Building national child protection frameworks: Summary of country progress & key challenges

Ghana (June 2015)

Building a child protection system that ‘fits’ a particular context and is in line with international standards and good practices requires sustained engagement and commitment from many actors. It takes political will, analytical rigour in approaches and programming, and strong government ownership. Since 2010, collaborative efforts have been under way to establish and strengthen a child protection system in Ghana that sets standards for addressing issues in a holistic manner. Efforts by various actors have focused on developing a comprehensive and overarching policy that will better protect children’s rights to protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and other harmful practices. In Ghana, the national legislative and policy framework seeks to establish a well-structured and coordinated child and family welfare and justice system that promotes the well-being of children, prevents abuse and protects children from harm.

Child protection & the national development agenda

To further advance the issue, the government embedded the country’s vision for strengthening child protection in the 2014-2018 Shared Growth and Development Agenda. The agenda outlines a number of actions needed to achieve five key objectives aimed at accelerating child development and enhancing child protection.

National child protection framework

Recent policy and legislative developments entail the endorsement of the Child and Family Welfare Policy approved by the Cabinet in February 2015 and the development of the Child Justice Policy, which is in the final drafting stage and is tabled for cabinet endorsement at the end of 2015. Both are components of the National Child Protection Policy.

Scaling up financial commitments

Evidence points to increased budget allocations in recent years to the newly formed Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and to social welfare programmes. However, imbalances persist in funding for child protection services. Decentralized processes have weakened linkages between policy agencies and local service providers. Moreover, funding has been diluted since local governments do not have sufficient revenue to adequately support child protection services and structures.

Strengthening coordination pathways

Ghana is making good strides in creating a clear coordination pathway to oversee the change process in child protection. A highlight in 2013 was the realignment of child-related functions previously under the mandate of two ministries into a single institution – the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The operationalization of the Child and Family Welfare Policy will further strengthen coordination pathways through the proposed establishment of a Child Protection Sector Working Group to coordinate the roll out of system changes. This is a key milestone for Ghana, since it will be the first time a sector-wide working group for child protection has been established.

Challenges

While good progress has been made in tackling the constraints initially highlighted in the 2010 mapping exercise, challenges remain. These include inadequate national funding for support to child protection services and interventions. In addition, existing legal frameworks have not been consistently applied and enforced, resulting in a stubborn gap between the legal and policy framework and practice. There is also a need to expeditiously improve data collection.
and monitoring systems in order to facilitate analysis of the situation of all children, particularly those most vulnerable and measure the results of system change. Translating system changes into real and lasting results for children is a long-term endeavour, and demonstrating results at the local level is the next big challenge in system-strengthening efforts.

**Indonesia (June 2015)**

The amended Child Protection Law (2014) and the new medium-term development strategy 2016-2019 for Indonesia lay out an ambitious agenda for child protection. Since 2009, the country has adopted a systems-building approach to child protection; it has invested in structures, services and partnerships dedicated to protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse. As a result, more children in conflict with the law are being diverted from places of detention. Further, a national campaign to end violence against children is reaching more than 2 million children, parents and community leaders. In 2015, the country will launch a comprehensive agenda for child rights and a dedicated strategy for preventing violence in childhood.

