

Protect my future

The links between child protection and employment and growth



In the post-2015 development agenda

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Executive summary

Economic growth has the potential – particularly in the developing world but in developed countries too – to free children from the worst forms of exploitation and violence, strengthen the reach and effectiveness of child protection services, and increase opportunities for human capital formation later in life. Economic growth could, in turn, be enhanced by improvements in child protection, as gaps in children's education, nutrition, health and psychosocial development resulting from child protection deficits severely diminish individuals' later productive capacities as adults, while increasing the subsequent cost of social services. At the same time, however, we recognise that economic growth alone is an insufficient indicator of children's well-being, particularly when such growth occurs without equitable and inclusive social development for children. In periods of rapid growth and development in particular, new opportunities may bring new threats to children's protection or exacerbate existing threats – a point that is far too often overlooked in discussions of pro-poor growth.

This report therefore emphasises the value of integrating a life cycle approach into the conceptualisation of inclusive growth and employment whereby childhood is considered as a time for learning and development, laying the foundations for future social and economic well-being. Children need to be supported during these critical periods of learning and development and protected from labour pressures, violence, neglect, and exploitation, within the home and in all other areas of their lives. In particular, this means that policymakers must first and foremost ensure that economic growth results in children becoming more safe rather than less safe, by guarding against risk factors associated with rapid economic growth (including migration, increased demand for cheap labour, growing urbanisation and the potential for increased exploitation of children and communities) that contribute to heightened child protection vulnerabilities. Policymakers must also carefully coordinate national business and employment strategies to minimise negative impacts on children's well-being, while ensuring that young people have access to decent work (as called for by MDG 1b).¹

To illustrate this argument, Section 2 provides an overview of the evidence in five key areas: the links between neglect and child health and nutrition deficits; the negative impacts of child violence against children and abuse; the particular protection and care vulnerabilities faced by children in institutional care; the risks of harmful forms of child labour; and the specific vulnerabilities to neglect faced by adolescents.

In Section 3, the discussion turns to five key policy and programming areas identified as offering critical opportunities for promoting stronger synergies between child protection and employment and job growth in the post-MDG agenda: (1) developing a robust child protection system; (2) strengthening a child protection focus within social protection programming; (3) involving key institutions and the private sector in addressing child labour and other exploitative practices, including the inclusion of child protection principles within corporate social responsibility imperatives guiding investment decisions; (4) ensuring that child protection principles are embedded within education systems; and (5) strengthening access to and quality of vocational training.

The report concludes with policy recommendations, highlighting that the post-2015 development framework should include goals, targets and indicators which help provide stronger, more comprehensive child protection systems, both as a means of promoting growth and employment

¹ United Nations Millennium Development Goals website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>.

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as well as ensuring children's well-being through growth that is sensitive to child protection needs. To this end, the report identifies three complementary policy and programme actions that should be considered: (a) the eradication of harmful forms of child labour; (b) the promotion of social protection programming that embeds child protection components at every stage; and (c) measures to ensure that young people everywhere have basic literacy and numeracy, technical and life skills to become active citizens with decent employment.

1. Introduction

The staggering scale of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children worldwide represents a multidimensional, interlinked threat to children's well-being, to socioeconomic growth, and to employment. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), for example, an estimated 18 million children were exploited in commercial sex work in 2003, including pornography and prostitution.² Between 30 and 48 per cent of children have been left alone or in other children's care while their parents were at work, while around eight million children grow up in institutional care (Heymann 2006; Pinheiro 2006). Approximately 215 million children begin work too young, often in exploitative and dangerous conditions (ILO 2010b; ILO 2012a). These major deficits in child protection are intrinsically linked to inequitable growth that often does not meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and is a major cause of the global crisis in child protection and the inadequate care and protection of children. This fundamentally damages a society's long-term prospects for socioeconomic growth, poverty reduction and human capital development.

This report explores these linkages between child protection and economic growth and employment, highlighting the importance of child-sensitive economic development,³ supported by education and social protection policies, as a means to ensure that measures to promote growth also improve children's protection and care. This is essential to safeguard children's current well-being as well as enabling them to develop future capabilities, including their role as productive contributors to socioeconomic growth later in life. It is argued that economic growth alone cannot provide the solution to the global crisis in child protection. It must be shaped to be inclusive, equitable, pro-poor and, critically, sensitive to child protection as well as accompanied by substantial investments in the child protection sector. In other words, growth must be managed so that it improves children's safety and well-being, without adding to the risks and vulnerabilities they already face. The report has been developed to feed into debates around growth, employment and the framework that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) post-2015.

What is child protection?

Child protection may be defined as measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children (Save the Children 2010). It is closely linked to providing better care for children, ensuring that more children grow up in safe and caring families, or, when this is not possible, have a range of high-quality alternative care choices open to them (UN 2010).

² http://www.oete.de/dokumente/docs%20zukunft-reisen/ilo_facts.pdf.

³ We define this as growth that positively contributes to improving children's security and opportunities to reach their full developmental potential, without exacerbating existing child-specific vulnerabilities.

2. The interdependence of growth, employment and child protection: a brief overview

The linkages between economic growth and child protection are complex and multidirectional (Boyden and Dercon 2012; Glewwe 2012).⁴ By improving returns on specific activities and labour, growth may expand a household's options in terms of the resources it has available to invest in children, as well as expanding the range of social structures and networks it has access to (Foster and Rosenzweig 1996; Pitt et al. 2010). Growth can likewise reduce families' exposure to risks and negative coping mechanisms within the household (such as reliance on exploitative forms of child labour, intra-household tensions and violence, and inadequate child care practices due to resource constraints and time poverty), as well as their exposure to risks arising from the wider economy such as income and price shocks, or food price hikes (Dercon 2008; Dornan 2010; Harper and Jones 2011).

At the same time, however, it is important to recognise that transitional periods of rapid economic growth can also introduce dangerous new risks to children's protection. Growth can, for instance, dramatically increase the market demand for exploitative child labour or increase vulnerabilities to other exploitative practices which arise around the sites of economic activity, or drive mass migration in the context of new economic opportunities, which may involve children in unsafe movement or being left behind when their parents migrate (Edmonds and Pavcnik 2005; Polakoff 2007; Flamm 2010). Similarly, rising levels of wealth and increasing integration of developing countries into the global economy can increase children's risk of involvement in criminal enterprises such as trafficking, child pornography, and recruitment into drug smuggling operations (Flower 2001; Bales 2004; Hodge and Lietz 2007).

Even where such risks can be avoided, economic growth alone is insufficient as an indicator of children's well-being. While economic development has been broadly linked to general socioeconomic improvements worldwide, those improvements have often been uneven and failed to extend to children (Boyden and Dercon 2012).⁵ Evidence also suggests that growth alone is insufficient in addressing disparities between certain groups of children; instead, the effects of positive economic growth on children can vary significantly across different types of households (for instance, rural versus urban households, or households belonging to different ethnic/caste groups) and within households (depending on a child's gender, age, and other factors such as disability) (Save the Children 2012).⁶ Such disparities can in turn impact on the ability of families to provide adequate protection and care. In Botswana, for example, 56 per cent of working families living on less than \$10 a day cannot afford to leave their children in safe day care or hire a caregiver during the day, compared with 45 per cent of families earning more than this amount, raising the risk of unsupervised child neglect and household accidents. While a number of factors determine the quality of a family's

4 As Boyden and Dercon (2012) note, a further indirect link exists between economic growth and child protection, given that the sustainability of large-scale social protection programmes that benefit children – such as Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) – are often reliant upon additional tax revenues derived from such growth.

