

# Building national frameworks for child protection: Key findings

## Background

In 2014, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (now Global Affairs Canada) entered into a partnership with UNICEF to document progress in strengthening national child protection frameworks in selected countries. The grant covered the period April 2014 to June 2015. The following is a summary of key findings from five country case studies produced: from Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

## Purpose

The purpose of the initiative is to generate a better understanding of the country context, government response, coordination pathways and other factors that are shaping the development of national child protection systems that safeguard children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Each case study examines core elements that contribute to strengthening such systems:

- The extent to which child protection is part of the country's national development agenda, and the extent to which there is a costed national child protection framework in force
- Action taken to scale up child protection systems, including coordination platforms and engagement with other actors
- Action taken to scale up financial commitments, including, where possible, a review of public financial policies and planning, budgetary allocations, disbursement structures and fiscal accountability.

## Limitations

While less formal aspects of the child protection system have been noted in several case studies (Senegal in particular, and to a lesser extent Kenya), the studies primarily analyse and document more formal elements of the system. Nevertheless, as the mapping exercises in each country illustrate, the vast majority of child protection work takes place at the community level. In the future, it will be important to examine how more upstream types of work documented in the case studies – on legislation, policies, coordination, capacity-building and budgeting – link to the child protection or social service workforce at the community level. This workforce is not limited to government workers, but also comprises members of civil society organizations and community networks as well as local leaders. In moving forward, additional research needs to focus on the less formal workforce and how to strengthen existing local capacity as part of a broader effort to strengthen child protection systems.

## Methodology

A two-phase process was undertaken to collect information:

**Phase 1:** A desk/literature review was conducted for each country to chart the range of initiatives and activities undertaken in recent years.

**Phase 2:** Consultations were also conducted with a broad range of stakeholders. They included key representatives from government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, along with donors. Additionally, a number of countries undertook costing exercises (and related assessments) to gather information on current and past levels of spending from the national budget on child protection. Where possible, assessments were made of the budgetary allocations needed to scale up child protection systems strengthening.

## Country selection

The six countries (Table 1) were drawn from three UNICEF geographic regions and provide a representative mix of UNICEF-supported country experience in strengthening child protection systems.

Table 1. Key indicators for selected countries<sup>1</sup>

	Human development index (HDI) rank (2014)	Income level	Total population (millions)	Population (0-14 years) (% of total population)	Prevalence of physical violence against children (%)	Birth registration under 5 years (%)	Child marriage (girls before 18 years) (%)	Female genital mutilation/cutting (%)	Child labour (%) (5-14 years)
Ghana	138	Lower middle	25.2	38.7 (0-14)	Male: 90.2 Female: 88.2 <i>This data covers any psychological or physical punishment</i>	Male: 63 Female: 62	27	33.9	4
Indonesia	108	Lower middle	255.7	28 <sup>1</sup>	n/a	67	17	7	51
Kenya	147	Middle	46.1	41.9	Male: 73 Female: 66	60	26	2.2 (5-17 years)	21
Senegal	163	Lower middle	13.5	42.1	Male: 35 Female: 31	73	33	67 (5-17 years)	25
United Republic of Tanzania	159	Low	44.9	43.9	Male: 72 Female: 74	8	39.7	320.7	15

Except if otherwise indicated, all data are drawn from sources noted in each of the accompanying case studies.

<sup>1</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS>

## Findings

The case studies provide a snapshot of the actions taken in each country to enhance child protection systems. In all five countries, momentum is building to strengthen the functions, structures and capacities required to bolster the more formal elements of the child protection system. This is partly the result of recent sector-wide mapping and issue-specific (thematic) gap assessments. However, system strengthening – and ensuring that the more formal and informal elements work together effectively – is a complex process that takes time to develop. Despite differing country contexts, lessons learned suggest that the countries face similar challenges.

### Child protection and the national development agenda

Child protection goals are reflected to varying degrees in each of the country's national development agendas and visioning strategies. Emerging commitment to child protection as part of the national development agenda is strongest in Indonesia, Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania. However, in none of these countries are child protection goals comprehensively costed in national medium-term budgets. Table 2 provides a summary of main findings.

**Table 2. Child protection as part of national visioning**

Ghana	To further advance child protection, the government embedded the country's vision for 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.
Indonesia	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).
Kenya	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.
Senegal	In 2014, the country launched a 10-year economic plan for an 'Emerging Senegal'. The implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy is subsumed under this new plan and is seen as part of a holistic approach to the country's development.

