EVALUATION REPORT

Formative and summative evaluation of "Government of Ghana / UNICEF Child Protection Programme (2012 - 2019)".

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Evaluation commissioned by UNICEF Ghana

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List of acronyms

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
BDR	Births and Deaths Registry
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCLC	Coram Children's Legal Centre
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CP	Child Protection
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCD	Department of Community Development
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EA	Enumeration Area
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GACA	Ghanaians Against Child Abuse campaign
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHC	Ghanaian cedi
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices

KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
KRC	Key Results for Children
LEAP	Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty programme
LI	Legislative Instrument
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHI	National Health Insurance scheme
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PASS	Promoting Adolescent Safe Spaces programme
PDA	Participatory Development Associates
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHS	Senior High School
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SP	Service Provider
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDoL	United States Department of Labor
WCARO	UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Evaluation purpose and scope

In January 2020 UNICEF Ghana engaged Coram International to conduct a Formative and Summative Evaluation of its Child Protection Programme, covering programming from January 2012 to December 2019, across two programme cycles (2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022). The purpose of the evaluation is to support learning and decision-making to improve child protection outcomes for girls and boys in Ghana: to hold UNICEF accountable for its contributions to child protection outcomes; to clarify the changes in child protection in Ghana that have been brought about by UNICEF's programme; and to determine whether the current programme has the right strategic focus to contribute to strengthening the child protection system moving forward. The UNICEF Ghana Country Office is the primary intended user of the evaluation. Other users include the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, the Government of Ghana, other UN agencies and NGOs, and development partners.

The evaluation's geographical scope is expansive, covering programming across Ghana at both national and sub-national (regional, metropolitan and district) levels. It generates evidence in relation to 4 of the 6 evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), namely: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.[1] In addition to these criteria, the evaluation methodology incorporates UNICEF's guiding principles of gender, human rights and equity.

1.2. Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed methodology, drawing on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data, whilst increasing opportunities for triangulation. In addition to drawing on existing evidence, the evaluation involved the collection of a significant body of primary data. Data collection methods included:

- A standardised survey with social welfare officers and community development officers at district level (n=120) to gather evidence on their child protection response work. Professionals were surveyed across 30 districts that received interventions from UNICEF and 30 'comparison' districts;
- A KAP survey of both children and adults (n=1022), designed to investigate changes in the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of communities targeted by UNICEF's social and behaviour change interventions. The survey was designed to identify changes in KAP which had occurred since a 2013 baseline. It was administered in areas where UNICEF has conducted community engagement work, as well as in selected 'comparison' districts which had not received interventions;
- Key informant interviews (n= 159) with stakeholders at national, regional and district level;
- In-depth life history interviews (n = 87) with children and their caregivers whose cases had been subject to a child protection intervention;
- Reviews of case files (n=80) maintained by district social welfare officers;
- Focus group discussions (n=242) with community members to gather qualitative evidence on attitudes and norms around child protection issues.

Strict ethical guidelines were followed at all stages of the data collection and analysis.

1.3. Findings and Preliminary Conclusions

Relevance of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme

Evaluation findings demonstrate a strong alignment between UNICEF's Child Protection Programme's design and approaches and the Government of Ghana's priorities in relation to violence against children, evidenced by an analysis of GoG policies and plans, as well as interviews with Government representatives. UNICEF's contributions to strengthening the legal and policy framework for child protection and building the capacity of service providers to implement that framework were found to be particularly relevant to national priorities. UNICEF's commitment was demonstrated by its willingness to divert from past approaches where these were not well aligned with needs in Ghana.

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[1] The fifth criteria, impact, has been looked at in relation to outcomes and likely impact of the programme.

The Child Protection Programme was also found to be relevant and responsive to the needs of children in Ghana. Across research sites, respondents consistently described that UNICEF has taken a consultative approach to programming; seeking out beneficiaries' views and making relevant adjustments to meet their needs better. However, evaluation findings suggest that in practice certain groups of children have been more difficult to reach than others. In particular, findings suggest that street children require additional support and may have been neglected by services delivered through the national child protection system.

Outcomes and Effectiveness of the Child Protection Programme[2]

Effectiveness of National Child Protection System Strengthening

UNICEF's child protection programming was found to have made significant contributions to strengthening the national child protection system in Ghana. When UNICEF's 2012 programme cycle began, Ghana lacked an institutional framework for the delivery of child protection response services. Recognising this gap, UNICEF worked effectively with the Government of Ghana to develop a more strategic vision for child protection work. Significant achievements include improvements to the legal and policy framework for children protection, particularly the development of the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Justice for Children Policy, as well as the establishment of a comprehensive child protection response service delivered through district administrations as part of a broader child protection system. These changes were recognised and valued by respondents, who emphasised the importance of building an institutional framework for child protection work.

Evaluation findings also demonstrate that UNICEF made important contributions to strengthening the capacity of social welfare authorities to deliver child protection services. In particular, UNICEF has succeeded in building the capacity of district level social welfare staff to deliver child protection response services in line with the Government's case management SOPs. Whilst findings indicate that the application of case management procedures is imperfect, a considerable proportion of service providers do report to be following the SOPs when responding to CP cases, a significant change from past practice. Furthermore, findings demonstrate the effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions: the implementation of case management procedures was found to be consistently stronger in districts that received UNICEF support compared to those that did not.

The degree to which this improved capacity has translated into outcomes for children exposed to violence or other forms of child protection risk is less clear, particularly given that these cases were rarely found to be reaching the child protection system. Findings revealed that the vast majority of child protection cases to which district level social welfare authorities respond are child maintenance cases, followed by custody cases, and, to a less extent, cases of parental neglect and abandonment. These findings are problematic, suggesting that the child protection system is not yet fulfilling its core function of identifying and responding to cases where children are exposed to violence or at risk of harm.

The evaluation identified a number of explanations for this trend. VAC cases continue to be handled by the Police Service's Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), and in some localities coordination between DOVVSU and district social welfare authorities was found to be weak. Meanwhile, effective and reliable referral channels between frontline professionals and district level social welfare authorities are lacking in many districts, undermining identification of cases where children are at-risk[3]. Finally, findings point to a number of reporting barriers, including stigma around child abuse and attitudes which are accepting of domestic violence, lack of awareness of reporting channels and practical barriers, which make accessing services challenging or costly.

Effectiveness of community mobilisation and behaviour change

UNICEF's child protection programme has included a number of behaviour change campaigns and community mobilisation efforts, designed to transform attitudes and practices in relation to child protection. At the national level this has involved the use of mass and social media to raise awareness, whilst at the local level, interventions involved collaboration with local government to deliver a Social and Behaviour Change Communication toolkit. UNICEF supported campaigns were found to have achieved an impressive reach: findings from the KAP survey indicate that the national 'Ghanaians Against Child Abuse' campaign has had widespread coverage in communities across Ghana, and 70 per cent of respondents in intervention communities said that they had participated in awareness-raising activities. The participatory methodology applied in the application of the toolkit was found to

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[2] This evaluation covers UNICEF's Child Protection Programme across all of its many components, however the executive summary presents findings on the effectiveness of two main areas of programming: strengthening the national child protection system and community mobilisation and behaviour change.
[3] There is some evidence that districts that have received UNICEF interventions, particularly those that were part of the 'policy to practice initiative', are more likely to receive referrals from the police, community members and DOVVSU.

be particularly effective in promoting community engagement, and 99.2 per cent of participants said that they would recommend activities to a friend.

As well as achieving widespread reach and endorsement, analysis of the data from the KAP surveys provides evidence that UNICEF's campaign and mobilisation efforts may be having a significant impact in contributing to transforming community norms and behaviours related to child protection. Respondents in the KAP surveys were asked a range of questions about their attitudes and practices in relation to a variety of relevant topics, and changes in results from baseline (2013) to endline (2020) were compared in both UNICEF intervention[4] and non-intervention communities. Overall, the findings indicate a significant improvement over time in attitudes and practices across a range of issues, including: family separation, violence against children, child marriage, child justice and help seeking behaviour. Yet despite the changes which occurred, there were no significant differences in rates of change in UNICEF intervention sites compared to comparison sites, making it hard to determine whether changes can be directly attributed to UNICEF's campaign and mobilisation efforts.

Evidence from the KAP survey suggests that behaviours related to violence against children may be particularly 'sticky', or difficult to shift. Analysis of the data demonstrates a small but significant reduction in rates of violence against children from baseline to endline.[5] However, there were no significant improvements in rates of violence in UNICEF intervention compared to control sites, and rates of change in intervention sites concerning attitudes towards corporal punishment and children's experiences of domestic and emotional violence were found to be particularly slow. Whilst social norms endorsing violence against children are widespread and entrenched, drivers of violence against children include structural factors such as poverty, low levels of education, lack of opportunity, gender inequalities and children's position of dependency in families and communities. These are complex factors that may not be effectively addressed by sensitisation messaging alone.

Efficiency of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme

UNICEF's Child Protection programme was successful in mobilising significant financial resources to support its system strengthening approach over both the 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 programme cycles. This is a notable achievement given that UNICEF Country Offices have often struggled to obtain funding for CPSS work, as 'issue based' programming tends to be more popular amongst donors[6]. The Child Protection Section was innovative in recognising that funding for an 'issue' can be incorporated into a system strengthening approach and utilising issue-based funding to promote their broader systems strengthening objectives.

A lack of sufficient resources continues to hinder child protection outcomes in Ghana, however. Evaluation findings demonstrate that district-level child protection services remain underfunded, resulting in significant disruptions to their effective delivery. Adequate funding for local child protection response services is critical to ensuring that resources are used efficiently within the child protection system. Without this component of the child protection system in place, the efficiency of other investments made by UNICEF, the GoG and other partners, are likely to be undermined, as cases are missed and duplication and fragmentation are more likely to occur. UNICEF has acknowledged the lack of sufficient resources for frontline social workers, and the Child Protection Programme has undertaken initiatives aimed at advocating for budget commitments from Government at central, regional and MMDA levels, but significant work remains to be done.

Sustainability of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme

Evaluation findings suggest that many programme outcomes have been institutionalised, enshrined in law, policy or practice, and are therefore likely to continue even after programming ends or changes its focus. Evidence also demonstrates that the GoG is increasingly taking ownership of programme activities. The next step in promoting sustainable child protection outcomes is to ensure that policy level achievements translate into effective child protection prevention and response services on the ground. This will require the GoG to commit sufficient funds to service delivery and highlights the need for UNICEF to continue to prioritise achieving budget commitments from the government.

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made considerable contributions to building the capacity of Ghanaian government counterparts at national and sub-national levels, and this support was found to have resulted in genuine improvements in the abilities and practices of beneficiaries. UNICEF's programme design has been

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[4] Areas where UNICEF has conducted community engagement work using the child protection communication facilitation toolkit or other interventions such as community theatre, Talking Books, or GACA activities.
[5] Difference in difference analysis, linear regression. $\beta = -.12$ $p<0.05$. The regression analysis was only carried out on the 'child sample' (young people were excluded).
[6] Strengthening child protection systems: evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance, E/ICEF/2019/23 16 July 2019.

conducive to sustaining capacities in the longer term. UNICEF developed materials, manuals and tools, which can continue to be used by relevant agencies going forward, and, wherever possible, supported the integration of training materials into national curricula to ensure their continued use. Whilst is too early to comment definitively on the sustainability of capacities generated through the Programme, findings clearly indicate that they have the potential to continue after the Programme's conclusion.

Gender equality[7]

Efforts have been made to mainstream gender in the child protection programme by recruiting a dedicated gender specialist and developing a Child Protection Programme Gender Strategy for the 2018-22 programme.[8] While child protection responses are evenly split by gender, the low number of child abuse cases overall suggests that a significant proportion of cases involving violence, neglect and abuse are not receiving an appropriate response, a phenomenon likely to affect girls more seriously than boys given their higher vulnerability. Whilst social and behaviour change programming has raised awareness of gender equality and shifted some norms, particularly those related to women's economic empowerment and child marriage, much work remains to be done to address entrenched norms and to reduce the high levels of violence reported by girls in Ghana.

1.4.   Lessons learned

A number of 'lessons learned' emerged from the evaluation, which can be used to inform future programming:

1. Legal reform is more likely to be successful when it is evidence based, drawing on analysis of existing laws, solid empirical evidence on the issues at stake and consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

2. Building a fully functioning child protection system requires sufficient resourcing, a continuum of services, monitoring and oversight and community engagement in addition to a legislative and institutional framework; it requires a long-term commitment to realise.

3. The identification and referral of suspected child abuse cases is an essential step in child protection system building and requires both effective referral processes and widespread training and awareness-raising.

4. Strengthening prevention and early intervention can promote an effective, efficient and sustainable child protection system. Acting early when risk is first identified can prevent cases from reaching crisis point.

5. Coordination amongst different bodies with child protection duties and roles is key to ensuring effective implementation of the child protection system and delivering outcomes for children.

6. In contexts where particular forms of violence are normalised, shifting attitudes and practices requires that sensitisation messaging be integrated with other programming approaches (social welfare, livelihoods, etc).

7. Building an effective foster care service requires appropriate funding for foster families and sufficient support from a social service workforce.

8. Gender empowerment programming may produce unintended consequences and must be done sensitively in order to avoid reinforcing stigma or discrimination.

1.5.   Final Conclusions

The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that UNICEF Ghana's Child Protection Programme has made significant contributions to strengthening the national child protection system in Ghana. In addition to being well aligned with UNICEF's global strategies, the programme's system strengthening approach was found to be highly relevant in the Ghanaian context. UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made significant contributions to addressing gaps in Ghana's child protection system. A number of important outcomes of this work include: institutionalising a social welfare workforce at the district level and building the capacity of that workforce to deliver child protection response services; establishing frameworks for alternative care and justice reform and models for service delivery, and building duty bearer's capacity to implement those frameworks and models, and supporting the delivery of community mobilisation and awareness campaigns which achieved remarkable coverage and high levels of public approval; amongst many others. The Child Protection Programme employed an efficient design and was effective in mobilising resources across diverse partners and stakeholders. Many of its achievements are likely to remain after programming has ended or changed focus, and the programme's capacity building work has generated capacities

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[7] In the full length report, findings and analysis on gender equality are integrated throughout the effectiveness section in order to avoid repetition and enrich analysis.
[8] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Programme Gender Strategy 2018-2022', March 2018

which are likely to be sustained. Yet, the evaluation also identified a number of barriers that have limited the degree to which this work has translated into outcomes for children and will potentially undermine the efficiency and sustainability of the child protection system going forward. Addressing these should be the focus of upcoming programme cycles.

1.6.   Recommendations

A number of recommendations emerged from the evaluation. These were validated, discussed and developed during a participatory workshop held with key stakeholders in Accra on 24 March 2021 to ensure that they are actionable and appropriate to the Ghanaian context. The main recommendations include:

1. Capacity building and training: UNICEF should continue to support efforts to develop the capacity of child protection and justice professionals, building on the work that has been done, and continue to support the institutionalisation of pre-service and in-service training. Training on child protection for health care professionals should be prioritised.

2. Referrals: It is recommended that UNICEF advocate with the Ministries of Health and Education to ensure that health clinics, hospitals, pre-schools and schools nominate at least one child protection focal point or 'champion', who should receive training and be responsible both for raising awareness of child protection amongst children and staff and for making case referrals to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.

