Moving from a child protection strategy and plan to real change for children and families in Senegal

This report is one in a series of case studies on building national child protection frameworks. The study was funded by Global Affairs Canada.

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This case study\textsuperscript{1} is part of a UNICEF global initiative, undertaken in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada, to document national child protection frameworks in five core programming countries: Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania. The studies are intended to generate a better understanding of the country context, government response, engagement by other actors and additional factors that are contributing to success in protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

Information for this case study was collected over the period April 2014 to November 2015 through a desk review of literature, supplemented, where appropriate, by stakeholder consultations and meetings. The study found that the ‘upstream’ work of developing a national policy framework and legislation in Senegal is largely complete, and that efforts now must focus on their implementation. Success, in part, will depend on generating adequate funding, based on accurate cost estimates, and on effectively integrating the efforts of non-governmental and community-based groups, which currently respond to the majority of child protection cases in Senegal.

Introduction

As a key step in strengthening its national child protection system, Senegal adopted a National Child Protection Strategy in 2013 and endorsed an accompanying National Plan of Action for Child Protection. Following pilot programmes in two departments (administrative areas) originally designed to tackle child labour and trafficking, the work has now been scaled up to address the full range of protection risks faced by children: maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. The programme is now operational in 10 of Senegal’s 45 departments and offers children referrals for specific services and follow-up in areas related to birth registration, health, justice and law enforcement.

\textsuperscript{1}Suggested bibliographic reference: UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada (2015). Moving from a child protection strategy and plan to real change for children and families in Senegal.
With the adoption of the strategy, new coordination platforms have been established, including Departmental Child Protection Committees that convene all social and institutional actors in charge of child protection and facilitate decentralized coordination. At the local level, the committees have established Orientation and Welcome Services, responsible for case management and reintegration. The Departmental Child Protection Committees, through the prefects, report on progress achieved to the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committees. Though these steps represent significant advancement in moving towards greater coordination between national and decentralized levels, the roll out of the strategy still requires dedicated investments and further clarification of roles and responsibilities in order to make the significant changes needed to affect the lives of vulnerable children and families.

**Country context**

**Table 1. Senegal: Basic indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>13,508,715</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population: Female</td>
<td>6,773,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population: Male</td>
<td>6,735,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 0-14 years</td>
<td>5,681,700 (42.1% of the total population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 0-14 years (% boys)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 0-14 years (% girls)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population living on less than $1.25 (purchasing power parity) per day (%)*</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth (years), total/male/female</td>
<td>63/62/65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Adult literacy rate (%)</em>*</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 2. Senegal: Core child protection indicators**

<p>| Prevalence of physical violence (boys/girls aged 13-17) (%)* | 35/31 |
| Prevalence of emotional violence (boys/girls aged 13-17) (%)* | 58/48 |
| Prevalence of sexual violence (boys/girls aged 13-17) (%)* | 14/27 |
| Female genital mutilation/cutting (females aged 15-49) (%) | 25 |
| Birth registration (under 5 years) (%), total/boys/girls | 73/75/71 |
| Child marriage (girls before age 15) (%) | 12 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child marriage (girls before age 18) (%)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour (children aged 5-17 years) (%) total/boys/girls</td>
<td>67/66/78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Koranic schools in Dakar who beg (%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in conflict with the law (detained separately from adults /% awaiting trial)</td>
<td>156/80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children living with neither biological parent (%) total/boys/girls†</td>
<td>15/13/17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Senegal Demographic and Health Survey, 2010-2012, except where noted.*

** ‘Cellule Nationale de Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes notamment des enfants et des femmes et Cellule Nationale de Lutte contre le Travail des enfants, Etude cartographie des daaras dans la région de Dakar’, 2014.
*** ‘Rapport 2013 de la Direction de l’Administration Pénitentiaire’. There is no disaggregated data by sex for this indicator.
† Senegal Demographic and Health Survey, 2012-2013.

Senegal is located in the Sahel, on the western tip of the African continent. More than half of its 13.5 million inhabitants are under 18 years of age. Various indicators between 2005 and 2011 show that progress against poverty in Senegal has remained stagnant, explained in part by a per capita growth rate in the gross domestic product (GDP) of around 0.5 per cent a year. The Senegalese economy is nevertheless relatively stable, with a GDP growth rate of 4.2 per cent in 2010 compared to 2.2 per cent in 2009.

This relative economic stability does not go hand in hand with an environment that is protective of children nationwide:

**Child labour:** Around 67 per cent of Senegalese children aged 5 to 17 years are involved in child labour, affecting more girls than boys (78 per cent versus 66 per cent, respectively). Among these children, 22 per cent are involved in child labour activities that, according to the law, should be abolished. Boys are more often engaged in these dangerous types of work than girls (19 per cent versus 9 per cent, respectively).

**Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C):** The practice of FGM/C remains widespread. An estimated 25 per cent of girls and women aged 15 to 49 have been cut, with strong disparities found in the prevalence of FGM/C among regions. Prevalence ranges from 69 per cent in the south (Kolda, Sedhiou, Ziguinchor, Kedougou and Tambacounda), to 30 per cent in the north (Matam, St Louis and Louga), to 17%

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3 Senegal Demographic and Health Survey, 2012-2013.
4 Document de Politique Économique et Sociale’, August 2010
5 Senegal Demographic and Health Survey-Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-2011.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
per cent in the west (Dakar, Pikine, Guediawaye and Rufisque) and 6 per cent in central areas of the country (Fatick, Diourbel and Kaolack).

**Child marriage:** Child marriage remains common, especially among girls. One third of women aged 20 to 24 were married before age 18 and 12 per cent were married before age 15.\(^8\)

**Other forms of violence against children:** Other violations of children’s rights are also widespread, including psychological and verbal violence, sexual violence and physical violence. In general, data on these forms of violence are rare, although a few statistics are available. For example, 58 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women reported that they experienced emotional violence in their teenage years.\(^9\)

Similarly, 27 per cent of women and 14 per cent of men reported that they had been victims of sexual violence before age 18.\(^10\) Around 9.8 per cent of women and 3.2 per cent of men said they had been victims of attempted rape between the ages of 13 and 17.\(^11\) Cases of incest have also been reported.

Around 35 per cent of men and 31 per cent of women said they been beaten between the ages of 13 and 17.\(^12\) Physical violence within families is also common: 80 per cent of parents reportedly use violence to ‘educate children’.\(^13\) Physical violence is also prevalent in schools, where 55 per cent of students from public schools and between 64 per cent and 100 per cent of children in Koranic schools (also called *talibés*) report experiences of physical violence.\(^14\) A 2013 study mapping Koranic schools (*daaras*) in the Dakar region determined that 55 per cent of *talibés* from Dakar beg in the streets and, for 23 per cent of those children, the corporal punishment they experienced is linked to begging.\(^15\) In workplaces, more than 67 per cent of child carpenters and mechanics reported experiences of physical violence.\(^16\)

Senegal continues to make improvements in the collection of routine administrative data at the decentralized level, particularly in areas where Departmental Child Protection Committees are functioning. Yet at present, there are no national studies on violence against children planned, and relevant modules on violence against children have not been included in the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys or Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). UNICEF is, however, advocating for their inclusion in the next DHS, planned for 2017.

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\(^8\) Ibid.


\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Ibid.


\(^14\) Ibid.


Birth registration: The births of 73 per cent of children under 5 have been registered, which is well above the regional average of 47 per cent in Western and Central Africa. However, much work remains to ensure universal coverage in Senegal – particularly in rural areas where the rate is lower than in urban areas (50 per cent versus 78 per cent, respectively). Without birth registration, the age of children remains uncertain, putting them at risk of detention by the justice system, conscription into the armed forces, marriage, sexual exploitation and child labour.

Juvenile justice: The latest data show that 156 children aged 13 to 18 were in detention in 2014. All prisons in Senegal now have separate quarters for boys, but girls are still detained with other women.

Alternative care: A country factsheet prepared for Senegal in 2012 shows that 14.8 per cent of children are not living with their biological parents and are in some form of informal alternative care. Placement of children in formal care arrangements, including residential care, is almost non-existent in Senegal (0.001 per cent). A new study on kinship care is planned for 2015 in collaboration with Save the Children.

Government response

Senegal was one of the first countries in West Africa to move towards a systems approach to child protection. It participated in one of the initial child protection mapping exercises, in 2011, with funding from an inter-agency group that included UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan International. As this case study illustrates, the mapping process was important in bringing various actors together to have a clearer understanding of the child protection system in Senegal. It also brought to light the fact that more formal child protection services are playing a much smaller role in protecting children than originally thought. This was a driving force in the development of a new National Child Protection Strategy and a costed National Plan of Action for Child Protection.

Commitment to international standards

According to Senegal’s National Child Protection Strategy, child protection “is about the prevention of and response to maltreatment, abuse, exploitation and violence targeted at children across all contexts, but also about efforts to end those violations.” This definition is in line with article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Senegal in 1990, and with the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In addition to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Senegal has signed the majority of international legal instruments related to child protection, including regional instruments such as the  

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17 Senegal Demographic and Health Survey-Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-2011.