5 See, for example, the variation in education quality and sanitation access in several countries studied by Oxford's Young Lives longitudinal study, in Boyden and Dercon 2012.

6 Examples include, for instance, gender discrepancies in school enrolment of children in India, Ethiopia, Peru and Vietnam (Dercon and Singh 2011; Pells 2011).

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child care (such as household structure, hours of work, and location), evidence shows that income is directly correlated to the level of risk children face in the home (Ruiz-Casares and Heymann 2009; Vandemoortele 2011).

Moreover, while growth can, if carefully managed, serve as an important driver of child protection, the opposite also holds true: ensuring that childhood remains a safe time for learning, physical and psychosocial development is an essential requirement for developing the base of human capital on which a country's economic success depends. Across several critical stages of childhood and youth development, certain key child protection deficits can have detrimental and potentially irreversible effects on the development of productive human capital. These include violence and abuse experienced during childhood, harmful forms of child labour, poor child health and nutrition stemming from neglect or inadequate care, and broader aspects of structural violence tied to a lack of decent education and employment opportunities for young people. Each of these child protection-related threats to well-being, and their potential impacts on growth and employment, is discussed below. In discussing these issues, it is acknowledged that not all child protection issues are correlated with growth, and that child abuse, neglect and exploitation remain a gross violation of children's rights, to be addressed urgently regardless of impact on growth.

2.1 Child abuse and violence against children

Beyond its indisputable negative impact on children's well-being, child abuse (including all forms of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill-treatment), neglect, and exploitation also have complex and profoundly detrimental effects on economic development. The scope of such abuse is vast: according to figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately 25-50 per cent of all children worldwide report having been physically abused, while 5-10 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women report having experienced some form of sexual abuse as a child (WHO and ISPCAN 2006). Stress and trauma caused by maltreatment lead to disruption of early brain development and, in more extreme cases, serious damage to the nervous and immune systems. As a result, maltreated children are at higher risk of behavioural, physical and mental health problems later in life, including depression, obesity, heart disease and cancer, high-risk sexual behaviours and sexually transmitted infections, alcohol and drug misuse, and violence (WHO and ISPCAN 2006; Gilbert et al. 2008).

For these reasons, acts of child abuse and violence against children represent gaps in child protection that cannot be ignored. Furthermore, at the macro level, child abuse and violence can have serious repercussions for a country's economic and social development (WHO and IPSCAN 2006). Broader economic costs include lost earnings and tax revenues due to survivors' subsequent needs for protective, psychological and welfare services, special education, foster care, and even their premature death, as well as the costs of incarcerating the adults responsible for maltreatment (WHO and ISPCAN 2006; Anda 2006; Gilbert et al. 2008). In the United States, for example, Fromm (2001) calculated the direct and indirect costs of child maltreatment at \$94 billion a year, or one per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) – including \$3 billion on hospitalisation, \$425 million on mental health treatment, and \$14.4 billion on child welfare costs alone (Fromm 2001).

Children affected by abuse and/or neglect also tend to lead less economically productive lives as adults, with lower levels of education, lower rates of skilled employment, lower earnings, and fewer

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assets.⁷ Moreover, the impact of these disparities across the life cycle is greater for women than for men (Currie and Widom 2010).

Certain forms of childhood violence can have particularly harmful knock-on effects on employment and growth, particularly those carried out in physical environments that are essential for children's development and should be safe spaces for children. One example is school-based violence, which disrupts children's access to education in many parts of the world. Recent research demonstrates the high incidence of physical, sexual, and emotional violence that children encounter in or around educational facilities worldwide, committed by teachers, school staff, and other students. Unsafe communities also leave students vulnerable to acts of violence committed by strangers on the way to and from school.⁸ Depriving children of a safe environment to learn not only directly affects their physical and psychological well-being but also interferes with the transmission of critical learning and skills necessary for their human capital development and future contributions to the workforce (Jones et al. 2008; Interagency Gender Working Group 2006). Children already marginalised by a lack of adequate care and protection at home, and by the stigma associated with HIV, AIDS and disability, as well as girls marginalised by a higher exposure to incidents of school-related gender-based violence, including sexual and psychological violence, are at even greater risk of violence, abuse and bullying in the classroom, compounding their existing vulnerabilities (Pinheiro 2006; SRSF for Prevention of Violence Against Children 2012).

The economic costs of school violence are significant. Work by Perezniето and Harper (2010), for example, shows the extent of economic impacts resulting from school violence. In the United States, the estimated costs in foregone social benefits related to early school-leaving provoked by school violence are between \$6.5 billion and \$32.4 billion a year, while costs that can be directly linked to school violence amount to an additional \$7.9 billion a year – resulting in a total loss of between 0.1% and 0.28% of GDP. In India, similarly, between \$1.49 billion and \$7.4 billion is lost annually in terms of foregone social benefits from school violence, accounting for between 0.13% and 0.64% of GDP (Perezniето and Harper 2010).

2.2 Exploitative child labour

Young children and adolescents forced to begin full-time work too early in their life cycle are at greater risk of damaging both their immediate well-being and their future development, particularly if engaged in the worst forms of child labour.⁹ For this reason, there is a broad international consensus on the need to end the worst forms of child labour, as articulated in the ILO's 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (ILO 1999) and Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (ILO 2010a). Nonetheless, some 215 million children worldwide are currently engaged in exploitative child labour, including 115 million engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The highest rates are in Asia

7 As Currie and Widom (2010) show, these disadvantages persist well into middle age: individuals with histories of abuse and neglect had employment rates that were 14 per cent lower than the general population, were less likely to have a bank account, vehicle, or home, and reported earnings of almost \$8,000 less per year over their lifetimes than matched controls.

8 This violence is also highly gendered, with boys experiencing a greater severity of corporal violence, and girls suffering the overwhelming majority of sexual harassment and violence by male students and teachers (Save the Children Alliance 2005; Jones et al. 2008).

9 The ILO (1999) specifies the 'worst forms of child labour' as all forms of slavery, sale and trafficking of children; child prostitution; the use of children for illicit activities (such as production and trafficking of drugs); and employment in work which is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.

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and the Pacific, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO 2010b).¹⁰ The impacts of children's work on child welfare are complex, and not always necessarily negative (Edmonds and Pavcnik 2005). Many working children blur definitional boundaries, combining schooling with less-hazardous employment and improving their skills base.¹¹ Some evidence also suggests that, at least in the short term, children's earnings make an important contribution to household income and reducing poverty (Galli 2001; World Bank 2007).

In the case of harmful child labour, however, any potential gains in reducing household poverty are offset by the harmful impacts of doing such work on children's well-being and growth. First, this child labour can have a major detrimental impact on children's physical and mental health; children doing such work are often subject to malnutrition and dehydration, exposed to dangerous chemicals and equipment, and experience physical abuse such as beatings and sexual harassment (particularly in trades such as domestic work, predominantly involving girls) (Kassouf et al. 2001; UNFPA 2009). This is particularly true for the worst forms of child labour, including forced labour, child prostitution, and conscription of child soldiers, which are all closely linked with the abusive practice of human trafficking (ILO 1999).¹²

Second, beginning work too early in life can impede children's access to basic schooling and skills development, reducing their productivity and marketability to employers later on – although the degree to which child labour affects access to education varies considerably, based on the type of work performed. Working children are routinely more tired than other children, and thus less capable of concentrating in class; they often have to repeat grades, and devote more of their energy and time to work than to study in order to fulfil their family's demand for income. Child labourers also tend to earn less income in later life, while any children they have are also more likely to work at a young age themselves (Rosati and Rossi 2003; Gunnarson et al. 2006; Emerson and Portela Souza 2006). This point is, of course, less relevant if children cannot access quality education. In some cases, being unable to afford school fees provides an impetus for children to work in order to earn the money needed to go to school. Here, children's work and education may in fact be mutually compatible – although working children may still be at a disadvantage in the classroom, especially because they have less time to invest in homework (Patrinos and Psacharopoulos 1997; Bass 2004).