3. Case management: UNICEF should provide technical assistance to the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice to support the establishment of alternative mechanisms for addressing maintenance cases, such as a Child Maintenance Service attached to the Family tribunal.

4. Community based services (fostering): UNICEF should continue to advocate with the Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Finance to provide further resources to the Foster Care Fund and, in particular, to cover the expenses of a foster child. UNICEF should also continue to advocate to DSW at different levels to provide social work support to foster families.

5. Coordination between social welfare and the police: It is recommended that UNICEF support the development of a joint working protocol specifically between the DoVVSU and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. This should be done as a priority and should accompany the roll-out of the Inter-Sectoral Standard Operating Procedures.

6. Information management systems: UNICEF should work closely with the MoGCSP, the MoLGRD decentralised Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development, and other relevant stakeholders to support the roll-out of the Social Welfare Information Management System in all districts through the provision of coaching, training and (where necessary) information technology.

7. Children's services plans: UNICEF should support MMDAs to develop a bi or tri-annual children's plan, which would enable them to provide more effective and efficient child protection services. In preparing the plan, reference should be made to the Social Services Directory which covered available services in 260 district areas. Case management data and records should also be reviewed to help assess the likely demand for services within each district. This information would assist the district in prioritising services and budgeting accordingly.

8. Social norms and behaviour change: UNICEF should review its communication programmes in light of the findings on knowledge, attitudes and practices, and accompany sensitisation interventions with programming to address structural drivers of entrenched norms.

2. INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, UNICEF Ghana engaged Coram International to conduct a Formative and Summative Evaluation of its Child Protection Programme.[9]

UNICEF has been present and working in Ghana since 1982 and has achieved important results in child protection. Challenges still remain in the high tolerance for violence against children, inconsistent application of child protection laws and policies, and capacity gaps in the child protection system. Since 2012, a system-strengthening approach has been adopted, moving away from the previous focus on issue-based programming.

This evaluation covers UNICEF Ghana's child protection work from January 2012 to December 2019, which occurred under two different country programme cycles (2012 to 2017 and 2018 to 2022). Its primary purpose is to support learning and decision-making to improve child protection outcomes for girls and boys in Ghana. The evaluation will also hold UNICEF accountable for its contributions to child protection outcomes. By examining, collecting and analysing evidence, the evaluation will help to clarify the changes in child protection in Ghana that have been brought about by UNICEF's child protection programmes, and whether the current programme has the right strategic focus to contribute to the development and strengthening of the child protection system moving forward.

The evaluation draws on a variety of evidence sources to answer evaluation questions pertaining to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNICEF's child protection work, as well as to cross-cutting questions of gender, equity and human rights. Evidence gathered includes extensive qualitative and quantitative data collection in all 16 of Ghana's regions and representing a wide variety of beneficiaries and stakeholders, from government partners and donors to district social workers and children who have experienced different aspects of the child protection programme.

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[9] Referred to throughout this report as 'the Child Protection Programme' or 'the Programme'.

3. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

3.1. Child protection context

There is a high prevalence of violence against children in Ghana and dominant social norms permit the use of physical punishment both at home and in schools. According to figures from the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit, in 2015 there were 14,810 cases of violence against children reported, with the most common offences being assault (5,361 cases) and non-maintenance (4,685 cases).[10] The issue of child maintenance can be considered a form of neglect or parental irresponsibility and is thus a child protection issue. In 2016, there were 2,261 complaints about child rights abuses made to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), with child maintenance being the most commonly reported.[11]

Survey data suggests that the actual prevalence of violence against children is much higher than formal reports might suggest. In a 2013 baseline report, 44 per cent of adults said that they physically punish their children, and 24 per cent said that a child in their household had been beaten by an adult at home in the past month. 14.5 per cent of children aged 14 to 17 said they had been beaten at home in the past month, and 58 per cent said that they were beaten regularly by an adult at home between the ages of 2 and 14. When asked how their teacher disciplines them, by far the most common response was 'hitting or physically hurting'.[12] Data from 2011 and 2017 indicates that there has been little change in prevalence in the intervening years, with 94 per cent of children aged 2 to 14 experiencing physical punishment or psychological aggression from their caregivers during the previous month.[13]

Only a small number of children enter the formal care system, with the majority of such children placed in residential care despite ongoing efforts to deinstitutionalise children.[14] 'Formal care' is defined as "All care provided in a family environment which has been ordered by a competent administrative body or judicial authority, and all care provided in a residential environment, including in private facilities, whether or not as a result of administrative or judicial measures". 'Residential care' is defined as "care provided in any non-family-based group setting, such as places of safety for emergency care, transit centres in emergency situations, and all other short- and long-term residential care facilities, including group homes".[15] A mapping exercise undertaken in October 2016 identified 115 residential homes, providing care for 3,586 children. Just over half of these homes (53 per cent) were located in three regions: Greater Accra (21 per cent); Ashanti (18 per cent) and Volta (14 per cent), and two-thirds of all children living in residential homes were in three Regions: Greater Accra (30 per cent), Ashanti (22 per cent) and Central (12 per cent).[16]

Gender-based violence is also widespread, with almost a third of women (32.4 per cent) aged 15 to 49 agreeing that a husband can be justified in beating his wife.[17] Among women aged 20 to 24, one in five were married before age 18 and the highest levels of early marriage are seen among those who reside in

[10] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Children need rights, not rites: Data gallery 2017', 2018, p.19.

[11] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Children need rights, not rites: Data gallery 2017', 2018, p.20.

[12] UNICEF and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Child protection baseline research report', March 2014, p.46.

[13] Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011: Final report', December 2012, p.216; Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/18: Survey findings report', 2018, p.262

[14] UNICEF and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Child and Family Welfare Policy', February 2015, p.1.

[15] United Nations General Assembly, *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children: resolution adopted by the General Assembly,* 24 February 2010, A/RES/64/142, p.6.

[16] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Analysis of current trends, flows and drivers of children residing in residential care institutions in "hot spot" mapping districts', October 2018, p.7.

[17] Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/18: Survey findings report', 2018, p.280

rural areas, live in poor households and have little or no education.[18] Forms of violence intersect, with young women who were married before the age of 18 being more likely than their never-married peers to say that wife-beating is justified.[19] There has been progress in some areas, however, with the prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among women aged 15 to 49 declining from 3.8 per cent in 2011 to 2.4 per cent in 2017/18 and from 1.5 per cent to 0.6 per cent among those aged 15 to 19.[20] Ghana has made relatively good progress in reducing early marriage, with a 2 per cent annual rate of reduction on average (ranking 7th out of 24 countries in West and Central Africa). Most regions have seen considerable reductions in child marriage over the past 35 years, though progress has been slower in the Northern and Eastern regions.[21]

Other harmful traditional practices are also seen in Ghana, such as widow inheritance, harmful mourning rituals, and witchcraft accusations. According to an anti-witchcraft accusation coalition, there are six 'witch camps' in Ghana with between 1,000 and 1,200 children resident.[22] There are also reports that children as young as 7 are sent to 'prayer camps' for those with disabilities, where there are reports that they are forcibly restrained and deprived of food.[23]

Court data from 2011 to 2013 showed a relatively low number of children being formally processed through the justice system, with 120 juvenile cases in 2011, 151 in 2012, and 173 in 2013. Theft was the most common offence (51 per cent), followed by assault / causing harm (18 per cent) and sexual offences[24] (12 per cent). Boys were much more likely than girls to be in conflict with the law, representing 87 per cent of offenders.[25] In 2016 DSW recorded that the probation services managed 974 juveniles, and 28 were on remand.[26] There are few statistics on children in detention but there are some reports that juveniles are being detained in adult prisons.[27]

Birth registration has increased in recent years but substantial variation by wealth and rurality remains, with just 55 per cent of children in the poorest households registered compared to 86 per cent of those in the richest, and 64 per cent of rural children registered compared to 80 per cent of urban children.[28]

Ghana is judged to have made a moderate advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labour, though many children, particularly in rural areas, are still working. Nearly a quarter (24.7 per cent) of children aged 5 to 14 are working, with the main sector being agriculture (including fishing). Child labour in the cocoa sector is a particular concern. It is estimated that 770,000 children were engaged in child labour in cocoa production in 2018/19, including approximately 710,000 who were exposed to at least one component of hazardous child labour. In cocoa-growing areas, 51 per cent of children in agricultural households were engaged in hazardous work in cocoa production.[29] A quarter (25.3 per cent) of children aged 7 to 14 combine work and school.[30] Analysis of data from the Ghana Living Standards Surveys in

[18] UNICEF, 'Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ghana', UNICEF, New York, 2020, pp.6 – 9.
[19] Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances : 49% of those married before age 18 compared to 22% of those never married; UNICEF, 'Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ghana', UNICEF, New York, 2020, p.15.
[20] Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011: Final report', December 2012, p.226; Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/18: Survey findings report', 2018, p.277.
[21] UNICEF, 'Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ghana', UNICEF, New York, 2020, pp.20 – 21.
[22] US Department of State, 'Ghana 2019 Human Rights Report', 2019, p.18.
[23] US Department of State, 'Ghana 2019 Human Rights Report', 2019, p.23.
[24] Sexual offences include rape and defilement, which are separate offences; defilement is the sexual abuse of children below 16 years while rape is the sexual abuse of persons from 16 years and above.
[25] Government of Ghana, 'Justice for Children Policy', November 2015, pp.3 - 4.
[26] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Children need rights, not rites: Data gallery 2017', 2018, p.25.
[27] United States Department of State, 'Ghana 2018 Human Rights Report', 2018, p.3.
[28] Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/18: Survey findings report', 2018, p.260.
[29] NORC, 'NORC Final Report : Assessing progress in reducing child labor in cocoa production in cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana', University of Chicago, Chicago, USA, October 2020, p.10.
[30] United States Department of Labor, '2018 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Ghana', 2018

2005 and 2012 demonstrates an increase in children's employment from 13 per cent to 29 per cent. This increase is driven primarily by an increase in the proportion of children combining work and school (from 7 per cent to 25 per cent), while the proportion of children solely in employment (i.e. not also attending school) decreased.[31]

Table 3.1 Key child protection indicators in Ghana

Indicator[32]	Value
Subject to any psychological or physical punishment (age 1 to 14)	94.0%[33]
Percentage of children age 1-14 who experienced any physical punishment	76.0%[34]
Percentage of children age 1-14 who experienced severe physical punishment	16.6%[35]
Percentage of children age 1-14 who experienced psychological aggression	88.6%[36]
Married before age 18 (female, age 20 to 24)	19.3%[37]
Married before age 15 (female, age 20 to 24)	5.0%[38]
Prevalence of FGM among women age 15-49	2.4%[39]
Prevalence of child labour (age 5 to 17)	27.9%[40]
Percentage of children working under hazardous working conditions (age 5 to 17)	20.7%[41]
Birth registration (age 0 to 5 years)	70.6%[42]
Birth registration (age 0 to 11 months)	57.4%[43]
Number of children in residential homes (2016)[44]	3,533
Number of children in probation services (2016)[45]	974

3.2. Legal and policy framework for child protection

Ghana's recognition of universal children's rights through the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has introduced new social norms and political obligations. In order to meet the obligations of Article 19 and 20 of the UNCRC, Ghana is required to provide State child protection services where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm due to abuse, neglect or exploitation as a result of the care (or lack thereof) that is being offered by their caregiver.[46]

Ghana was the first country to ratify the UNCRC on 29 June 1990. Since that date it has ratified many but not all of the major international instruments related to child protection.[47] Ghana has also ratified the

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[31] Understanding Children's Work, 'Child labour and the youth decent work deficit in Ghana', February 2016, p.25.
[32] Data for all indicators comes from MICS 2017/2018 unless otherwise specified
[33] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.2.1, p.262
[34] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.2.1, p.262
[35] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.2.1, p.262
[36] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.4.1W, p.270
[37] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.2.1, p.262
[38] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.2.1, p.262
[39] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.5.1, p.277
[40] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.3.3, p.268
[41] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.3.3, p.268
[42] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.1.1, p.260
[43] MICS 2017/18, Table PR.1.1, p.260
[44] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Children need rights, not rites: Data gallery 2017', 2018, p.25.
[45] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Children need rights, not rites: Data gallery 2017', 2018, p.25.
[46] United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, New York, 20 November 1989.
[47] It should be noted that Ghana has signed but not ratified either the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (signed 2002), or the third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (signed 2013).

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2005). The 1992 Constitution requires the State to be guided by these international instruments and mandates Parliament to enact laws to ensure children's rights, including the right to measures of special care and assistance, and to protect children from exposure to physical and moral hazards, from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to health, education or development, and from torture or other cruel, inhumane, or degrading punishment.[48]

While important progress had been made in child protection in Ghana, up until 2012 the framework for responding to and preventing child abuse was not sufficiently coherent. Only small numbers of children were reached, and there was a lack of efficiency throughout the system. [49] In 2012, UNICEF and the Government of Ghana committed to a system's strengthening approach and developed a more strategic vision for child protection in Ghana.[50] This included a goal of a comprehensive legal framework for child protection that fully reflected and incorporated international standards and norms, while also considering the local context. Under this approach, three key policies were developed, providing the framework for the child protection system-strengthening agenda: the Child and Family Welfare Policy, adopted in February 2015, the Justice for Children Policy, adopted in November 2015 and the Ghana National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework 2018-2021. The policies have three main purposes: To strengthen and enforce the legal environment, to improve services and to address behaviour that is inimical to children's best interests. In addition, the Children's (Amendment) Act 2016 (Act 937) was passed, which amended the Children's Act of 1998 (Act 560) and adopted the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, as well as introducing provisions on the management of domestic and intercountry adoption and foster care.

The following sections outline the legal framework for various aspects of child protection in Ghana in more detail.

Child welfare

The Children's Act, 1998 provides for the rights of the child, including health, education, name and nationality, and social activity. It covers issues of parental duties and responsibilities, adoption and fosterage, and protects children from discrimination, exploitative labour, forced betrothal or marriage, and torture and degrading treatment. Contravention of any of these provisions is an offence and is liable to a fine of up to 5 million GHC, or to one year in prison, or both.[51]

The Children's Act also outlines the legislative process for responding to children in need of care and protection, including the duty of the District Assembly to protect the welfare and promote the rights of children, and the duty of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development of a District Assembly to investigate any contravention of children's rights. The Act provides for the removal of a child to a place of safety if a child is deemed in need of immediate care and protection, and for parental rights to be transferred to the Department if in the child's best interests.[52] However, the Act does not include an explicit preference for interventions that promote family preservation or reintegration, and there is no clear statement of the principle of institutionalisation as a last resort.[53]

[48] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.15 – 16; Government of Ghana, Ghana's Constitution of 1992 with amendments through 1996, Chapter 5, Article 28.

[49] UNICEF, 'Protecting children from violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance. Ghana Country Report.', May 2015, p.viii.

[50] UNICEF, 'Protecting children from violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance. Ghana Country Report.', May 2015, p.viii.

[51] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998, Sub-Part I.

[52] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998.

[53] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.15 – 16.

