

UNICEF in Ghana

Child Protection



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Essential Statistics

Orphaned children
8%

Child labour (children 5–14 years)
34%

Birth registration
51%

Early marriage (before age 18)
26%

Female genital mutilation
4%

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa and Elder Statesman

Source: UNICEF: MICS 2006, Child Labour Survey 2003, Births and Deaths Registry



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Issue

Ghana has made great strides in creating an enabling environment to protect children and women from human rights violations.

Progressive laws that conform to international human rights standards are in place. The rights-based legislative and policy environment provides an excellent platform to enhance implementation. The government is also strongly committed to birth registration, which has seen the percentage of registered children rise.

The challenge remains to use laws and policies effectively to deliver lasting results for children. Too many youngsters are still vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation.

A Child Labour Survey conducted in 2003 found that 39 per cent of

children between the ages of five and 17 were engaged in some form of economic activity, while nearly 20 per cent were involved in activities classified as child labour.

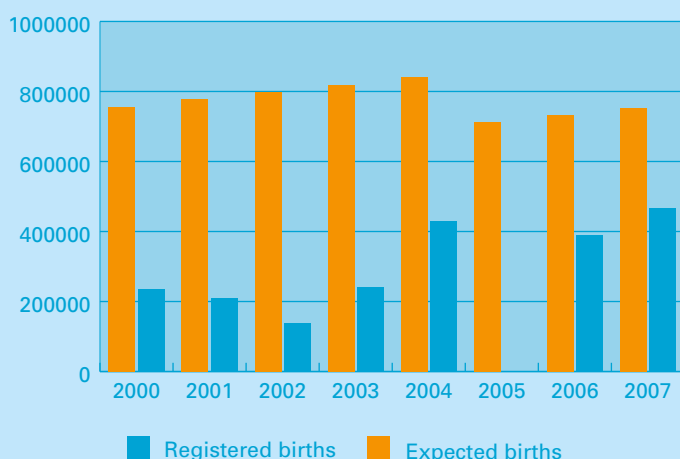
The number of reported child abuse cases has been rising significantly. This shows not only a real increase but also a greater social awareness and confidence that cases will be brought to justice.

Child protection issues intersect with every one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – from poverty reduction to getting children into school, from tackling gender inequality to reducing child mortality. The fact is that there is no hope of achieving most of the MDGs if children are not protected from abuse and exploitation.

“In some communities, some of the boys go fishing after school and then sell the fish at the market. Because of this, they come to school and sleep.”

2008 UNICEF Child Participation Event Consultant Report

Trends in birth registration (children aged 0–12 months), 2000–07



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UNICEF in action

Child Protection is the fourth focus area of the UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006–11. It constitutes UNICEF’s response to the Millennium Declaration and its emphasis on the protection of vulnerable groups and issues related to violations of human rights and child rights as a result of violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Between 2006 and 2009, UNICEF continued to work with the government and other key players in building a comprehensive child protection system. This led to:

Enhanced social protection for orphaned and vulnerable children.

The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) is pivotal to addressing hard-core poverty among excluded and vulnerable children, women and men. A flagship programme of the NSPS is the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), a cash transfer scheme that UNICEF helped to design and implement. The scheme now provides a monthly grant to 26,200 households with orphaned and vulnerable children. An ongoing UNICEF-supported impact evaluation will help to inform the future development of this poverty-reduction mechanism.

Improved child trafficking response.

An Anti-Human Trafficking Unit was established within the Criminal Investigations Unit of the police. Two hundred law enforcement agents were trained to enforce the Human Trafficking Act, which resulted in more arrests and prosecutions. Community vigilance groups were created to report cases of trafficking

to the authorities. Child-friendly material on trafficking and other child rights abuses are available to raise children’s awareness of these crimes.

Efforts strengthened to end child labour.

Ghana’s National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (NPECLC) reached the 2008 Harkin-Engel Protocol deadline for establishing a certification programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in the cocoa industry. UNICEF’s technical assistance to NPECLC was instrumental to this achievement.

Victims of violence supported.

The Police Service established a Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) in all 10 regions with UNICEF support. DOVVSU responds to physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and economic exploitation of children and women. Services provided include a legal aid programme, psychosocial support and awareness raising among traditional leaders.

Advocacy against corporal punishment.

As part of UNICEF’s support to the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Violence against Children, a national survey on perceptions of corporal punishment among children and adults was carried out in 2008. The survey will be used to advocate for an end to this harmful practice.

Increased access to birth registration.

UNICEF’s support to the national birth registration programme involved helping to train community outreach volunteers and modernising its infrastructure.



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“Teachers are employed to teach children, not to cane children.”

2008 UNICEF Child Participation Event Consultant Report

Planned impact for children

While many steps forward in children's rights and protection have been realised in Ghana, much more is needed to fully ensure that results are embedded into the system. Particular attention will be paid to building national and community capacity, strengthening programme coordination, improving statistics on child protection and mobilising resources for service delivery. This would greatly contribute to creating a comprehensive child protection system, which is currently one of the major policy gaps in Ghana.

Over the period 2009–11, UNICEF intends to build on the successes of the past three years to contribute to achieving results for children.

Development of a child protection system. UNICEF will support the strengthening of systems and reinforce partner capacity at all levels to establish a structured, effective and comprehensive child protection system. This will include support to the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy and ensuring that child protection is part of the government's social protection framework.

Building capacity to protect children from abuse. UNICEF will support the enhancement of capacity and systems of legal and

enforcement institutions to better protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation. Support to the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Violence against Children, improvements to monitoring and evaluation systems and evidence-based research for advocacy will be a priority.

Address child trafficking. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit and the human trafficking board will be supported to institutionalise and strengthen the national response to child trafficking. The three northern districts will provide reintegration services.

Violence against children will be reduced through support for capacity building of service providers and establishment of reporting mechanisms through DOVVSU in all ten regions.

Corporal punishment will be advocated against and awareness against its practice will be created at the regional and national level.

Birth registration will be increased to 90 per cent by supporting the strengthening of the births and deaths registries and advocacy to link birth registration with access to social services.

“We have to organise ourselves in our communities, get a leader and help members of the community know about the importance of birth registration.”

2008 UNICEF Child Participation Event Consultant Report



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