Protect my future

Why child protection matters

In the post-2015 development agenda

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Better Care Network

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CONSORTIUM FOR STREET CHILDREN

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SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

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For children, their rights and equitable development

World Vision

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This paper was written by Emily Delap, Head of Policy for Family for Every Child. It is the culmination of a series of inter-agency papers on the links between child protection and major development goals, designed to feed into the thematic debates around the post 2015 development framework. The paper draws heavily on the other papers in the series, and in addition to the author of this paper, contributors to the series include:

- Andy West, a consultant, on equity
- Daniela Reale of Save the Children on migration and trafficking
- Ghazal Keshavarzian, a consultant, on governance
- Janis Ridsdel of Plan and Christine McCormick of Save the Children on child protection in emergencies
- Josiah Kaplan and Nicola Jones of the Overseas Development Institute on growth, social protection and education.

Summary

The widespread failure to protect children is a global crisis, with 0.5-1.5 billion children experiencing violence each year (Pinheiro 2006), 150 million girls and 73 million boys who are raped or subject to sexual violence (WHO 2000), and 115 million children engaged in extremely harmful forms of work (ILO 2010). This global crisis represents a major violation of children's rights; an unacceptable situation, which must be remedied urgently, no matter what the costs. In addition to impacting on the current well-being of children, the widespread inadequate care and protection of children is also affecting the achievement of broader development objectives relating to child survival and health, education, economic growth and equity. Many girls and boys die each year because they are abused, neglected or exploited. Vulnerable children that survive into adulthood can be at a significant disadvantage, with many experiencing developmental delays, gaps in their schooling and mental and physical health problems due to their maltreatment. The stigma, discrimination and diminished life chances faced by children who are abused, exploited and neglected exacerbates inequity. Whilst the resilience of such children can carry with it some advantage for societies, in general these boys and girls are not able to contribute to economies to their full potential. In addition to the damaging impacts on children themselves, the negative effects of child maltreatment on human capital, combined with the costs associated with responding to abuse and neglect, means that inadequate care and protection also hinders economic growth.

The alarming impacts of child protection failures are likely to grow in significance unless something is done urgently. Global trends such as climate change, migration and urbanisation are all increasing children's vulnerability and governments are not investing enough resources in building and maintaining comprehensive child protection systems. Children around the world want more support to enable them to grow up free from violence, and within caring, safe families.

It is therefore is essential that governments, UN agencies and other actors engaged in the design of the framework that will replace the current Millennium Development Goals in 2015:

1. Include a goal on child protection. For example:

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

2. Listen to the voices of children, including vulnerable and commonly excluded groups such as those without adequate care and protection, in debates around the design of the post 2015 development framework and in the implementation and monitoring of this framework.

3. Promote the equitable achievement of all other goals included in the post 2015 development framework through assessing progress within commonly excluded and discriminated against groups, including children without adequate care and protection.

As the quote below indicates, child protection is essential for ensuring strong, flourishing societies; it is the foundation of child well-being that allows girls and boys to thrive, develop and contribute to their full potential.

"*You are rebuilding the schools and the roads and the bridges, but you are not rebuilding us and we suffered too much. What is done in Liberia is like constructing a house without cement. It can't hold for too long."* (A young woman in Liberia who as a child witnessed her father and brother being killed and is engaged in commercial sex work, cited in Plan and FHI 2009 p.54)

We must therefore all strive for a world where children can grow up safely in their families, and be free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation as this world will be a better place. If we achieve the goal outlined above, alongside targets in areas such as child abuse, early marriage, child labour, and avoiding unnecessary separation from families:

- Girls will not be forced into harmful early marriage, and will be able to wait until they are at least 18 before getting married. This, combined with reduced sexual abuse, will in turn reduce maternal and infant mortality as fewer girls will get pregnant before their bodies are ready.
- Child mortality will fall because children are loved and nurtured within families and girls are not neglected in favour of their brothers.
- Children will not have to work long hours and/or in harmful or hazardous conditions, risking their wellbeing and health and depriving them of their education.
- Children will be able to learn in schools as they are not terrified of the threat of bullying or corporal punishment or too afraid to go to school because they might be raped by their teachers.
- Human capital potential will not be diminished by children who have experienced so much neglect or abuse that it damages their physical and mental development and employment prospects.
- The state will be able to re-invest some of the resources it currently spends on supporting victims of abuse.
- Societies will become more equitable as children's chances in life are not seriously damaged by their lack of care and protection. Children's rights to be free from inadequate care and protection will also be achieved.
- Children will grow up in resilient communities that can withstand the shocks of disasters and conflict, and protect them from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect even in emergency situations.
- Girls and boys will be happier, safer and more able to develop to their full potential because they grow up in caring and protective families and get the love and attention that it is human nature to crave.

Introduction

The issue of child abuse, neglect and exploitation is missing from both the existing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and many debates around the framework that will replace the MDGs when they come to an end in 2015. This is despite commitments to address child protection made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration which preceded the development of the MDGs.[1] The lack of attention to this important issue is contributing to the current global crisis in child protection, with 0.5-1.5 billion children experiencing violence each year (Pinheiro 2006), 150 million girls and 73 million boys who are raped or subject to sexual violence (WHO 2000), and 115 million children engaged in extremely harmful forms of work (ILO 2010). In addition to impacting on child well-being and rights, the global crisis in child protection is having a detrimental effect on societies and on the achievement of a range of broader development goals. For example, lost opportunities to attend school as a result of child labour and violence within schools are depleting human capital, with ramifications for employment and growth. In this paper, we provide evidence of the central importance of child protection, arguing that the post 2015 development framework must therefore include a specific goal and targets on child protection.

The paper is the culmination of a series of inter-agency thematic papers on the links between child protection and major development goals. It summarises other papers in the series which address the links between child protection and equity, health, governance, population dynamics, conflict, disasters and fragility, education, growth and employment.[2]

What is child protection?

Child protection refers to strategies and structures aimed at protecting children from abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence (Save the Children 2010). This maltreatment of children includes early marriage, child labour and other forms of exploitation, and all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse and physical violence against children in homes, schools and wider communities (UN 1989). It is closely linked to the better care of children, which involves 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 2010a).

[1] See: http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm
[2] For other papers in the series please visit: http://www.familyforeverychild.org/knowledge-centre

Why child protection matters

Inadequate care and protection violates children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989) is the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history, with all but two countries having ratified. The Convention commits states to taking action on child protection through a number of articles including those relating to child labour, trafficking and sexual exploitation; abuse and neglect within and outside of the home; family support and separation from parents, and the provision of alternative care. The Convention is supported by several other international agreements, including those relating to alternative care and child labour.[3] Together, these agreements represent an obligation to ensure that girls and boys are free from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and that all children grow up safe and protected within families.

Inadequate care and protection is killing children

Violence and neglect are major causes of early death. For example:

- Girls forced into early marriage and sexual activity commonly become pregnant before their bodies are ready, leading to an increase in both maternal and child mortality. Pregnancy related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19 in developing countries, and babies born to teenage mothers are 50% more likely to die in the first months of their lives than those born to women in their twenties (ODI and Save the Children 2012; World Vision 2008).
- The mortality rate for children under four years old growing up in large scale institutions in Russia is ten times higher than that of the general population (Ministry of Health and Social Development 2007), and in many parts of the world, children with disabilities are especially at risk of such neglect (BCN and EveryChild 2012; UN 2011). Despite this, the number of children in such institutional care is growing in many regions of the world (EveryChild 2011a).
- In conflict situations children are often recruited into armed forces or groups and placed at risk of violent death. Between 2010 and 2012 there were 20 countries that used children in their armed forces or groups (Child Soldiers International 2012).