The Children's (Amendment) Act 2016 (ACT 937) introduced amendments to the Children's Act 1998 (ACT 560) to include an expanded definition of children in need of care and protection, the introduction of guiding principles regarding the best interests of the child, and a requirement for mandatory background checks for those who work with children.[54]

Other laws with relevance to child welfare include the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (ACT 732), which provides criminal and civil remedies, including compensation, for victims of psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional, verbal or psychological violence. The Act provides for the removal of the victim to a place of safety and the issuing of a protection order.[55]

The Ghana Education Service has banned the use of corporal punishment in schools and published guidelines for the use of positive discipline, but the practice of corporal punishment still continues in the home.[56] The Children's Act 1998 prohibits any form of correction that is "unreasonable in kind or in degree according to the age, physical and mental condition of the child", thus implicitly allowing the use of correction deemed "reasonable". Furthermore, Article 41 of the Criminal Code 1960 states that a "blow or other force may be justified for the purpose of correction" by a parent, guardian, schoolmaster or other person authorised to inflict correction on a child under 16 years of age.

Ghana expressed its commitment to prohibiting all corporal punishment of children, including in the home, by clearly accepting the recommendations made as part of the Universal Periodic Review of Ghana in 2017.[57] This was followed up by the MoGCSP in July 2018 in a position paper on corporal punishment, which recommended that there should be an amendment of the Criminal Code and the Children's Act to prohibit corporal punishment in all forms and settings.[58]

Although the Children's Act, together with other Laws mentioned above, the Juvenile Justice Law and the Human Trafficking Act, can be considered as a step towards ensuring a comprehensive legal framework for child protection, the level of implementation of the different laws has been variable and incomplete, reducing their effectiveness.

Alternative care

The Children's Act, 1998, provides for the establishment of residential homes for children by either the Government or a NGO, subject to the Minister's approval. The Act also outlines the procedure for admission of a child to the home and grants the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development of the MMDAs the right to monitor and inspect residential homes.[59]

Under the 2012 – 2017 and the 2018 – 2022 Child Protection Programmes, further work has been undertaken to protect children in alternative care with the support and technical assistance of UNICEF. Revised National Standards for Residential Homes for Children in Ghana were developed in 2018, together with Standard Operating Procedures for Inspection, Licensing, and Monitoring Residential Homes for Children in Ghana.[60] Foster Care Regulations were also passed in 2018[61] and following this, a

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[54] UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', April 2019.
[55] Ghana, Domestic Violence Act, Act No. 732 of 3 May 2007.
[56] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Corporal punishment in Ghana: A position paper on the legal and policy issues', July 2018, p.10.
[57] A/HRC/37/7, Report of the working group, paras. 146(171), 146(172) and 146(174), 26 December 2017.
[58] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Corporal punishment in Ghana: A position paper on the legal and policy issues', July 2018.
[59] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998, Part VI, Sub-Part I.
[60] UNICEF Ghana and DSW, 'National Standards for Residential Homes for Children in Ghana', October 2017, and UNICEF Ghana and DSW, 'Standard Operating Procedures for Inspection, Licensing, and Monitoring Residential Homes for Children in Ghana', 2018.
[61] Ghana, Foster Care Regulations, Legislative Instrument No. 2361 of 27 June 2018.

Foster Care Operational Manual was published to provide guidance to Department of Social Welfare officers and Foster Care Agencies on the delivery of foster care services.[62]

The Cabinet approved Ghana's accession to the Hague Convention on inter-country adoption in 2016. In line with acceding to the Hague Convention, the Children's Act was amended the same year to establish a Central Authority for adoption.[63] Domestic adoption has also been the subject of new regulations, which Parliament approved in 2018.[64]

In addition to the many sets of Regulations, the Government produced a manual for routine monitoring of the alternative care system in 2018, which provides guidance on how to collect and report data on children in formal alternative care, including residential homes, foster care, adoption, and those who have been reunified or reintegrated into family-based care.[65]

Birth registration

The Children's Act also lists birth registration as part of parental duties and responsibilities.[66] It is also compulsory under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, to register births within twenty-one days of the date of birth. A fee must be paid to register births outside of this period.[67] The Births and Deaths Registry, under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, is responsible for directing, coordinating and monitoring the birth registration process throughout Ghana. It establishes local registration offices, provides registration materials and supervises the work of the local offices.[68] The Standard Operating Procedures for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System of Ghana set out the standardised approach to and guidelines for the registration of births to ensure a uniform registration process across the country.[69]

The enactment of the Decentralisation Act, 2016 (ACT 936) has resulted in the decentralisation of births and deaths registration, with the Births and Death Registry now a department of the district assemblies. A Registration of Births and Death Bill 2016 was drafted by MoLGRD, with support from UNICEF, and finally became law in November 2020 (the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 2020 (ACT 1027)). The intention is that the Births and Deaths Registry will have a digital interface with other systems, such as the Ghana Health Service and the Ghana Statistical Service and provide for the generation of Community Population Registers. These measures should improve knowledge about local populations and enable far more effective development planning. The new Births and Deaths Registration Act also provides for the registration of surrogate babies and introduces the concept of notification of births and identifies primary notifiers, including persons in charge of health facilities and traditional birth attendants who must provide information to the authorities.[70]

Child labour and child trafficking

Ghana has ratified a number of the key international conventions concerning child labour, but has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography,[71] the

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[62] UNICEF Ghana and DSW, 'Foster Care Operational Manual', October 2018.
[63] Ghana, The Children's (Amendment) Act, Act No. 937 of 2016.
[64] Ghana, Adoption Regulations, Legislative Instrument No. 2360 of 27 June 2018.
[65] MEASURE Evaluation, 'A manual for routine monitoring of the alternative care system in Ghana', 2018.
[66] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998, sect. 6.
[67] Ghana, Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Act No. 301 of 29 September 1965, sect. 8.
[68] Ghana Statistical Service, Standard Operating Procedures For Civil Registration And Vital Statistics System Of Ghana, pp.6-7.
[69] Ghana Statistical Service, Standard Operating Procedures For Civil Registration And Vital Statistics System Of Ghana, p.2.
[70] https://www.myjoyonline.com/new-births-and-deaths-registration-act-will-help-improve-collation-of-vital-information-for-national-development-alima-mahama/
[71] OHCHR, 'UN Treaty Body Database: View ratification status by country or by treaty', accessed 27 April 2020.

Convention on Domestic Work (Convention 189)[72] and the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (Convention 29).[73]

Forced labour is prohibited under the Constitution, the Labour Act,[74] the Human Trafficking Act,[75] and the Human Trafficking Prohibition Legislative Instrument. In addition, the Children's Act prohibits exploitative child labour and sets the minimum age of employment at 15 years, or 13 years for light work deemed unlikely to be harmful to a child or to affect the child's attendance at school, in line with the UNCRC. The Act prohibits night work and certain types of hazardous labour for those under 18. It also sets out the responsibility of employers, including those of apprentices, to provide a healthy and safe working environment and provides for fines and imprisonment for employers who violate the law. Inspection and enforcement of the law is the responsibility of district labour officers.[76]

Other relevant laws include the Constitution, Labour Regulations Legislative Instrument, and the Labour Act which identify hazardous occupations or activities that are prohibited for children.[77] These do not include working underwater, despite many children working in the fishing sector.[78]

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is prohibited under the Criminal Offences Act and the Labour Regulations Legislative Instrument,[79] though these provisions are not in line with international standards, and there is currently no legislation against the use of children in pornographic performances.[80]

The minimum age for voluntary military recruitment is 18, and there is no compulsory military recruitment (conscription). However, there is no legislation against military recruitment by non-state armed groups.[81]

Human trafficking is taken seriously in Ghana. The Human Trafficking Act was passed in 2005, which provides for the prevention, reduction and punishment of human trafficking, and for the rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficked persons.[82] Subsequent to the passing of the Act, a Human Trafficking Secretariat was established, as well as an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in the Ghana Police Service and the Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Unit in the Ghana Immigration Service, an operational unit set up to arrest human trafficking and smuggling offenders. Child trafficking was specifically addressed by the GOG and the Government of the USA as a result of a Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership in 2015; a four-year joint initiative aimed at addressing child trafficking in Ghana by strengthening the government's capacity to identify child trafficking cases, care for and reintegrate victims, investigate effectively and prosecute traffickers, and prevent trafficking from occurring. [83] Despite these efforts, trafficking continues and to counter the challenges, a National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in Ghana 2017 – 2021 was drafted with support from UNICEF and the Government of Canada, focusing on women and children. The National Plan of Action contains a range of activities aimed at prevention and protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking,

[72] ILO, 'C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189): Countries that have not ratified this Convention', accessed 27 April 2020.
[73] ILO, 'P029 – Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930: Countries that have not ratified this Convention', accessed 27 April 2020; United States Department of Labor, '2018 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Ghana', 2018; Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, 'National Plan of Action Phase II for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Ghana 2017-2021', 2017, p.45.
[74] Ghana, Labour Act, Act No. 651 of 2003, Articles 116 and 117.
[75] Ghana, Human Trafficking Act, Act No. 694 of 2005, Sections 1-3 and 42.
[76] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998, Part V, Sub-Part I.
[77] United States Department of Labor, '2018 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Ghana', 2018.
[78] United States Department of State, 'Ghana 2018 Human Rights Report', 2018, pp.26 – 27.
[79] Ghana, Criminal Offences Act, Act No. 29 of 1960, Sections 101(A), 107-108, 110, 111, 274-277 and 279-283; Ghana, Labour Regulations Legislative Instrument, L.I. No. 1833 of 2007, Article 7(2).
[80] United States Department of Labor, '2018 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Ghana', 2018.
[81] United States Department of Labor, '2018 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Ghana', 2018.
[82] Ghana, Human Trafficking Act, Act No. 694 of 5 December 2005, Sections 1 and 2. It specifies that in cases of child trafficking, the consent of the child, parent or guardians of the child cannot be used as a defence to prosecution under the Act.
[83] Westat 2016 Baseline Assessment of the Child Protection Compact Partnership

prosecution of traffickers and partnership with stakeholders. In addition to the Plan of Action, child trafficking is also prohibited under the Human Trafficking Prohibition Legislative Instrument, and the Labour Regulations Legislative Instrument.[84] Standard Operating Procedures to Combat Human Trafficking in Ghana were published in October 2017 and include child trafficking.[85]

The National Plan of Action Phase II for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Ghana (2017 - 2021) sets out a number of interventions to reinforce public awareness, improve capacity, collaboration and coordination, promote community empowerment, and provide social services and economic empowerment programmes. One of the expected outcomes is that laws relating to child labour will be better enforced, and content gaps in the legal framework addressed.[86] The Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture Development additionally published a Strategy on Anti-Child Labour and Trafficking in Fisheries in October 2018 which aims to significantly reduce child labour and trafficking in the fisheries sector through effective protection of children and prosecution of offences. The Strategy aims to promote speedy and effective prosecution through strengthening institutions involved in the enforcement and prosecution of child labour and child trafficking violations.[87]

The legal review process identified a number of legal changes to be made with relation to child labour and child trafficking. Amendments proposed to the Children's Act include an expansion of provisions on child labour and an indication of the State's commitment to protecting children from armed conflict and illegal mining (engaging children in illicit activities is not currently an offence), and provisions on child sexual abuse and child pornography. In the Criminal Code, amendments are required to add specific provisions on child pornography, child sex tourism, child prostitution, and the use of children in the production, sale and trafficking of drugs. The Human Trafficking Act also requires amendment to protect the victims of trafficking from prosecution for violations of immigration laws or any other illegal activity as a direct result of their being trafficked.[88] These amendments are yet to be passed by Parliament.

Child marriage and other gender issues

Under the Children's Act, the minimum age for marriage is 18 years and forcing a child to be betrothed or married is punishable by a fine or a year's imprisonment.[89] Despite this provision, the percentage of girls between 20 -24 who were married or in a union before the age of 18 was estimated at 21 per cent nationally, with girls from rural areas twice more likely to be married while children than in urban areas.[90] The National Gender Policy, approved in 2015, also makes it clear that marriage under the age of 18 is prohibited, a stance supported by the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana (2017-2026), which aims to ensure that laws, policy frameworks and mechanisms related to ending child marriage are in place and effectively enforced and implemented.[91]

The age of marriage is set at 18, but the age of sexual consent in Ghana is set at 16.[92] The MoGCSP has published a position paper on harmonising the age of marriage and the age of sexual consent in Ghana.[93]

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[84] Ghana, Labour Regulations Legislative Instrument, L.I. No. 1833 of 2007, Articles 21-25.
[85] International Organisation for Migration, 'Standard Operating Procedures to Combat Human Trafficking in Ghana', Accra, Ghana, 2017. The SOPs outline the procedure for the identification of human and child trafficking, the provision of assistance to victims, and the investigation and prosecution of traffickers and include standardised forms for screening, referral, placement and case monitoring.
[86] 'National Plan of Action Phase II for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Ghana 2017-2021'.
[87] Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, 'Strategy on Anti-Child Labour and Trafficking in Fisheries', Accra, Ghana, 2018, pp.20-21.
[88] UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', April 2019
[89] Ghana, The Children's Act, Act No. 560 of 30 December 1998, Article 14(2).
[90] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017-2026 at p. 4.
[91] National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana, p.15.
[92] Criminal Code 1960, section 1.
[93] Criminal Offences Act 1960 section 14.

While the consensus appears to be to maintain the age of sexual consent at 16, a proposal has been made to amend the law to legalise sexual relations among children below the age of sexual consent, provided the age gap is less than 2 to 3 years. Additional amendments include revising the definition of defilement, which only applies to girls, making it a first-degree felony, and to make compulsion of marriage a more serious offence. At present it is only a misdemeanour under the Act[94] but would become a second-degree felony under the amendment.

Section 69A of the Criminal Code was inserted in 1994 and a further amendment was made in 2007 to address the practice of female circumcision. It sets out a clear definition of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) and makes it a second degree felony to carry out FGM/C.

Child online safety

As in every country, online safety has recently become a child protection issue and one which Ghana has yet to address effectively. Ghana has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000) or acceded to the Convention on Cybercrime (2001), the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007), or the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (2014) (though this was signed in 2017).[95]

Following a series of consultations, a multi-sectoral National Child Online Protection Steering Committee was set up in 2016, and was tasked with drafting a Child Online Protection Framework for Ghana.[96] MoGCSP released a position paper on the legislation and policy gaps relating to children's online safety in 2018, which was followed by a review of the Electronic Transaction Act 2008 (Act 772). During the review process, to which UNICEF contributed, the Ministry of Communications decided to consolidate all the proposed amendments into a separate Cybersecurity Bill 2019, which was passed by Parliament in November 2020. The Cybersecurity Act 2020 (ACT 1038) sets up a Cybersecurity Authority that replaces the national cybersecurity centre at the Ministry of Communications. This Authority will have its dedicated budget from the consolidated fund and will be responsible for implementing the Act 2020. The Act covers a wide range of offences including but not limited to the grooming of children online, the showing of indecent images and photographs of a child, cyberstalking, sexual extortion, 'revenge porn' and blocking, filtering and the taking down of illegal content, with the protection of children listed as one of the grounds for triggering the action.

Discrimination

Article 17(2) of the Constitution of Ghana prohibits discrimination "on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status." Section 3 of the Children's Act also prohibits discrimination with more detail: "on the grounds of gender, race, age, religious, disability, health status, custom, ethnic origin, rural or urban background, birth or other status, socio-economic status or because the child is a refugee". Despite this wide definition, the protection provided has proved to be inadequate to protect certain vulnerable children. The USAID Human Rights Report 2019 notes that children with disabilities are subject to abuse and intolerance. Children with mental disabilities, some as young as seven, are recorded as being sent to spiritual healing centres, known as 'prayer camps' to 'heal' them. Reports noted that some were deprived of their liberty, denied food and physically assaulted.[97] The

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[94] See Criminal Offences Act 1960, section 109 and MOGCSP, 'A position paper on harmonizing the age of sexual consent and the age of marriage in Ghana', July 2018; UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', April 2019.

