



Child Protection in Crisis Uganda: March 2012 Learning Retreat

An Overview of the Child Protection System in Uganda

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Child Protection in Crisis

Network for Research, Learning & Action



Key Child Protection Concerns in Uganda

The National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NSPPI-2) identifies the following categories of children as most vulnerable and in need protection in Uganda:

- Children physically, sexually and emotionally abused
- Children affected by armed conflict
- Children displaced by natural and man-made disasters
- Children at risk of human sacrifice



Most vulnerable children continued:

- Children employed in harmful and exploitative child labour,
- Children engaged in CSEC, trafficked children, street children,
- Children out of school
- Children in conflict with the law
- Children in hard to reach areas,
- Orphans,
- Children heading families,
- Children producing children



The Legal Framework for Child protection in Uganda

- Ratified and domesticated child rights protection instruments:
 - Uganda Constitution provides for the protection of all children, 1995
 - The Children's Act Cap 59, The NCC act CAP 60
 - The Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009
 - The Penal Code
 - The Employment Act, 2006
 - The Births and Deaths Registration Act
 - The Local government Act (1997) amended in 1999
 - The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010
 - The Domestic Violence Act, 2010.



Key policies related to child protection

- The National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy (NOP) (2004)
- The Child Labour Policy (2006)
- The National Universal Primary Education Policy (1997)
- The Health Policy (1999)
- The National ART Policy (2003)
- The National Youth Policy (2000)
- The National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons (2004)
- The National Policy on Disability in Uganda (2006)



Major ongoing initiatives in child protection

- Public awareness activities at all levels by various actors (Governmental and non-governmental)
- Child protection training programmes for professionals and non-professionals.
- Limited research initiatives on various child protection issues
- Advocacy activities for policies and resources for child protection
- Legal reform initiatives (Children's Act)
- Justice for children initiative by the Justice, Law and Order sector (Justice for children programme)
- OVC interventions within the framework of the NSSPI are being rolled out.



Ongoing initiatives (cont'd)

- The NSPPI -2, SUNRISE, SCORE, SDS.
- OVC MIS
- Advocacy and communication strategy
- Draft Plans against child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Draft Plans against child sacrifice
- Draft Alternative care framework
- Revised children and babies homes rules
- Cash Transfer programme under the Social Protection Programme



Overview of the Child protection systems in Uganda

- The **Formal system** is based on statutory mandates and obligations .
- They include a range of governmental structures, institutions and actors from local to national level in a cross section of sectors namely social welfare, education, health, as well as law enforcement structures.



- The **Informal system** is based on and driven by traditional values of shared responsibility for the wellbeing of children.
- It is largely composed of voluntary actors at family and community .



Efforts towards building a child protection system in Uganda

- Two complementary assessments have been undertaken one by UNICEF and OAK Foundation in 2010;
- A national consultative workshop for all key actors was organized by the MGLSD in Dec. 2010;
- Key issues and challenges affecting the functionality of the CP systems were analyzed;
- Key priority actions have been identified and a proposal for initial work has been submitted to OAK Foundation.



Status of Child Protection System In Uganda

- In Uganda, three sub-sectors constitute the Formal Child Protection System:
 - The child care/ social protection sub-system that focuses on issues of vulnerability (probation and social welfare actors);
 - The law/ order and justice sub-system that focuses on legal protection, law enforcement and dispensation of justice (police, courts, prisons etc.);
 - Basic social service sub-system that includes health and educational services (schools, hospitals, etc).



Status of Child Protection System In Uganda

Informal child protection structures

- Constituted by the family unit, cultural system, community members and community volunteers/groups;
- Informal structures are situated closest to children; are more affordable and more responsive to the varied needs of vulnerable children;
- However, over time these structures have become overstretched.



Critical Issues Linked to Child Protection Systems Building

Policy versus Practice

- Despite the institution of progressive laws and policies, Uganda still faces challenges in ensuring adequate protection for all vulnerable children in light of the varied violations and abuse that they are exposed to.
- Evidence points to the existence of substantial barriers that ought to be addressed before a comprehensive, accessible, functional and sustainable child protection system can be realized.



1. Linking the Various Structures for Child Protection

- The child care, justice, law and order, and the basic social service sub-systems often work independent of each other, resulting into partial and fragmented services.
- The Justice Law & Order Sector (JLOS) framework provides a good starting point in trying to bring the various actors together, but it is not yet inclusive of all actors.
- Despite several initiatives, the formal and informal structures for child protection are not yet well integrated



2. Linkage between Formal and Informal Child Protection Structures

- While informal structures are closer and more responsive to the needs of vulnerable children, they have become progressively over-stretched.
- Informal structures do not have the mandate to deal with all child protection issues/violations and have to depend on the formal structures.
- The formal structures, notwithstanding their national coverage, are not sufficiently resourced to respond effectively to the grassroots needs of children at community level



3. The Functionality of the Child Protection System

- The various sub-components of the child protection system are generally fragmented between many sectors and actors and rarely coordinate at the national and local levels.
- The National Council for Children, which has the coordination mandate, is constrained by both structural and resource limitations
- The various services that children need are sometimes either not available or are scattered in various service points .



4. Limited Capacity within the System

- Insufficient human resources and technical skills, especially among the grassroots child protection actors.
- Inadequate infrastructure and logistical capacity especially within the formal child protection system (e.g lack of transport and logistical support for the police and probation officers)
- Generally poor funding for child protection activities at all levels. At district level funding for child protection activities is largely dependent on local resources, which are very limited.



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GENDER, LABOUR AND
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COORDINATING THE NATIONAL RESPONSE FOR

*Orphans & Other
Vulnerable Children*

MOVING FORWARD- KEY PRIORITIES

THE 7- POINT AGENDA



Key Priorities for Child Protection:

1. Harmonizing linkages between actors and sectors in order to enforce standards and streamline referrals
2. Linking and strengthening national and local systems by establishing linkages between district level and national level actors through the child protection working group.



3. Improving the professional capacities of actors through coordinated and accredited training programmes
4. Improving budgeting , resourcing and costing of child protection through evidence –based budget advocacy initiatives
5. Improving data and information management systems through an integrated database and research partnerships.



6. Linking/strengthening the formal and informal child protection structures through better documentation of the work of informal structures and improving the capacity of the formal structures to support the work of informal structures.
7. Improving processes and procedures for child protection through development of standardized protocols and quality standards as well as establishing accountability standards



Institutional Framework

- The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development coordinates much of the current child protection work through the Child Protection Working Group
- The terms of reference of the Child Protection Working Group are being reviewed to make it more representative of the relevant key actors
- The CPWG will feed into the Social Protection Sector Committee



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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

**HOPE NEVER RUNS DRY FOR
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