Inadequate care and protection threatens wellbeing and stops children from reaching their full potential

There are several ways in which inadequate care and protection stops children from developing and learning to their full potential. Firstly, poor care and a lack of stimulation have particularly

[3] See for example: ILO convention 138 and 182 on Child Labour (ILO 1973/ 1999); Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN 2010)

harmful effects on the development of very young children, with children in institutional care who lack an attachment with a consistent carer commonly facing problems with physical development, language and intelligence (Bilson 2009; Williamson and Greenberg 2010). Conversely, stimulation provided by a devoted carer can reduce early childhood stunting, having as great an impact as the provision of nutritional supplements (World Bank 2009).

'In the orphanages, the substitute mothers could not give us the love of a true mother. We didn't have our parents' care and that is something terrible. We would have really wanted to have it, even if they were starving poor, we would have wanted to have the care that each child deserves.' (Young people in residential care in El Salvador, quoted in Tolfree 2005 p.4)

Secondly, children who experience inadequate care, abuse or exploitation in homes or communities are less likely to go to or do well in school:

- For the 13.6% of children who are child labourers, including a quarter of children in Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO 2010), combining work with school often has a negative impact on learning achievements with long working hours preventing many children from attending school at all (UNESCO 2010).
- Children who have lost both parents are 12% less likely to be in school than other children (UN 2010b), and since up to 30% of children in some countries are without parental care, this constitutes a major barrier to education (UNICEF 2008a).
- Early marriage usually means an end to education for girls. For example, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, 30% of girls who are not in school said that the primary reason is marriage (ICRW 2006). Around 34% of women in Africa and 40% in Asia were married or in a union before the age of 18 (UNICEF 2009).

"...I did not go to school as my father saw it is no use to take a girl to school, so after FGM [female genital mutilation] I was married off. My father had taken dowry and thus forcing me to get married at the age of 12 years. My mother agreed with me that I was small, but she could not go against my father for fear of being beaten…" (Girl, cited in CDF and Forward 2010, p. 17).

Thirdly, violence within the school system itself also stops millions of children from gaining an education. Almost four in ten 12 to 18 year olds report that violence in schools is common (Pinheiro 2006). Such violence includes bullying by other pupils, corporal punishment and sexual violence, with teachers commonly requesting sex from girls in return for higher grades in many parts of the world. Violence causes many children to perform badly in school or to drop out altogether (Save the Children 2011a):

- 40% of parents in one survey in Ethiopia said that school violence discouraged them from sending their daughters to school.
- 68% of boys and 58% of girls in a refugee camp in Lebanon who had dropped out of school had done so because of harsh treatment by teachers, and in Nepal 14% of school drop outs are attributed to a fear of teachers.

- 57% of children in Brazil who had experienced violence in school felt that their learning had been adversely affected.[4]

"My 45 year-old teacher made me pregnant. I have a baby now, but no one helps take care of it except my mother. The teacher denies what happened and refuses to pay for the child." (17-year-old girl from Liberia cited in Save the Children 2011a p.3)

"The teacher shouldn't use the stick because it is very painful and the students don't get any knowledge from beatings like this." (A child from Cambodia, cited in Save the Children 2011a p.3)

Finally, the impacts of child maltreatment are long lasting, reaching well into adulthood. In addition to the effect on education and consequent employment prospects, maltreated children are at higher risk of later behavioral, physical and mental health problems, including depression, obesity, heart disease, cancer, high risk behaviors and sexually transmitted infections, alcohol and drug misuse, and violence (Gilbert et al 2009; Krug et al 2002; WHO/ IPSCAN 2006).

Whilst the impacts of abuse, neglect and exploitation on education and child development are undoubtedly devastating, it is important not to pity children who have experienced such maltreatment, and to recognize and build on the resilience and strength that many of these girls and boys display (for example see Lenz 2004).

