Child Protection Systems Strengthening

INTERVENTIONS

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About this paper

For more than a decade, UNICEF has prioritized child protection systems strengthening as a key approach to child protection programming. In response to the recommendations of the 2018 evaluation of UNICEF's work on child protection systems strengthening, this paper outlines UNICEF's approach to child protection systems strengthening going forward. Guided by UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy (2021 – 2030)1 which provides the overarching strategic framework for UNICEF's child protection programming globally, the paper discusses key considerations that have shaped this approach. It then goes on to describe the programme – impact pathways for child protection, focusing on the intermediate outcomes of child protection systems strengthening work and the main UNICEF investments and priority actions to achieve those outcomes. Finally, the paper proposes a four-phased approach to child protection systems strengthening based on a maturity model. It elaborates the priorities, processes, and results to be achieved in each phase of child protection systems strengthening and provides comprehensive benchmarks to effectively measure investments and results in systems strengthening.

3 High Priority CPSS Interventions

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This is Part 3 of the Paper "Child Protection Systems Strengthening: Approach; Benchmarks; Interventions", and should be read together with Part 1 "The UNICEF Child Protection Systems Strengthening Approach" and Part 2 "Phases of CPSS and Benchmarks for Measurement".

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1. Priority Areas of Work and High Impact Interventions in CPSS

The 2018 evaluation of UNICEF's work on CPSS provided critical insights into which types of interventions yield high impact results and offers recommendations for which interventions and investments to prioritize. The evaluation recommended that UNICEF identify its niche and priorities in CPSS, develop a menu of interventions in priority areas across various contexts, and invest in the most impactful areas to strengthen child protection systems. The evaluation also called for UNICEF to "unapologetically embrace a focus on state leadership and accountability, for which it is well positioned". While UNICEF offices will be in the best position to determine which of the intermediate outcomes to focus on while strengthening child protection systems, in terms of priorities and sequencing of work, this section offers guidance to facilitate these decisions.

The UNICEF interventions that the 2018 evaluation identified as most impactful include social service workforce strengthening, investing in evidence and research, and leveraging public resources. In some settings, the evaluation highlighted standard-setting/quality control and coordination/partnerships as the most successful intervention strategies. UNICEF's contribution to CPSS has been particularly strong in terms of strengthening the legal and regulatory framework. UNICEF support was more successful in countries where UNICEF supported the government-led reform of existing child protection systems. The evaluation showed the critical importance of leveraging national financial resources for sustainable child protection systems and noted that most successful countries supported public finance and budget tracking reviews and used this to leverage public resources for CPSS.

The 2018 evaluation noted that, for highly functioning systems, a package of interventions that includes a mix of evidence and research, public financing for child protection, and policy advocacy, was found to have the greatest impact. The most successful strategies employed by UNICEF to strengthen child protection systems were those usually associated with sustainability, namely: advocacy/building political commitment, research and evidence-generation, leveraging resources and capacity building.

2. Developing Context Specific Strategies

On the ground, how UNICEF prioritizes investments in child protection and CPSS is significantly influenced by the overall socioeconomic and socio-political context and the extent to which child protection systems have been established and are functioning.

The availability of human and financial resources, and geographical reach and coverage of systems, the level of wealth inequality, fragility, deprivation and disadvantage, conflict and humanitarian situations all influence decisions about how and where to invest.

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FIGURE 1*: Understanding the context[1]

ECONOMY	NATIONAL CAPACITY
• Low income • Lower- middle income • Upper- middle income • High income	**Low national capacity** • Insufficient fiscal resource • Low levels of functioning of the government and infrastructure **Medium national capacity** • Limited fiscal resources • Moderate/medium functioning of the governement and infrastructure • Persisting equity concerns related to population groups **High national capacity** • Adequate fiscal resources • High levels of functioning of the government and infrastructure • May have persisting equity concerns related to population groups.
COUNTRY CONTEXT	
• Emergency • Fragility • Political stability • Vulnerability to natural disasters	

Adapted from the **UNICEF's Strategy for Health (2016-2030)*

As is evident in the figure above, a holistic understanding of the context is not just useful, but essential for identifying how and what UNICEF will prioritize in terms of CPSS interventions. A context is a sum of multiple factors, e.g., a low-income economy and a fragile country context with low national capacities calls for a significantly different focus of UNICEF's investments compared to an upper-middle income country with political stability and medium or high national capacity. Even in emergency contexts, in case of a natural disaster, UNICEF's interventions in a high-income country with high national capacities will be significantly different than in a lower-middle income country with low national capacities. Thus, at the national level, UNICEF offices will continue to determine which of the CPSS interventions to prioritize, depending on the local/national context.