United Republic of Tanzania	The overall strategy for child protection is firmly embedded in the Second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty 2010-2014, and focuses on creating an enabling environment and ensuring that children have access to basic services. Key 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.
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### National child protection frameworks

All countries need the basic building blocks of a system for protecting children, including legislation, human and financial resources, and services. However, the approach taken by these five countries in defining this overarching framework differs. Ghana's entry point is through the recent National Child Protection Policy (2014); Senegal has outlined a National Child Protection Strategy (2013); Indonesia's and the United Republic of Tanzania's national child protection laws and accompanying regulations and guidelines are seen as the overarching child protection framework; and Kenya uses the National Response Plan to Violence against Children (2013-2018) as an alternative strategic entry point to maintain national-level momentum for strengthening the child protection system.

Moreover, each country implements a number of thematic plans spelling out the actions required to meet specific goals. These national action plans cover particular issues, such as violence against children, civil registration, trafficking, child labour, female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. In the case of Ghana and Senegal, both countries specify linkages between the various action plans under their umbrella 'framework' documents. Many of these plans are vital components of national goals and broader global and regional strategies and plans to address certain aspects of child protection. These broader initiatives include the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), the African Union's Child Marriage Campaign, and the Accelerated Programme for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

Within each country context, there is still room to further streamline/integrate the various thematic plans (with accompanying budgets) into a consolidated national framework. This will avoid unnecessary duplication across government agencies, strengthen coordination pathways, and streamline resources (both human and financial). See Table 3 for a summary of findings.

**Table 3. National child protection frameworks**

Ghana	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.
Indonesia	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, the country does not yet have such a framework in place. An alternative entry point for developing a strong planning framework is the updated Violence against Children Response Plan (in progress), which includes projected costings up to 2020.

Kenya	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.
Senegal	The National Child Protection Strategy (2013) is a comprehensive plan to better protect children from 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 child begging.
United Republic of Tanzania	The strengthening of the child protection system is well defined in the national regulatory framework through regulations, rules and guidelines, including the <i>National Guidelines on Establishing and Strengthening Child Protection Systems</i> , 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.

### Alignment with UN development assistance frameworks and plans

For most countries, national child protection goals are reflected in the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or UN Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP), with child protection indicators integrated into their results areas. However, the degree to which child protection is explicitly built into these frameworks varies considerably. In Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, child protection goals and strategies are broadly aligned with the UNDAF, although they are not clearly defined as such. In Ghana, child protection is reflected in outcome areas related to social protection and governance. In Kenya, child protection indicators are subsumed under targets to improve policy and institutional frameworks, promote democratic participation and human rights (and gender equality) and enhance social protection.

In Indonesia and Senegal, child protection indicators show even greater cohesion and alignment with UN frameworks. In Senegal, child protection goals are reflected under UNDAF results areas 5 and 6, which relate, respectively, to protecting vulnerable groups (girls and boys, women) against violence, exploitation and abuse and to providing adequate social protection to vulnerable groups. In Indonesia, child protection indicators are integrated into several outcome areas within the UN Development Partnership Framework (UNDPF) 2016-2020: social services, with a focus on violence in schools and gender-based violence; sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on reforming the child-sensitive social protection system; and governance, with a focus on access to justice for all, including child victims, witnesses and offenders. The 2016-2020 UNPDF is also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, including on child protection (Goals 5 and 16, especially Target 16.2).

### Gender equality

Gender inequality is a key factor in depriving children of their rights. Across all five case studies, women, overall, have lower status than men. More specifically, female-headed

households are more likely to be among the most economically disadvantaged, and children of mothers with little or no primary education are more likely to be deprived than children with more educated mothers. Gender inequalities become more pronounced through adolescence, with countries indicating high inequality in girls' access to education; dropout rates also tend to be higher for girls than boys during adolescence. Girls are especially vulnerable during this time due to violence, early marriage and pregnancy. Child marriage perpetuates gender inequality: The intergenerational effects of child marriage fuel the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and poor health into future generations, depriving communities and society as a whole of productive, healthy citizens, both immediately and over the long term. Female genital mutilation/cutting is still practised in each of the five countries reviewed. Indeed, Indonesia only recently joined the global database on FGM/C, making national prevalence data available for the first time. Kenya has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world: In that country, one in four girls marry before their 18th birthday. The case studies reveal that, in general, boys are more likely than girls to suffer physical violence, and also to be in conflict with the law and detained in prison (often with adults).