Inadequate care and protection is a major driver of inequity

As demonstrated above, many children who experience a lack of care or protection have severely diminished life chances as they are unable to learn or develop to their full potential. These children commonly come from already impoverished and discriminated against groups, and such girls and boys are further discriminated and stigmatised by communities because of the exploitation and abuse they have suffered (BCN et al 2012a):

- Married adolescent girls and children connected to the streets face stigma and discrimination from health care workers, denying them much needed sexual and reproductive health services (ODI and Save the Children 2012; BCN et al 2012b).
- Social protection schemes often fail to reach the most marginalised groups, and children outside of parental care or with uncertain legal status are commonly excluded from such programmes (Kaplan and Jones forthcoming; BCN et al 2013b).
- Children who migrate or who have been trafficked across borders are frequently treated like criminals, and are unable to access services open to other children (BCN et al 2013b).
- Children who have lost parental care, who are connected to the streets or who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation are widely stigmatised by communities, and such discrimination may be exacerbated by factors such as gender, disability and HIV status (BCN et al 2012a).

[4] Taken from Pereznieto et al (2010)

"I am always asking myself about the things that happened to me, did I do something wrong to pay for it every day?....all the abuse that I face on a daily basis must be punishment for a thing that I didn't do…I hope to return to school and learn how to change my life and learn how to make people respect me instead of insulting and abusing me." (A 15 year old boy living on the streets in Egypt, cited in Thomas de Benitez 2007 p.33)

Inadequate care and protection is hindering economic growth

Child abuse and exploitation carry high economic costs (Kaplan and Jones 2013). For example:

- The wide reaching impacts of a lack of care and protection on education and child development diminish human capital, which has a major impact on the growth of economies. In India, $1.49–$7.4 billion is lost each year in forgone social benefits related to early school leaving as a consequence of school violence, amounting to 0.13–0.64% of GDP (Pereznieto et al 2010).
- The economic costs of child abuse and neglect include: lost earnings and tax revenue as a consequence of premature death and the costs of child welfare, alternative care and health services. In the US, such costs are estimated to amount to $94 billion annually or 1% of the country's GDP (Fromm 2001).
- Child labour damages economic growth in numerous ways. Where child labour is illegal, businesses do not report or pay tax on child employees. Child labour can damage the export sector as many richer nations are reluctant to import goods associated with child labour. Child labour can also encourage the growth of illegal economic activity, particularly where the earnings from child trafficking or children's involvement in drugs and arms smuggling and prostitution fund criminal networks (UNODC 2008; ILO 2011).

Growing numbers of children are being inadequately cared for and protected

The evidence presented above illustrates how millions of children are currently facing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Some forms of inadequate care and protection, such as the use of institutional care, continue to rise in many settings, despite global recognition of the harm caused (Williamson and Greenberg 2010; EveryChild 2011a). Worryingly, many major global trends predicted for the coming decades are likely to exacerbate the maltreatment of children further:

- **Climate change and consequent disasters**: Climate change increases the frequency and severity of natural disasters, and every year over the next decade it is estimated that 175 million children worldwide will be affected by the natural disasters brought about by climate change (Save the Children 2009). Children are especially vulnerable to child protection violations during emergencies. For example, children may become separated from families in the chaos immediately surrounding emergencies, and risk of separation and exposure to

child labour may also increase as a consequence of the impact of emergencies on household poverty and livelihood practices (ChildFund Alliance et al 2013).