Senegal has enacted several laws that strengthen the legal framework related to child protection, such as the Family Code, the Penal Code, the Penal Procedure Code, the Law on Human Trafficking, the Labour Code, the Law Forbidding the Practice of Female Genital Mutilation and Excision and the Law Prohibiting Child Begging. Of note, in 2013, the Penal Code and Penal Procedure Code underwent a revision of provisions related to penal justice for children. Finally, following a recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the draft Children’s Code is now being reviewed by the Ministry of Justice.

**Child protection and the national development agenda**

In 2014, Senegal launched a new 10-year economic plan for an ‘Emerging Senegal’. The implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy fits under this new plan and is seen as part of a holistic approach to development for the country. However, keys issues in Senegal, such as the exploitation of *talibés* through begging, still need to be addressed in a more systematic way.

The Annual Workplan for Child Protection signed between UNICEF and the Government of Senegal sits under Result areas 5 and 6 of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Result area 6 relates to vulnerable groups (girls and boys, women) benefiting from adequate protection against violence, exploitation and abuse; Result area 5 relates to vulnerable groups benefiting from adequate social protection.

**The National Child Protection Strategy**

In December 2013, the Government of Senegal adopted a National Child Protection Strategy that clearly articulates its general vision: “Offering to all children in Senegal, to their families and communities a political, institutional and legal environment protective against all forms of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence, through an integrated protection system.”

Beyond the obligation that falls upon the government to protect children’s rights, the National Child Protection Strategy underscores that the family is the fundamental social institution for the protection
of children – from prevention to response. Other actors, such as non-state actors, the private sector, the media, religious communities and civil society also play a fundamental role in supporting state obligations.

This new systemic and integrated vision of child protection in Senegal is in contrast to a reactive approach that focuses on small-scale projects with no extensive coordination among established protection actors. The National Child Protection Strategy focuses particular attention on strengthening the child protection system and was developed through extensive consultations with local civil servants, religious leaders, coordination groups for child protection, civil society organizations and children. It is important to note that the thematic issue of *talibés* has, over the past few years, become a top priority in the political agenda of Senegal. This issue has been effectively used to sensitize public authorities, civil society and communities around the need to develop and promote a broader national strategy for child protection based on a systemic and integrated approach.

The National Child Protection Strategy is coordinated by three key ministries (Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood, Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Health and Social Action) and the Committee in Support of Child Protection under the authority of the country’s president. It is supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education (through its Child Protection Office under the Direction of Elementary Teaching) and the Ministry of Labour, Land Settlement and Local Authorities. The strategy is based on three pillars and has two strategic objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillars of the National Child Protection Strategy</th>
<th>Objectives of the National Child Protection Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Prevention of violence, exploitation and mistreatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support to child victims</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promotion of children’s rights</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement a national integrated system for child protection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support and promote positive social change</td>
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</table>

The National Child Protection Strategy calls for a national and decentralized system to coordinate multisectoral services in order to prevent and support in an integrated manner children who are vulnerable, at risk and victims of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence and children in conflict with the law.

A Plan of Action for Child Protection (2013-2015) accompanies the strategy to ensure its implementation and strengthen and/or create an integrated system for child protection. Based on consultations with the three key ministries and the main civil society actors, the Plan of Action is estimated to cost 12 million euros over a three-year period.

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20 These services are organized around eight steps to support vulnerable children: 1) child identification, 2) emergency support for the child, 3) listening to the child, 4) looking into the personal situation of the child, 5) evaluation of the family and environmental situation of the child, 6) social and professional reintegration of the child, 7) follow-up of the child after reunification with his/her family or community, 8) alternatives for the placement of children outside of their family.
Over the years, the government has developed budgeted thematic action plans to address major child protection issues. This was accomplished with the support of several UN agencies (ILO, UN Population Fund, UNICEF, UN Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women) and international non-governmental organizations (ChildFund, Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde [ENDA] Jeunesse Action, Plan International, Save the Children International and World Vision). It is envisaged that those actions plans will eventually be included in the broader Plan of Action for Child Protection.

|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abandonment of FGM/C                     | Elaborated in 2010, the objectives of this National Action Plan are fourfold:  
  • Reinforce an integrated approach that includes social protection, justice, health and education sectors to accelerate the abandonment of FGM/C  
  • Strengthen social dialogue and communication among communities for social change  
  • Promote cross-border FGM/C abandonment activities between Senegal and Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Mauritania  
  • Reinforce coordination and monitoring through the Thematic Commission on Monitoring and Evaluation committee.  