Evidence shows that gender issues are being mainstreamed into national frameworks for child protection. In Ghana, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has drafted a Gender Policy that seeks to advance gender equality for women and girls. The same ministry has established a coordination unit to take forward a national plan of action to end child marriage, in collaboration with the National Domestic Violence Secretariat. A Presidential Decree in Indonesia, in 2000, mandated government agencies to mainstream gender programmes, policies and budgets to eliminate gender discrimination. The country has also seen a large increase in girls' access to education in the last three decades, resulting in significant social and cultural shifts, such as a decline in the rate of child marriage.

Senegal has a national plan of action (2010-2015) to accelerate the abandonment of FGM/C and a rich history of promoting positive gender norms. The NGO Tostan, a key partner of UNICEF, has developed a community capacity-building 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 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.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania revised the Women Development Policy (1992) to become a Gender Policy in 2000. It is also attempting to institutionalize gender equality in various sectors by, for example, establishing gender focal points, providing training and capacity-building on gender issues; and adopting gender budgeting initiatives. Additionally, certain reform programmes, including of the civil service and education, are integrating gender as one of the components. The government has adopted a Gender Budgeting Initiative, and now includes gender in budget guidelines.

While the laws and policies of all five countries are generally aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, some gaps remain, particularly in the area of discrimination against women and girls. Special efforts are

needed to address these inequities. For example, in Indonesia, despite the high prevalence of child marriage in that country, the laws on child marriage are contradictory. The Child Protection Law prohibits child marriage for both boys and girls under 18 years of age, yet the 1974 Marriage Law allows child marriage for girls at age 16. Moreover, sexual violence within marriage is not criminalized and women and girls still struggle to obtain inheritance rights.

Another common challenge is the lack of sex-disaggregated data for a number of child protection indicators. In part, this is symptomatic of the broader challenge many countries face in the routine collection of child protection data.

### **Stock-taking and mapping of child protection systems**

In many ways, mapping and assessment exercises were catalytic for each of the five countries. For the first time, structures, systems and services were analysed at national, subnational and local levels to determine the primary bottlenecks limiting the development of child protection systems. The results of the mapping exercises and the assessments of thematic gaps are relatively consistent among countries, with each citing similar factors hindering systems development. The mapping exercises were also a significant factor in prompting a response by key decision makers to move towards a system-strengthening approach to child protection, and subsequently developing a road map for action.

### **Scaling up action**

The case studies summarize some of the key actions taken by governments to scale up national child protection systems. The studies focused primarily on the main building blocks needed to strengthen policy and operational frameworks – including steps taken to strengthen the ‘enabling environment’ for child protection. This includes policy and regulatory developments (laws, policies and secondary legislation); coordination mechanisms; capacity-building; and data collection and information management systems. ‘Supply-type’ activities were also examined, including service delivery mechanisms. Where relevant, the piloting of initiatives for potential service scale up were also considered.

**Policy and regulatory developments.** Each of the five countries demonstrated good progress in translating international standards into national legislative frameworks. In Indonesia, this was most recently seen in the amended 2014 Child Protection Law, and a range of other laws in relevant sectors. For example, ongoing juvenile justice reforms are enhancing the reintegration of children in conflict with the law. Kenya has embarked on a review of the Children Act to bring its provisions in line with international standards, including, since 2010, bringing it in line with the country’s new Constitution. In 2014, the Children Act (Amendment bill) was validated, and proposes a number of important modifications, including in the areas of juvenile justice and family-based care. The Government has now decided to enact a completely new Children Act upon recommendation from the Constitution Implementation Committee, as the proposed revisions are too many to manage through amendments and there are some emerging issues to be included in the new law. Significant steps have been taken to strengthen other areas of legislative reform in Kenya, notably around sexual exploitation and

trafficking and the prohibition of FGM/C. In Ghana, focus in recent years has been on a consultative process leading to the development of a Child and Family Welfare Policy and Child Justice Policy; the process has been instrumental in formulating a strategic direction and action steps and in creating sectoral cohesion and improved coordination. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are now reflected in that country's Law of the Child Act (2009); regulations and guidelines have also been developed for the operationalization of the law. The majority of the regulations have been approved, with the most recent being the Child Protection Regulations (2015).