- **Fragile states:** Fragile states may be defined as situations where governments cannot or will not fulfil their responsibility to protect and fulfil the rights of the majority of the population (World Vision 2012). Some estimates suggests that the number of fragile states has risen from 28 in 2006 to 37 in 2010, with many projections indicating that the share of the world's poor living in fragile contexts will rise further (Gertz and Chandy 2011). Research by World Vision in five fragile states demonstrates amplified child protection risks in such settings, including high risk of early and forced marriage, sexual abuse and child labour. These child protection violations are commonly linked to weakened social fabric, and the limited capacity of families, communities and governments to protect children (World Vision 2012).
- **Adult and child migration**: There are around 750 million internal migrants, and 214 million international migrants globally, including 30 million migrants under the age of 20 (UNICEF 2012b). Although migration can open up new opportunities for families, migrants, including children moving with their families or independently, are often denied access to essential health and education services at their destinations, as noted above. Children who migrate alone often experience abuse and exploitation en route and at their destination. In communities in countries such as Moldova and China, over 25% of children are left behind by migrating parents (Jia and Tian 2010; UNICEF 2007). Whilst such children may benefit from remittances, many suffer emotionally and are placed at risk of child protection violations as a result of parents migrating (BCN et al 2013b; UNICEF 2010a).
- **Urbanisation**: The UN estimates that by 2025, 60% of children from developing countries will live in cities (UN cited in UNICEF 2012b). While children are abused, neglected and exploited in all settings, cities expose children to particular risk. Urbanisation is associated with the dislocation of extended family and community networks, and higher rates of divorce and single parenthood, leaving many parents struggling to bring children up alone (UNICEF 2010b; Roby 2011). Levels of violent crime are higher in cities than in urban areas, and urban children are also exposed to particular forms of harmful child labour, including child domestic work (ILO 2011; Save the Children 2012b).

''I paid smugglers and they hid me in a truck with a lot of people. There was no air and no space. I was lying for 36 hours in a container small like a grave. Some people died." (Boy, 17, from Afghanistan who migrated to Serbia cited in Save the Children 2012a p.4)

*"We are not safe, there is no protection, and we are not confident to walk freely on the streets because we are terrified of harassment."(*Girl from a city in Ethiopia, cited in Save the Children 2012b p.26)

Children want to grow up free from violence and in their families

When children are consulted about their priorities, living with families and being free from violence, abuse or exploitation are commonly major concerns. In 2012-13, Family for Every Child consulted over 700 children in seven countries on their priorities for the post 2015

development framework. Although many children did mention issues such as health and education included in the current MDGs, the vast majority also expressed a strong desire to be free from violence, and safe and well looked after within families:[5]

'Child labour which is common in tobacco estates should be stopped because any child who is involved in child labour cannot have time to go to school and they end up being uneducated.' (17 year old boy in extended family care in Malawi)

*'Being isolated from your parents means that your life will not be good. Children should not be isolated from their parents at all if they are alive.' (*Girl aged 8-12 in extended family care in Kenya)

*'Ensure there is no violence in children's homes or families.' (*Child aged 13-17 in Russia)

"I hate it when people fight and have hatred in their hearts for others." (11 year old child from India)

"The future will be just like Iraq! Urban warfare! I'm scared of dying, being shot." (16 year old boy from Brazil)

Many of the concerns raised by girls in these consultations with children mirror wider concerns about the violence experienced by women around the world.[6] Other consultations with children further support the need for increased efforts to ensure the protection and care of children. The Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction is based on consultations with 600 children in 21 high risk countries. These children identified child protection as a top priority alongside issues such as access to education, participation and community infra-structure.[7]

"The first thing that needs to be ensured is the protection of children. Otherwise there will be no education or anything else." (Moges, boy from a community at high risk of disasters in Ethiopia, cited in Children in a Changing Climate p.18)

In 2013, the Participate initiative compiled findings from participatory research in 57 countries. A strong concern raised by both adults and children included in many of these studies is a desire to live in dignity and free from violence. Indeed, many gave this issue as much prominence as more material concerns (Participate 2013).