The plan is coordinated by the National Committee on FGM/C and is part of the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committee (NICPC), set up in 2014 to facilitate cooperation and multisectoral coordination between the central government and department services, and between the government and civil society. The plan was revised in 2012 to extend FGM/C prevention and response activities to the national level and to include children and youth as main actors for prevention and peer education. The plan is currently under implementation.

|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | Launched in 2010, this national action plan is coordinated by a dedicated National Committee on Human Trafficking in charge of planning, monitoring and evaluation. That committee is also part of the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committee.  

The objectives of the plan are fourfold:  
• Improve the legal framework to better protect children at risk or victims of trafficking  
• Reinforce the community-based child protection system by linking it with the formal system  
• Promote mass communication and interpersonal communication activities to improve knowledge of and prevent trafficking  
• Improve access to and affordability of care services for victims of trafficking.  

This plan was revised in 2012 to be part of the coordination mechanism at national and departmental levels. Implementation is currently under way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fight against child labour</th>
<th>National Action Plan to Fight against Child Labour (2012-2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                                        | Launched in 2012, this plan is coordinated by a National Committee for Child Labour Eradication, which is charged with planning, monitoring and evaluation. The plan’s objectives are fourfold:  
  • Design and implement education, information and communication programmes on child labour risks for children  

|
Integrate child labour eradication into public policies and programmes
Improve service delivery for children who opted out of labour.

The National Committee for Child Labour Eradication is part of the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committee. However, this plan is not currently being implemented due to lack of coordination and resources.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaborated in 2013, this plan is coordinated by the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committee and by the Departmental Child Protection Committee at the decentralized level. Its objectives are threefold:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and reintegrate all children who beg and are living on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop communication and education activities at national, decentralized and community levels to prevent child begging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take measures to enforce the Law Prohibiting Child Begging (2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At present, the plan is not being implemented because the law is not being enforced and because of a lack of funds.

**Stock-taking and mapping**

The National Child Protection Strategy was designed as a result of a 2011 mapping and analysis of child protection systems in Senegal. The study was published by Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des hommes and UNICEF, with support from the government, to inform the reform of the child protection sector towards a systemic approach. In fact, across West Africa, the mapping of child protection is acknowledged as an essential first step in bringing actors together to analyse what is actually happening to protect children. As in the case of Senegal, this is often a revelatory moment when actors see for the first time the ‘disconnect’ between national legislation and standards and the reality on the ground.

According to the study, child protection in Senegal is characterized by a large number of institutions, public or private structures, and a diversity of stakeholders who intervene without strategic coordination at the national level. Several coordination mechanisms targeting specific child protection issues existed. However, those engaged in child protection efforts continued to work in relative isolation, increasing the risk that mandates, roles, responsibilities and stakeholders’ actions would overlap. State services, social welfare services and services related to the justice system were strongly concentrated around Dakar and Thies (the capital and third largest city in the country), and most services came down to one person managing all related actions. Moreover, social welfare services emphasizing prevention were very limited, and mainly focused on awareness-raising, advocacy and vocational training.

The mapping revealed that even in zones where there is a strong presence of state services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the population did not seem to know much about them or did not want to rely on them. Communities interviewed during the mapping exercise tended to manage child protection issues at the local level, starting with the nuclear family and then the extended family,
followed by the community chief. Emphasis was placed on amicable settlements to ensure peace and harmony in the community. In terms of offenses, priority was given to community justice and mediation rather than relying on the more formal justice system.

The mapping also highlighted the lack of a common strategy, policies or directives to guide the development of prevention and response services and their effective coordination by key ministries (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health and Social Action, and the Ministry of Women, Childhood and Female Entrepreneurship, today called the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood).

Also lacking was a national system for managing information on child protection. A large number of organizations had an internal database at their disposal, but only a quarter of them shared information from their data management system with others.

Finally, the mapping underscored that funding for the sector was inadequate in relation to the real needs of children and families, thus preventing an appropriate response. Indeed, effective and sustained protection of children against maltreatment, neglect, exploitation and violence requires a pooling of resources, experiences and the sharing of vision at all levels.

The mapping exercise has played a key role in strengthening the child protection system in Senegal. Indeed, by identifying the limits of formal services and by underscoring the important role of community and civil society, it gave direction to the institutional reforms that needed to take place.

**Recent actions to scale up systems strengthening**

Following the completion of the new National Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action, the Government of Senegal, with support from UNICEF, chose two pilot departments as ‘laboratories’ for implementation. The idea was to road-test the new system across a network of governmental and non-governmental entities in charge of identifying, protecting and reintegrating vulnerable children. The two locations chosen to pilot the initiative were Guediawaye (a department located in the suburbs of the Dakar region) and Kolda (a rural department located in the south of Senegal characterized by high vulnerability indicators).

