowering communities</li> <li>Identify community resources, help communities to build assets and capacities, and share knowledge and resources</li> </ul>
<b>Module 6</b> (1 day): Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in Policy Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and analyze a contemporary social problem and/or specific policies at the community level that impact clients</li> <li>Apply empowerment skills to record community needs and strengths (community needs assessment); initiate and support dialogue; promote discussion and create a platform to engage with stakeholders, including policymakers; bring stakeholders together to identify needs and solutions to create change in the community</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

In accordance with the project timeline (Appendix VI) and findings shared in this inception report, next steps for the “Building Competencies” project are listed below under the project’s two phases.

### Phase I

- Submit inception report to stakeholders and receive feedback on training strategy.
- Complete curriculum draft that incorporates desk review findings and input from stakeholder consultation calls and discuss with UNICEF.
- Receive feedback from UNICEF ECARO and Country Offices on first draft. Incorporate into revised second draft.
- Develop training assessment and evaluation tools. Incorporate into revised second draft.
- Work with local partners to finalize selection criteria and applications for ToT participation.
- Distribute application form among stakeholders and potential trainees. Select trainees who meet criteria. Interview candidates if necessary.
- Provide UNICEF KZ with revised second draft of ToT package and evaluation tools for translation.

### Phase II

- Develop preparatory materials (e.g., orientation plan, reading materials, expectations), in addition to follow-up webinar materials and logistics, in partnership with in-country stakeholders, to provide coaching to ToT participants, foster peer support networks, and discuss supervision in SSW contexts. Deliver webinars in KZ, GEO, and AL.
- Pilot training package as a ToT in KZ, GEO, and AL (delivery timing and mode to be determined with UNICEF and stakeholders).
- Receive feedback from participants, stakeholders, and evaluation measures. Incorporate into revised third draft.
- Collect additional feedback and evaluations from ToT participations and stakeholders to inform final training package.
- Complete and submit final training package, along with final report.
- Explore possibilities for Phase III as needed.

## Cross-Phase Considerations

Programs and services will vary greatly by context in each country, as will social work professional readiness. Thus, the “Building Competencies” team will respond to countries’ and localities’ different needs by developing a tailored approach with resources in each context, informed by stakeholders, the OPM needs assessment, and the project desk review.

In addition, social work resources, textbooks, academic literature, and practice materials in local languages may be lacking. The project’s final report will include a list of recommended literature and other materials for further translation.

Results of “Building Competencies” will be disseminated at project’s end to the UNICEF regional office, in-country teams, stakeholders, and partner institutions to examine lessons learned, continued challenges in the field, and proposed next steps and project phase(s).

Finally, it is worth noting the current and potentially ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on pilot countries, stakeholders, and the project overall. COVID-19 is causing widespread travel concerns and restrictions across the globe. Leading public health experts are advising limited, essential travel only as well as social distancing to reduce the likely spread of the virus, in hopes of minimizing cases and fatalities. Columbia University has already taken action to cancel all non-essential international travel, move all classes to online formats, cancel or postpone campus events, and encourage students, faculty, and staff to work from home.

As of the writing of this inception report, the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19 are unknown. It is impossible to predict the virus's impact in pilot countries at this time, though it is reasonable to expect that the virus will spread much more widely over the next several weeks. Resultant required changes in service delivery and the likely critical increase of risk to vulnerable children and families due to extreme economic and public health conditions suggest an urgent need for capacity-building efforts with appropriate adaptations to build a responsive SSW. The “Building Competencies” project team is committed to working with UNICEF ECARO and Country Offices to create contingency plans as needed in order to protect the safety, health, and well-being of all involved, while attempting to meet pilot countries’ needs to the extent possible.

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