Child protection is poorly resourced

As established above, child protection is vital both for children's well-being and for the growth and development of societies. Yet child protection is amongst the least well-resourced sectors. For example, in India just 0.035% of the total expenditure of the union government is on child

[5] For reports on these findings, please see: familyforeverychild.org

[6] See for example the key conclusions from Global Thematic Consultation on Violence, Citizen Security and the Post-2015 Development Agenda available at: http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/panama-consultation-discusses-violence-security-in-post-2015-agenda/

[7] See: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/globalplatform/childrencharter.pdf

protection, compared with 0.56% for child health, and 2.54% on education (MWCD 2007). In Ghana, the department responsible for child protection receives only 1% of total government budget allocations compared with 15% for the Ministry of Education, and 10% for the Ministry of Health (UNICEF et al 2012).

Child protection is also amongst the lowest-funded sectors in humanitarian action. Analysis of projects funded through the CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) and of projects included in Consolidated (CAPs) or Flash Appeals shows that overall, child protection receives only a fraction of the budgets allocated to other sectors. In 2009, funding for education through CERF and CAPS was $144 million compared to just $41 million for child protection (CPWG 2011).

The scant resources allocated to child protection are often badly used due to the extremely weak institutional organisation and governance of the sector. Common problems include:[8]

- A lack of comprehensive legislation on child protection, with laws that do exist failing to comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other global guidance on child protection and care.
- Inadequate enforcement of laws and delivery of child protection services due to factors such as low budget allocations and corruption.
- A lack of coordination between different child protection actors and between child protection and other sectors.
- Limited accountability, with few oversight mechanisms in place and incomplete data to assess government expenditure on child protection and child protection outcomes.
- A lack of opportunities for vulnerable children and their families to engage in the development of effective child protection legislation and interventions, and in monitoring progress.

As a consequence of these inadequacies, children around the world grow up without the back-up of support to their families, professional social workers or quality alternative care or other service provision. For example, China currently has only 200,000 social workers for 1.3 billion people.[9] In Sub-Saharan Africa on average 50-60% of social work posts are vacant, and in Tanzania only one third of the districts have a district social welfare officer (Davis 2009). Extended families, including many vulnerable grandparents, commonly bring up children with no or minimal support, and children who cannot be cared for by their families are often placed in harmful institutions because foster care, adoption, or the Islamic equivalent of *Kafala*, and small group homes are not available (EveryChild and HelpAge 2012; EveryChild 2011a/b; EveryChild

[8] Taken from BCN et al 2013b

[9] Though efforts are being made to expand this workforce. See: http://www.china.org.cn/china/2012-05/09/content_25342371.htm

2012). Services for very vulnerable groups in need of protection, such as trafficked or migrant children, are often woefully inadequate (BCN et al 2013b).

Child protection and the post 2015 development framework

Debates around the content of the post 2015 development framework have centred on 11 thematic areas, with the UN organising wide reaching consultations on each of these topics.[10] As demonstrated above and summarised in the table below, child protection is highly relevant to many of these areas. In particular, the changes outlined below to health care, education, social protection, emergency preparedness and responses and governance all have the potential to strengthen families, and provide more of the protective caring environments essential for the crucial task of preventing abuse and exploitation. Whilst the mainstreaming of child protection in other sectors is important, it is also essential for child protection to be recognised and resourced as a sector in its own right. Only through such recognition will there be sufficient investment in areas such as a child protection workforce and co-ordinated services aimed at identifying and responding to abuse, neglect and exploitation, supporting families to better care for children, and providing alternative care where needed.

To raise the profile of child protection and reverse the widespread neglect of this essential sector, it is crucial for the post 2015 development framework to include a goal and targets on child protection. For example: [11]

Goal:

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

Targets:

- Halve the number of children who are subject to sexual violence and abuse of any form.
- Halve the number of children subjected to violent discipline at home, in other care settings and in school.
- Halve the number of children unnecessarily living outside family care and end the placement of all children in institutional care.
- End the worst forms of child labour.
- End child marriage.