It is important to note that the development of a national system for child protection started before the adoption of the National Child Protection Strategy. In 2004, Technical Committees were established in 14 of the country’s 45 departments (including Guediawaye and Kolda) to tackle problems of child labour and the trafficking of children. An NGO representative nominated by the prefect and a decentralized social welfare service were in charge of leading the committees, with technical support from UNICEF. The Technical Committees have now been restructured into Departmental Child Protection Committees in charge of coordinating support to child victims and raising community awareness of the need to prevent child maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. This change demonstrates the evolution of existing structures towards a more holistic approach, aimed at the ‘whole’ child, to prevent and respond to a wide range of protection risks.
In the department of Guediawaye, social workers in the Orientation and Welcome Service (‘Service d’accueil et d’orientation’, an operational unit of the Departmental Child Protection Committee), take charge of reported cases of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. They refer them to departmental state services (social security, justice, health, education) and to child protection NGOs, depending on the need. Members of local associations working for child protection, Local Committees for Child Protection, the police, teachers, social workers, health actors and members of the community themselves are all expected to report cases known to them (a 24/7 telephone service is in place to facilitate reporting). On average, this service receives seven to eight cases per week. Referred children can stay for a maximum of 72 hours before being transferred to another structure or reunited with their family or daara. Cases may also be referred to specific services: justice, health, police and birth registration. In addition, the Orientation and Welcome Service is tasked with following up on referred cases. Such services also exist in the department of Kolda.

In order to strengthen child protection in Senegal, the government committed to scale up the experience of Guediawaye and Kolda to 12 other departments, and eventually cover all 45. In June 2014, 24 Departmental Child Protection Committees had been established throughout Senegal, with results varying from one department to another depending on programmatic priorities agreed upon with the government, available human resources, the capacity of social workers and specialized educators, and the degree of support received by communities. It is estimated that, between 2010 and 2013, almost 20,500 vulnerable children benefitted from this coordinated approach and have been in contact with various components of the child protection system at the local level, such as the Orientation and Welcome Services, Local Committees for Protection, or Community Health Stations. At the time of writing, only 10 of the 24 Departmental Committees were actually functioning since the distribution of decentralized state services responsible for child protection is highly uneven, as is the implementation of the new strategy. Moreover, NGOs tend to be concentrated in western and southern parts of Senegal. This highlights the need to focus on building examples of local practices that work and that can be maintained over time. A one-size-fits-all approach with too many national standards and protocols may not be appropriate or feasible in practice.

In addition to improving the coordination of response services in child protection cases, a drive is also under way to strengthen linkages among efforts to prevent harmful practices and develop positive social norms. In fact, there is a rich history in Senegal on prevention, particularly involving community dialogue through NGOs and religious leaders. Of note is the religious argumentation for child protection, developed in collaboration with local imams, and a strong methodology for change that has been developed with the NGO Tostan. Tostan has devised a community capacity-strengthening approach based on non-formal education on human rights. Over a period of two to three years, communities participate in a process of transformation in which they themselves identify the social practices that are harmful to development. As a result of this work, over 5,000 communities in Senegal have made public declarations to abandon FGM/C. Now, efforts need to be made to forge coherent links between the work on social norms and the work to develop more formal response services.
UNICEF and Social Services International are working together with national training institutes to strengthen the capacity of both social workers and ‘specialized educators’, and to improve the training provided to these important government cadres. New training programmes are also being developed for the para-professionals and volunteers that are required to implement the new strategy.

In order to begin working in more depth on the financial analysis and budgeting element of child protection system strengthening, the Government of Senegal, in collaboration with UNICEF, hired a local consultant to undertake a costing exercise in the two pilot departments of Guediawaye and Kolda. This work began in the last quarter of 2014 and the final report is still being drafted. An initial draft of the financial analysis showed that the vast majority of financial allocations for actual prevention and response services provided to children in both departments were made by NGOs. For the most part, decentralized government services were unable to provide figures for an annual budget and expenditures on child protection for the 2014 fiscal year. The study found that government staff salaries were paid at the central level and decentralized services received only a limited amount of funding to ensure the running costs of the office (stationery, electricity, etc.), but had no real allocation for service provision. The final report and analysis is expected to shed more light on this issue.

**Coordination among stakeholders**

With the adoption of the National Child Protection Strategy, new multisectoral coordination platforms have been put in place. These new coordination mechanisms have proven more dynamic than previous national coordination bodies.