| **Child protection & the national development agenda** | Child protection started to be included in Indonesia’s development planning documents in 2005 with the National Long-Term Development Plan (2005-2025). Since then, momentum has been building to tackle child protection violations and to scale up action to strengthen the juvenile justice and social welfare sectors. Child protection goals are now firmly embedded in national visioning and medium-term planning (National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN 2010-2014 and RPJMN 2015-2019). |
| **National child protection framework** | The amended 2014 Child Protection Law, and greater incorporation of child protection goals in the national development agenda, are moving Indonesia closer to defining an overarching child protection framework. However, it does not yet have such a framework in place. An alternative entry point for developing a strong planning framework for Indonesia is the updated Violence against Children Response Plan (in progress), which includes projected costs up to 2020. |
| **Scaling up financial commitments** | No accurate planning and costing models exist for strengthening the child protection system, and there has been only limited assessment of costs and benefits of current and planned child protection policies. Moving forward, greater time and commitment are required to develop stronger analysis and tracking of allocations and expenditures in this sector. Indonesia is currently a pilot country in a UNICEF global initiative to develop child protection financial benchmarks. The available results based on 2013 and 2014 expenditures indicate that the overall level of spending on child protection in Indonesia is very low. For every 1,000 Indonesia rupees spent per person at the national level, 72 US cents were spent per child on child protection. As a percentage of the budget, this is equal to 0.027 per cent (or 27 US cents for every 1,000 Indonesian rupees spent). The aim of this study is to develop a tool to assess child protection budgeting (in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, among other things) against a global ‘norm’. Ultimately, the tool will track improvements (and identify gaps) in allocations and expenditures at national and subnational levels. |
| **Strengthening coordination pathways** | Creating productive multi-stakeholder platforms for the coordination of child protection is an ongoing challenge for Indonesia. There is no parliamentary or other oversight body on child protection that has a clearly defined mandate in this regard, or the authority and resources to implement it. Nor is there an inter-ministerial mechanism to coordinate child protection activities that has such a mandate and institutional leverage. The Government of Indonesia recognizes the need to ensure productive cooperation across various authorities, as well as between national and subnational counterparts in child protection. This task is recognized not only in sector-specific legislation, but also at a higher level within national development planning documents. Improved partnership and coordination among stakeholders is one of the core activities needed to achieve child protection targets specified in the country's 2015-2019 medium-term development plan. |
| **Challenges** | Despite major efforts, significant legislative and policy gaps remain that need to be filled and require support. Laws can be contradictory, and policy practice tends to reinforce gender inequalities and discrimination against girls in particular. Complex public administration
procedures and the lack of a clear mandated authority for child protection impede coordination and the effective delivery of services for marginalized children. Budgets are fragmented and laws protecting children are seldom enforced. Social work practice is still limited to ad hoc remedial interventions rather than comprehensive approaches. Consequently, more than 500,000 children are living in institutional care and responses to child victims are unreliable. Children continue to be witnesses, victims and perpetrators of violence at home, at school and in their communities.

Kenya (December 2015)

After the enactment of the Children Act 2001, Kenya embarked on the establishment of a child protection system. In 2009, with the goal of improving that system, the Government of Kenya conducted a mapping exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in relation to child protection policies, legal context, structures, functions and capacities. Using the results of this study and in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, the government developed two key documents to guide stakeholders in making the child protection system more effective. The first, The Framework for the National Child Protection System for Kenya (2011), seeks to “promote linkages between different actors and provide coordinated interventions and responses through statutory mechanisms.” The second, County Child Protection Systems Guidelines, lays out an agenda for “coordinated action at county level and provides work practice direction for all formal and informal actors.” Further, the Government of Kenya developed a programme strategy, Strengthening Child Protection in Kenya: Programme Strategy 2011-2014, that sets specific targets for the programme period and was drawn up under the leadership of the National Council of Children Services and the Department of Children Services, both of which are part of the Ministry of Labour and East African Affairs (former Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services). The need now is to develop a second strategy that will help meet the targets set in the Second Medium-Term Plan (2014-2018) of Vision 2030. The government is committed to taking stock of progress so far and to undertake a cost analysis of the key components of the child protection system to inform the new strategy.