**Capacity.** The United Republic of Tanzania and Indonesia demonstrate most clearly the major effort under way to build the capacity of social welfare officers and other child protection workers, such as those in the health and justice sectors. In Tanzania, at the national level, UNICEF supported the integration of child protection in a training manual for social welfare officers. At the district level, cross-sector Child Protection Teams have been established, trained and supported to improve case management and referral; business practices have also been reviewed to continuously upgrade the system. The Tanzania Child Helpline, launched in 2013, aids in the reporting of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and over 417 Gender and Children's Desks have been established in police stations so that specialists can respond to calls for help from child victims and young offenders. In Indonesia, the government has begun to implement standards, personnel accounting systems and performance evaluations to build up its social welfare workforce and child protection expertise. The government is also initiating academic training for social work and child protection professionals.

**Service delivery.** Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania are useful examples of how targeted programmes can provide a testing ground for scaling up local action. In 2004, Senegal began working in two 'departments' (administrative areas of the country) to pilot the implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action, focusing on child labour and trafficking. These efforts are now operational in 10 departments and are addressing the full spectrum of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. The programmes are also offering referrals for specific services (related to birth registration, health, justice and law enforcement) and follow-up. In Tanzania, a programme in place since 2011 at the local government level is strengthening decentralized child protection systems, with a focus on improving services, human and financial capacities, and coordination and referral mechanisms. Initially piloted in four districts, the programme is now in various stages of development in 33 districts out of a total 169 strengthening their local systems and structures for child protection.

Indonesia has embarked on a process of widespread reform to improve the quality of care in residential care facilities, and to shift policies and resources towards supporting alternative care options. To strengthen the quality of services, especially for victims of crime, Special Units for Women and Children are being established. Priority has been placed on strengthening provincial- and district-level regulations, and improving systems to make birth registration more accessible. To build up provincial, district and municipal-level efforts to combat child labour and human trafficking, local regulations are being adopted, coordination mechanisms are being set up, and targeted policies and action plans are being developed. Moreover, programmes for family-based support are

emerging, including parenting programmes, childcare and welfare support, as well as targeted household-based social assistance programmes.

Ghana places high priority on strengthening the justice and family welfare functions, as well as explicit interventions to improve the systems responsible for delivering key services. In Kenya, service provision strengthening has focused on a number of areas, including improving regulations, standards and protocols for child protection services, such as support to orphaned and vulnerable children, and alternative care. Childline Kenya is an important strategy to enable children to report violations, and is serving as a useful tool to routinely gather national data. Significant progress has been made in the expansion of social protection and the development of a social protection system.

### **Scaling up financial commitments**

In many of the case study countries, knowledge remains weak of public financial policies and national planning for child protection system strengthening, and of assessing the costs and benefits of current or planned child protection policies. A range of factors impede adequate budgetary allocations for child protection, including structural weaknesses in public financial institutions; inadequate budgetary processes; a 'disconnect' between national allocation decisions and local-level disbursement procedures, especially in highly decentralized systems like Indonesia; lack of knowledge by key decision makers on how to cost national policies; and the hidden, unaccounted costs of child protection services (such as those provided through NGOs and other civil society partners). These weaknesses point to the urgent need to identify the real cost of actions to scale up financial commitments in each of the countries. Table 4 summarizes key findings in this area.

**Table 4. Scaling up financial commitments**

<b>Ghana</b>	Evidence points to increased budget allocations in recent years to a newly formed ministry 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.
<b>Indonesia</b>	No accurate planning and costing models exist for strengthening the child protection system, and there has been limited assessment of costs and benefits of current and planned child protection policies. Moving forward, greater time and commitment are needed to develop stronger analysis and tracking of allocations and expenditures. 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 US 27 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.
<b>Kenya</b>	Given the transition 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 could 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 goal will be to estimate the financial and other