FIGURE 2: Illustrative Priority Interventions by Country Typology

The following table offers a list of potential high impact interventions to achieve the seven intermediate outcomes of CPSS. As mentioned earlier, the relevance of these interventions is influenced significantly by the local/national context.

Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Priority High Impact Interventions	Country Context
1. Legal and policy framework	Advocate for and support child protection systems mapping and assessments	• Low/lower-middle income • Political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Advocacy and support to develop child protection policy and legislation	• Low/lower-middle income/upper-middle income/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support to develop comprehensive CPSS strategies	• Lower middle/upper middle income/high income(emergency) • Political stability • Medium national capacity
	Advocacy for balanced investments in and adapting CP systems considering (changing) needs	• Lower middle/upper middle/high income • Fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacities
2. Governance and coordination structures	Support to set up national level coordination structures/mechanisms	• Low/lower-middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support to set up sub-national and local level coordination mechanisms	• Low/luner middle/upper middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support to strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination at national and sub-national levels, including cross-border coordination	• Low/lower-middle/upper-middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
3. A Continuum of services	Fund child protection services	• Low income • Emergency/fragility • Low national capacity
	Support to model and test child protection services	• Lower-middle income/upper-middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support to develop SOPs for case management and referral systems	• Low/lower middle/upper middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support roll out of case management and referral systems and expanding services	• Low/lower-middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support to strengthen a continuum of services (welfare, health, education)	• Low/lower middle/upper middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity

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Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Priority High Impact Interventions	Country Context
4. Minimum standards and oversight mechanisms	Support to develop policy frameworks for minimum standards and oversight mechanisms	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/ high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support implementation and monitoring of minimum standards and advocate for establishment of oversight mechanisms	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support implementation of independent oversight mechanisms	• Lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
5. Human, financial and infrastructure resources	Support training workshops for child protection service providers	• Low/lower middle income/upper middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low or medium national capacity
	Support to develop social service worker curriculum	• Low/lower middle/upper middle income • Political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support comprehensive workforce strengthening initiatives	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support monitoring of child protection budgets and development of budget briefs	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support costing and financing of child protection services	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
6. Mechanisms for child participation and community engagement	Support and promote community engagement forums/platforms	• Low/lower middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stbility • Low/medium national capacity
	Advocate for and support integration of community engagement within CPS	• Low/lower middle income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Support and promote platforms for children's and adolescents' empowerment through forums	• Low/lower middle/middle income • Emergency/political stability • Low/medium national capacity
	Advocate for and support establishment of complaints mechanisms for children	• Low/lower middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity

Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Priority High Impact Interventions	Country Context
7. Data collection and monitoring systems	Support strengthening of administrative data systems, including through development of diagnostic tools and tools to support data collection, analysis and dissemination	• Low/lower-middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/ fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Promote and support inclusion of survey modules on child protection in ongoing data collection plans and mechanisms, using standardized definitions that are in line with international standards or national legislations	• Low/lower-middle/upper middle income/ high income • Emergency/ fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support strengthening of data governance, including development and use of detailed and comprehensive data security and management protocols	• Low/lower-middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/ fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity
	Support capacity building on data collection, management, analysis, dissemination, and use	• Low/lower-middle/upper middle/high income • Emergency/ fragility/political stability • Low/medium/high national capacity

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3. Identifying Key Interventions for CPSS

Child protection systems strengthening interventions are often long term, and results are achieved in a progressive, gradual manner; the benchmarking tool is reflective of this reality.

UNICEF's role and priorities in supporting national governments in CPSS see a notable change as the system continues to mature, as can be seen in an illustrative table below.

Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Interventions and results	System Building	System Enhancement	System Integration	System Maturity
1. Legal and policy framework	Advocate for and support child protection systems mapping and assessments	●	●		
	Advocacy and support to develop child protection policy and legislation	●	●	●	●
	Support to develop comprehensive and inclusive CPS strategies		●	●	●
	Advocacy for balanced investments in and adapting CPS considering (changing) needs			●	●
2. Governance and coordination structures	Support to set up national level coordination structures/mechanisms	●	●		
	Support to set up sub-national and local level coordination mechanisms		●	●	
	Support to strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination at national and sub-national levels			●	●

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Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Interventions and results	System Building	System Enhancement	System Integration	System Maturity
3. A continuum of services	**Fund child protection services**	●			
	Support to model and test child protection services	●	●	●	
	Support to develop SOPs for case management and referral systems		●	●	
	Support roll out of case management and referral systems and expanding services			●	
	Support to develop policy frameworks for minimum standards and oversight mechanisms			●	●
4. Minimum standards and oversight mechanisms	**Support to develop policy frameworks for minimum standards and oversight mechanisms**		●	●	
	Support implementation of minimum standards and advocate for establishment of oversight mechanisms		●	●	
	Support implementation of independent oversight mechanisms				●
5. Human, financial and infrastructure resources	**Support training workshops for child protection service providers**	●			
	Support to develop social service workforce curriculum		●	●	
	Support comprehensive workforce strengthening initiatives		●	●	●
	Support monitoring of child protection budgets and development of budget briefs	●		●	●
	Support costing and financing of child protection services			●	●

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Intermediate outcomes of CPSS	Interventions and results	System Building	System Enhancement	System Integration	System Maturity
6. Mechanisms for child participation and community engagement	Support and promote community engagement forums/platforms	●	●		
	Advocate for and support integration of community engagement within CPS		●	●	
	Support and promote platforms for child and adolescent empowerment through forums	●	●		
	Advocate for and support establishment of complaint mechanisms for children			●	●
7. Data collection and monitoring systems	Support strengthening of administrative data systems, including through development of diagnostic tools and tools to support data collection, analysis and dissemination	●	●	●	●
	Promote and support inclusion of survey modules on child protection in ongoing data collection plans and mechanisms, using standardized definitions that are in line with international standards or national legislation			●	●
	Support strengthening of data governance (coordination, oversight and secure management; for example, the development, adoption and use of detailed and comprehensive ethical protocols and data security/management)	●	●	●	●
	Support capacity building on data collection, management, analysis, dissemination, and use	●	●	●	●

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Annex

The State of Play – Systems Building to Systems Maturity

The following paragraphs offer a comprehensive description of the "state of play" of child protection systems in each of the four phases, namely, 'system building'; 'system enhancement'; 'system integration'; and 'system maturity'.

This state of play for each of the four phases is broadly organized around the seven intermediate outcomes and the various subdomains of systems strengthening under each of these intermediate outcomes.

Phase 1: System Building

This phase is characterized by a limited understanding of child protection systems among policymakers. Child protection interventions (both prevention and response) are issue-based and addressed as standalone interventions or ad-hoc responses. A comprehensive normative framework (policies and laws) that articulates the scope of the national child protection system does not exist. There are no lead ministries/agencies at national government level in charge of child protection. There is neither a public sector led national, multi-sector coordination mechanism that steers/directs child protection work and functioning of the child protection systems, nor is there a public sector entity that provides oversight. In the absence of formal SOPs, informal coordination exists amongst service providers at the implementation level, but it is largely voluntary, driven by individual initiatives, including by civil society.

Child protection services are available but are ad-hoc and do not address all child protection concerns. Government funded programmes primarily or largely focus on response services

for specific "groups" of children addressing some, but not all, child protection issues. Some "pilot" prevention focused services exist, but are largely donor funded, and limited in geographic/programmatic scope. SOPs or protocols that set out child protection roles, referral processes and procedures to be followed do not exist or are limited to a certain "category" of children developed by individual agencies for their own personnel and are not fully compliant with relevant national legislation and international standards. Case workers are often trained on agency-specific SOPs related to specific "categories" of children and referrals, and case management approach to service delivery is practised in an ad-hoc manner. Independent accountability and oversight mechanisms for child protection do not exist or only partially cover child protection as part of their mandate. No minimum standards for child protection services are available, or minimum standards are available for some and not all child protection services. The same applies to data security and privacy standards, which are managed in a largely ad-hoc manner in most programming contexts.

In the absence of comprehensive strategies to plan, develop and support the social service workforce for child protection, most workers undergo ad-hoc trainings, often on the job, and supported by development partners. There is no comprehensive normative framework for social service work, and licencing and accreditation systems for social service workers do not exist. There is no formal system of supervision of workers, and human resource information is not collected and used at national/sub-national levels.