[95] MoGCSP, 'Children's online safety concerns in Ghana: A position paper on legislative and policy gaps', July 2018, p.13.

[96] See also UNICEF, Risks and Opportunities Related to Children's Online Practices, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/1791/file/Risks%20and%20Opportunities%20-%20Child%20Online%20Protection.pdf.

[97] United States Department of State, 'Ghana 2018 Human Rights Report', 2019, p.23.

Government does not monitor the camps despite the Mental Health Act, which prohibits involuntary and forced treatment in non-accredited facilities.[98] In December 2018 the Mental Health Authority issued guidelines for traditional and faith-based healers to ensure that they respect the rights of children with mental disabilities.

Those living with HIV/AIDS are also still stigmatised. The Ghana AIDS Commission Act criminalises discrimination against a person infected with or affected by HIV or AIDS and provides for a fine of 1,200 to 6,000 GHC, imprisonment for 18 months to 3 years, or both. The Act further provides for the right to health, education, insurance benefits, employment, privacy and confidentiality, nondisclosure of status without consent, and right to hold public or political office for those with HIV/AIDS and those suspected of having HIV/AIDS.[99]

Overview of the child protection system in Ghana

Traditionally, children in Ghana grew up in extended family groups, with child-rearing and socialisation seen as the responsibility of the entire community. Informal foster arrangements played an important role as a 'safety net' to protect children from the negative impacts of household poverty or orphanhood and continue to be the main form of support for children in need of protection. Although extended family networks and traditional foster arrangements remain important, particularly in rural areas, social change, including rapid urbanisation and migration has eroded these networks and undermined the ability of communities to care for and protect children.[100] In some cases, informal fostering may be abusive or exploitative, for example if a child is fostered to carry out domestic work or labour.[101] There is, therefore, a growing role for the State in monitoring and providing adequate protection and care to those children who are in need.

Governance and responsibility for child protection services

Within the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), the Department of Children is the leading coordinating body for child protection issues and leads on formulating child-related policies and legislation, while the Department of Social Welfare is responsible for providing guidelines and standards for child and family welfare services and for providing social welfare training, registration and management of childcare institutions, the registration of CSOs/NGOs, the central adoption agency, and the management of two probation units. The Department of Children leads the National Child Protection Committee, with representatives from several government ministries, departments and agencies, UN agencies, NGOs and other development partners.[102]

Within the MoGCSP, there is also the Domestic Violence Secretariat, which is responsible for the coordination of national programmes related to domestic violence and ending child marriage and the Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariat, which coordinates and monitors the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking 2017-2021. Within the Department of Labour, the Child Labour Unit coordinates the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2017-2021; and within the Ministry of Communications, the Child Online Protection Unit coordinates interventions related to online sexual exploitation and abuse. Within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Department of Community Development implements programmes focused on poverty reduction, livelihoods, and technical/vocational training,

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[98] Mental Health Act, Act No. 846 of 2012, Article 51
[99] Ghana, AIDS Commission Act, Act No. 938 of 2016.
[100] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.10-11.
[101] UNICEF and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Child and Family Welfare Policy', February 2015, p.1.
[102] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Budget Analysis: Ghana 2019/2020', December 2020

including the Mass Education Social Drive, which promotes behavioural and social change in relation to issues relevant to child protection.[103]

The Department of Children has offices in ten regions (as of 2020 there were no offices in the six new regions created in 2018-19), managed directly by MoGCSP. In each of the sixteen regions, there is a Department of Social Welfare and a Department of Community Development, both of which are managed by the Office of the Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS). Regional Directors of all three departments are non-voting members of the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs). [104]

Following the Local Governance Act in 2016, the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Community Development were merged at district level into one department, which is responsible for the actual provision of services related to child and family welfare and child protection and thus forms the core of the social services workforce.[105] The district-level departments are staffed by social welfare officers (SWOs) and community development officers (CDOs), who have different roles and professional backgrounds. While the Department reports jointly to the District Assembly, SWOs and CDOs maintain separate reporting lines to their respective Departments at a regional level. A new role of social development officer has been created, but has not yet been adopted in all districts.[106] There is currently a serious shortage of social services staff, with 2,460 staff working across these departments in 2020, less than half of the minimum staffing norm of 5,790.[107]

The process of decentralisation has had a number of difficulties, including a lack of local administrative capacity, delays in the transfer of funds and staff, and poor coordination between central and local government officials. Community members are relatively unlikely to approach their District Assembly for help with problems, and much more likely to rely on their Member of Parliament or chief, suggesting that national and traditional institutions are still viewed as more competent or more reliable than local ones.[108] This has important implications for child protection, given the centrality of the District Assembly and local institutions in providing child protection services.

Police

The Ministry of Interior oversees the Ghana Police Service and its specialised units and supervises remand homes for young offenders. The Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) responds to cases of domestic violence. DOVVSU has 112 offices across the country in all regional capitals and in many districts, but only the office in Tamale has a specialised interview room for children. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) deals with cases of child trafficking and has ten regional offices besides its headquarters in Accra.[109] The police tend to deal with more serious child protection cases, for example, involving criminal abuse or neglect. Historically, they have been inclined to focus more on investigating the perpetrator than on supporting child victims.[110]

Since 2016 the Ghana Police Service has been integrating child-friendly policing into the police training curriculum for both new recruits and police officers already in post. A mapping of the Ghana Police Service

[103] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Budget Analysis: Ghana 2019/2020', December 2020
[104] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Budget Analysis: Ghana 2019/2020', December 2020
[105] UNICEF Ghana, 'Evaluation of Ghana's Child Protection System Strengthening at District Level: Draft Final Report', December 2018, Accra, Ghana, p.19.
[106] UNICEF Ghana, 'Evaluation of Ghana's Child Protection System Strengthening at District Level: Draft Final Report', December 2018, Accra, Ghana, p.19.
[107] Office of the Head of Local Government Service, 2018, 'Operational Manual for Department of Social Welfare and Community Development', November 2018
[108] Fridy, K. S. and Myers, W. M. (2019) Challenges to decentralization in Ghana: where do citizens seek assistance?, Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 57: 1, 71–92. DOI: 10.1080/14662043.2018.1514217.
[109] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Budget Analysis: Ghana 2019/2020', December 2020
[110] UNICEF and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Child and Family Welfare Policy', February 2015, p.3.

conducted in 2016 found that there was a need to raise awareness of child-friendly policing and legislation and policies relevant to children in contact with the law. Specialist officers at DOVVSU and AHTU were found to have more awareness but lacked the tools and infrastructure to implement policies. For example, there was a gap in the skills and resources required for crisis counselling and psychosocial support. The report found that child victims and witnesses were offered very little protection, and that there were no child-friendly spaces or financial support available.[111] Obtaining medical reports and providing shelter for child victims or witnesses remain a challenge for the police. Following the mapping, standard operating procedures were developed to guide the handling of child cases. A Student's Manual was also developed to provide background information and lessons on child protection for police recruits undertaking the child-friendly policing training course and in-service police officers in DOVVSU and AHTU.[112]

Judicial system

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) is a quasi-judicial body which exists to protect fundamental human rights and to ensure good governance for every person in Ghana.[113] CHRAJ was established under the Commission of Human Rights Act 1993, which sets out the composition of the Commission, the functions of the Commission, and the establishment of regional and district branches. Representatives of CHRAJ in the regional and district offices are responsible for receiving complaints from the public and investigating any allegations of human rights abuses or corruption.[114] CHRAJ has offices in 100 districts across all 16 regions and handles complaints involving children's rights, including maintenance, neglect, abuse, abandonment, child labour, paternity, forced marriage, custody etc., dealing with, on average, 3,500 complaints per year. Over 80 per cent of complaints relate to neglect, custody of the child and improper care of the child in the context of custody, while 7 per cent related to education and 1 per cent to child marriage.[115]

The Judicial Service oversees the administration of courts. There are 72 circuit courts, of which ten are child-friendly gender-based violence courts, and 192 district courts, of which three are juvenile courts and family tribunals. The juvenile courts and family tribunals handle cases involving juvenile offenders, child neglect, maintenance and custody cases and sit as a panel. One of the panel members must be a social welfare officer.[116] However, magistrates or prosecutors working in Juvenile Courts or Family Tribunals do not currently have to undergo formal training or qualifications, meaning that proceedings are not always child friendly.[117] All three juvenile courts are in Accra, with general district courts handling juvenile cases in other regions. There are no social workers in criminal courts and no comprehensive victim/witness support programmes, though some pre-trial preparation is provided to child victims/witnesses by DOVVSU staff.[118] The general practice is for children to testify in open court, though judges are encouraged to hear sensitive cases in-camera.

Health sector

In 2018 a capacity assessment was conducted to ascertain the health sector's response to child abuse incidences and to identify gaps in capacity. The assessment found that many providers report knowledge and skills in responding to cases involving child abuse, including in making referrals, documenting

[111] Ghana Police Service, 'Integrating child-friendly policing into the Ghana Police Service: Mapping Report Summary', October 2016, pp.1-2.
[112] Ghana Police Service, 'Student's Manual', October 2016.
[113] CHRAJ, 'Human Rights Mandate', 2020, accessed 28 April 2020.
[114] Ghana, Commission of Human Rights Act, Act No. 456 of 1993.
[115] MoGCSP, 2018, Children Need Rights, Not Rites: Data Gallery 2017
[116] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Budget Analysis: Ghana 2019/2020', December 2020
[117] Judicial Service of Ghana, 'Children before the courts in Ghana: Towards child-friendly justice', 2018, pp.63-66.
[118] MoGCSP, 2016, Justice for Children Policy.

findings, recommending follow-up treatment, and history-taking and examination. Most providers also reported a sympathetic attitude towards victims of child abuse, attending to them in a positive and timely manner. However, some gaps were identified around the provision of practical, social and psychological support to child victims, and in the forensic management of child abuse cases, for example in the taking of forensic samples to be used as evidence, accessing advocacy for abused children and reporting to the appropriate authorities. There were also gaps in knowledge around HIV prophylaxis and sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment after sexual assault, and around the appropriate handling of perpetrators. The report concluded that there was a need to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration between partners involved in child protection, including healthcare providers, police officers, prosecutors, and social welfare services.[119] Guidelines for health workers were published in 2018 to support health workers in preventing and managing child abuse, including supporting child victims of abuse and following the correct procedures for collecting and preserving evidence for potential use in the legal system.[120]

Education sector

In July 2018, the Ghana Education Service published a Safe School Resource Pack, which includes a training manual, a teachers' handbook, a positive discipline toolkit, fact sheets, and peer-to-peer materials. The resource pack defines the concept of a 'safe school' and gives information on the things that make schools unsafe, including bullying, sexual harassment and corporal punishment.[121] The teachers' handbook contains information on children's rights, the negative effects of violence on children, and the implementation of safe, positive discipline techniques in classrooms.[122] The peer-to-peer materials recognise the important role of child participation in making a school safe and contains resources for children to learn about their rights and responsibilities, how to challenge bullying and sexual harassment, and how to solve conflict without violence.[123] The fact sheets contain information on reporting school-based violence at various levels, from the child up to the headteacher, as well as School Management Committees or Parent-Teacher Associations, local councils, police, social welfare officers, medical centres, and courts of law.[124]

As well as these resources, the Ghana Education Service updated its Code of Conduct in April 2016 to incorporate School-Related Gender-Based Violence. The Code of Conduct explicitly prohibits the use of corporal punishment or other acts that inflict physical pain on a child, from using work as a form of punishment, and from using any cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[125]

Community and informal child protection institutions

At a local level, there are many informal service providers and structures that respond to child protection concerns, including traditional leaders such as chiefs and Queen Mothers,[126] faith-based organisations, teachers, and assembly members. Often informal community structures emphasise compensation, reconciliation, and restoring harmony in the family and community to prevent any recurrence of the abuse. Providing support for the child and seeking their opinion or experience is often seen as less important. Informal actors often prefer not to refer child protection cases into the formal system,

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[119] Ghana Health Service, 'Capacity and gaps of Ghana health sector's response to child abuse', June 2018.
[120] Ghana Health Service, 'Child Protection Guidelines for Health Workers', 2018, p.12.
[121] Ghana Education Service, 'Training Manual on Safe School', July 2018.
[122] Ghana Education Service, 'Teacher's Handbook on Safe Schools', July 2018.
[123] Ghana Education Service, 'Safe Schools Peer-to-Peer Materials', July 2018.
[124] Ghana Education Service, 'Reporting school-based violence', July 2018.
[125] Ghana Education Service, 'Code of Conduct for staff of the Ghana Education Service', revised version April 2016.
[126] Queen Mothers are traditionally responsible for the welfare of women and children and can play a strong leadership role; UNICEF, 'Mapping and Analysis of Ghana's Child Protection System', November 2012, p.36.

particularly for cases attracting stigma such as rape, defilement and incest.[127] In the five case study districts included in the evaluation of the Policy 2 Practice initiative, traditional authorities saw themselves as responsible for organising community durbars on child protection issues, and as having a role in addressing sexual related abuse such as incest, defilement and rape. Views on cooperation with formal authorities differed between districts, with some recognising the importance of working with the police in child protection cases, and others feeling that their traditional role had been undermined. Traditional authorities were generally aware of the need to develop linkages between formal and informal services, particularly around sexual assault cases.[128]

In 2010 Ghana introduced the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act to regulate the process of mediating settlements in civil and minor criminal disputes and to recognise customary arbitration formally as a means to resolve these matters. The Act could potentially be used to divert children charged with minor crimes.[129] During the workshops held as part of the Policy 2 Practice initiative, social workers recognised the need for further collaboration and cooperation between formal and informal actors and the need to engage with a broader range of informal actors. Participants agreed that there was a need to build the capacity of informal actors in order to have a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities with regards to the handling of criminal offences involving children, including when cases should be referred into the formal system.[130] Traditional authorities have been engaged in the development of the Child and Family Welfare Policy, the Justice for Children Policy and the proposed amendments to the Children's Act, the Juvenile Act and other laws.

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[127] UNICEF and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Child and Family Welfare Policy', February 2015, p.4.
[128] UNICEF, 'Evaluation of child protection system strengthening at district level: Situational report', August 2017, p.12.
[129] Ghana, Alternative Dispute Resolution Act, Act No. 798 of 2010.
[130] UNICEF, 'Evaluation of child protection system strengthening at district level: Situational report', August 2017, pp.28-29.

4. OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation covers UNICEF Ghana's child protection work under two different country programme cycles. The country programme 2012-2017 had six key components, namely health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; education; child protection; advocacy, communication, monitoring and analysis and cross-sectoral support. The child protection component had a budget of US$18.5 million.[131] The 2018-2022 country programme retains the same six components (with the substitution of 'policy and evidence' for 'advocacy, communication, monitoring and analysis') and has a budget of US$30 million for child protection.[132] Both programmes take a systems-strengthening approach with the aim of effecting legal and regulatory change, reforming the child and family welfare and justice services to become more effective and relevant in both preventing abuse and responding to harm, and supporting behaviour and social change.[133]

Strengthening the child protection system in Ghana is an important and high-impact area for intervention. The national Child Protection Social Drive has reached millions of people across Ghana with messaging around child protection issues and has attracted influential supporters such as the Second Lady of Ghana. The Government of Ghana's child protection budget has grown from 44 million GHC in 2016 to 142 million GHC in 2020, with 0.26 per cent of the national budget allocated to child protection services.[134] Governmental budget allocation to child protection is similar to other West African countries for which budgetary analysis is available, but falls far short of the ECOWAS benchmark which requires that 3 per cent of the national budget be allocated to child protection.[135]

Table 4.1 Brief presentation of the object of the evaluation

Title of the program	Government of Ghana / UNICEF Child Protection Programme (2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022)
Country	Ghana
Sources of funding	USAID, Global Affairs Canada, CIDA, KOICA, Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (Norway, the Netherlands, Canada, the United Kingdom, European Union, Zonta International)
Total Budget	2012 – 2017: USD 18.5 million 2018 – 2022: USD 30 million
Project duration	2012 – 2022 (ongoing)
Main Objectives	2012 – 2017: Outcome 1: By the end of 2016 a National Child Protection system that better protects children (especially orphans, the most vulnerable and marginalized) from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination will be

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[131] United Nations Economic and Social Council, 'UNICEF Country Programme Document: Ghana', 20-23 June 2011, pp.6 – 7.
[132] United Nations Economic and Social Council, 'UNICEF Country Programme Document: Ghana', 6-8 February 2018, p.8.
[133] UNICEF Ghana, 'Proposed country programme 2018-2022 Programme Strategy Note: Child Protection', 15 September 2017.
[134] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child protection budget analysis 2019/2020', December 2020
[135] Nigeria: 0.16% of national budget; Cote d'Ivoire: 0.3%; UNICEF Ghana, 'Child protection budget analysis 2019/2020', December 2020.

	functioning in 5 most deprived regions and during emergencies. Outcome 2: By 2016 capacity of justice system strengthened to deliver justice services for children. 2018 – 2022: Overall outcome: Girls and boys in Ghana, especially the most disadvantaged, increasingly benefit from an equitable and integrated child protection system
Components and strategies	Legal and regulatory framework, budget and planning reform through policy dialogue and advocacy; enhancing the capacity of the child and family welfare, justice and birth registration services through technical assistance, organisational institution building, evidence generation, and innovation and private sector partnerships; supporting social and behavioural change processes through technical assistance, community-level capacity development, advocacy and public dialogue, and organisational institution building.
Expected beneficiaries	Girls and boys in Ghana, particularly those disadvantaged through disability, special needs, ethnicity, migration status or socio-economic status, and those in need of care and protection; their parents, guardians, and caregivers Community members in areas targeted by social and behavioural change campaigns Main duty bearers and secondary duty bearers including social service providers, police and justice officials, teachers, healthcare professionals, members of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, and community and traditional leaders with responsibility for providing protection to children
Partners (institutional, implementing agencies)	2012 – 2017: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare; Ministry of Local Government; Department of Social Welfare; Department of Community Development; Regional and District Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development; Department of Children; National Commission for Civic Education; Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies; Births and Deaths Registry; Ministry of Justice; Ghana Police Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit; Legal Aid Board; Attorney General Department; NGOs; USAID; CIDA 2018 – 2022: Ministry of Gender, Social Protection and Children; Department of Children; Department of Social Welfare; Department of Community Development; Local Government Service; Births and Deaths Registry; Ministry of Local Government; Ghana Statistical Service; Ghana Health Service; Judiciary Service; Attorney General's Department; Ghana Police Service; CHRAJ; Ghana Prison Service; Legal Aid Scheme; National Commission for Civic Education; NGOs; CSOs; FBOs

2012-2017 child protection programme and results framework

The 2012-2017 child protection programme was informed by the results of the Mapping and Analysis of Ghana's Child Protection Report, based on research undertaken in 2010. [136] The mapping report, highlighted the importance of a systems-based, rather than issues-based approach, and enabled the targeting of the programme towards areas with a high prevalence of child protection issues. Under the 2012-2017 Country Programme plan, the two main outcomes were 'a functioning national child protection system that will better protect children, especially orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), from violence, exploitation abuse and discrimination in the five most deprived regions and during emergencies' and the 'capacity of the justice system strengthened to deliver justice services for children'. Child protection programme interventions targeted five regions in Ghana, three located in the north of the country (Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions), the Western region and the Greater Accra region. The programme employed a mix of strategies to achieve results, including developing institutional capacity for policy implementation, planning, monitoring and evaluation, addressing equity, particularly in relation to gender, location and disadvantaged groups, strengthening public-private partnerships, and strengthening community-based strategies.

The 2012-2017 programme had seven outputs, four under Outcome 1 and three under Outcome 2. The outcomes, outputs and results were as follows:

Outcome 1: By the end of 2016 a National Child Protection system that better protects children (especially orphans, the most vulnerable and marginalized) from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination will be functioning in 5 most deprived regions and during emergencies.

   a. Child and Family Welfare Policy approved, and provisions of Children's Act aligned with Policy.
   b. 90% of adults and children say they are comfortable seeking help from the Police where Police are present in their community, 80% are comfortable seeking help from DSW and 60% are comfortable seeking help from DCD
   c. At least 20 Most Significant Change stories gathered from service providers in at least 5 regions indicating positive changes towards a more effective Child and Family Welfare System

Output 1: By 2016, Child Welfare and Protection Laws and Policies are increasingly aligned with international standards and made appropriate for Ghana, and resources are increasingly available for its application

   a. Greater alignment of child welfare and protection laws and policies with child-centred values, local cultural and social context, and international standards
   b. Evidence of more appropriate and relevant budget allocations at national level and in at least 20 districts
   c. A national, integrated Child Protection Information Management System linking national and regional levels exists and is being used by relevant stakeholders

Output 2: By 2016, child protection service providers demonstrate strengthened and coordinated capacity to prevent, promote and respond to child protection abuses, in line with national policy and standard operational procedures

   a. Standards, protocols and procedures finalised for social workers, community workers, health professionals, teachers, and Chiefs and Queen mothers

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[136] UNICEF, 2012.

b. Child Protection Sector Working Group established by the end of 2015 and evidence of more systematic human and financial resource planning in support of CP by end of 2016

c. The number of service providers at district and regional and national level working to prevent and respond to child protection abuses increases by 10%

Output 3: By 2016, parents, caregivers and community members in at least 5 regions understand and are able to practice positive behaviour that protects children from violence, abuse and exploitation

a. Number of children in residential care decreases by 20% to 3,600

b. No more than 15% of adults believe that it is 'ok' for a girl under 18 to get married

c. Parents, care-givers, community members and children report significant change in relation to the protection of children as evidenced by at least 50 positive stories annually

d. No more than 30% of children report having experienced physical punishment at school in the past month

e. No more than 30% of parents and care-givers practice physical, emotion and psychological abuse of children

Output 4: More children under the age of 5 have their births registered

a. 75% of children under the age of 1 have their births registered

b. 75% of children aged 1 to 5 have their birth registered in rural communities

c. Costed Civil Registration Strategy is developed by the end of 2015

d. The BDR Act 1965 (301) is reviewed in line with current national and international standards by the end of 2015

e. BDR is able to retain part of its service fee ensuring more adequate resources for its services by the end of 2016

Outcome 2: By 2016 capacity of justice system strengthened to deliver justice services for children.

a. Justice for Children Policy approved, and provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act are aligned with Policy

b. At least 20 Most Significant Change stories gathered from service providers in at least 5 regions indicating positive changes towards a more effective Justice for Children system

Output 5: Juvenile Justice laws and policies are increasingly aligned with international standards and made appropriate for Ghana and resources are increasingly available for its application

a. Evidence of greater alignment of juvenile justice laws and policies with international standards

b. Evidence of more appropriate and relevant budget allocations at national level

Output 6: By 2016, justice system actors apply principles and laws on child justice and programmes are increasingly available in support of young offenders, child victims and witnesses

a. SOPs for police finalised and service guidelines and court directives are issued for justice services by the end of 2016

b. SOPs, guidelines and court procedures are integrated into the training curriculum

c. 20% reduction in the number of children in detention

Output 7: There is increased effort to prevent children coming in conflict with the law and effective and appropriate mechanisms exists for dealing with cases of juvenile offending through informal, community-based processes.

a. Guidelines for traditional authorities (Chiefs, Queen mothers) developed for handling children's cases in line with the Justice for Children Policy by the end of 2016.

2018-2022 child protection programme and results framework

The overall outcome for the 2018-2022 child protection programme is that 'girls and boys in Ghana, especially the most disadvantaged, increasingly benefit from an equitable and integrated child protection system'. The Country Programme as a whole continues its focus on the five most deprived northern regions (Northern, Savannah, North East, Upper East and Upper West, while also using district-level data to target activities to areas with the highest need. The child protection programme builds on the system strengthening approach commenced under the 2012-2017 programme, with child protection system strengthening identified as a high-impact area for intervention. Capacity building of the social welfare workforce continues in 20 selected districts while interventions concerning alternative care for children in foster care, kinship care or adoption focus on districts with high numbers of children in residential care. Development of guidelines and directives is carried out at a national level.

The 2018-2022 programme has five outputs under the main outcome as follows:

Overall outcome: Girls and boys in Ghana, especially the most disadvantaged, increasingly benefit from an equitable and integrated child protection system

   a. Proportion of children aged 2-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month decreases to 83% by 2022
   b. Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were first married / in union before age 18 decreases to 18% nationally by 2022 (12% of women in urban areas, 16% of women in rural areas)
   c. 85% of children aged 0-5 have their births registered with the civil authorities

Output 1: Child and family welfare, justice for children and birth registration-related laws and regulations are aligned with child protection policies and international standards

   a. The Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and the Criminal Procedure Act are reviewed in line with child protection policies and international standards by 2020
   b. 20% of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) include child protection in their Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs)/Budgets (40 out of 216)

Output 2: Most vulnerable and disadvantaged girls and boys have access to services to prevent and respond to violence against children

   a. Existence of a functional social work quality assurance system that entails trained personnel; SOPs to run the system; monitoring and data collection tools and evidence of reporting
   b. Existence of inter-operable information management system that supports and tracks case management, incident monitoring and programme monitoring
   c. 86,000 girls receive prevention and care services to address child marriages through UNICEF support programmes

Output 3: Capacities of formal and informal service providers enhanced to provide equitable, quality and coordinated child-friendly justice services, to girls and boys and their families

   a. Guidelines and training manuals for judiciary, probation officers, and evidence of the application of the SOPs
   b. 63% of justice professionals certified in dealing with child offenders and child victims and witnesses (21,000 out of 33,000)

Output 4: Birth registration services are more efficient for the registration of girls and boys under 5 years of age

a. Only 10 districts remain with birth registration rates less than 50%
b. 95% of children aged 0-1 have their births registered with the civil authorities

Output 5: Women, girls, boys and men in selected areas have an increased understanding of violence and harmful practices that affect children especially girls

a. 1,250 new communities engaged through child protection facilitation toolkit as part of the social drive campaign by 2022 (2,050 communities in total)
b. 9% of the population aged 10-18 (810,000) and 12% of the adult population (1.2 million) reached by UNICEF-supported programmes that target parents and primary caregivers to address child-rearing to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and that aim at increasing girls' and boys' capacity to identify, prevent and/or report more than one form of violence

Programme beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries of UNICEF's 2012-2017 and 2018-2022 programmes are girls and boys in Ghana, particularly those disadvantaged through disability, special needs, ethnicity, migration status or socio-economic status, and those in need of care and protection. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should also be regarded as beneficiaries, as should community members in areas targeted by social and behavioural change campaigns.

Beneficiaries also include the main duty bearers and secondary duty bearers involved in the delivery of child protection at national, regional and district levels. These include social service providers, police and justice officials, teachers, healthcare professionals, members of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), and community and traditional leaders with responsibility for providing protection to children.

Theory of Change

The 2018-2022 programme has a theory of change that is expressed both visually and in writing in the programme strategy note.[137] The overall change envisioned is that 'fewer girls and boys experience violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and injustices, and more children are registered within one year of birth and no later than their fifth birthday'. The programme outcome is that 'by 2022, girls and boys in Ghana, especially the most disadvantaged, increasingly benefit from an equitable and integrated child protection system'. According to the theory of change, in order for this outcome to lead to the final vision, several conditions must be met:

- Political prioritization of and commitment to child protected is reflected in laws, planning and budgeting
- The momentum and support for Civil Registry and Vital Statistics reform continues
- Child and family welfare, justice, and birth registration systems provide accessible, quality preventive and responsive services to children and families
- Families, young people, communities and traditional leaders embrace and lead change for child protection, with a general increase in appreciation for women's and girls' empowerment and equal opportunities for girls and boys

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[137] UNICEF Ghana, 'Proposed country programme 2018-2022 Programme Strategy Note: Child Protection', 15 September 2017.

- An overall internal and external supportive environment reinforces positive, transformative change and increases stakeholder accountability

UNICEF's inputs aim to support and strengthen three pillars of work in order to generate the five programme outputs that will contribute to the overall outcome. Firstly, the enabling environment formed by the legal and regulatory framework must be more conducive for child protection. Secondly, the supply of effective and efficient child protection services, including specialised child protection case management and birth registration services, must be better able to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in a timely and appropriate way. Thirdly, the demand for child protection prevention and response must be strengthened through social and behavioural change, particularly with regards to gender-related norms and behaviours. Through these pillars of work, laws and regulations will be aligned to national policies and international standards, access to child and family welfare services will be improved, the justice system will be more child-friendly, the birth registration system will be more efficient, and communities will have an increased understanding of violence and harmful practices.

The programme has several assumptions and risks. The theory of change assumes that programming is mutually reinforcing across all three pillars; that the government will remain committed to child protection system reforms and that Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will remain committed to championing and leading the change; that organisational change and decentralisation will not adversely affect the programme; and that families, young people and communities are ready and willing to change. The main risk is a reduced level of funding which would limit the ability to continue programming in all three 'pillars'. Another key challenge identified is that of monitoring and gauging the impact of programme interventions due to the sensitivity of issues and the difficulties inherent in measuring an 'absence of incidents' – the outcome that effective prevention work aims to achieve. Climate change and emergencies are also recognised as risks, albeit smaller, with mitigation focusing on building long-term capacity of stakeholders to respond to emergencies.

4.1. Key stakeholders and their contributions

UNICEF Ghana has many stakeholders at a national, regional and district level. At a national level, key government partners within the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) include the Department of Children, the Department of Social Welfare, the Domestic Violence Secretariat, the Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariat, and the National Child Protection Committee (led by the Department of Children). Within other Ministries and Agencies there is the Child Labour Unit within the Department of Labour and the Child Online Protection Unit within the Ministry of Communications.

With regards to justice for children, the main partners are CHRAJ, the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General's Department, the Judicial Service of Ghana and the Ministry of Interior overseeing the Ghana Police Service. Birth registration is overseen by the Births and Deaths Registry. Important supporting roles are played by the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service, the Ghana Statistical Service, the National Commission for Civic Education and the Office of the Head of the Local Government Service.

At a regional level, partners include the regional offices of the Department of Children, the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Community Development, as well as the Regional Coordinating Councils. At a district level, the MMDAs are the key stakeholder together with the Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development. In addition, community, traditional and religious leaders are all important stakeholders.