	<p>resources needed to roll out the Child Protection Policy Framework in 2016. The costing analysis is expected to include a review of key government budget documents (including the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and Social Protection-Cash Transfers schemes) and the County Integrated Strategic Plans. As of June 2015, however, this exercise had yet to take place.</p> <p>In May 2015, the Institute of Economic Affairs and UNICEF carried out a study called the <i>Child Budget Analysis in Kenya: National government and six county governments</i>. One of its key findings is that children account for about 53 per cent of Kenya's population, but the budget devoted to children under nine ministries averaged 25 per cent of the national budget in two financial years (2014/15 and 2013/14). The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services (currently the Ministry of Labour and East African Affairs since December 2015), 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 for children in the health sector and only one seventh the amount budgeted for education. Attention to childcare and juvenile justice is inadequate, given the insufficient allocations for children to the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice (the lowest of all nine ministries).</p>
<b>Senegal</b>	<p>Financial commitments for child protection remain weak: The share of the child protection budget in the overall State budget is estimated at 0.01 per cent. Bilateral and non-governmental donors traditionally finance the development of the child protection sector. It is critical that funding allocations are increased to effectively meet the needs. There are also challenges to mapping the costs of implementing the National Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action. Even though the Plan of Action for Child Protection is estimated to cost 12 million euros over a three-year period, this budget does not take into account all of the human resource and coordination costs. 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 needs is completed, the current Plan of Action for Child Protection will need to be revised to better reflect actual needs.</p>
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	<p>In the costing analysis funded by the Government of Canada, very little reference was made to child protection in the Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks, and the budgets that did exist were almost exclusively donor-funded. In part this may be because government resources spent on child protection are hidden under other budget categories for which child protection is only one, often relatively small, area of activity. Furthermore, while the need for clearer and more generous budget allocations for child protection are widely recognized, those responsible for planning and budgets seemed much less aware of their importance or the relevance of the various Plans of Action in resourcing decisions. This leads to the risk that budget planning will focus primarily on donor-led initiatives and 'enabling' activities and not give sufficient priority to the need to secure longer-term government resources.</p> <p>Some initial mapping of resource requirements has been undertaken, which will help to address the critical challenges that lie ahead. An analysis of current and future social welfare staffing requirements indicates that the additional cost to government would be around \$12.8 million per year. Similarly, scaling up gender and children's desks, upgrading police stations and training (additional) staff is estimated to cost more than \$29 million annually.</p>

## Coordination among stakeholders

Effective coordination among all actors is a central and vital component of a systems-strengthening approach. Although Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania show positive developments in this regard, Kenya, Indonesia and Senegal identify coordination as one of several persistent challenges. The coordination of child protection does not happen in isolation. Coordination is required at all levels and at all stages of the systems-strengthening process – from developing a vision and strategy, to rolling out implementation plans to develop systems and structures, to enhancing

routinized data collection and information management systems, to developing cross-sector coordination and integration in service delivery, for example, in the health and education sectors. Country highlights of efforts to enhance coordination are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Strengthening coordination pathways**

<b>Ghana</b>	Ghana is making good strides in creating a clear coordination pathway to oversee changes in the child protection system. 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 with the proposed establishment of a Child Protection Sector Working Group to coordinate the roll out of the 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.
<b>Indonesia</b>	Creating productive multi-stakeholder platforms for the coordination of child protection is an area of ongoing challenge for Indonesia. There is no parliamentary or other oversight body on child protection with a clearly defined mandate and the authority and resources to implement it. Nor is there an inter-ministerial mechanism that coordinates child protection activities and that has a clearly defined 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 the sector-specific legislation, but 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.
<b>Kenya</b>	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.
<b>Senegal</b>	With the adoption of the 2013 National Strategy for Child Protection, new coordination platforms have been put in place in Senegal, including multisectoral Departmental Child Protection Committees (DCPCs). These 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 a decentralized level. 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 specified that the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood is the lead agency for child protection in Senegal. However, the mandates of three other principal ministries (Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood; Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health and Social Action) need to be further clarified and reflected in the multisectoral coordination system being implemented at the national and decentralized levels following the adoption of the National Child Protection Strategy. In addition, at a decentralized level, the management of cases of maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence is still in the early stages of development and operational procedures still 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.
<b>United Republic</b>	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

of Tanzania	programmes under one institutional home, within the Prime Minister's Office. A coordination meeting in May 2015, convened by the Prime Minister's Office, resulted in a proposal for a new structure that would encourage a more streamlined approach to coordination – one that moves away from issue-based coordination and towards a systems/cross-cutting approach, and that aligns coordination structures with systems for monitoring and evaluation and for resources. Unlike the current structure, a proposed integrated national technical committee would draw together the current 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 the National Plan of Action for Violence against Children expire.
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## Engagement with other actors

Each country works in close collaboration with UNICEF and other UN agencies (within the framework of UNDAF/UNDAP), bilateral donors and other development partners in supporting child protection system strengthening.

