



# Mapping and Assessment of Child Protection Systems in West Africa

Presentation by

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## Background to the studies

- Initiative of consortium of agencies to map and assess child protection systems in 5 countries
- Recognition that approaches to systems building requires contextual understanding and tailored framework of study: an African perspective
- Expanded and enhanced initiatives in Southeast Asia, but introduced community perceptions of systems

## Measurement and methodology

- Macro analysis: degree of systems integration; system priorities; relevance; and sustainability
- Methodology:
  - Mapping of existing system: core questions matrix, interviews and FGDs
  - Mapping at all levels, case exemplars

## Environments for establishing systems of protection

- Context central to the development of systems, including history and colonization; geography; socio-economic conditions; political systems; religious life; and cultural norms and practices
- Legacy of war and displacement has reduced many of the structures of protection in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone
- Context provides both challenges and opportunities.

## Core Findings (Challenges)

- Social welfare infrastructure destroyed, including cadre of professional social workers. Although based on colonial models, services at different levels did exist
- Collapse of education, health sectors greatly increased vulnerability of children
- Donor support focused on security, justice and governance, although protection issues also recognized (GBV, FGM/C, child labor). Donors and international community have become the drivers of the protection agenda, but reduced focus on social welfare. Inter-sectoral approach favored.
- Majority of INGOs established during / after the conflicts. While many have stayed and expanded programs, slow shift from emergency to development and formalized partnerships with government.
- Fragmentation of services and not based upon evidenced need (baseline)

## Core Findings (Challenges)

- Post-conflict focus on establishment of laws and regulations, in Sierra Leone a statutory based model with primary focus on response. However, infrastructure of justice not developed enough to implement procedures
- In developing systems, little attention to ensuring congruence between formal and informal systems; undermining positive traditional mediation and resolution mechanisms of village 'councils' and leaders
- Formalization of community processes tend to be perceived / experienced as imposed, a direct challenge to traditional child-rearing practices and not connected to actual priorities of communities

« Ça c'est la loi des blancs, ce n'est pas pour nous »

## Core Findings (Opportunities)

- Opening of dialogue about child protection issues and key entry point for development of more formalized systems of protection (e.g. post-tsunami initiatives in Indonesia / Thailand)
- Opportunities to introduce new approaches to child protection (risk identification, case management) – but transition needs to be managed to ensure continuity and sustainability once the immediate intensive efforts have subsided
- Proximity to community allows for greater understanding of community needs and perceptions
- Opportunity to realign partnerships, funding and program priorities to develop a vision of a national system



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