Of course, having goals and targets on child protection is just the start, and in order to achieve effective progress against such goals it is essential that:

[10] See: http://www.worldwewant2015.org/

[11] This goal and targets are adapted from the goal and targets developed by Save the Children (2013). Some additional example targets have been added by other members of the inter-agency group

- National governments and UN agencies ensure that strengthening child protection systems (see box below) is a key part of development agendas and national plans of action.
- National governments, with the support of UN agencies, donors and civil society develop coordination and accountability mechanisms between child protection and other services (including health, education, justice and social protection) at national and local levels.
- National governments, with the support of UN agencies, donors and civil society prioritise family-strengthening programmes within child protection systems
- National governments, UN agencies and civil society develop mechanisms 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 essential that donors and UN agencies increase funding for child 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.

What is a child protection system?

A child protection system aims to address all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect in a co-ordinated 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 risk." (UNICEF 2008b para 12)

Key components of a successful child protection system include: a legal framework, national strategy and co-ordinating 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 (Save the Children 2011b; UNICEF 2008b)

Thematic areas	Why child protection is essential for achieving goals in this area	Policy recommendations for those working in this area
Health, nutrition and child survival:[12]	• Many young children fail to survive because of neglect in homes and institutional care. • Early marriage and consequent early pregnancy is a major cause of both maternal and infant mortality. • Stimulation provided by a dedicated carer has as great an impact on child stunting as nutritional supplements. • Neglect and abuse have long term physical and mental health consequences. • Health care systems do not adequately meet the needs of children without adequate care and protection.	• Ensure that children without adequate care and protection are not discriminated against and have access to quality and relevant health care. • Recognise the importance of stimulation and consequently of adequate care in programmes designed to reduce childhood stunting. • Use health care systems to identify vulnerable children and link them to child protection systems.
Education[13]	• Many children, especially those in institutional care, experience developmental delays as a consequence of inadequate care in their early years, and these delays are likely to impact on education. • Children who do not have the care of a loving family are less likely to attend or do well in school than their peers. • Violence within schools stops millions of children from gaining an education.	• Ensure that universal education is available for all children, including those most vulnerable to inadequate care and protection. • Ensure that the school environment is safe and protective. • Provide education of sufficient quality and relevance to attract vulnerable children and their families. • Use education systems to teach children to protect themselves, and to identify vulnerable children and link them to child protection systems.
Equity[14]	• Many children who experience a lack of care or protection have severely diminished life chances as they are unable to learn or develop to their full potential. • In addition to inequitable access to health and education, social protection also often fails to reach these children and their families, and the justice sector often treats them unfairly.	• Reduce inequity on the grounds of inadequate care and protection by investing in strong and equitable child protection systems, and ensuring children without adequate care and protection have equitable access to other basic services. • Challenge the discrimination faced by children on the streets, those in alternative care, and those that have been sexually exploited or abused.

[12] Evidence from this row is taken from: BCN et al 2012b
[13] Evidence from this row is taken from: Kaplan and Jones 2013 and EveryChild et al 2010
[14] Evidence from this row is taken from: BCN et al 2012a

Thematic areas	Why child protection is essential for achieving goals in this area	Policy recommendations for those working in this area
Responding to changing population dynamics [15]	• There are growing numbers of children in the developing world, many of whom are outside of parental care. • Migration is leading to a rise in trafficked children and vulnerable child migrants, and an increase in the numbers of children left behind by migrating parents. • Urbanisation is leading to dislocation from family and community support networks, increased exposure to violent crime and risks from particular forms of harmful child labour.	• Ensure that children and parents are not forced into unsafe migration or trafficking, and that efforts are made to keep children with families, providing it is in their best interests. • Protect and respect the rights of child migrants. Invest in child protection for child migrants and other children in unsafe urban settings. • In responding to adult migration, consider implications for children left behind, including efforts to address heightened risks of abuse and exploitation.
Disasters, conflict and fragility[16]	• Millions of children are affected each year by conflict and disasters, and a growing number live in fragile states • Children affected by emergencies or living in fragile contexts are especially vulnerable to inadequate care and protection. • Child protection in emergencies, or in fragile states, does not currently receive adequate funding or support.	• Increase funding to child protection in emergencies and in fragile states, but also recognise that there is a global crisis in child protection in development contexts. • Ensure that there are comprehensive laws and policies on child protection that include disaster risk and resilience plans which incorporate a focus on child protection. • Ensure effective co-ordination between all actors working in emergency contexts and fragile states, and the mainstreaming of child protection into other areas such as health or education. • Focus on prevention, and recognise the role of communities and children in protecting children, with communities and customary law likely to play a particularly significant role in fragile states.