UNICEF partners with other international development organisations on different issues, including the ILO and the IOM on child labour and child trafficking, UNFPA on child marriage and gender-based violence, and UNDP on gender, governance and standards for mining.

Major donors and partners have included the Governments of Canada and the Netherlands, DANIDA, the USAID Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). UNICEF has provided funding to several NGOs and civil society organisations to implement interventions on child marriage, including Savanna Signature, International Needs Ghana, Defence for Children Internal and Youth Harvest. UNICEF has also established a number of partnerships with private organisations, including Airtel Tigo Ghana, MTN Ghana and Vodafone, for the implementation of mobile birth registration and social and behavioural change campaigns.

5. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

As set out in the ToR for the assignment, the primary purpose of the evaluation is to support learning and decision-making that would, in turn, support better child protection outcomes for girls and boys now and in the future. In addition to this, the evaluation will hold UNICEF accountable for contributing to child protection outcomes for children (or failing to do so) in Ghana since 2012. Finally, by examining, collecting and analysing credible evidence, this evaluation will help to clarify the changes in child protection in Ghana that have been brought about by UNICEF's child protection programme, and whether the programme has the right strategic focus to contribute to the development of child protection and social welfare system in Ghana going forward. In order to reflect on the programme's strategic approach, the Evaluation Team will consider the assumptions contained in the theory of change included in the 2017 *'Child Protection Programme Strategy Note'*.

The UNICEF Ghana Country Office is the primary intended user of the evaluation. The other users and uses of the evaluation are set out in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1 Users and use of the evaluation

Evaluation Users	Uses of the evaluation (how the findings and recommendations will be used)
UNICEF Ghana Country Office	• Strengthen understanding of the contributions the Child Protection Programme has made to Ghana's development agenda
UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WCARO)	• Determine the contributions the Ghana Country Office to has made to Key Result Areas in relation to Ending Violence Against Children (KRC 5), Ending Child Marriages (KRC 6); and Birth Registration (KRC 7)
Stakeholders in the Government of Ghana, including but not limited to: • Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection • Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Health • Ministry of the Interior • Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations • Ministry of Communications • Office of the Head of Local Government Service • Judicial Service of Ghana • National Commission for Civic Education	• Understand the contribution of the Child Protection Programme towards Ghana's National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework • Suggest priority actions to be included in subsequent annual work plans

- Office of the Attorney General - Ghana Statistical Service - Ministry of Finance - National Development Planning Commission - Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice - Regional Coordinating Councils	
Other UN agencies especially: - UNFPA - ILO - IOM - United Nations Ghana Country Team	- Strengthen collaborative programming especially on areas such as child marriage, child trafficking and child labour
Development partners and private sector organisations e.g. USAID, CIDA, KOICA, Tigo	- Hold UNICEF accountable against its programming commitments and results presented in progress reports - Reflect on allocation of budget resources for child protection programming going forward
CSO and NGO implementing partners	- Scale up and mainstream good practices identified - Address any weaknesses identified

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

As set out in the ToR, this formative and summative evaluation has six main objectives:

➢ To determine the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability** of the Child Protection Programme.

➢ To examine **the results achieved by the UNICEF/GoG Child Protection Programme since 2012** for children, adolescents, families and communities in Ghana, and its contribution to national priorities. This exercise should also look at the results of programme implementation in terms of collaboration with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, private sector organisations, academic institutions and development partners, across national, regional and district levels.

➢ To take stock of **changes on child protection indicators** included in the country programme documents and annual workplan, and to provide evidence to inform future programming.

➢ To assess **UNICEF Ghana's leadership, coordination capacity, and ability to leverage resources and partnerships** towards child protection outcomes at national and sub-national levels through advocacy and policy influencing, including knowledge management and evidence-generation to inform policy decisions.

➢ To examine the **existing linkages** between the outputs of the child protection programme, as well as linkages with other outcome and output areas of the UNICEF country programme.

➢ Deepen our focus on **empowering disadvantaged adolescent girls** to improve their wellbeing with multiplier effects for their families, communities and societies.

7. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7.1. Thematic scope

This evaluation covers the entire child protection component of UNICEF Ghana's 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 Country Programmes. In addition to this, the evaluation considers the linkages between child protection programming and other components of the Ghana Country Programme that relate to child protection, namely: education, health and nutrition, social protection and social policy adolescent and youth empowerment-related interventions, communication for development, and early childhood and development.

7.2. Geographical scope

The geographical scope of the evaluation is expansive, covering programming nationwide across Ghana at both national and sub-national (regional, metropolitan and district) levels; the evaluation includes evidence collected in all 16 regions of Ghana.

7.3. Chronological scope

The evaluation covers the period from 2012 to 2020. It addresses the perspectives of a range of programme beneficiaries, including children, adolescents and their families and communities as well as key actors in the child protection sector.

8. CRITERIA AND EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

The evaluation generates evidence in relation to 4 of the 6 evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), namely: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The fifth criteria, impact[138], has been looked at in relation to outcomes and likely impact of the programme. In addition to these criteria, the evaluation methodology will also incorporate UNICEF's guiding principles of gender, human rights and equity. A set of research questions were included in the TOR and were refined in collaboration with the Evaluation Reference Group during the inception phase. They are set out below and relate to the four criteria listed above.

8.1. Evaluation questions

Relevance

➢ *To what extent have the child protection programme and its approaches been aligned (and consistently so over time) with national priorities, SDGs and commitments of UNICEF (UNICEF Strategic Plans) in the area of prevention and response to violence against girls and boys?*

➢ *To what extent has the child protection programme responded to UNICEF commitments made to development partners, especially Global Affairs Canada and USAID?*

➢ *To what extent has the design of the child protection programme taken into account the voices of girls and boys and their different needs based on age, gender, ethnicity and other social identities, especially the most vulnerable?*

➢ *To what extent have the child protection programme and its approaches been aligned (and consistently so over time) with national priorities, SDGs and commitments of UNICEF (UNICEF Strategic Plans) in the area of prevention and response to violence against girls and boys?*

➢ *To what extent has the child protection programme responded to UNICEF commitments made to development partners, especially Global Affairs Canada and USAID?*

➢ *To what extent has the design of the child protection programme taken into account the voices of girls and boys and their different needs based on age, gender, ethnicity and other social identities, especially the most vulnerable?*

Impact / Effectiveness

➢ *To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on the protection of girls and boys (covering all areas of the programme) as per the country programme documents and subsequent annual work plans? What are the results that can be attributed to the Child Protection Programme (v contribution)?[139]*

➢ *How have partnerships been mobilised so as to contribute effectively to the child protection programme?[140]*

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[138] The evaluation will identify impacts of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme wherever possible, however, in line with the ToR, the evaluation is expected to look for "likely links" between the programme interventions and child protection outcomes for children rather than establishing "firm links" – we have therefore rephrased this criteria as "impacts and outcomes".

[139] This question is overarching and it was suggested that the response be integrated with analysis in response to other questions – particularly EQ6, EQ7, EQ8, EQ9 and EQ10 – so as to avoid repetition.

[140] See above.

- *To what degree have the policy, institutional and legal frameworks been reformed to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its optional protocols, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child?*
- *To what degree has the national child protection system been able to respond to the needs of vulnerable girls and boys, especially the most marginalised, that were separated or exposed to violence? Do barriers continue to prevent women, girls and boys from accessing services? How has UNICEF's child protection programme addressed these?*
- *To what extent have behavioural change campaigns and community mobilisation efforts contributed to the intended transformation of gender norms in communities? How has this led to improved prevention and response to violence, reduction in child marriages and prevention of unnecessary family separation?*
- *What has the level of satisfaction been among women, girls, boys and men, and communities, with the quality of prevention and response services that they have received through the child protection programme?*
- *To what degree has the child protection programme contributed to an alternative care system based on family-based care options as well as to the implementation of the Care Reform Initiative?*
- *Has sufficient attention been given to measuring, monitoring and reporting results including results related to gender equality? How effectively has evidence been used to inform programmatic changes and adjustments?*

Efficiency

- *How has UNICEF mobilised and used its resources (human, technical and financial) to achieve its planned results for child protection? To what extent have resources (human, technical, financial) been sufficient, both in quantity and quality?*
- *Do more cost-effective ways of achieving the same child protection results exist?*
- *How effectively have coordination mechanisms been working between UNICEF's child protection programme and other UNICEF programme outcomes (across education, health and nutrition, social protection and social policy, adolescent and youth empowerment, communication for development, and early childhood development) to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to community engagement for the prevention of child marriage (KRC 6), violence against children (KRC 2) and birth registration (KRC 4)? How complementary were the activities implemented jointly with other UN agencies, development partners and NGOs (avoiding duplication, maximising efficiency, leveraging added value)?*

Sustainability

- *To what extent are the benefits and achievements of the UNICEF supported programmes likely to continue after the programme has ended? What measures were taken so that the Government of Ghana and targeted communities could take ownership of the child protection programme?*
- *To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels? How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme?*

> ➤ *What would be the strategy to follow to ensure an alternative care system based primarily on family-based care and not on residential care?*
> ➤ *What are the enabling as well as constraining factors that are likely to influence replication and sustainability?*

Gender, equity and human rights

> ➤ *To what extent were gender and human rights principles integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of the child protection programme?[141]*

8.2.   Evaluation matrix

The analytical framework for the evaluation has been driven by the evaluation criteria and questions set out above. The evaluation team's approach to answering these is detailed in an evaluation matrix (Annex 2), which sets out the specific information (indicators and sub questions) which is necessary to answer the evaluation questions, and methods and data sources for measuring / answering these. The evaluation matrix informed the development of the methodology for the evaluation and will guide analysis. Specifically, the evaluation matrix contains:

1. The questions that the evaluation will attempt to answer (across the evaluation criteria of impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender, equity and human rights);
2. Qualitative and quantitative indicators which emerge from / relate to the evaluation questions;
3. Data sources for answering research questions and measuring indicators;
4. And any limitations in data or the ability of researchers to analyse it.

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[141] This question is overarching / cross-cutting and it was suggested that relevant findings and analysis be integrated throughout the evaluation report to avoid repetition and enrich analysis.

9. METHODOLOGY

9.1. Approach of the evaluation

The evaluation took an outcome-harvesting approach, collecting evidence of what has changed over the course of the two child protection programmes and working backwards to determine whether and how the programmes contributed to those changes. This approach was complemented by a quasi-experimental approach to measuring the impact of the social and behavioural change interventions, utilising difference-in-difference analysis to assess the extent to which changes could be attributed to UNICEF programming.

This methodology is framed around the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and coherence. The evaluation methodology has been developed according to the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016) and also incorporates UNICEF's guiding principles on gender equality, equity, and human rights. Our approach is equity and rights-based, rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and other key international standards. We pay special attention to vulnerable or 'at risk' groups of children, particularly girls, children from ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities, to ensure that their particular needs are identified, represented and addressed through our data collection and sampling techniques, analysis and recommendations. Through these approaches, we include and represent a diverse range of voices in the research.

The evaluation employs a mixed-methods approach to data collection, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods and drawing on the strengths of both to gather data that is rich, accurate and measurable. Triangulation between different methods also improves the validity of results.

The evaluation has taken a consultative and participatory approach with UNICEF, stakeholders and beneficiaries in order to ensure that the findings are context-appropriate and high-quality and that stakeholders have overall ownership of the process and outputs.

9.2. Methods, tools and sampling strategy for data collection

Data collection was implemented by our national partner, Participatory Development Associates (PDA). Remote training was first held with qualitative researchers and fieldwork coordinators from PDA, who subsequently delivered training to field researchers and enumerators in Ghana. Trainings covered the implementation of the data collection methods as well as research ethics, child-friendly interview techniques, and COVID-19 safety precautions.

Quantitative data collection

Service provider survey: A quantitative survey was carried out with social welfare officers and community development officers at district level. The survey collected basic data on the types of child protection cases referred to district level service providers, attitudes towards child protection issues among service providers, and the child protection response, including the use of the guidelines and operating procedures introduced through UNICEF's child protection programming. The service provider survey was not intended to be nationally representative but instead to capture the views and experiences of a range of service providers. Thirty 'intervention' districts that received social workforce interventions from UNICEF were selected for the service provider survey and matched with another 30 'comparison' districts

that were selected to be as similar as possible in terms of population density, rurality, ethnicity and language. However, eight of the comparison districts had received training from UNICEF on the case management SOPs prior to data collection. These districts are, therefore, treated as intervention districts in the final analysis. The selected districts covered a range of ordinary, municipal and metropolitan districts in 12 out of the 16 regions. Within each district two social welfare officers or community development officers were surveyed, with preference given to officers who had been in post longer. 120 social workers were surveyed in total including 71 men and 49 women.

KAP survey: In order to investigate the changes in the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of communities targeted by UNICEF's social and behaviour change interventions, a KAP survey was administered in selected districts to children (ages 14 to 17), young people (ages 18 to 25) and adults (25 to 65). The survey was administered both in areas where UNICEF has conducted community engagement work,[142] as well as in selected 'comparison' districts which had not received interventions. The survey originally planned to compare results both over time and between intervention and comparison areas to provide an estimate of the contribution made by UNICEF's programme. However, this approach was only possible with the children's data, as baseline data for the adult sample was not available.

The KAP survey was administered in six regions where UNICEF has carried out social and behavioural change programming. There were 12 enumeration areas (EAs) which had both baseline data from 2013 and which had received social and behavioural change programming. These 12 EAs ('intervention communities') were matched with another 12 EAs that had baseline data but did not receive programming ('comparison communities'). Comparison districts were matched to be as similar as possible to the intervention communities in terms of community size, rurality, ethnicity, and language.

The aim was to achieve a sample size of 1,000 respondents (500 adolescents / young adults and 500 adults) in order to achieve a margin of error of 5 per cent. This involved interviewing 42 individuals in each enumeration area, 21 adolescents and young adults, and 21 adults. A random walk method was used to select households within an enumeration area. At each selected household, enumerators first ascertained whether the household had an eligible respondent. If not, another household was selected. If the household had more than one eligible respondent, the respondent to be interviewed was selected randomly using a Kish grid. For child protection reasons, adolescent, young adult and adult household questionnaires were not conducted in the same household.

A final sample of 512 adolescent / young adult surveys (270 female and 242 male) and 510 adult surveys (280 women and 230 men) was achieved.

Administrative data collection: In the absence of national administrative data on child protection, enumerators collected data on all child protection cases recorded by the districts in 2019 and 2020 in districts where the service provider survey was implemented. The purpose was to give a sense of the numbers and basic profile of cases being addressed at sub-district level. Enumerators used a validated Excel template to record basic information on each case, including gender, type of case and referral source.

Table 9.1 Overview of the sample achieved for quantitative data collection methods

Data collection tools	Total	Female	Male
Service provider survey	120	49	71

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[142] Interventions using the child protection communication facilitation toolkit or other interventions such as community theatre, Talking Books, or GACA activities.

KAP survey (adolescents / young adults)	512	270	242
KAP survey (adults)	510	280	230

Qualitative data collection

Two districts for qualitative data collection were purposively sampled from each of the 10 'old' regions[143] to give a total of 20 districts. The sampling aimed to achieve a diverse sample, incorporating metropolitan, municipal and 'ordinary' districts, and ensuring that all interventions were represented. In addition, two districts were selected as 'comparison' districts where UNICEF interventions had not taken place. Efforts were made to ensure that districts from 'new' regions were also included, and the final sample of districts covers 13 out of 16 regions.[144] Table 9.1 shows the total sample achieved for qualitative interviews.