10 Of these figures, 153 million child labourers are aged 5-14, with 53 million of them engaged in hazardous activities. Although overall, rates of child labour fell by nearly 20 per cent between 2000 and 2008 for this age group, gains were offset by a far slower decline in child labour for older children (aged 15-17) and those engaged in hazardous work (ILO 2010b).

11 For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America respectively, 52 per cent and 78 per cent of all working children were in school (World Bank 2007).

12 An estimated 30-50 per cent of all trafficking victims are children under 18 years of age, who are also often trafficked directly into the most harmful forms of child labour, including the sex industry and unsafe manual labour (ILO 2009; World Bank 2009). Furthermore, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers estimates that tens of thousands of children are trafficked for use as combatants or used for sexual exploitation by armed forces across 19 different countries/territories (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2008).

2.3 Poor childhood health, nutrition, and development as a result of inadequate care and neglect

Child abuse, violence and neglect can have a particularly negative impact on children's health and nutrition, with highly detrimental effects on a society's human capital formation and economic growth in the medium and longer term. One clear example of this relationship can be seen with regard to stunting, one of the leading factors in poor child health worldwide.¹³ Globally, 156 million children under five are stunted – accounting for 28 per cent of the under-five population in the developing world. Compared with their peers, stunted children have lower cognitive ability and achievement scores, are less likely to remain in school, and in turn reduce their potential to lead productive lives as adults. Neglected children – deprived of opportunities to interact with nurturing caregivers who are responsive to their emotional and physical needs – are at higher risk of stunting; with evidence suggesting that in addition to commonly being denied food, neglected children may also miss out on the stimulation provided by a devoted carer, which can have as great an impact on stunting as the provision of nutritional supplements (Naudeau 2009; Engle et al. 2011).^{14 15}

Risks to child health resulting from inadequate care go beyond nutrition deficits to include harm caused by accidents in the home, which may often (though not all the time) be the consequence of poor care and neglect. These represent an often overlooked but extremely common danger worldwide, particularly among children in middle childhood (from eight years to adolescence) living in middle-income countries. Accidents in the home are a leading cause of youth mortality and disability worldwide, with around 830,000 children dying each year from unintentional injuries (including road traffic accidents, burns, drowning, poisoning, falls, etc.) (Heymann 2006; Munro et al 2006; WHO and UNICEF 2008). One comparative study of child care in Botswana, Mexico and Vietnam, for instance, found that children left in self-care most often belong to families defined by poor working conditions, low income, education, limited support networks, single parents, and lack of access to public childcare. Fifty-seven per cent of parents from this group, in turn, report that their children have suffered accidents or other emergencies in the past while left alone (Ruiz-Casares and Heymann 2009).¹⁶ As well as their negative impact on children's well-being, these failures to

13 Moderate to severe stunting is defined as a deficit in height-for-age which is below minus two standard deviations from median height for age in a population. See UNICEF, 'Definitions: nutrition' at http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/stats_popup2.html.

14 In Jamaica and Vietnam, for instance, studies show that stunted children who received adequate psychosocial stimulation and nutrition fared far better on cognitive tests than those receiving dietary assistance only (Walker et al. 2005; Watanabe et al. 2005). And a wide body of medical and developmental research shows that significant absence of caregiver responsiveness, particularly in the early years, leads to serious cognitive delays and impairments, and disruptions in the body's normal stress responses that have both immediate and lifelong impacts on children's well-being (Center on the Developing Child 2012).

15 It is important to emphasise that while the causes of stunting – including inadequate nutrition, chronic illness or, in rarer cases, extreme psychosocial stress – are all tied to neglect, not all cases of stunting are the result of neglect, parental or otherwise. Nonetheless, while research on the links between stunting and neglect is still in development, it has been shown that stunting, lack of stimulation and poor nutrition are co-occurring risk factors (Engle et al. 2011). In addition to the obvious link between stunting and children who are fed too little as a result of neglect, child stunting can also be caused as the result of growth hormone imbalance caused by inadequate and disturbed night-time rest, stress, and anxiety – all traits common in neglected children (Stassen Berger 2010).

16 In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, unintentional injury rates for children are 53 per 100,000 (Ruiz-Casares 2009), while 57 per cent of families in Botswana, Mexico and Vietnam with unsupervised children have reported accidents while parents were at work. These same households also reported poor behavioural and development outcomes as a result of the lack

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adequately protect children against malnutrition, illness and home accidents can all significantly decrease an economy's overall productivity and growth, because of their impact on children's formative cognitive development. As already noted, these developmental losses, particularly in the perinatal period, infancy and early childhood, delay learning and skill acquisition in childhood, reduce school performance, and increase the likelihood of children having to repeat grades (Rosati and Rossi 2003; Gunnarson et al. 2006; Emerson and Portela Souza 2006). Such delays lead, in turn, to a less productive workforce: adults who had poor health and nutrition as children are more likely to lack employable skills, have delayed age of entry into the workforce, and lower lifetime earnings (Carneiro and Heckman 2003; Alderman et al. 2004; World Bank 2008).

Ongoing lifetime treatment of chronic diseases linked to early-stage malnutrition including stunting, as well as other long-term effects (such as obesity and cardiovascular disease) can also severely impact healthcare budgets over longer periods (Eckhardt 2006; World Bank 2006). Higher health budgets linked to childhood malnutrition routinely cost billions of dollars a year in lost GDP; for instance, healthcare outlays linked to stunting, iodine deficiency, and iron deficiency together are estimated to account for roughly two per cent of China's annual GDP and three per cent of India's (World Bank 2008). Similarly, emerging evidence has begun to highlight the links between home accidents, inadequate child care and negative growth, aggravated throughout the developing world by a pervasive lack of adequate child injury prevention and control programmes and policies (Mock et al. 2003; Damashek and Peterson 2002; Ruiz-Casares 2009; Ruiz-Casares and Heymann 2009).¹⁷ Beyond the neglect children may experience at home, those placed in alternative care are often confronted by a range of unique child protection risks stemming from poor facilities, abuse and violence, and neglect. Globally, an estimated eight million children are in institutional care,¹⁸ which is an increasingly common option despite global guidance suggesting that such care options should be a last resort (Williamson and Greenberg 2010; UN 2010). Institutional care homes, for example, often provide overcrowded, unhealthy accommodation where children routinely experience psychosocial neglect and lack of stimulation, as well as physical, sexual and emotional abuse (Giese and Dawes 1999; Delap 2012; Williamson and Greenberg 2010).¹⁹ Children in institutional care are less able to form an attachment with a consistent carer due to the size of such facilities and the use of shift systems, and this can have extremely detrimental impacts on child development, particularly for very young children, with such children commonly exhibiting delays in physical development, language and intelligence (Williamson and Greenberg 2010). Such inadequate care has serious negative impacts on children's well-being during their childhoods and in later life, rendering them less likely to contribute productively to their country's growth as adults. For these reasons, greater efforts are

of supervision (Ruiz-Casares and Heymann 2009).

