



International Network for School Social Work

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

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School Social Work is Progressing

School social work has spread during the last decade as countries seek to improve educational outcomes for school children. Schools in many countries request support services to help deal with the obstacles children face that interfere with good outcomes. Social work help is one of the most valued support services as social workers use practical problem-solving skills to help the school with a wide range of personal, family and community issues.

When social workers develop a new field of practice they have the chance to define a role that honors the cultures of clients. Although countries with a long history of school social work offer much background information, the field is plastic and can be shaped to fit each culture.

Recently, in Jamaica, Education Minister Ronald Thwaites has said social workers will be assigned for the first time to each of the six school regions in the upcoming academic year. In New Zealand the Social Workers in Schools programme has been expanded this year to cover 72 per cent of low-decile schools with a major focus on the safety and wellbeing of children. In Japan, school social work officially started in 2008 with funding of approximately 1.5 million U.S. dollar equivalent from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Jamaica

Population 2.7 million. 2009 Amended Target for Jamaica's Millennium Development Goals: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary and secondary schooling.

In 2007 young people from the Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) proposed that the Ministry of Education and Youth place trained social workers in high schools to tackle the social problems faced by students, including truancy, violence, drop-outs, slow learners and working children. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20070721/business/business2.html>.

This year the Jamaica Association of Principals of Secondary High Schools called for social workers to be assigned to schools to help with delinquent behavior and to focus on children's social and emotional needs. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/latest/article.php?id=41535>.

Responding to these requests, Education Minister Ronald Thwaites recently said social workers will be assigned to each region in the upcoming academic year. Although he recognizes that

more than 2 social workers are needed per region, the ministry can only afford to assign one social worker at this time. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130824/lead/lead5.html>

New Zealand

Population 4.5 million. The Social Workers in Schools programme has been expanded to cover over 670 decile 1-3 schools, or 72 per cent of low-decile schools. This is making a difference for the safety and wellbeing of children. By the end of this year around 142,000 children will have access to a social worker, meaning face-to-face contact with professionals trained in dealing with complex and difficult issues.

New Zealand has increased the number of social workers in schools in recent years. A major goal is to reduce child abuse and neglect with a specific objective of decreasing current numbers by 5 per cent. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1307/S00328/social-workers-in-an-extra-385-schools.htm>. Social Workers in Schools is a school-based community social work service that places a social worker right in the school grounds, bringing together a child or young person's home and school life. The service provides early assistance and intervention to children and their families when social or family circumstances are causing the child to struggle with education, health or social development. The aim is to see safe, socialised children with a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, who are fully engaged in school. <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/working-with-others/swis-services/>.

Japan

Population 127.5 million. The school social work service officially started in 2008 and rapidly increased to 750 school social workers nationwide.

Earlier efforts, such as Eizaburo Yamashita's work in *Tokorozawa* city in the 1980's, demonstrated how social workers could work with children who refuse to go to school. However, this pioneering work did not result in widespread adoption of school social work.

Meanwhile, concern has grown about child abuse and neglect, serious juvenile crime, truancy or school refusal, family problems, increasing rates of behavioral problems in schools and violence in schools. Teachers were expressing concern about dealing with children with challenges and about the school's relationships with parents. Responding to these concerns, in 2008, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) started a project to promote the use of school social workers nationwide.

Newly hired school social workers are learning the necessary skills to provide all the help needed for complex school problems. They are aided by extensive publications, research, exchange visits and professional associations.

Publications <http://www.human.osakafu-u.ac.jp/ssw-opu/en/reports/publish1.html>

Research http://www.human.osakafu-u.ac.jp/ssw-opu/images/pdf/SSW-handBook_2011.pdf

Visit to Illinois <http://naswil.org/news/networker/featured/for-school-social-workers-school-social-work-abroad/>

School Social Work Association of Japan <http://sswaj.org/>

Japanese Society for the Study of School Social Work <http://www.jsssw.com/news.html>