Sampling strategies for the selection of participants were purposive and non-random. This means that all sample members were selected based on their satisfaction of criteria relevant to the evaluation questions, and whose information was likely to be of use for developing and testing emerging analytical ideas. Different sampling approaches were used for each type of qualitative interaction. Purposive sampling prioritised diversity so that respondents of diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives were included in the evaluation.

Qualitative interviews were guided by a set of standardised questions which guided the interaction but allowed for the researcher to probe for more detail on aspects of particular interest.

Key informant interviews: Key stakeholders who play a role in the implementation of UNICEF's child protection programme and child protection more broadly were identified for interview at the national, regional and district level. The purpose of the selection was to obtain particular knowledge, expertise and accurate information in relation to indicators in the evaluation framework, from stakeholders with in-depth knowledge of child protection, including stakeholders in relevant government agencies at national, regional, and district levels, as well as NGO and CBO partners, social welfare and community development officers, police officers including representatives from DOVVSU and AHTU, members of the judiciary, and health and education professionals. Six key informant interviews were conducted at a regional level (with the exception of Ashanti region where only five KIIs were conducted, giving a total of 59 interviews) and ten at a district level within each region (100 in total).

In-depth interviews with children and their caregivers: In-depth life history interviews were carried out with children whose cases had been subject to a child protection intervention (e.g. by district social workers, regional councils, NGOs, etc.); who had been in contact with the justice system and who lived in a residential home (or other alternative care arrangement). Where possible, interviews were also carried out with those involved in the child's case, including members of their family and the district social welfare officer or caseworker assigned to the case. The purpose of the case study interviews was to learn about these children's experiences and the outcomes of their case from multiple perspectives.

A 'typical case sampling' approach was used to select four case studies in each district (80 in total). Cases were selected in collaboration with implementing partners to represent typical child protection cases (e.g. where children have received prevention and response services through UNICEF's programme). Implementing partners were asked to consider what criteria they associated with a 'typical' child protection case, for example in terms of how the case was referred, the type of child protection case, and

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[143] The sampling for the evaluation used the old administrative regions and districts rather than the new regions and MMDAs created in 2018-19, as these were the context for the majority of the programming being evaluated.

[144] 'New' regions are those created in 2018-2019.

the type of service or intervention received and what the outcomes of the case were. Cases meeting these criteria were selected with a view to achieving diversity in terms of demographic characteristics, such as gender and age, as well as the type of child protection case and the type of service or intervention received. The minimum age for interviewing children was 10 years.

Case file reviews: A sample of files kept by district social welfare officers documenting individual child protection cases were reviewed in order to collect information on the types of cases being picked up by the case management system and the quality of the response being implemented.

Focus group discussions: Participants were selected to represent diversity in terms of age and socio-economic background within the community to ensure that a range of views were represented. Four focus group discussions were carried out in each district, one with adult men, one with adult women, one with girls and one with boys, and each group had six to eight participants. The minimum age for interviewing children as part of focus group discussions was 12 years.

Table 9.2 Number of participants for qualitative data collection, by gender and interview type

Qualitative interview type	Participants		
	Male	Female	Total
Key informant interviews	87	72	159
Focus group discussions (adolescents)	44	62	109
Focus group discussions (adults)	77	56	133
In-depth interviews (children)	10	6	16
In-depth interviews (parents/caregivers)	18	53	71

Fieldwork

All quantitative surveys were carried out face-to-face using tablets running ODK software. Tablets were also used to record the case file review data. For qualitative interviews, researchers took detailed notes and typed up transcripts to share with the evaluation team. For the administrative data, enumerators either typed up the data directly into an Excel spreadsheet using their laptop, or recorded the data on paper and entered it into Excel at a later time.

Two teams of researchers were used. The first team implemented the service provider survey, case file reviews, qualitative interviews and administrative data collection. Training for this team took place from 18th to 20th November 2020, including a pilot of the tools. Following a review of the pilot data and adjustments to the tools, fieldwork took place between 25th November and 7th December 2020. The second team implemented the community KAP survey. They received training remotely between 8th and 10th December 2020, again including a pilot of the tools. Data collection for the KAP survey took place between 12th and 20th December 2020.

9.3.   Data analysis and quality assurance

Qualitative data analysis

All raw qualitative data were uploaded into NVivo software and coded to identify key themes, patterns and relationships relevant to the research questions. The evaluation team used a thematic analysis, with a focus on understanding how the child protection system functions to prevent and respond to violence

and child protection violations, and the role of UNICEF's programme within that. Where possible, the analysis compares findings between districts where UNICEF has and has not worked in order to understand the contribution that UNICEF programming has made to child protection systems, community awareness and attitudes, and coordination between formal and informal actors.

Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data from primary data collection was analysed using Excel and Stata software. Preliminary quantitative data analysis involved cleaning and checking the data to understand the extent and randomness of missing data, which was found to be minimal. Initial analysis produced descriptive statistics on the composition of the sample and the overall results, disaggregated by factors of interest including intervention or comparison area.

The KAP survey analysis aimed to measure changes in key KAP indicators over time in the sampled enumeration areas, comparing control areas and intervention areas to estimate the extent to which UNICEF programming has contributed to these changes. For the child data, a difference-in-difference analysis was used to explore the impact of UNICEF programming. An individual-level analysis was also conducted to explore the association between KAP and background characteristics including gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, and between participation in community activities and KAP indicators, adjusting for background characteristics, to explore whether participation was associated with greater knowledge or more favourable attitudes.

For the adult baseline data, we do not have statistics disaggregated by region or area were not available, so the comparison was made at a national level, with the limitation that the populations for the baseline and the follow-up survey are different as only six regions are being covered by the follow-up survey. The role of UNICEF programming in the change in adult KAP could not therefore be addressed. However, the individual-level analysis described above was also carried out for adults, allowing us to explore the association between participation in UNICEF programming and KAP.

9.4.   Ethical Considerations and Evaluation Principles

This evaluation has been guided by a tailored ethical protocol based on the Coram International ethical protocol, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the Ethical Principles of Research Involving Children.[145] This protocol was adapted in line with the project's methodology and data collection tools and plan. All research was carried out in full accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Coram International's own Ethical Guidelines (Annex 5) as well as UNICEF's Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation Data Collection and Analysis, and was guided by the evaluators' obligations of independence, impartiality, credibility, avoiding conflicts of interest, and accountability.

Coram International and Participatory Development Associates collaborated to ensure that all external researchers had the necessary experience to carry out the research required. Training was provided to PDA by Coram International on the ethical protocol and best practice issues for carrying out the relevant research. Training carried out by PDA also emphasised the importance of the ethical protocol and provided information on the safeguarding protocol to be followed in the event of any child protection concerns. In addition, Coram International employed the following ethical safeguards for this consultancy:

Review: The methodology and tools were reviewed and approved by the Director or Research Manager before they were deployed.

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[145] https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf

Managing expectations: Researchers were trained to carefully explain the nature and purpose of the study to study participants, and the role that the data will play in the research project. Participants were informed that the purpose of the researcher's visit was not to offer direct assistance in order to avoid raising unfounded expectations.

Voluntary participation: Participation in the research was undertaken on a voluntary basis. Researchers explained to participants in clear, age-appropriate language that participants were not required to participate and that they were able to stop participating at any time without negative consequences.

Informed consent: Research participants were informed of the purpose and nature of the study, their contribution, and how the data collected from them would be used in the study, through an information and consent form, where possible and where this was appropriate and not intimidating for young people. Procedures were in place both for signing forms and for demonstrating informed consent for those participants who were not literate (see further details in Annex 5). Where possible, parental consent was obtained for all children aged under 13 years. For children aged over 13, the decision on whether consent from parents / carers is needed was made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature and context of the research and the age and capacity of participants. Special care was taken to ensure that especially vulnerable children gave informed consent.

Anonymity and confidentiality: Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity is of the utmost importance. The identity of all research participants is kept confidential throughout the process of data collection as well as in the analysis and writing up of study findings. Measures to ensure anonymity included interviewing in private settings; not recording names; ensuring that research findings are presented in such a way as to ensure individuals can't be identified; and safe data storage.

Addressing child protection concerns: Prior to the data collection taking place, researchers were trained on PDA's child protection policies and procedures and familiarised themselves with child protection referral mechanisms and child protection focal points. Procedures were in place to report any disclosure of a child protection risk.

For more detailed information on ethical safeguards and risk management, see Coram International's complete Ethical Guidelines in Annex 5.

9.5. Limitations and mitigation measures of the evaluation

Table 9.3 Limitations and mitigation measures of the evaluation

Limitations and Constraints of the Evaluation	Mitigation strategies identified
The sensitive nature of the evaluation subject matter means that evidence is likely to be affected by reporting bias; both children and adults may be reluctant to share sensitive information about traumatic and/or personal events; professional respondents may be resistant to engaging critically on aspects of their professional experiences in case of negative repercussions for themselves, government agencies, UNICEF or other stakeholders; social desirability bias may	• Researchers took care to carefully explain to all respondents that the evaluation was learning-oriented and focused on evaluating UNICEF's programme rather than the work of Government or NGO partners • Researchers and enumerators emphasised that anonymity would be protected and that no negative personal or professional consequences would result from sharing open and honest information • Questions were asked sensitively, and interactions

have led to under-reporting of attitudes and norms perceived to be socially undesirable	were flexible and participatory to allow for the most authentic, spontaneous and participant-led exchange
The evaluation required respondents to reflect on past experiences which may have led to some recall bias. Respondents are likely to have forgotten or misremembered past events and their particular ideas about when, where, how and why such events took place may have been influenced by subsequent events and experiences.	• Evaluators were careful to consider the impact of recall bias in the analysis and interpretation of research data. Wherever possible, evaluators sought to triangulate objective information through other sources of information and documentation (e.g. files, reports etc.)
The COVID-19 pandemic began during the inception phase of the evaluation, meaning the Coram International team were unable to travel to Ghana or carry out data collection. Not conducting interviews presented a challenge to the evaluators as time was needed to familiarise themselves with the data, and some opportunities for follow-up questions and in-depth probing were lost during the qualitative interviews.	• Data collection was carried out by Participatory Development Associates, who have considerable experience and in-depth knowledge of the context, as well as a network of experienced researchers and enumerators, ensuring efficient and high-quality data collection • The Coram International team carried out inception meetings remotely via telephone or video interviews in order to familiarise themselves with the programme and key stakeholders • Coram International carried out remote training for the PDA team leaders, covering both quantitative and qualitative data collection, to ensure a shared understanding of the evaluation aims and research questions • Two pilot tests of the qualitative tools were carried out and one of the survey tools, with time afterwards for the Coram team to review the data and make adjustments and recommendations to inform the main fieldwork phase
The complex nature of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme posed a challenge for designing and implementing a comprehensive evaluation methodology; the programme involves a wide range of activities and interventions delivered through numerous partners to a broad target population; it would require a detailed and complex methodology to evaluate each element with great detail and depth	• The evaluators designed the methodology to balance obtaining data about a range of interventions and achieving an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of these interventions and the degree to which they meet the needs of the target population • The evaluators have drawn upon existing data sources provided by UNICEF and partners to supplement primary data collection
The limitations of existing data and the diffusive nature of the Child Protection	• The evaluators triangulated data from several sources when analysing differences between

Programme have presented a challenge in measuring the contribution of the CP programme to changes in outcomes. The social and behavioural change programming involved several national-level activities, while some social welfare workforce activities took place in all districts, making it challenging to identify true 'comparison' areas. In addition, baseline KAP data was only available for children and not for adults, limiting the robustness of this analysis.	intervention and comparison districts, in order to better link any differences identified to elements of UNICEF's programme. • The KAP survey analysis was able to compare changes in KAP for adolescents and young adults between intervention and comparison districts; however, many comparison districts had received interventions either through national campaigns or from other NGOs or service providers, making it difficult to isolate the impact of UNICEF programming

10. FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

10.1. Relevance of the CP programme

Alignment with government and institutional priorities

To what extent have the child protection programme and its approaches been aligned (and consistently so over time) with national priorities, SDGs and commitments of UNICEF (UNICEF Strategic Plans) in the area of prevention and response to violence against girls and boys?

1. **Evaluation findings demonstrate a strong alignment between UNICEF's child protection programme's design and approaches and the Government of Ghana's priorities in relation to violence against children.** This is reflected in GoG policy documents, including the National Medium Term Development Policy Framework, which includes commitments to reducing the number of children who become victims of violence and abuse,[146] and the Government's second Ghana Shared Growth Agenda, which identifies a number of strategies for protecting children against violence, abuse and exploitation.[147] Notably, the vast majority of these strategies were found to be aligned with and supported by UNICEF's CP programme. Furthermore, representatives of National Government Agencies consistently emphasised the relevance of UNICEF's support to their institutional mandates; particularly **UNICEF's contributions to strengthening and integrating the legal and policy framework for child protection, a focus of the 2012-2017 programme, and building the capacity of service providers to implement that framework, work which occurred across both programme cycles**. Government stakeholders expressed appreciation for UNICEF's collaborative approach to programming, which involved engaging in consultation with government partners at all stages to ensure that approaches were relevant, coordinated and well-aligned with the GoG's priorities and plans:

> *Do you feel UNICEF's approach is aligned with government's approach?*
>
> *Yes very much – UNICEF worked with the government to develop their action plan. It is done together collaboratively so it is in line with our National Development Plan… I think UNICEF has done very very well…. They really try to understand where we are coming from so they aren't 'shoving something down our throats'. The consultant we have been working with – he is always*

[146] National Planning Commission, Government of Ghana, Medium-term National Development Policy Framework: 'An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All 2018 – 2021, December 2017, p62 and p239.
[147] National Planning Commission, Government of Ghana, Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda II, May 2015, p. 40.

trying to ensure that when something comes on board it is workable. He is trying to make sure it is up and running. He goes to the district level, sometimes even without our knowledge! [148]

2.   **UNICEF's commitment to national priorities is also evident in their willingness to divert from past approaches where these were not found to be well aligned with needs in Ghana**. For instance, in 2010 UNICEF had supported the development of standards for residential care homes for children in Ghana, . These standards were never applied in practice as they were considered to be ill-suited to and unrealistic for the Ghanaian context.[149] In 2017 UNICEF reviewed and simplified the standards to ensure their compatibility with the context and developed a tool and checklist to support their implementation. As is discussed further in the effectiveness section below, the revised standards are viewed as more relevant to the context, and are being increasingly applied.

3.   **UNICEF's programme design placed particular emphasis on preventing and responding to violence against children (VAC), in line with Ghana's commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16.2**[150]. Protecting children from violence was featured as a key component of frameworks for both country programmes, including output five of the 2012-2017 programme[151] and output 2 of the 2018 – 2022 programme[152]. A significant focus of programme interventions has been on building the capacity of the national child protection system to respond to cases of violence against children, and preventing VAC through community outreach and mobilisation campaigns.[153] Prevention work at the community level was recognised as particularly important given the widespread acceptance of certain forms of VAC, such as corporal punishment.