17 For instance, among rural households in Ghana which suffered some form of household injury, 42 per cent reported loss of income, 39 per cent reported loss of income to at least one family member, 24 per cent were forced to borrow money, and 28 per cent underwent a decline in food consumption (Mock et al. 2003).

18 Institutional care can be defined as referring to collective living arrangements for large groups of children who are looked after by staff working in shift systems. It does not encompass all forms of residential care for children.

19 In India, for instance, younger children living in large-scale dormitory-style government housing facilities are frequently bullied by older children as a result of poor staff supervision (staff-to-child ratios can be as low as 1:100). Among countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), disturbing evidence reveals that more children leave large-scale residential care facilities with disabilities than enter them. Smaller is not always better, however. EveryChild notes that many unregulated small group homes in Kenya are suspected of being used as a mechanism for obtaining income from private Western donors. Even in better-regulated institutional care, a great deal of research over the past 50 years has confirmed that young children in such environments do not experience sufficient stimulation, attachment, acculturation and social integration (Williamson and Greenberg 2010; EveryChild 2011).

required to replace institutional care with family strengthening and reintegration efforts and safer forms of alternative care in line with international standards, such as those identified in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN2010a).²⁰

2.4 Inadequate care, neglect, and lack of opportunities for adolescents

Inadequate care for and neglect of adolescents (young people aged 10 to 19) is also a major concern.²¹ Key gaps in child protection for adolescents include inadequate supervision, stimulation, and child protection services (World Bank 2007; UNICEF 2009). These risks are particularly relevant to adolescents who are denied the chance to develop a strong sense of self normally acquired through moving from education to employment, engaging with their community and gaining acceptance from their wider society, and as such are more likely to engage in domestic violence and risky behaviours such as illicit drug-taking, crime and gang participation. Marginalised adolescents, particularly those living in poverty, are also more likely to join violence-prone gangs as a means of seeking a strong identity and opportunity (O'Donoghue and Rabin 2001). Older girls are especially prone to turning to gangs for protection, even in instances where gang presence is relatively rare (World Bank 2007; O'Donoghue and Rabin 2001). For countries experiencing a 'youth bulge', large populations of restive, frustrated adolescents represent a growing domestic security concern: out of 119 countries examined by the ILO (2011b), 40 per cent reported significant increases in social unrest since 2010, with the global economic crisis no doubt an important contributing factor (Stavropoulou and Jones 2013).

20 United Nations General Assembly, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children http://www.unicef.org/aids/files/UN_Guidelines_for_alternative_care_of_children.pdf.

21 We recognise that childhood is internationally defined as under 18 years so for the purposes of this paper when we refer to adolescents we are referring to those under 18 but recognise that the age range of adolescence extends up until 19 years.

3. Delivering growth that protects children: policy and programming entry points

Given the broad-ranging and interrelated challenges outlined in Section 2, proactive responses to child protection must be considered across a range of policy areas in order to promote more child-sensitive growth – growth that improves children’s safety and security while simultaneously mitigating the effects of risky economic transitions. Here, we focus on five policy areas where child protection could be strengthened to simultaneously improve growth, employment and children’s well-being, and for which there is a strong evidence base of compelling returns on social investment: (1) The development of a robust child protection system; (2) social protection; (3) involving key institutions and the private sector in child protection; (4) educational quality; and (5) vocational training. Combined, these areas have the potential to ensure growth which is sensitive to child protection needs.²²

3.1 Developing robust child protection systems

In order to address the child protection violations that have such a major impact on child well-being and growth it is essential that a robust child protection system be developed – one that is sufficiently staffed, funded and focused to reduce child neglect, exploitation and abuse, working with other services and programmes to deliver protection that is enshrined in national legislation. A child protection system aims to address all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect in a coordinated manner. Child protection systems include “the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks.” (UNICEF 2008 para 12).

Key components of a successful child protection system include: a legal framework, national strategy and coordinating body; local protection services; a well-trained child welfare workforce; a strong focus on community and child participation; adequate resources and monitoring and data collection systems (UNICEF 2008; Wulczyn et al. 2010).

The following are essential to ensure the development of such a system.

- Strengthening child protection systems is a key part of development agendas and national plans of action.
- Coordination and accountability mechanisms between child protection and other services (including health, education, justice and social protection) are developed at national and local levels.
- There is a prioritisation of family-strengthening programmes within child protection systems.
- Mechanisms are put in place to involve children and young people and community-based organisations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of child protection and relevant services.

In order to achieve these goals, it is important that donors and UN agencies increase funding for child

²² The literature on key requirements for effective child protection systems is well developed, and beyond the scope of this paper to summarise. For an introduction, see, for instance, UNICEF 2009b; Wulczyn et al. 2010; Gilbert et al. 2011.

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protection to help resource strong national child protection systems. A budget line on child protection within global development and humanitarian financial assistance would also enable the tracking of spending in this sector.

3.2 Promoting a more child protection-sensitive approach to social protection

Over the past few decades, developing countries have implemented a broad range of social protection schemes targeted at children and other vulnerable groups as integral components of their social policy and poverty reduction strategies. Such schemes are encouraged due to their proven effectiveness in reducing susceptibility to certain kinds of (mainly economic) risks and reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged groups. Social protection is, in broad terms, a general approach to poverty and vulnerability which takes as its starting point the growing international understanding of risk and vulnerability as multidimensional phenomena. During periods of economic crisis, social protection strategies offer a counter-cyclical mechanism to smooth income and consumption patterns while maintaining domestic demand in poorer communities (Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa 2011; Fiszbein et al. 2011; Boyden and Dercon 2012).

Table 1: Types of child-sensitive social protection instruments

Social assistance to poor children and households, including regular, predictable transfers (e.g. in cash or in-kind, scholarships, school feeding programmes, and health fee waivers) from governments and non-governmental entities. These aim to reduce poverty and vulnerability, increase access to basic services, and promote asset accumulation.

Social services for marginalised groups of children who need special care, including child fostering systems, child-focused violence prevention and protection services, rehabilitation services after trafficking, and basic alternative education for child labourers.

Social insurance to protect children and their families against the risks and consequences of livelihood, health and other shocks. Such insurance typically takes the form of subsidised risk-pooling mechanisms, with poor households exempted from contributions.

Social equity measures to protect children and their families against social risks such as discrimination or abuse, including anti-discrimination legislation (e.g. laws to protect children from trafficking, early child marriage and harmful traditional practices or to ensure special treatment and rehabilitation services for young offenders). Such measures also include affirmative action (e.g. scholarships for children from ethnic minority or indigenous communities) to try to redress past patterns of discrimination.

Source: Jones and Holmes, 2010.

However, there is growing recognition that social protection goals must go beyond a focus on economic shocks and income poverty to address the underlying social risks and vulnerabilities that keep millions of children and young people living in poverty (Holmes and Jones 2013). These include people's lack of information and knowledge about their rights and entitlements as citizens, discrimination, susceptibility to violence and exploitation, and many other factors. The ILO's Social Protection Floor (SPF) represents an important declaration of integrated social policies designed to

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guarantee universal income security and access to essential services, protection and empowerment of all people across the life cycle, particularly vulnerable groups. Yet while the SPF includes guarantees of access to positive outcomes for children linked to adequate health, nutrition and education (such as achieving children's growth targets or school attendance), neither it nor the MDGs make reference to specific child protection risks or a broader child protection imperative (ILO 2011b). Analysis suggests that children's unique vulnerabilities to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect have so far been largely overlooked by social protection strategies and policy frameworks (EveryChild 2010; Jones et al. 2012; Thompson 2012).