Growth and employment [17]	• Abuse and neglect damage education and child development, diminishing human capital.
	• There are high economic costs associated with child abuse and neglect in terms of lost earnings and the provision of support to maltreated children.
	• Child labour, particularly in its worst forms, can damage economies, through, for example, threatening the reputation of the export sector.
		• As outlined above, invest in safe and equitable education systems that meet the needs of children with inadequate care and protection.
		• Invest in child protection-sensitive social protection programmes which:
		  ○ Reach the most marginalised and vulnerable groups;
		  ○ Have strong linkages to complementary child protection programmes and services.

[15] Evidence from this row is taken from: BCN et al 2013b

[16] Evidence from this row is taken from Family for Every Child et al 2013. See CWPG 2012 for more detailed policy recommendations.

[17] Evidence from this row is taken from: Kaplan and Jones (forthcoming)

Thematic area	Why child protection is essential for achieving goals in this area	Policy recommendations for those working in this area
Governance[18]	As with other sectors, the governance of the child protection sector is extremely weak with: • A lack of comprehensive legislation. • Poor enforcement of laws due to factors such as low or poorly costed budget allocations. • Limited accountability, with few oversight mechanisms or access to data to assess progress.	Give greater priority to child protection in efforts to improve governance. Focus on: • The development and enforcement of comprehensive and realistic legislative and policy frameworks on child protection, which reflect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant global guidance. • The delivery of child protection services – ensuring these are adequately resourced and well planned. • Child protection information management systems and oversight mechanisms to increase the accountability of the sector. • Greater engagement of children and vulnerable families, and of an active and effective civil society, in developing and monitoring child protection response.

[18] Evidence from this row is taken from BCN et al 2013a

Conclusion

The global crisis in child protection represents a major violation of children's rights, which both impacts on the current well-being of children and on the achievement of broader development objectives. Many girls and boys die each year because they are abused, neglected or exploited. Vulnerable children that survive into adulthood can be at a significant disadvantage, with many experiencing developmental delays, gaps in their schooling and mental and physical health problems owing to their maltreatment. The stigma, discrimination and diminished life chances faced by children who are abused, exploited and neglected exacerbate inequity. Whilst the resilience of such children can carry with it some advantage for societies, in general these boys and girls are not able to contribute to economies to their full potential. In addition to the damaging impacts on children themselves, the negative effects of child maltreatment on human capital, combined with the costs associated with responding to abuse and neglect, mean that inadequate care and protection hinders economic growth. The alarming impacts of child protection failures are likely to grow in significance unless something is done urgently. Global trends such as climate change, migration and urbanisation are all increasing children's vulnerability, and governments are not investing enough resources in building and maintaining comprehensive child protection systems. Children around the world want more support to enable them to grow up free from violence, and within caring, safe families.

It is therefore essential that governments, UN agencies and other actors engaged in the design of the framework that will replace the current Millennium Development Goals in 2015:

1. Include a goal on child protection. For example:

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

2. Listen to the voices of children, including vulnerable and commonly excluded groups such as those without adequate care and protection, in debates on the design of the post 2015 development framework and in the implementation and monitoring of this framework.

3. Promote the equitable achievement of all other goals included in the post 2015 development framework through assessing progress within commonly excluded and discriminated against groups, including children without adequate care and protection.

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