The extent to which countries rely on bilateral funding to support systems-strengthening efforts varies. In Senegal, for example, donor investment still plays a major role in shaping child protection work, versus in Indonesia, where donor partnerships and investment are limited. Until recently, Ghana suffered from a lack of comprehensive multi-donor investment for child protection and systems strengthening; it is currently more buoyant with longer-term support.

A common trend is for development partners to target specific areas of work, which runs counter to a systems-based approach and broader systems-strengthening efforts. In Indonesia, for example, funding tends to be catalytic – aimed at 'pilot models', research and the promotion of innovative strategies to tackle particular child protection violations in a specific geographic location. Interestingly, the areas of child protection that are bolstered by strong regional and/or global initiatives, such as the joint UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C and the Together for Girls partnership to combat violence against girls appear to be better coordinated and resourced.

Comprehensive information to track donor investment in each of the five countries is lacking. This leads, at times, to further coordination challenges, as in the case of Kenya, where competing agendas and priorities have led to a lack of synergy and coherence in aid provided by international partners.

Engagement with civil society ranges from small, issue-specific and community-based groups to large nationwide structures and academic institutions. Non-governmental organizations are critical in mobilizing public support for reforms. The emergence of programming with religious organizations is also a growing trend, especially around the issue of violence and addressing harmful practices. For example, innovative work to establish violence prevention programmes in *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) has been noted in Indonesia. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Christian Council of Tanzania and the National Muslim Council of Tanzania play an active role in supporting efforts to combat FGM/C. At the local level, civil society can also play a key role in supplementing formal child protection structures and processes and filling the void where formal mechanisms do not exist. For example, in Kenya, international and

national civil society organizations play a critical role in supporting or, at times, filling gaps left by the State in the provision of child protection services, in particular through residential, educational and health services. Strengthening links with the private sector is also emerging as a key factor, most notably improving technological systems around birth registration. A useful example is the Government of Tanzania's partnership with Tigo, a mobile phone service provider that offers innovative technological solutions to improving birth registration.

## **Challenges**

Although each country has ventured onto a path to strengthen their child protection systems, they all face similar challenges. Lessons clearly demonstrate that structural and institutional systems and processes must be coupled with sound (and enforceable) operational protocols, standards and regulations. It is also essential that the child protection workforce, including State, non-State and community actors, are equipped with the requisite skills, knowledge and authority to implement and enforce components of the system.

A critical challenge centres on forging consensus with decision makers on what constitutes a child protection system and what steps are required to initiate long-term, sustainable solutions. Strengthening systems is a complex process that takes time to develop. Lessons learned from the case studies show there are no 'quick fixes'. Similarly, many actions previously undertaken focus on specific time-bound actions – such as revising a law or policy, developing issue-specific standards or operating procedures, revising curricula and/or providing training, establishing support desks, and developing programming in priority areas. While important, in order for these actions to be sustainable and efficacious, they should be part of a long-term strategy to strengthen child protection systems. Another key challenge is ensuring actual implementation of the strategies and plans and making the necessary links between the formal and informal, or community-based, elements of the system.

**Strengthening government commitment.** A number of countries show that they have successfully started on a journey of reform to systematically determine the actions required to build a comprehensive child protection system over the long term. To be most effective, system change needs to be government driven. Where this 'buy-in' is weak, it is vital to identify national champions to advocate for child protection as the national agenda is being developed. A strong national advocate is vital to creating the necessary momentum. Moreover, external factors can adversely stall progress, as noted in the case of Kenya. The change in national leadership in 2013 greatly affected the pace and continuity of the child protection development process. With the change in government, many processes that had commenced under earlier leadership stalled and/or shifted, including re-assigning the mandate of child protection to a new ministry.

**Developing an overarching framework for child protection action.** As noted in the case studies, not all countries have a clearly defined national child protection framework, but rather a number of related action plans. A key challenge is to translate these action plans into workable frameworks, through robust coordination mechanisms. Similarly, too few action plans are matched by sufficient resources or strong leadership. Future efforts to strengthen child protection systems need to focus on provincial- and

district-level implementation, carried out in a holistic manner and in a way that takes into account existing legal and policy commitments, including those within such action plans. More effort is also needed to build on what already exists at the local level, encouraging the search for local solutions rather than enforcing a ‘one-size fits all’ approach.