Here, we present some key entry points for social protection policies and programming to address these oversights. First, greater effort is required to improve the coverage of social protection programmes to ensure that they reach marginalised and vulnerable children. This is particularly true of children who lack parental carers, and especially those reliant on support from older family members (such as grandparents) who already face economic challenges and unemployment, often due to disability, ill-health, and/or family caring responsibilities.

In a study of 21 Sub-Saharan African countries, 66 per cent of children who had lost both parents lived with grandparents (Beegle et al. 2009). In Asia, studies suggest that 50-80 per cent of children outside of parental care live with grandparents (Knodel et al. 2009, Roby 2011 and Save the Children 2007) and similarly large proportions of children are cared for by grandparents in Europe and Latin America (EveryChild and HelpAge International 2012). These elderly carers often have no regular income such as an old age pension; in Kenya, for example, only three per cent of people aged 65 and over receive a social pension (EveryChild and HelpAge International 2012). Older carers, furthermore, are often denied formal recognition of 'parental rights' or lack the requisite birth certificate documentation to access existing social protection services (EveryChild and HelpAge International 2012; Kuo and Operario 2009). And the vast majority of older carers are women, who are disproportionately represented among older people living in poverty (HelpAge International 2007).

More broadly, social protection schemes around the world often fail to reach children living on the streets, in migrant families, or in child-only households; this is often due to these children lacking official documentation such as birth registration certificates or proof of legal residence (EveryChild 2010). While some countries have attempted to include vulnerable children in their national social protection agenda, the policies which seek to extend social assistance to vulnerable children are frequently under-resourced and poorly implemented.²³ In Nigeria, for example, child protection services remain chronically under-funded and under-staffed at the state government level, and few mechanisms are in place to properly integrate child protection components into broader social protection systems, including cash transfers. As a result, it is estimated that as few as 8,000 of the country's 17 million orphans and vulnerable children are reached by government social assistance and social services (Jones et al. 2012).

Explicitly targeting children outside of parental care, marginalised and vulnerable children can be

²³ More broadly, as Holmes and Brauholtz-Speight (2009) note, not only do few countries across West and Central Africa have established, coherent approaches to social protection, but an even smaller number of these countries (such as Ghana, Mali, and Senegal) have made the attempt to integrate child protection components within their broader social protection systems. Jones (2009) similarly observes that child protection issues receive only limited attention in poverty reduction strategy papers in the region, and even then are rarely tied to broader social protection agendas.

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a key mechanism for improving programme coverage. Kenya's social protection strategy provides an example of good practice here, as it has made coverage of orphans and vulnerable children an integral component of its Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) project.²⁴ Likewise, in South Africa, the continent's largest social insurance system provides targeted transfers to more than 10 million poor children²⁵ (the Child Support Grant), to poor caregivers (the Foster Care Grant), and to carers of severely disabled children (the Care Dependency Grant). Similar schemes exist throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, including in Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. Evidence suggests that the distribution of transfers through a child-centred targeting strategy is effective in reaching the poorest families and children outside of parental care (Stewart and Handa 2008). It should be noted that such targeted funding must be handled with care to avoid perverse incentives for family separation, as has been reported in South Africa, with parents placing children in extended family care to increase access to grants (Hanlon et al. 2010).

Second, **programme conditionalities** linked to child protection behaviours are another approach that is widely used within the social protection field. Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) that demand positive behaviours (e.g. service uptake or participation in educational and awareness-raising sessions) in exchange for regular cash payments are an increasingly popular social protection instrument.²⁶ A limited number of CCTs include child protection-related conditionalities, such as mandatory childbirth registration (in Peru's Juntos cash transfer scheme), and abstaining from the use of child labour and involvement in child trafficking (Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme) (World Bank 2007; Jones 2009; Holmes and Jones 2011).²⁷ Chile's flagship social assistance programme, Chile Solidario, includes tailored psychosocial support from social workers, who work with families on a one-to-one basis to address a broad range of economic and social vulnerabilities underpinning vulnerable families' poverty traps, including issues relating to domestic violence and child abuse.²⁸

In other cases, conditionalities focus on improving children's schooling and, increasingly, girls' enrolment and attendance at secondary school. As discussed earlier, this is likely to have an indirect positive effect on child protection and care, given that school generally offers a protective environment for children and young people (with some caveats around school-based violence, discussed on page

24 Kenya's CT-OVC Project reaches approximately 250,000 households, and preliminary evidence points to important impacts in improving the well-being of children within the household, their nutritional health, education, and employment (see Kenya CT-OVC Evaluation Team 2012).

25 South Africa Government Services, 'Child Support Grant', http://www.services.gov.za//services//content//Home//ServicesForPeople//Socialbenefits//childsupportgrant//en_ZA; Pawelczyk, K. (2012) 'Child Support Grants prove critical to reducing child poverty in South Africa', UNICEF, 31 May 2012, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica_62535.html.

26 An unavoidable point of tension in the concept of CCTs is the problematic nature of attaching conditionality to assistance which should be the universal right of all children – indeed, those children whose parents fail to comply with conditionalities may well be those most at risk. Furthermore, monitoring of child-related conditionalities as part of transfer programmes is difficult, and establishing monitoring systems requires greater investment in labour, resources, and technical knowledge, which may be particularly challenging for countries with governance and resource deficits. Furthermore, conditionality tends to be 'soft', in the sense that it is rarely enforced (Jones 2009).

27 Categorical targeting of vulnerable groups, however, risks limiting the focus of coverage too narrowly, such as prioritising children orphaned by HIV and AIDS at the exclusion of other vulnerable groups of children.

28 *Solidario* is also notable for its innovative universal integrated child development programme, *Chile Crece Contigo*, which is made available to all pregnant Chilean women as a means to access both child development support and, when needed, facilitate referral to the broader social protection system (Government of Chile 2012). A similar approach can be seen in Mexico's *Estancias* programme, which offers a nationwide network of subsidised childcare facilities to help working mothers (Pereznieto and Campos 2010).

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10 and lowers their exposure to the worst forms of child labour (World Bank 2009).²⁹

As mentioned above, CCTs are not without controversy and there is significant debate over their relative merits compared with unconditional cash transfers (Baird et al. 2011). While there is now considerable empirical evidence which underscores that attaching conditions has a positive impact on education attendance, and especially on girls' secondary schooling (ibid.), there is also evidence from a recent social experiment in Malawi pointing to the protective nature of unconditional cash transfers, especially among households where conditional incentives would not have made enough of a difference to keep adolescent girls in school. Here, evaluation findings indicated that unconditional cash transfers can play a role in child protection by reducing early pregnancy and child marriage, and also reducing the risk of young people engaging in transactional sex (Baird et al. 2011).