| Child protection & the national development agenda | Despite a visioning process in place since 2005, child protection re-emerged onto the national development agenda in 2013 with Kenya’s Vision 2030 and the Second Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (2013-2017), in which the overall vision for the country’s development is laid out. Vision 2030 is Kenya’s long-term national strategy that focuses on investing in people and reducing poverty and vulnerability. Child protection issues are broadly aligned with Vision 2030’s social pillar, though they are not specifically articulated. Within the Second Medium-Term Plan (2014-2018), child protection is one of the areas of intervention under the objectives for gender, youth and vulnerable groups. In terms of strengthening child protection systems, the plan focuses on establishing child protection centres, developing integrated data management systems and facilitating alternative family care services, as well as finalizing and implementing the National Community Development Policy. A specific focus is sexual and gender-based violence. This includes reducing the prevalence of FGM/C, in part by operationalizing the FGM Act 2011. |
| National child protection framework | The 2011-2014 Strengthening Child Protection Strategy laid out the national plan to bolster Kenya’s emerging child protection system. Though ambitious in its aims and a significant step forward in defining a comprehensive framework for child protection, the strategy was never fully implemented. Rather, a costed Response Plan to Violence against Children (2013-2018) provided an alternative entry point for maintaining national level momentum and driving forward the agenda for child protection systems strengthening. |
| Scaling up financial commitments | Given the transitions Kenya is undergoing with new government leadership since 2013, the child protection sector is in a transformative phase. No costed strategies or costing models are available that can help in re-defining the child protection framework. Therefore, the Government of Kenya and UNICEF have begun exploring how to undertake such an exercise. The objective will be to estimate the financial and other resources needed to roll out the child protection policy framework. The costing analysis is expected to include a review of key government budgeting documents (including the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and |
Social Protection-Cash Transfers schemes) along with the County Integrated Strategic Plans. Although this exercise has yet to take place, the country’s Institute of Economic Affairs and UNICEF did carry out a study, in May 2015, called Child Budget Analysis in Kenya: National government and six county governments. One of the study’s findings is that while children account for about 53 per cent of Kenya’s population, the entire budget for children in nine ministries averaged 25 per cent of the national budget in two financial years (2014/2015 and 2013/2014). The Ministry of Labour and East African Affairs (former Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services), the most child-sensitive ministry, earmarked 68 per cent of its budget to children’s services, but in actual figures this remains only one third of the budget allocated to children in the health sector, and only about one seventh of the education budget. Attention to child protection and juvenile justice is inadequate, given the insufficient child budgetary allocations to the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice (the lowest of all nine ministries).

**Strengthening coordination pathways**

A key and urgent priority is identifying and establishing a fully functioning coordination platform for child protection system strengthening at all levels of government. Over the past decade, multi-stakeholder platforms to coordinate the development of a systems-based approach to child protection have undergone major transformations; as a result, the system lacks structure and cohesion. The new proposed Children Act is also expected to assign clearer roles and responsibilities, as well as coordination between different departments with a child protection mandate.

**Challenges**

The challenges and constraints that continue to face those in the child protection field include lack of coordination, financial limitations, shifts in priorities resulting from a change in leadership, and lack of senior representation in decision-making forums. Kenya requires strong national champions to drive the process of change forward. Although the country has developed a solid legal framework for child protection, a number of policies are yet to be implemented, monitored and evaluated, and duty bearers lack full awareness of those policies. As a result, children are falling through what should be a protective net. Child protection is the responsibility of different government ministries and departments, at times leading to conflicting mandates and competing agendas and priorities. Capacity gaps in the social welfare workforce remain, with an overall lack of qualified social workers. A lack of adequate funding impedes the development of sound coordination mechanisms and sustainable implementation of key services. Investing in information and knowledge-generation on these and other issues is necessary. There is also the need to engage and strengthen existing mechanisms so that they become part of the referral pathway for child protection and to monitor the work of the formal child protection system.

**Senegal (November 2015)**

Following a child protection system mapping exercise in 2011, the Government of Senegal and its partners launched a reform of the sector emphasizing a systems-building approach. As a key step in this reform, Senegal adopted a National Child Protection Strategy in 2013 and endorsed an accompanying National Plan of Action for Child Protection to better safeguard children from all forms of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. Over the past few years, addressing the exploitation of talibé children (through forced begging) has become a political priority in Senegal. The issue has been used effectively to sensitize public authorities, civil society and communities on the need to develop and promote a broader national strategy for child protection based on an integrated systems-building approach. Following pilot programmes in two departments (administrative areas of the country) originally designed to tackle child labour and trafficking, efforts have been scaled up. They now address the full range of child protection risks (maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence) and provide children with referrals for specific services (such as those related to birth registration, health, justice and the police) and follow-up. This system is now operational in 10 of Senegal’s 45 departments. In addition, important work undertaken to accelerate change in social norms related to child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are being linked into this more integrated system. The reform process has brought about greater national visioning, sector cohesion, improved coordination pathways, and strategic
application of a more systematic approach to preventing and responding to the full spectrum of risk factors faced by children in Senegal. However, the actual roll out of the strategy is revealing constraints and gaps, which are progressively being addressed through a collaborative approach.