As illustrated by the experiences in Kolda and Guediawaye, the strategy recommends that multisectoral Departmental Child Protection Committees gather together all social and institutional actors in charge of child protection to encourage, facilitate and coordinate their actions at the decentralized level. Such actors include representatives of administrative authorities, specialized social services, health structures, education structures through the Teaching and Training Inspection Commission, local justice authorities, the police, civil society associations, neighbourhood chiefs, religious groups, and organizations of children and families. As mentioned above, the committees’ operational unit is the Orientation and Welcome Service, which is tasked with following up on reported cases and reintegration.

Important components of the child protection system at the local level are Local Child Protection Committees such as the Villagers Committee for Protection, the Neighbourhood Councils for Protection and community centres such as Health Stations, established under the coordination of the Departmental Child Protection Committees. Those committees and councils, composed of volunteer community members, and community centres, play an observational role and also refer cases to Orientation and Welcome Services for the protection of child victims. These committees and councils are committed to advocate for children’s rights, including the right to protection against violence and exploitation in the community, and to contribute to communicate for social change efforts regarding harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage. The committees and councils are composed of seven to nine
members, depending on the size of the locality covered, and generally include representatives of sectors such as health and education, representatives of main economic activities or associations, and representatives of various associations, including women and youth groups.

Through the prefect, the Departmental Child Protection Committees provide an assessment of activities at the national level to the Executive Secretariat of the National Intersectoral Child Protection Committee (NICPC), which was officially established on 17 June 2014. This committee’s mission is to facilitate cooperation and multisectoral coordination over a wide range of sectors between central government and department services, and between the government and civil society. It gathers all state actors involved in child protection, UN agencies, NGOs and other community-based organizations, including religious groups and women’s and youth groups. This committee gathers twice a year to follow the implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy and its Action Plan, assess activities, analyse results and formulate orientations and recommendations.

The National Child Protection Strategy specifies that an Executive Committee will be put in place to implement all strategic and political decisions from the NICPC. Under the Executive Committee, five thematic commissions (on policy and promotion, prevention, alternative care, communication and partnership, monitoring and evaluation and information management) were created to manage priority actions requiring the interventions of several ministries (communication and partnership was subsequently incorporated into the Commission on Policy and Promotion). The role of these commissions is to advise and guide the work undertaken on specific themes in view of the development of programmes and specialized tools within the framework of the National Child Protection Strategy. It is envisaged that the thematic commissions and the Executive Secretariat of the NICPC will work on integrating the thematic action plans into the National Plan of Action for Child Protection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The four thematic commissions and corresponding ministries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy and promotion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood and Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prevention</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health and Social Action&lt;sup&gt;21&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative care</strong></td>
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<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<td><strong>Monitoring and evaluation and information management</strong></td>
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<td>Ministry of Justice (Human Rights Division)</td>
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Alongside platforms put in place by the state, civil society is also represented by a platform of actors called the Coalition of National Organizations in Support of Childhood, which gathers together all relevant NGOs and community-based organizations. Working in close collaboration with platforms put in place by the government, this coalition supports civil society organizations in: strengthening their capacities; advocating to strengthen the protective environment for children, especially the harmonization and strengthening of the legal framework; implementing legislation; and mobilizing resources for the child protection sector. The coalition is strongly involved in the more decentralized coordination mechanisms and is the focal point in supporting the prefect and state services in planning,

<sup>21</sup> The Ministry of Education also plays an important role in the Commission on Prevention by building the capacity of children and supporting their participation.
coordination, implementation and follow-up to the National Child Protection Strategy through the Departmental Child Protection Committee. The NGO focal point is therefore a key agent of change within the reform process. In addition, NGO representatives are found in the Executive Secretariat of the NICPC.

The Government of Senegal also manages other multisectoral coordination platforms for specific child protection issues. These include: the National Committee to Fight against Human Trafficking, particularly of women and children, established in 2008 under the Ministry of Justice; and the National Committee to Fight against Trafficking of Children, established in 2006 under the Ministry of Labour. Integrated within both of them are the thematic commissions. Ongoing revisions to the Penal Code and the Penal Procedure Code in provisions related to penal justice for children should positively impact the support services coordinated by these two committees.

In July 2015, the country’s prime minister chaired a consultation to review progress on the implementation of the National Strategy for Child Protection and Action Plan. The thematic and departmental committees also made presentations on progress so far.

**Engagement with other actors**

Civil society, including religious organizations, national and international NGOs, have, for many years, been the main funders and providers of more formal services in the child protection sector – to compensate for and complement the lack of state services at the decentralized level. The main international actors providing child protection services are ChildFund, Handicap international, the ILO, the International Organization for Migration, cooperation from the governments of Italy, Spain and Switzerland, the Red Cross, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the UN Population Fund, UNICEF, UN Women, Save the Children and World Vision. Civil society organizations working for the protection of children include: Aide et Action, Association des Juristes Sénégalaises, Centre de Guidance Infantile, ENDA Jeunesse Action, InterMondes, Réseau Islam et Population, Samu Social, TOSTAN and Village Pilote. These organizations focus their efforts on training stakeholders and strengthening prevention and response services under the framework of a coordinated systemic approach.

