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# SOCIAL WORKERS IN JAMAICA

Colette Roberts Riden  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social  
Security

# MLSS ROLE IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

The MLSS' role is to create and facilitate an enabling environment that supports the most vulnerable in our society. Key aspect in most interventions is to build or empower the individual

Main functions of Ministry in Social Protection:

1. *Work with the national planning agency (PIOJ) to identify Gaps in Social Protection Framework*
2. *Develop targeted Social Assistance Programmes to fill gaps*
3. *Manage and deliver interventions from identification to empowerment and payment of grants or benefits.*

*In executing these functions at 3 :*

- All interventions are administered at the operational level by a cadre of Social Workers
- A Key SP strategy used for resilience building is the Case Management Approach

# Social Protection Programmes in Jamaica

TYPES OF INTERVENTION	PROGRAMME	BENEFIT DESCRIPTION
Active Labour Market Programmes	ELE/ LMIS/ STW/ SIP/	OJT/ SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT
Micro Business Financing	STW/ SIP/ JCPD/ NCSC/ REHAB	GRANTS
Cash Based Transfers	PATH/ REHAB/ CASE MANAGEMENT/SOCIAL PENSION	TARGETED CASH GRANTS
Skills Training & Continuing Education	STW/ SIP/ JCPD/ NCSC/ PATH/ ABILITIES FOUNDATION	EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS/CERTIFICATION
In-Kind Transfers	REHAB/ JCPD	WELFARE/ EMERGENCY SUPPLIES (CFO), ASSISTIVE AIDS/ THERAPY/
Educational/ Psychosocial Programmes	ESP/ ABILITIES FOUNDATION/ NCSC	TRAINING, THERAPY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Social Insurance	NIS	Health insurance, Old Age Pension

# Social Workers' Role

- Social Workers are the key or the centre of the wheel that enables/supports all programmes - key agents for programme delivery
  - *Identify vulnerable persons in need of support*
  - *Interview and assess needs of vulnerable persons*
  - *Conduct verification through home visits homes, speak with neighbours to validate information/need of applicants/beneficiaries*
  - *Liaise with school/health personnel in relation to applicants/beneficiaries*
  - *Conduct assessments, write reports and distribute assistance*
  - *Referrals to other Agencies*
  - *Conduct Public Education/Awareness sessions*
  - *Represent on various local committees*

# Social Workers' Role in Disaster Relief/Response

- Conduct Public Education/Preparedness Exercises
- Coordinates shelter inspection to ascertain; Adequacy, Accessibility and Appropriateness
- Ensures training of Shelter Managers and other disaster relief workers (Partnership with Jamaica Red Cross)
- Distribute relief supplies to shelters or affected persons in event of disaster
- Conducts/lead post-disaster household damage assessments

Social workers are also instrumental in acting as a communication liaisons linking vulnerable populations to other social protection/ disaster management agencies



# Case Management

The Case Management Approach is a key initiative that builds resilience for poor families

- Provides assessment tools for; psychosocial support, identifying at risk/vulnerable households and improving socio-economic resilience.
- Resilience Matrix - assessment tool used to triage/rank families to determine the level of intervention that is necessary for the family to receive resilience.
- Task Centered Practice Model - short term intervention model designed to strengthen client/worker relationship to achieve prescribed goals. It consist of three phases: Assessment, Intervention/ Treatment Planning and Termination.

# Case Management Cont'd...

- Treatment Phase - Six months intervention period geared at improving clients socio-economic and disaster resilience.
- Referrals are an integral element of the CM Process, used to leverage synergies across social protection programmes
  - *Internally across MLSS Departments/ Agencies*
  - *Externally to other MDA's through partnerships and MOU's*
- Post Resilience Testing – determine improvement in resilience status
- Re-contracting – treatment extended for up to 2 years (3 months intervals) if sufficient resilience not achieved.

# Social Workers Role Advantage

1. Engenders close Client/Worker relationship
2. SW network facilitates prompt response
3. Build up capacity in a team who are key resource for government, community and other partners e.g. FBOs NGOs
4. Multi-skilled
5. The ability to act as a broker to include advocacy e.g on behalf of the disabled community





# Challenges

- Inadequate number of Social Workers
- High client to social worker ratio
- Work is not glamorous, its hard work with low salary
- Many times, Social Workers themselves need social assistance and are unable to access
- Need for mechanisms for psychosocial support and to build Social Workers' own resiliency
- The matrix and roles works well when all stakeholders fulfill their role. In instances when this does not happen, easy to blame Social Workers who are closer to the people.
- Safety- working in volatile communities and exposure to health hazard

# Next Steps

- Empowerment of Social Workers through technology to improve efficiency and reduce workload.
- Compensation review currently underway
- Specialized training in Psychosocial interventions for SW
- Partnerships to implement psychosocial support programmes (e.g. Jamaica Red Cross)
- Implementation of new Performance Management system to include reward/incentive mechanism

THANK YOU !!