Third, **strengthening linkages to complementary programmes and services** is increasingly seen as a vital part of social protection designed to tackle the interlinked nature of economic and social vulnerabilities (UNICEF 2012; Holmes and Jones 2013). To maximise benefits for children's protection and care it is essential that such complementarity includes linkages to child protection services. In Peru, for example, the Juntos CCT programme is increasingly making referrals to family violence prevention and protection services (Vargas Valente 2010). Social health insurance programming also represents another rapidly expanding area of social protection, with a potentially critical role to play in child protection. Ghana's LEAP programme, for instance, automatically links cash transfer beneficiaries to the National Health Insurance Scheme, which also exempts pregnant women and children under 18 from premium payments. However, medical professionals could also be supported to strengthen their capacities to identify and refer children and young people most at risk of abuse and neglect to child protection specialists within social work systems. A first key step is promoting registration of the most vulnerable children. The rapid expansion of health insurance coverage in Ghana³⁰ mirrors similar growth in social health insurance arrangements elsewhere, such as China's New Rural Cooperative Medical Scheme, which now has 833 million people enrolled, and India's Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, which at the end of 2012 was reaching 110 million poor individuals (Holmes and Jones 2013). These large-scale schemes represent key opportunities for the integration of complementary national child protection components.

Finally, it is vital to strengthen **institutional capacities** so that child protection goals are routinely embedded in the vulnerability assessments that underpin social protection programming at all stages, from design through to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Here, it is critical to involve a wide range of child protection actors (including schools, health facilities, police and the justice system) in order to identify, refer, and support vulnerable children, as well as maintaining open dialogue with influential community, religious and traditional leaders.

²⁹ In Malawi, for instance, a comparison of two components of the same transfer programme – one featuring unconditional transfers and the other featuring a school attendance conditionality – showed a clear positive impact on the enrolment and regular attendance rates of school-age girls who received CCTs over standard transfers, as well as a notable improvement in English test scores (Baird et al. 2011).

³⁰ By 2007, only two years after its launch, around 8.2 million people – 33 per cent of Ghana's population – were registered with the scheme, including informal sector workers (Holmes and Jones 2013).

3.3 Involving the private sector in addressing child labour and other exploitative practices

The private sector also has an important responsibility to help ensure child protection rights regarding child labour via corporate social responsibility measures (Jones 2009). In light of increased globalisation of the private sector and economies in recent decades, there is growing recognition that greater attention needs to be paid to the potentially negative impacts on child rights. A 2013 statement by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child called for the integration of CRC principles, including: 1) the right to non-discrimination; 2) the best interests of the child; 3) the right to life, survival and development; and 4) the right of the child to be heard. The statement calls for such principles to be embedded within business operations through legislation and regulation; coordination and monitoring; remediation; enforcement of rights; and policy and awareness-raising (UN CRC 2013).

Stakeholders in the child protection movement argue that transnational companies have the potential to affect and thereby potentially violate all human rights. Societies and businesses can respond to this by working together to respect and protect such rights, especially for vulnerable groups such as children (Ruggie 2008). Whilst corporate social responsibility (CSR) in general has become a mainstream issue in the private sector, civil society actors working in child protection have raised concerns about the weak implementation of CSR principles. In 2007, a report by Save the Children UK and the Corporate Responsibility Coalition (CORE), based on a review of three CSR codes – the International Marketing Code for Breastmilk Substitutes, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) – highlighted concerns over the limited application of CSR principles in relation to child protection. The results show widespread violations to all three codes, including at company management level; failure to enforce sanctions for violation; and a general contradiction between market drivers and the principles of voluntary codes (Doane and Holder 2007). The report called for concrete and binding minimum standards in the implementation of CSR principles, to be bolstered by strong enforcement regimes.

As CSR measures are usually voluntary, they lack accountability and can differ from business to business (ECPAT International 2012). As the impacts of the globalised private sector have become more widespread, the potential negative effects on child rights go beyond that of exploiting children for labour. A concrete and consistent definition of CSR has thus been proposed by civil society actors to ensure child protection standards across the private sector.

In response to such concerns, UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children launched a process in 2010 to develop a set of guiding principles for the business sector on how to effectively protect and respect child rights. After a process of consultation with businesses, governments, children and civil society, the Children's Rights and Business Principles was launched in 2012 (UNICEF et al. 2012). The Principles are based on the UN CRC and also include the need to ensure all products and services, marketing and advertising and business activities and facilities ensure or comply with child rights and protection. The guidelines are designed to address gaps in business operations which are often overlooked by stakeholders and cover all business activities in the workplace, marketplace and community. UNICEF also published an adjacent set of practical guidelines and tools for companies to comprehensively incorporate child rights into their business practices. These include policy commitment through explicit endorsement of child protection, identification of gaps and necessary amendments; child rights impact assessments which should be

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embedded within company due diligence processes; integration of child rights requirements in job descriptions; monitoring performance and reporting results and finally, implementation of remediation procedures.

The ILO, for instance, has been spearheading public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives in several countries as a promising strategy to reduce child labour. Good practice example of PPPs can also be seen in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, where the ILO has worked with businesses to implement the Chocolate and Cocoa Industry Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) to Combat Child Labour. This initiative has facilitated additional, targeted support to the ILO's broader efforts in eradicating child labour from cocoa-growing farms in the region (ILO 2012a).

Initiatives in child protection and CSR have also been launched in the private sector itself. For example, Microsoft has designed the Child Exploitation Tracking System to assist law enforcement worldwide. The analysis tool is designed to enable officers to better investigate sex offenders in the online environment (ECPAT International 2011a). The financial industry has established the Financial Coalition against Child Pornography (FCACP) in the USA designed to block the flow of funds which are used by illegal child exploitation enterprises thereby contributing to the elimination of profitability of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (ECPAT International 2011b).

3.4 Ensuring that child protection principles are embedded within education systems

Learning is a cumulative process across the life cycle, with the largest returns on human capital investments beginning when children are first exposed to basic skill development, literacy and numeracy knowledge outside their home at the primary school level (Carneiro and Heckman 2003; Cunha et al. 2006). By ensuring universal access to quality education for all children, this process can lead to parallel gains in both child protection and economic growth. Education achieves this dual purpose by offering children a chance to cultivate their human capital for greater productivity later on in the life cycle while simultaneously providing them with a safe and nurturing environment in which to develop.

However, as with social protection, sensitivity to child protection concerns within the education environment cannot be assumed. Education systems must instead be deliberately designed with specific child protection linkages in mind, so that children can learn in safe and secure environments, free from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

This requires several mutually supportive approaches. First, **universal education must be available to all children, including those who are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation**. Over the past few decades, recognition of the importance of primary education for children's development and well-being has resulted in great strides in the provision of universal primary education worldwide, as encapsulated in MDG 2.³¹ Despite significant barriers, progress has been notable, with 85 per cent of all children in developing countries now enrolled in school by age

³¹ United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>.

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12 (World Bank 2007). However, transition rates from primary to secondary school remain far lower than primary enrolment, especially in Sub-Saharan African countries. This is the result of interlinked factors such as inadequate lower primary school preparedness levels for the transition to secondary, high direct and indirect costs, and difficulties in physically accessing secondary schools, as well as a broader perception of the irrelevance of secondary education stemming at least in part from irrelevant curricula and passive, non-interactive teaching (World Bank 2007).³²

Moreover, there is a critical need to improve access to education for hard-to-reach groups of children, particularly those who are most marginalised as the result of exploitation, abuse, and lack of adequate parental care (UNESCO 2010; Save the Children 2009). The overwhelming majority of children who live and work on the street, for example, do not attend school – as in Egypt, where 70 per cent of street children have dropped out of school, and 30 per cent have never attended (Consortium for Street Children 2009). Similarly, children living without either parent are already 12 per cent less likely to attend school than their peers who have parental support. This situation is compounded by concurrent risks arising from discrimination, stigma and abuse, which are common among orphans who have lost their parents due to AIDS and are living with extended family carers; children who are already isolated and marginalised, such as children with disabilities, are even more vulnerable to such discrimination and abuse (Pinheiro 2006; Save the Children 2007; UN 2010).³³ Child marriage also typically halts girls' formal education, especially if they become pregnant (CRIN 2007; World Vision 2008).