There are no child-friendly and gender-sensitive legal procedures for children to access justice. There are no complaints mechanisms (independent or otherwise) for children who are refused or receive child protection services. Children who have received or are receiving prevention or response related child protection services have no access to forums (groups/organizations) that work with them and enable them to express their views or experiences

to service providers and government bodies. Community-based mechanisms exist but only in select parts of the country and are largely supported by development partners/NGOs. These mechanisms are often accountable only at community level or local level, but do not work with national or sub-national government bodies responsible for child protection.

There is no system in place to gather routine data on child protection, or countries are still in the process of developing systems in one or multiple sectors. Data collection plans and mechanisms to generate data on child protection do not exist. There are no policies and procedures to ensure safety of all those involved in data collection processes and management and there are no data protection and confidentiality protocols. There is no legislation on data collection, transfer or sharing of data, usage of data, or there is no accountability in terms of the roles and responsibilities of relevant actors on the generation of data.

Phase 2: System Enhancement

During this phase, increased attention to understanding and responding to child protection concerns in a systematic manner results in analysis of the existing systems. Mapping and assessment of existing child protection system is undertaken/completed, but interventions and response continue to be issue-based/standalone. Normative framework/legislation outlining the national child protection systems exists, but may not include all children in a country, and implementation structures/mechanisms do not exist or are weak/ad-hoc. There is a lead ministry/agency at the national government level in charge of child protection systems, but it is weak due to limited

authority, human capacity, financial resources, and limited mandate. Multiple national, multi-sector child protection coordination mechanisms have been established; however, all or most of such mechanisms are issue-based (e.g., child labour task force, anti-trafficking coordination committee), and often work in silos/in isolation from one another due to the lack/absence of mandate with the lead ministry/agency or the child protection authority to unify such mechanisms. Formal coordination mechanisms across select agencies/departments at local level exist but such mechanisms are ad-hoc and primarily related to service provision.

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Systematic modelling and testing of a host of prevention and response related child protection services is underway in this phase, mostly funded by development partners and donors. Governments continue to focus on response related services, which see expansion across the country. Comprehensive SOPs/ protocols largely compliant with national legislation and international standards are being developed or are in place but implementation of these SOPs/protocols is ad-hoc at best, often constrained by lack of adequate financial or human resources and limited capacities. Implementation of SOPs is weak/ad-hoc due to (a) absence of commonly agreed referral protocols between child protection/social welfare and other sectors (education, health, law enforcement, immigration authorities, justice etc.) and across borders; and (b) absence of a formal and nationally/sub-nationally adopted training and supervision system for case workers and supervisors. Accountability mechanisms have been established in-house within the lead ministry/agency responsible for child protection but are not independent. Nationally adopted minimum standards for a range of prevention and response related child protection services are available, but there is an absence of formal mechanisms for monitoring and oversight of services.

During this second phase, the normative framework for social service work is being defined. Efforts are underway to introduce/ strengthen social work education with focus on knowledge and skills related to child protection and select government institutions provide on the job certified child protection trainings. Worker recruitment doesn't require following licensing and accreditation standards and there is an absence/lack of formal systems of supportive supervision. Efforts are underway to improve

the human resource information/worker data for social service workers. Significant number of child protection services are funded through public finance, but are mostly response oriented and infrastructure related, e.g., establishment, running costs of residential care facilities. Efforts are underway to track and analyse child protection budgets (e.g., using budget briefs) but there is an absence of systematic analysis of public finance for child protection.

There are specialized law enforcement and court personnel (including judges and magistrates) for children in conflict with the law and in contact with the law, but specialized courts that operate in a child-friendly and gender-responsive manner, i.e., fully or mainly in compliance with international standards, have yet to be established. Local service providers have a child complaint procedure in place to address complaints by or on behalf of children refused or receiving child protection services; however, such procedures/mechanisms are not independent. Forums have been established at local level, largely through efforts of development partners/NGOs, for children who have been/or are receiving prevention or response related child protection services to enable them to discuss issues and provide feedback to service providers; however, the establishment of such forums is not uniform across the country, and mechanisms to ensure children's views are effectively communicated to the government do not exist or are informal. Community-based mechanisms are more widely available but continue to be led and supported by development partners and NGOs. These mechanisms frequently engage with actors in the more formal child protection system including at national and sub-national level but continue to function in an ad-hoc manner and no formal structures for accountability/oversight exist.