**Child protection & the national development agenda**

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<th>The National Child Protection Strategy (2013) is a comprehensive plan to better protect children against all forms of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. The strategy is accompanied by a National Plan of Action, which encapsulates pre-existing thematic action plans designed to address specific child protection violations, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, trafficking, child labour and forced begging.</th>
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<td>Financial commitments for child protection remain weak. The share devoted to child protection in the national budget is estimated at 0.01 per cent. Bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have traditionally financed the development of the child protection sector. It is critical that public funding allocations are increased to effectively meet the needs. There are also challenges to mapping the costs of implementing the child protection strategy and action plan. For example, even though the Plan of Action for Child Protection estimated to cost 12 million euros over a three-year period, this budget does not take into account all of the costs for human resource and coordination needs. The process of identifying the real costs and available budgets for delivering prevention and response services at the decentralized level started in two departments and has yet to be completed. Once a realistic assessment of fiscal requirements is made, the current Plan of Action for Child Protection will need to be revised to better reflect actual needs.</td>
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<td>With the adoption of the 2013 National Strategy for Child Protection, new coordination platforms have been put in place, including multisectoral Departmental Child Protection Committees (DCPCs). The committees aim to convene all social and institutional actors in charge of child protection and to facilitate decentralized coordination. At the local level, the DCPCs established Orientation and Welcome Services responsible for case management and reintegration. In turn, the DCPCs, through the prefects, report on progress achieved to the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committees. These steps are important advancements in moving towards greater coordination at decentralized and national levels. However, the roll out of the strategy still requires further clarification of roles and responsibilities in order to make the significant changes needed to affect the lives of vulnerable children and families. The new strategy has clarified that the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood is the lead agency for child protection in Senegal. However, the mandates of all three principal ministries in child protection (Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Health and Social Action) still need to be further articulated. Their mandates also need to be reflected in the multisectoral coordination system being implemented at the national and decentralized levels following the adoption of the National Child Protection Strategy. This gap is being progressively addressed with the creation of four technical commissions led by each ministry, according to its mandate. The four commissions are regularly meeting to monitor implementation of the national child protection action plan. In addition, at the decentralized level, the management of cases involving child maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence are still in the early stages of development and operational procedures need to be produced. Finally, the weak geographic coverage of state and NGO-based services at the national level and the unequal distribution of qualified human resources represent other obstacles in the implementation of a coordinated system for integrated support of children.</td>
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<td>The main challenge is implementing the Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action at the decentralized level so that it has a real impact on vulnerable children and families. Significant challenges to mapping funds for child protection are also evident. However, the framework established by the national child protection strategy is seen as part of a holistic approach to the country’s development.</td>
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changes are still necessary to strengthen the system. As noted above, specific constraints include a lack of financial and human resources, difficulty in operationalizing a decentralized child protection system to undertake prevention work and manage reported cases, and inadequate budgetary allocations. The unequal geographic coverage of state and NGO-based services also raises questions about the appropriateness and fit of the new strategy to the context of Senegal and the possible need to develop different local models – based on existing community-based mechanisms and change agents – for the system to be more effective.