Such factors have led to growing international support for inclusive education as an important aspect of child protection and care, particularly in the dialogue surrounding child labour (ILO 2010b). Yet these efforts have achieved only limited success to date, with national education policymakers largely continuing to overlook the protection and other needs of hard-to-reach children. As such, key gaps in extending children's access to education, including lower rates of primary-to-secondary school transition, and lack of access for marginalised and vulnerable children, must be recognised and addressed through reforms to national education systems.

Second, **schools must be a safe and protective environment in which children can learn.**

As already noted, however, this is not the reality; in many schools around the world, children routinely experience violence, abuse and bullying. Such child protection violations represent tragic inversions of the secure, nurturing classroom environment that all children have a right to, and, as already discussed, leave children exposed to a wide range of psychosocial risks to their human capital development. School violence is also a leading cause of school dropouts globally, reducing children's access to education further and, in turn, threatening the human capital needed to sustain national economic growth (Pinheiro 2006; Jones et al. 2008; Pereznieta and Harper 2010). Strong efforts to eradicate school violence are therefore essential, beginning with the assurance of safe physical locations for schools and enforced legislation to ban violence in schools and around school premises. In addition, teachers and other staff must be properly vetted and comply with codes of conduct for

32 While transition rates are 95% and higher in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North America, and Western Europe, and relatively high in Latin America and the Arab States, there is far more variance across Sub-Saharan Africa. Rates vary, for example, from 95% in South Africa to 51% in Uganda and 36% in Tanzania (UNESCO 2011).

33 Additionally, parents are often incentivised to place their children in residential care unnecessarily, regardless of the risks, as a means of accessing otherwise-unavailable educational resources. This is particularly common for children with disabilities who may otherwise be unable to access mainstream education, as well as in emergency contexts where poverty levels are high (EveryChild and Better Care Network 2012; Save the Children 2009).

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non-violent classroom discipline, and teachers trained in non-violent conflict resolution approaches. Educators should also be trained to identify cases of abuse and neglect among students, and be given the knowledge, resources, and support needed to link at-risk children to wider social services when child protection violations are recognised and/or reported.

Third, alongside these important elements, **education must be of sufficient quality and relevance that children are less likely to drop out of the safe classroom environment.**

The low quality of education that many children receive is a serious concern (World Bank 2007); by quality, we mean the output of schooling in terms of knowledge and cognitive abilities, as well as social skills and other non-cognitive skills relevant for preparing young people for work and adulthood. Although recent decades have seen a major expansion in access to education, higher primary school enrolment rates have often been accompanied by lower academic achievement, particularly in basic competencies such as numeracy and literacy as well as more specialised skills.³⁴ Specific efforts should be made to track enrolment and learning outcomes by equity groups, including gender, age, disability, urban-rural, ethnic, and income groups, as well as progress in reducing the gaps in outcomes between top and bottom socioeconomic quintiles (Save the Children 2012).

Fourth, **educational quality is key in supporting successful transitions into employment.**

Curricula that properly equip students with the skills they need to make the transition to the job market also help to address the economic and child protection costs associated with youth unemployment. In this regard, gaps in educational quality are particularly problematic from an employment perspective, given the widening gap between the lack of basic education and the global market's increasing demands for workers with post-primary education and specific technical, communication, and problem-solving skills, which go far beyond many countries' standard secondary and even tertiary curricula. In many developing countries, schooling is routinely failing to equip students with basic numeracy and literacy skills at the primary level, which means they subsequently struggle to provide the specialised knowledge in science and technology (particularly computer literacy), economics, and foreign languages increasingly demanded by the worldwide knowledge economy (World Bank 2003; World Bank 2007). At upper secondary and tertiary levels, unemployment/underemployment is also often linked to a similar disjuncture between formal educational qualifications and employability (Biavaschi et al. 2012). Higher education curricula, in particular, are often unresponsive to market demands (ILO 2012b).

Finally, beyond employability, classroom education provides an invaluable opportunity to **inform children of their rights, as well as a means to protect themselves from violence.** Quality educational curricula must therefore be judged in terms of their ability to impart empowering information on child protection to students, including an emphasis on children's rights to education and, ideally, the inclusion of human-rights and inclusion-based curricula which incorporate sensitivities towards gender, disabilities, and non-discrimination (Howe and Covell 2005). Comparative evidence

³⁴ Many students, including those who reach lower secondary school, are barely literate. For instance, although 80 per cent of school children in Morocco and Namibia remain enrolled throughout their primary education, less than 20 per cent graduate with minimum command of the material they learned in the process (UNESCO 2004; World Bank 2007). In several African countries, less than half of young women aged 15-24 are able to read after three years of primary school. In Ghana and Zambia, this even extends to students in grade 6 (World Bank 2007). And as standardised tests also show, students in developing countries trail students in OECD countries by approximately 20 per cent with regard to the acquisition of basic skills – a discrepancy that further reflects serious inequalities in access to quality education between rich and poor households (World Bank 2007).

from North America and Europe shows that beyond these advantages, rights education in schools also contributes to an improved school environment, with more engaged teachers and pupils, and, later in life, individuals that actively support other people's rights (Covell and Howe 2001). Recognising this, the Children's Charter of South Africa, for instance, directly acknowledges the right of all children 'to be educated about child abuse and the right to form youth groups to protect them from abuse'.³⁵

3.5 Strengthening access to and quality of vocational training

Older children and adolescents preparing to leave school often lack a clear path from education to decent employment commensurate with their skills. As discussed above, this can lead to risks of exploitative employment, trafficking, and participation in gangs. It is therefore essential that they have access to quality vocational training that can equip them with the necessary skills to make this critical transition. Giving older children and adolescents a better chance of employment not only helps them realise their potential as young adults and later in life, but also helps to ensure that national economies receive the important infusion of new and appropriately-skilled young labour for continued growth (as recognised by MDG 1b, pertaining to decent youth employment).³⁶

Unfortunately, in 2013, the employment outlook for young people in many developing and developed countries alike appears grim. The ongoing global financial crisis, which sparked the more recent eurozone crisis, has led to continuing difficulties in access to credit, reduced consumer confidence, and fiscal contractions. Job markets worldwide have contracted, with young people disproportionately affected; today, more than 75 million young people (aged 15-25) are without work.³⁷ It is estimated that another 6.4 million unemployed young people, demoralised by their lack of prospects, have stopped seeking employment altogether (ILO 2011a; ILO 2012b; Ortiz and Cummins 2012). Young women have also been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis. They are more likely to be unemployed than men, as in Greece, where women aged 15-24 have an unemployment rate of 67.4 per cent compared with 44.5 per cent for their male counterparts. The crisis has also worsened pre-existing employment difficulties for women, forcing more of them into vulnerable employment, defined by low wages, no job security and often riskier workplace environments (Stavropoulou and Jones 2013). Within this context, the next generation of children will face an increasingly difficult path from education to employment.