Data collection plans and mechanisms are in place, but only a few child protection topics are covered, and data are collected irregularly. Data gathered by different sources are not based on standard definitions. Data on child protection are not consistently disaggregated by sex, age, migration status and other domains most relevant to the issue (e.g. types of care; types of violence). Ad-

hoc approval processes are in place for data collection, access to data, and data sharing. Certain safeguards are available within limited ministries and agencies to regulate who has access to child protection information and for what purpose. Resources and capacity for collecting and analysing data are limited and there is lack of institutionalized quality assurance processes and procedures.

Phase 3: System Integration

In this phase of system integration, the national child protection system and its key elements are clearly defined and agreed upon in evidence-based national policy and plans. The definition of child protection systems includes a clear articulation of its boundaries and relation to other/allied systems (i.e., health, justice, education, social protection, immigration, etc.). Specific issues may be identified and addressed, but the responses designed are system-wide and are gender responsive and inclusive of all children. Implementation structures and mechanisms for the normative framework/ legislation outlining the national child protection system is in progress but not uniform across the country and across agencies. The lead ministry/ agency in charge of child protection systems is functional and adequately resourced (human and financial resources). Its mandate and authority related to child protection has been established, well-articulated, and formally communicated and recognized across government at national and state levels, as well as outside of the government. Work is underway to improve/ strengthen its links with other national/sub-national bodies with responsibility for child

protection. A national, multi-sector child protection coordination mechanism has been established under the aegis of the lead ministry responsible for child protection, with specific terms of reference, high-level authority/leadership to convene different sectors/ministries and is currently working towards strengthening coordination across sectors. Gender responsive and inclusive SOPs/ regulations for formal coordination mechanisms that focus holistically on planning, programme implementation, monitoring and review across agencies and departments have been established but implementation of these mechanisms is not uniform across the country.

During this phase, increased investments are made by the government in replicating proven gender-responsive and inclusive models of prevention and response related child protection services in various parts of the country. Development partners increasingly limit their investments to technical assistance for policy advocacy. Investments in capacity building shift from trainings to systematic institutional capacity building.

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Significant focus is on routine and regular monitoring of child protection services, but majority or all such monitoring is undertaken through internal monitoring systems and mechanisms. Comprehensive gender responsive and inclusive SOPs/protocols largely compliant with national legislation and international standards are available and are widely disseminated and effectively implemented in practice by most/all agencies/organizations while delivering child protection services, and efforts are underway to train case workers and supervisors to increase the use of formal case management and referral systems across the country.

Clear accountability and oversight systems for child protection have been established within the government, e.g., through hiring child protection experts, setting up inspection units, Management Information Systems and Quality Assurance Systems exist. A mechanism for monitoring and oversight of child protection services based on nationally adopted minimum standards for child protection services exists, but monitoring is ad-hoc and does not cover all services.

Normative frameworks for the workforce are well-defined. Trainings are streamlined through improved accreditation processes for pre- and in-service courses and hiring processes mandate consideration of qualifications of workers. A formal system of supportive supervision is in place but lacks uniform nationwide implementation. Efforts are underway to strengthen and scale the supervision system.

A human resource information system for social service workers for child protection has been established and is increasingly used to gather human resource related information. Efforts are underway to enhance the capacity of the social service workforce on gender responsive

social and behavioural change communication. National/sub-national budgets increasingly support a wide range of prevention and response related child protection services and there is a shift in focus from moving investments from infrastructure to human resources. There is an annual increase in government budgets allocated for child protection. A host of public finance tools (e.g., budget briefs, costing models, expenditure analyses, financial benchmarking) are used to influence public financing for child protection.

Specialised courts (Juvenile Court / Family Court / Children's Court) for children in conflict and/or contact with the law, operating with child-friendly and gender-responsive procedures that comply fully or mainly with international standards exist, but not for children in contact with the law or vice versa. There is an independent body/authority at local level that accepts complaints by or on behalf of children refused or receiving child protection services. Efforts are made to make complaint mechanism equally accessible for internally displaced, refugee and migrant children, as well as children with disabilities. Government financially supports such forums (e.g., children's groups established at local government/community level for children who have been/or are receiving prevention or response related child protection services) to enable them to discuss issues and provide feedback to service providers; or those receiving child protection services. Efforts are underway to establish or strengthen existing mechanisms to ensure children's views are effectively communicated to the government at national/sub-national/local level. Community-based mechanisms are formally recognized, through its linkages with the formal child protection system, and function according to standard terms of reference or written procedures and protocols. These mechanisms are increasingly supported by the government,

both financially and with technical support. While formal accountability structures may be defined through terms of reference or written procedures and protocols, implementation of accountability structures continues to be weak.