**Challenges**

As is the case in a number of West African countries, the main challenge is how to move from a new strategy and action plan to real change for children and families. The ‘upstream’ work of developing a national policy framework and legislation is complete, but efforts now must be concentrated on their implementation. Public sector reform in developing countries is an extremely challenging, often lengthy, process. Choosing priority actions and moving forward with these in collaboration with stakeholders has proven difficult and, for many, business has continued as usual, with a return to activities linked to donor interest and funding opportunities.
Harmonizing the mandates and authority of ministries in charge of child protection

The Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood has a Division for Rights, Child Protection and Vulnerable Groups in charge of policy; the Ministry of Justice also has a mandate for children at risk, children in conflict with the law and child victims. In addition, the Ministry of Health and Social Action is responsible for children living with a disability; it also has a Division for Social Affairs, with a mandate for vulnerable children and a more substantial budget. Developing a systemic approach calls for a greater pooling of interventions from all key ministries. The new Strategy for Child Protection has clarified that the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood is the lead agency for child protection in Senegal. However, it still has the smallest budget. In order to avoid duplication of roles and responsibilities, the mandates of these three principal ministries need to be further clarified and reflected in the multisectoral coordination system being implemented at the national and decentralized level following the adoption of the National Child Protection Strategy. Technical support provided by UNICEF to the Division for Rights, Child Protection and Vulnerable Groups at the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood aims to position child protection at the heart of its mandate. It is with this perspective that the review of the child protection sector was organized by that ministry in August 2015. The final report currently being drafted will present a stock-taking of the implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy and clarify the roles played by various ministries.

Decentralizing the child protection system

Despite progress in the departments of Kolda and Guediawaye, difficulties persist in the operationalization of a decentralized child protection system. For those two departments, the process of managing cases of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence are still in the early stages, and operational management procedures still need to be produced. Moreover, the participation of children in existing structures remains limited and needs to be strengthened in partnership with other sectors, such as education. As stated above, more also needs to be done to bring together the work of civil society and religious leaders on developing positive social norms and on improving the coordination of response services. This will also enhance linkages between community-based child protection mechanisms, which continue to manage the vast majority of cases, and the more formal services found at the level of departments.

In other departments, state services are weak, and civil society organizations and community actors have jumped in to deliver prevention and response services at the community level. The poor geographic coverage of services at the national level and the unequal distribution of qualified human resources represent major obstacles in the implementation of a system for integrated support of children. In 2013, there were only about seven social workers for every 100,000 children. Despite the recruitment of 100 new specialized educators by the Ministry of Justice in 2013, a large gap remains to be filled. This raises questions about the appropriateness and fit of the new strategy in the context of Senegal and the need to develop different local models for the system, based on what already exists.

Building capacity

The 2011 mapping and analysis found that social workers receive quality training at the National School for Specialized Social Workers of Dakar and are generally considered well prepared. The school attracts
several francophone students from the region, and numerous graduates are now ready to be recruited by the government. On the other hand, the training of agents from the justice system is seen as inadequate, especially for police officers. Despite efforts to strengthen the legal protection of children, training is not compulsory and the training programmes available are not strong enough to ensure quality education. A thinking process is under way between the Centre for Legal Training, UNICEF and the Belgian Cooperation Agency in order to develop training modules in juvenile justice and to train judges dealing with children and other justice actors. UNICEF and Save the Children have also been working with the International Bureau of Children’s Rights to develop a competency-based training programme for police officers that would be included in their initial and ongoing training.

Ensuring adequate budgetary allocations
The 2011 mapping highlights that financial resources available to the child protection sector are limited compared to the real needs and therefore limit an effective response. Even though the Plan of Action for Child Protection has a three-year budget, this budget does not take into account all costs related to human resources and coordination. It is also important to note that neither the government, nor NGOs, have made financial contributions to the Plan of Action, and no financing mechanisms are in place to manage resources. This lack of financing has several consequences, including the weak deployment of specialized social workers in governmental services, which is a major obstacle to the availability and quality of services for prevention, promotion and support to children and families in vulnerable situations.