Given the dangerous links that exist between high youth unemployment and the heightened risks of protection violations against children and young people discussed above, one important strategy in breaking these causal relationships is to facilitate closer integration between schooling, vocational training and the needs of the labour market, aimed at post-compulsory secondary school aged

35 The Children's Charter of South Africa <http://dohsoc.nwpg.gov.za/NWDoH/documents/legislation/childrens%20rights%20charter.pdf>.

36 United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>.

37 Youth unemployment is highest in North Africa, at 27.9%, and lowest in East Asia, at 9%. Some of the most dramatic shifts have occurred in European Union countries, where overall, youth unemployment increased by 3.6% between 2008 and 2011. There have been dramatic increases in youth unemployment in Greece (now at 44%) and Spain (46%) (ILO 2012b and c).

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children.³⁸ Evidence supports the efficacy of vocational training as a means of facilitating higher rates of youth employment. In cross-country comparisons, developed countries that implement effective dual vocational training systems, including Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, have lower rates of young people classed as 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET); they also have lower youth unemployment levels, and lower average repeated unemployment periods among participants than countries without such schemes (Quintini et al. 2007; Quintini and Manfredi 2009).

However, dual apprenticeships are not always feasible in developing countries owing to the small share of employment in the modern wage sector, slow wage employment growth, and lack of institutional capacity. In such cases, traditional apprenticeships with informal sector firms have effectively used incentives to improve quality and encourage innovation, such as Kenya's Jua Kali programme, which features a revolving capital fund that provides vouchers to around 24,000 informal sector manufacturing workers to help them purchase training in the open market. Such traditional apprenticeships must, however, be extended to young women and men from very poor households (Johanson and Adams 2004). An emerging opportunity for such capacity building can be found in South-South cooperation efforts by institutions such as Brazil's National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI),³⁹ which has worked to help restructure and improve the efficacy of professional education centres in Angola and Mozambique, drawing on Brazil's domestic good practice model (World Bank and IPEA 2011).⁴⁰

38 School-based vocational education, to this end, helps incentivise employer hiring by providing students with targeted, technical skills that are directly transferable to the labour market, and which require less on-the-job training. This type of training is typically delivered at the post-compulsory secondary level, or made available at a specialised educational track compulsory school. Dual vocational education and training, by comparison, incorporates an element of work-place experience during which time students acquire on-the-job technical skills specific to the business, paid for under a fixed-term, reduced wage by employers. Participants also continue to receive state-funded school-based vocational education, in order to simultaneously provide them with more generalised skills that they can carry with them across employers (Nilsson 2010; Biavaschi et al. 2012). Both approaches rely on close collaboration between employers, unions and educational institutions for success.

39 As of 2010, SENAI boasted 2,362,312 registered students, with 419,257 enrolled in its Distance Education Programme (World Bank and IPEA 2011).

40 Active labour market programmes accessible to, or designed for, youth also have an important role to play. Within developed countries, quality job-search assistance schemes have had positive short-term effects in ending unemployment, as have publicly sponsored training and start-up support to young business people in the medium term. Targeted, temporary hiring subsidies provided to employers have likewise proven effective, although more costly (Martin and Grubb 2001; Card et al. 2010; Quintini et al. 2007). Good practice examples exist in youth programmes such as the UK and Australian 'Jobstart' programmes, and in Thailand's youth start-up support (Ortiz 2008). Labour market regulation has a further critical impact on youth employment. For example, higher minimum wages provide for increased income to working individuals and their families, but tend to discourage employers from taking on unskilled young workers at such rates. For this reason, a common solution worldwide is to cover young workers' salaries under a specific, but lower, minimum wage as a necessary compromise (Neumark and Wascher 2007; Gomez-Salvador and Leiner-Killingner 2008; Biavaschi et al. 2012).

4. Conclusions and recommendations for post-MDG policy dialogues

In this report, we have emphasised the importance of a more nuanced understanding of growth as both an opportunity for, as well as a potential threat to, child protection. Socioeconomic growth and development can introduce valuable new resources and opportunities for children and adolescents to stay safe and reach their full developmental potential, particularly pro-poor growth and development which increase households' economic security and reduce risks for children. Yet these same changes are often accompanied by tumultuous periods of transition, in which rapid economic growth may introduce a host of new threats to child protection in the short term. Growth, in addition to being pro-poor, inclusive and employment generating, must also serve to protect children. It must be carefully managed so that the new opportunities it brings reduce rather than compound children's vulnerabilities.

In order to achieve this, the following policy and programme actions should be considered.

- a. **Include goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development framework that help provide stronger, more comprehensive child protection systems, both as a means of promoting growth and employment as well as ensuring children's well-being through growth that is sensitive to child protection needs.** We suggest a goal that might be worded as follows:

All children live a life free from all forms of violence, are protected in conflicts and disasters, and thrive in a safe family environment.

The inclusion of such a goal could help to galvanise greater investments in robust child protection systems which include comprehensive legislation and guidance on child protection; strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms; child protection services (such as monitoring and responding to abuse and providing alternative care where needed); and the full participation of affected children and families. Importantly, a greater focus on child protection must encompass greater attention to prevention, including strengthening families and communities to enable them to better protect children.

Depending on the number of goals finally agreed on, and opportunities for coalition-building among civil society and national government actors, such a goal could be discrete or subsumed within a broader goal related to freedom from all forms of violence, potentially also addressing children and young people's vulnerability to gender-based violence and involvement in armed conflict.

Any goal related to child protection must be accompanied by a clear recognition of the fact that, while economic growth has an important role to play in improving children's well-being and protection, growth alone is an insufficient indicator of progress in child protection. Reflecting the emerging consensus within the UN-coordinated post-MDG consultation process about the importance of achieving 'resilience for all', our synthesis of the evidence indicates that the post-MDG framework must continue to drive an agenda of equitable, inclusive poverty reduction, growth, and employment if all children are to have equitable access to the protection and care that is their fundamental human

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right. In order to achieve this, the findings from this report indicate that the following complementary policy and programme actions should be considered.

- b. **Eradicate harmful child labour and adopt a life cycle approach to employment whereby childhood and adolescence are seen as a time for learning and laying the foundations for the future.** In particular, it will be essential to eradicate harmful forms of child labour (including exploitative practices within domestic labour) through the adoption and enforcement of effective child labour laws by both governments and members of the private sector, investing in public-private partnerships, and efforts to guarantee that children are not dropping out of education because of their work or other child protection violations (for example, neglect and abuse in the home and violence in school).
- c. **Promote social protection programming that embeds child protection components at every stage, from design through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation.** Social protection, which promotes adequate resourcing for child protection and child care, is essential if it is to effectively enhance the well-being of all children. Strategies should focus on the following areas.
 - Ensuring that existing social protection schemes are extended to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable children (particularly those who lack parental care).
 - Enabling policymakers (where appropriate) to develop a better understanding of how conditionalities can be used to strengthen the child protection element of cash transfer schemes.
 - Institutionalising linkages with complementary services and programmes that deal with prevention of and protection from child abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- d. **Ensure that young people everywhere have basic literacy and numeracy, technical and life skills to become active citizens with decent employment.** Guaranteeing access to quality education for all children and young people, and investing in the closer integration of upper secondary and tertiary education with market needs, offers avenues to encourage children to stay in safe educational environments while reducing the potential violence and instability that accompany widespread youth unemployment. Similarly, investing in vocational education systems is a way of providing marketable skills to young people who are about to embark on the transition to employment and adulthood in what is an extremely challenging global economic environment.

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