Data on a range of child protection topics are collected at regular intervals, but inconsistent definitions and approaches are used to gather data. There is legislation that generally include data to be collected and by whom but does

not cover essential elements and standards of quality data collection and record keeping. Efforts are underway to pass legislation which stipulates how data are to be transferred and stored, and what the data may be used for. Efforts are also underway to develop policies and procedures to ensure safety of all those involved at all stages of the data collection process and management to minimize the inherent risks, including data protection and confidentiality and consent protocols.

Phase 4: System Maturity

There is formal high-level political commitment to CPSS, including adequate allocation of financial and human resources and its relationships with other/allied systems. All child protection interventions (prevention and response) including the broader multisectoral responses are led/coordinated by the recognized national/sub-national child protection systems. Implementation structures/mechanisms for the normative framework/legislation outlining the national child protection system are mostly/fully in place. Regular reviews, evaluations, and audits of functioning of the national child protection system are undertaken, and recommendations are made for revision to legislation and regulations that govern the child protection system. The lead ministry/agency responsible for child protection at central government level is linked to sub-national bodies (either ministerial departments or local government authority) with responsibility for child protection and is active and effective in fulfilling its child protection responsibilities across the country. The national, multi-sector child protection coordination mechanism is formalized and fully functional, its role is known to stakeholders and

its working is reviewed against the terms of reference and disseminated regularly. The terms of reference are revised as needed and the lead ministry/agency has oversight of the functioning of the mechanism. Intra- and inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms for planning, programme implementation, monitoring and reviews have been formalized and the functioning of these mechanisms is reviewed against SOPs/regulations and disseminated regularly.

Government managed and funded national level scale-up of prevention and response related child protection services is underway during this phase through national programmes. All child protection services are subject to periodic/annual audits and external evaluations, and services often see changes based on evidence, including research, findings of audits and external evaluations.

Implementation of SOPs/protocols is institutionalized through formal case management systems and these SOPs/protocols are regularly reviewed and revised to adapt to emerging

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situations. Fully functional national human rights institutions such as national ombudsperson, human rights/child rights tribunals empowered to hold government accountable to child protection concerns have been established and are functional. Regular monitoring and reporting of child protection services is carried out by national or local government to ensure national minimum standards are fully enforced.

A well-planned,-developed, and-supported social service workforce is in place. Licencing and accreditation systems as well as supportive supervision systems are fully functional. Human resources information is regularly gathered, analysed and used to refine/revise social service workforce strategies. All/a vast majority of tertiary child protection services are funded through national/sub-national budgets. Budgets and expenditures are regularly/annually tracked.

There is a specialised court/s for children in conflict with the law and contact with the law and its procedures are child-friendly and gender-responsive (i.e., comply fully/largely with international standards). There is an independent child complaints procedure with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children about refusal to receive child protection services or about the child protection system or services received. Government supports forums such as children's groups established at local government/community level. A formal mechanism is in use through which national/sub-national/local government receives and responds to feedback from children

and children's groups who are receiving or have received child protection services. Community-based mechanisms are fully functional across the country per their applicability - urban/rural, and where necessary and as per their protocols/procedures. Functioning of these mechanisms is monitored through fully functional accountability mechanisms.

Data collection takes place at regular intervals, using definitions that are in line with international standards or national legislations. Detailed and comprehensive ethical protocols are adopted and used. Data on hard-to-reach populations, including children in street situations, are also generated at regular intervals. In addition to prevalence data, information is collected on risk and protective factors, and data can be disaggregated by sex, age, migration status and other variables most relevant to the issue (e.g., types of care; family's characteristics). There is legislation on data collection, transfer of data, quality record-keeping, usage of data, and the roles and responsibilities of relevant actors. Policies and procedures ensure safe and secure data management. Financial resources and organizational and staff capacity are guaranteed to enable data collection and analyses. There is a centralised coordination body to oversee the system and ensure effective coordination and data sharing between the different agencies. Data, including research and evaluation reports, are regularly analysed, or used for planning purposes, programme and policy design and monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of programmes and policies, and improving access to essential services.\

Endnotes

1. https://www.unicef.org/health/files/UNICEF_Health_Strategy_Final.pdf

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