### United Republic of Tanzania (June 2015)

The United Republic of Tanzania has made significant progress in translating the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the national legislative framework. However, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, including child trafficking and labour, are still the reality for large numbers of girls and boys. The government has taken a number of strategic steps to create an enabling environment for child protection, evident by the ongoing implementation of commitments across sectors, at national and local levels. National-level actions are complemented at the local level through the engagements of districts, wards and villages in building a system of prevention, care and protection services for children. The child protection system was initially modelled in four districts, and lessons learned were fed back into the national framework. Currently 33 out of 169 districts are in different stages of implementing the child protection system. The National Costed Action Plan II for Most Vulnerable Children and the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Violence against Children serve as a strategic entry point for systems strengthening. Discussions are ongoing with regard to a new policy for children that will bring the two action plans together into one National Plan of Action for Children.

### Child protection & the national development agenda

The overall strategy for child protection is firmly embedded in the Second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty 2010-2014, which focuses on creating an enabling environment and ensuring children have access to basic services. Keys areas of thematic focus include: supporting children's rights against the worst forms of forced labour and sexual abuse; improving juvenile justice; supporting children living in difficult circumstances; and holding duty bearers, including parents, teachers and law enforcement officials, accountable for child rights abuses.

### National child protection framework

The strengthening of the child protection system is well defined in the national regulatory framework through regulations, rules and guidelines, including the *National Guidelines on Establishing and Strengthening Child Protection Systems*, as well as by a series of interrelated national action plans and strategies. Some of the plans and strategies focus on a particular aspect of child protection (such as violence, child justice, the role of police, and child labour); the scope of others extends beyond child protection to encompass wider aspects of social protection or activities relevant to other target groups (such as the National Costed Action Plan II for Most Vulnerable Children and various plans and strategies to address gender-based violence). These plans enable the monitoring of progress against government commitments to addressing violence and strengthening child protection systems.

### Scaling up financial commitments

A costing analysis funded by the Government of Canada found very few references to child protection in the country's Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks; what budgets for child protection that do exist are almost exclusively donor-funded. In part this may be because government resources spent on child protection are often hidden under other budget headings for which child protection is only one, often relatively small, area of activity. Furthermore, while the need for clearer, more generous resource allocations for child protection is widely recognized, those responsible for planning and budgeting decisions seem much less aware of their importance or the relevance of various action plans on resource decisions. This leads to the risk that budget planning will focus primarily on donor-led initiatives and initial ‘enabling’ activities, and not give sufficient priority to securing longer-term government resources. Some initial mapping of resource requirements was undertaken, which will help to address critical challenges ahead. An analysis of current and future social welfare staffing requirements indicates that the additional cost to government would be around $12.8 million annually.
Similarly, to scale up gender and children’s desks, upgrade police stations, and train (additional) staff would cost over $29 million per year.

| **Strengthening coordination pathways** | Among all the case study countries, coordination pathways show the greatest maturity in the United Republic of Tanzania. Discussions are under way to bring all coordination of children’s activities and programmes under one institutional home, within the Prime Minister’s Office. A coordination meeting in May 2015, convened by the Prime Minister’s Office, developed a new proposed structure that would promote a more streamlined approach to coordination – one that moves away from issue-based coordination and towards a systems/cross-cutting approach, which aligns coordination structures with system for monitoring and evaluation and for resources. Unlike the current structure, a proposed integrated national technical committee will bring together the two ministries with primary child protection mandates. The proposed structure is yet to be implemented, and continued high-level government (and donor) support is needed for further rationalization of the proposal. Opportunities to further refine the proposed coordination pathways will present themselves when the current National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children and National Plan of Action for Violence against Children expire. |
| **Challenges** | Remaining challenges centre on the fact that the systems approach is relatively new in the United Republic of Tanzania, and scaling up to cover all 169 districts is complex. Throughout the country, too many children remain without protection services. The Law of the Child Act is yet to be fully implemented. Creating the conditions required to ensure service delivery mechanisms and effective enforcement is vital, yet processes are hampered by the insufficient capacity of service providers and requisite budget allocations. It is critical that an adequate budget, particularly funds from the national budget, be available over the long term to ensure sustainability. Similarly, there is a need for robust evidence and routine data collection mechanisms – not only to initiate the process of developing a comprehensive child protection system, but also to provide lessons on how best to maintain it. |