**Promoting the establishment and enforcement of adequate legislation.** An ongoing challenge is the need to harmonize legislation with international standards, translate current and future national legislation into subnational action, and ensure adequate enforcement. Although many countries have ratified international commitments on child protection, political and social consensus are sometimes lacking on key issues, such as child marriage, corporal punishment or juvenile justice. This obstructs further progress and the implementation of a number of international standards. Similarly, many countries have advanced their legislative frameworks and developed a range of national action plans, yet too often they fail to be comprehensively implemented, lack coordination and cohesion, and targets are not always met.

Ensuring a context-specific legislative framework that includes the full range of necessary policies, standards and regulations, coupled with a process/structure that can effectively roll out and enforce them, is one of the greatest challenges in child protection. The legislative environment cannot be strengthened in isolation, but must be part of broader legislative reforms. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, elements of the Law on Children Act (such as the minimum age for marriage, criminal responsibility admission to employment) conflict with other laws. In Kenya, major efforts have been made to harmonize international and national provisions on child protection through the creation of policy documents and a spectrum of legislation and to enforce them. However, many duty bearers are not fully aware of the different laws and policies, regulations and guidelines, leading to possible misapplication and insufficient implementation. As a result, children in Kenya are falling through what should be a protective net.

**Ensuring effective coordination.** Establishing coordination structures for child protection with clear, delineated lines of responsibility remains a challenge for many countries. Particularly problematic is instituting a policy process that involves the whole government and ensures effective streamlining of who is doing what to minimize duplication of effort, improve cohesion over roles and responsibilities, and better channel budget flows. In some countries, working-level coordination across ministries and agencies remains issue-based and is mostly focused on individual sector programmes and priorities.

**Improving capacity.** Building the capacity of the child protection workforce is crucial. Also essential is creating the conditions needed to ensure effective service delivery mechanisms and enforcement, yet processes are hampered by the insufficient capacity of service providers. Strengthening child protection systems relies heavily on human resources. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the ratio of social welfare officers to children is around 1 to 100,000. Like Tanzania, Senegal has a weak human resource capacity with approximately seven social workers for every 100,000 children (2013). Many countries are faced with the dilemma of how to build a strong workforce of qualified, dedicated child protection professionals providing equitable services, especially to those children who are marginalized or in hard-to-reach places. An

assessment of the social welfare workforce in Kenya cites a shortage of funding as the major roadblock, along with a lack of capacity and shortage of trained staff, resulting in services to children often being delegated to volunteers, both formally and informally. In building the child protection workforce, or the social welfare workforce more broadly, it will be essential for countries to identify the roles and responsibilities of the different State and non-State actors within the system and to build the capacity of local leaders and community volunteers, who are already doing the bulk of the work.

**Instituting effective monitoring, reporting and oversight.** Strengthening child protection information management systems is another area requiring sustained support. This involves developing comprehensive, integrated case management databases that generate reliable disaggregated data on violations as well as services provided (such as children receiving cash grants or children already benefitting from social welfare case management). In Senegal, for example, no national baseline exists to provide timely and viable data on various child protection issues; efforts to develop an information management system are still in a pilot phase. While the United Republic of Tanzania has made progress in selected districts to strengthen the information management of social welfare cases, further efforts are needed to scale up the system nationwide. Ghana is not at the point yet where it can evaluate system reforms by multiple donors in various sectors, or measure the impact on children. Such assessments can only be undertaken when all baseline studies have been completed, child protection benchmarks or targets are established, and programmes have been implemented for a number of years.

**Scaling up financial commitments.** Allocating adequate budgets for child protection, particularly from national sources, is critical to sustainability. In a number of countries, limited technical expertise and lack of investment in costing child protection services have led to inadequate budgetary allocations. Ghana has commissioned studies to identify spending trends and budget allocations to the child protection sector, and the United Republic of Tanzania has prioritized child protection in the guidelines used to develop medium-term expenditure frameworks. Yet little action has yet been taken to fully integrate child protection costs into national budget processes. Many countries have yet to comprehensively chart the costs of their child protection policies and plans, as well as routine service delivery costs. For a number of countries that have recently undertaken costing and budgeting assessments, the challenge of moving forward is to determine how to stimulate discussions and action to invigorate child protection in national budgetary decision-making and allocation processes.