Monitoring and evaluating the new strategy
The monitoring and evaluation system required by the National Child Protection Strategy is considered extremely weak. There is no national baseline offering recent and viable data on various child protection issues. Thus, it is difficult to accurately measure progress and to calculate the need for qualified human resources to cover the entire country. In response, an information management system called ‘DEV Enfance’ (DEV Childhood) is currently being developed with support from the Ministry of Planning. The system will collect data on the profiles of children whose cases have been reported and managed. Training has been undertaken in five departments: Guediawaye, Kolda, Pikine, Thies and Ziguinchor. The system, which will be shared among all ministries in charge of child protection, is planned to become operational by the third quarter of 2015.

Funding system reform
As noted previously, the three-year budget that accompanies the Plan of Action for Child Protection does not take into account all the costs for human resources and coordination. Nor does the budget reflect the important financial contribution of civil society organizations to the delivery of services, which was estimated at $22 million in 2009. This means that, at present, there is still no clear overview of the real cost of child protection in Senegal. The analysis at the decentralized level currently under way in Guediawaye and Kolda will, at a minimum, help to provide a better model for calculating costs at the national level, as well as the actual amounts that NGOs and the government spent in these two departments.
The share of the child protection budget in the overall state budget is estimated at 0.01 per cent. The mobilization of additional financial resources to implement the National Child Protection Strategy and its Plan of Action is therefore a priority. Each concerned ministry will also have to integrate its share of the child protection budget in its governmental budget.

Finally, it is important to note that in addition to UNICEF, the child protection sector in Senegal has traditionally been financed by the European Union, the governments of France, Italy and Spain, UN Women, UNFPA and international organizations such as Plan, Save the Children International and World Vision. In the framework of the National Child Protection Strategy, a round table of donors has been put in place to help harmonize funding allocations to efficiently cover financial needs.

**Next steps**

Effective child protection depends on the following elements: 1) adequate policies, laws and regulations, 2) well-defined structures and functions and adequate capacity, 3) supportive social norms, 4) efficient promotion, prevention and response, 5) the availability of high-quality data and information on which to base decision-making, and 6) efficient fiscal management and sufficient resource allocations. When these elements and actors work together, the system is better able to protect all children. In order to continue to strengthen child protection in Senegal, the following priorities in these six areas need to be addressed.

**Adequate policies, laws and regulations**

A fair amount of work has been undertaken on the development of new policies, action plans and legislation at the national level. Although work will continue to finalize the Children’s Code, the focus now needs to shift to actual implementation of the new legal and policy framework.

**Well-defined structures and functions and adequate capacity**

Clearly, the roles of government and NGO actors within the child protection system need to be better defined. This task should be undertaken as a priority before looking to increase the number and deployment of social workers. It is not entirely clear what role government social workers, NGO development workers, para-professionals and volunteers are to play and where different mandates start and end. Therefore it is difficult to know how many of the different types of workers are needed.

In terms of human capacity, a training manual is being developed by the National School for Specialized Social Workers and the Centre for Legal Training in order to strengthen the capacities of institutional and community actors.

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Supportive social norms
Senegal has a rich history of community dialogue and of changing social norms. The government is using this to its advantage in its National Strategy for Child Protection: One of the strategy’s objectives is to strengthen positive social change through the development and implementation of communication plans that specifically address harmful practices, child begging, violence against children and the failure to register children at birth. More needs to be done to link community-level work with more formal response services, which will hopefully create a dynamic for change at a larger scale. More work is also needed to improve the participation of children and youth in implementing the strategy.

Efficient promotion, prevention and response
To create a more efficient response system, a priority is to develop and validate standard operational procedures for child victims. A directory of services offered by all state and civil society actors needs to be set up in order to formalize an integrated support plan.

In addition, it will be important to continue to strengthen and document the work under way in Guediawaye, Kolda and some other departments where Departmental Child Protection Committees are functioning to have a better understanding of what works or does not work and why. The search for local solutions and adaptations may be more important than developing more national standard operational procedures that are not suited to the local context. This approach is at the heart of the RAP (Renforcement à la Protection de l’enfant – Strengthening Child Protection) initiative, supported by Plan and UNICEF in partnership with the government.

The availability of high-quality data and information to inform decision-making
Using lessons learned from the implementation of ‘DEV Childhood’ in the departments of Guediawaye and Kolda, this system for data management and monitoring and evaluation will have to be scaled up to more departments around the country.

Efficient fiscal management and sufficient resource allocations
The process of identifying the real costs and available budgets for delivering prevention and response services at the departmental level has yet to be completed. Initial work in this area suggests that the bulk of funding for child protection services comes from NGOs. It will be important to finish this work and use the results as the basis for future financial planning and the eventual revision of costing in the National Plan of Action. It will also be essential to ensure that operating costs – human resources, offices and transport – are included in any calculations, and not just the services and activities themselves. Child protection relies heavily on a strong social service workforce, so costs for professionals and para-professionals must be included.