4.   Furthermore, **the Child Protection Programme succeeded in integrating VAC prevention and response work into a holistic, systems strengthening approach to child protection programming.** The move towards a systems strengthening approach to child protection work was well aligned with UNICEF's global strategy as articulated in the Global Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (the Plan emphasised system strengthening under Outcome 6). It remains highly relevant under the current Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which identifies system-strengthening amongst its eight change strategies. This shift entailed a significant move away from previous approaches, which had focussed on addressing particular child protection issues. As a UNICEF representative recalled:

> *The real shift we saw in Ghana was in 2012-2013 - from issue-based programming during the country programme cycle that ended in 2011. A baseline assessment in 2012 recommended that UNICEF move away from programming focused on a single issue, such as the street children programme in 2010-2011… There was a global shift towards systems strengthening, but UNICEF Ghana learned it the hard way - learned not to repeat the same mistakes. We've made a deliberate attempt to bring that out and we've taken it very seriously.* [154]

5.   Indeed, **since 2012, UNICEF has contributed to building the capacity of the Ghanaian child protection system across all relevant spheres: the legal and regulatory framework; institutional structures and coordination mechanisms; delivery of services; data systems and monitoring frameworks; human, financial and infrastructure resources; and social participation**.[155]

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[148] Individual interview, Representative of the Department of Social Welfare, remote interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.
[149] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[150] Goal 16.2 requires States to "[e]nd abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children".
[151] By 2016, parents, care-givers and community members in at least 5 regions understand and are able to practice positive behaviour that protects children from violence, abuse and exploitation.
[152] Most vulnerable and disadvantaged girls and boys have access to services to prevent and respond to violence against children.
[153] The effectiveness of both areas of programming are discussed in detail in the effectiveness section of this report.
[154] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[155] These six elements were identified by a 2018 Evaluation of UNICEF's Child Protection System Strengthening Work as essential components of a child protection system.

Meeting donor commitments

> To what extent has the child protection programme responded to UNICEF commitments made to development partners, especially Global Affairs Canada and USAID?

6.   UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has received funding from a number of development partners, but contributions from USAID and Global Affairs Canada have been particularly significant. **The Programme was found to have delivered effectively on its donor commitments, as evidenced by regular progress reports, and donors expressed satisfaction with UNICEF's ability to meet reporting requirements and demonstrate results.**

7.   UNICEF's CP Programme design is particularly relevant to donor priorities. It responds to Global Affairs Canada's particular interest in promoting gender equality and empowerment and protection for women and girls, and USAID's interest in improving childcare for children who are orphaned or separated from their families. As is set out in the context section, both of these priorities are also highly relevant to child protection needs in Ghana. Furthermore, rather than designing targeted interventions to address these issues, **the Child Protection Programme was able to integrate funding successfully into the broader systems strengthening strategy described above**.

Responsiveness to children's voices and needs

> To what extent has the design of the child protection programme taken into account the voices of girls and boys and their different needs based on age, gender, ethnicity and other social identities, especially the most vulnerable?

8.   Across research sites, respondents consistently described that **UNICEF has taken a consultative and responsive approach to programming; seeking out beneficiaries' views and making relevant adjustments to meet their needs better**. When asked how UNICEF has engaged the voices of children and young people in their programming, respondents tended to identify field visits: *"from time to time to time, UNICEF comes down to seek feedback from all beneficiaries irrespective of their status or background"*[156]; participatory programming, such as community mobilisation activities: *"we provide opportunities for them to share their views and opinions during community engagement"*[157]; and participation in more formal consultations, such as the example detailed below, amongst others.

> ***Example: Children's Participation in Legal Consultation***
>
> From 2017 - 2018 UNICEF undertook a comprehensive review of Ghana's legal framework on children's rights to inform the amendment of the Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, and other related laws.[158] The review aimed at identifying gaps in Ghana's legal framework for child rights and developing recommendations for how these can be addressed. Importantly, the review included consultations with children to take their views on board.
>
> The consultations took place over a period of two days, and included 50 children between the ages of 12 – 18 from across all ten regions of Ghana. Children were selected from diverse demographics and backgrounds and a number of children with disabilities were included to ensure the representation of their views. According to a report detailing the proceedings: *"There was a general appreciation among stakeholders of the significance of consulting with children, as legislative amendments would directly affect them and generations to come."*[159]

[156] Individual interview, Social Welfare Officer (DSW), Region 5, 25 November 2020.
[157] Individual interview, Community Development Officer, Region 7, 25 November 2020.
[158] Law and Development Associates, "Mid-Term Consultancy Report: Toward the Review and Amendment of the Children's Act, Juvenile Justice Act and Related Laws", 27 December, 2018.
[159] Law and Development Associates, "Mid-Term Consultancy Report: Toward the Review and Amendment of the Children's Act, Juvenile Justice Act and Related Laws", 27 December, 2018, p. 17.

Children were asked to discuss a number of questions aimed at capturing their views on particular child protection issues as well as specific legal provisions, including corporal punishment, consensual sexual relations and the right to legal representation, among others. Their views were incorporated into the conclusions and recommendations of the review, which have formed the basis of UNICEF and government partners' efforts towards legislative reform.

9.   Finally, and as is discussed further in the effectiveness section of the evaluation, UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has conducted numerous data gathering and research exercises designed to inform programming approaches. Children have been included as participants in the vast majority of these, such as the Most Significant Change Stories (a participatory monitoring technique aimed at gathering lived experiences of normative or behaviour change), Knowledge Attitudes and Practice assessments (2014 and 2018), Research on Children Before the Courts (2019), Research on Child Online Practice (2017) and an Assessment of UNICEF's Child Marriage Strategies (2017), to name a few.

10.   **In addition to actively seeking out children's views, evaluation findings suggest that UNICEF took a responsive approach to programming and was willing to make adjustments to accommodate beneficiaries' preferences and needs**. Again, this was recognised by respondents who described different instances where UNICEF incorporated participant feedback into their programming. As one stakeholder recalled:

> *I remember the toolkit was not laminated. The next version was all laminated. This evaluation is another example… They come to test tools with stakeholders and use the views of the stakeholders to improve the tools.[160]*

11.   Generally, UNICEF's Child Protection Programme was found to be highly relevant, designed in a sensitive and inclusive way with the intention of meeting the needs of diverse groups across gender, ethnicity, religion and other social identities. However, **evaluation findings suggest that in practice certain groups of children have been more difficult to reach than others**. **In particular, a number of respondents mentioned that street children require additional support and have been neglected by prevention and response services delivered through the national child protection system:**

> *The national child protection system does not address the needs of street children at all. Maybe it does for other children.. Street children in particular are not aware of any services available to them in the first place, so that is a major barrier.[161]*

12.   Street children are a particularly difficult group to reach and to engage. UNICEF should consider how future programming can draw on the views of street children and address their particular vulnerabilities.

Preliminary conclusions on the relevance of UNICEF's CP Programme

REL 1. UNICEF's Child Protection Programme's design and approaches have been well aligned with the Government of Ghana's priorities in relation to VAC and child protection more broadly, particularly in the areas of legal and policy reform and capacity building. [Paras 1 – 3].

REL 2. The Programme integrated VAC prevention and response work into a holistic system strengthening approach, building the capacity of the child protection system across relevant areas. [Paras 4 – 5].

REL 3. UNICEF was found to have delivered effectively on its donor commitments and the programme design was well aligned with donor priorities. [Paras 6 – 7].

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[160] Individual interview, Department of Gender, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.
[161] Individual interview, NGO representative, Region 8, NO DATE.

REL 4. The Child Protection Programme was found to be relevant to the needs of children in Ghana, due to its consultative and responsive approach. [Paras 8 – 10].

REL 5. Despite this, particularly vulnerable groups, such as street children, may require additional support to fully benefit from national CP services. [Paras 11 – 12].

10.2. Outcomes and effectiveness of the child protection programme

To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on the protection of girls and boys (covering all areas of the programme) as per the country programme documents and subsequent annual work plans?

What are the results that can be attributed to the Child Protection Programme (v contribution)?

How have partnerships been mobilised so as to contribute effectively to the child protection programme?

To what extent were gender and human rights principles integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of the child protection programme?

Effectiveness of policy, institutional and legal reform

To what degree have the policy, institutional and legal frameworks been reformed to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its optional protocols, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child?

13.   Outcome 1 of the 2012-2017 Child Protection Programme set as its goal the approval of a Child and Family Welfare Policy and alignment of the Children's Act with the Policy. A further goal, contained in Outcome 2 was the development and approval of a 'Justice for Children Policy' with amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act to align it with the policy. The focus on legal reform continued in the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme, with Output 1: child and family welfare, justice for children and birth registration-related laws and regulations are aligned with child protection policies and international standards and, in particular, "The Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and the Criminal Procedure Act are reviewed in line with child protection policies and international standards by 2020."

Strengthening the policy framework

14.   The National Child Protection Policy framework was developed and approved with support from UNICEF under Output 1 in 2013. Following on from this, two key policies were developed: the Child and Family Welfare Policy, adopted in February 2015, and the Justice for Children Policy, adopted in November 2015. These policies, together, provided the first comprehensive vision and roadmap for child protection systems strengthening in Ghana; setting out aims, objectives and orientation.[162] The policies are guided by and aligned with international standards, and incorporate the four general principles of the UNCRC,[163] as well as other international key principles, such as the right to legal representation, privacy and the right to a fair trial. Further, the system envisaged by the two Policies reflect international standards and best practice, focusing on prevention, child and family services, and rehabilitation and social reintegration. UNICEF has also supported the National Development Planning Commission to develop the Ghana National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework 2018-2021 which has the improvement of child protection and family welfare and ensuring the rights and entitlements of children.[164] The key activities are building an inter-sectoral framework to ensure collaboration, reporting

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[162] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2013; UNICEF Ghana, 'Building a national child protection system in Ghana: From evidence to policy and practice', June 2015, p. 7.
[163] Art 2; Non-discrimination, Art 3; the best interest of the child; Art6:2; survival and development and Art 12; participation.
[164] At para. 3.4.7.

and accounting on child protection and family welfare programmes; the development of a Child Protection Management System; implementing a national social protection floor for children and expanding social protection to reach all vulnerable children and the introduction of the District Integrated Social Services Programme for children.

15.   **By outlining the roles and responsibilities of key state institutions and major stakeholders at all levels, as well as the relationships between the formal and informal structures, the Policies provide the institutional framework for the child protection system.[165] Importantly the Policies have also acted as drivers for further legal and policy reform**.[166]

16.   UNICEF's support, technical assistance and advocacy in relation to the development of the Policies was highly effective and central to this significant achievement. The policies represent major achievements in the enabling environment around child protection, and engagement with key stakeholders has raised the profile of child protection.

The ongoing legal reform process

17.   The developments of the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Child Justice Policy revealed, as expected, the need for legislative amendments to ensure that child protection laws reflected and implemented the policy aligned with international standards.[167]

18.   **A small number of legal reforms were completed under the 2012-2017 Programme**, such as an amendment to the Children's Act to align the Law with the newly ratified Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption. **In addition, a comprehensive legal reform process was begun in 2017 led by the MOGCSP supported by UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada.** While started in the 2012-2017 Programme, the review continued during the 2018-2022 Programme.[168] The proposed legal amendments went through a process of consultation with national, regional and district-level stakeholders coordinated by the Department of Children. This was followed by the development of position papers, which enabled consensus on particularly contentious key amendments to be agreed.[169]   The proposals for legal amendments were submitted to the Government in 2019. The results include the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 2020 and the Cybersecurity Act 2020.

19.   **The extensive amendments proposed and still being considered include: repealing the Children's Act and replacing it with a new Act, as well as amendments to the Criminal and Other Offences Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act.** Proposed amendments to the Children Act include incorporation of regulations and standards[170] relating to care and protection of children, giving them a statutory basis; strengthening the legislation on the prohibition of corporal punishment; introducing new legislation to protect and support child victims and witnesses during criminal proceedings; amending the legal definitions of rape and sexual assault; bringing the definition of child prostitution in line with the OPSC and introducing new legislation to address emerging issues around child online protection.[171]

20.   The development of the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Child Justice Policy represented a significant development in aligning the policy and institutional framework in Ghana with international

[165] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2013.
[166] UNICEF Ghana, 2015 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[167] UNICEF, 'Protecting children from violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance. Ghana Country Report.', May 2015, p.viii and see also, UNICEF Ghana, 2016 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[168] The Adoption Regulation (LI 2018) and the Foster Care Regulation (LI 2018), were both finalised and became law in 2018.
[169] UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', April 2019.
[170] Including the Regulations for Care and Protection of Children without Parental Care, 2008, and the National Standards for Residential Homes for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, 2010.
[171] Law and Development Associates, 'Mid-term consultancy report; Towards the review and amendment of the Children's Act, Juvenile Justice Act and related laws', 27 December 2018.

child protection standards. The legal reform process, if completed as foreseen, will provide Ghana with a comprehensive legal framework for child protection and child justice aligned, to a high degree, with international treaties and conventions. In addition to the success of bringing these activities to a conclusion, this evaluation found that UNICEF's leadership in the process of reform has been particularly effective and has paved the way for successful implementation of the new policies, as well as setting the ground for further, future reform.

21. **UNICEF's support for the *process* of legal reform has also been highly effective. Its financial and technical support for research studies, baseline studies and legal reviews etc. on pressing, and sometimes contentious issues that arose during the process of legal reform, allowed decisions to be made with the benefit of empirical evidence**. This in turn led to better informed and stronger advocacy, which in its turn created an understanding of the need for reforms on the part of stakeholders. In addition, extensive and inclusive stakeholder consultations at all levels raised the profile of child protection issues and stimulated debates, while at the same time galvanising support for, and legitimizing, the reform process as it moved forward.[172] **The process promoted ownership for the reforms and fostered relationships with stakeholders, all of which were essential for successful implementation of the reforms, and also for further programming and future reform.**[173]

22. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that UNICEF's support was understood to be instrumental in driving the child protections systems strengthening process forward, particularly in relation to policy, institutional and legal reform. Stakeholders at different levels referred both to the changes they had seen within their particular area of work, as well as at systems level.

23. The important contributions made by UNICEF and its comparative advantage in relation to effective 'upstream work' with Government partners was particularly noted by stakeholders: *I think UNICEF is doing the thing they need to do – strengthening systems at national level. No other donor is doing that. That role is really important….I really appreciate how well they work with national government. I think the UN – their influence and traction with government is an advantage.* [174]

24. During the period since 2012, significant developments have also been seen in the alignment of policy, institutional and legal frameworks with international standards in relation to specific child protection issues, as set out below.

Alternative care

25. **In relation to alternative care, important steps were taken towards creating a more robust framework and system in line with international standards and ensuring the best interest of children in need of such services**.[175] UNICEF supported these processes through technical assistance and advocacy. New Foster Care and Adoption Regulations, based on key provisions from the UNCRC, CEDAW and the 1993 Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption were developed in 2014 and approved by the Parliament in 2018.[176] In 2016 amendments were also made to the Children's Act to reflect Ghana's accession to the Hague Convention. **Amendments included the establishment of a Central Authority for adoption, restricting the court decisions on adoption to the High Court and bringing adoption and fostering options in line with the Hague Convention.**[177] Through these reforms, gaps in the legal, policy

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[172] UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', May 2019.
[173] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2013.
[174] Individual interview, International Organisation, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.
[175] UNICEF Ghana, 2016 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[176] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2017.
[177] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2016; UNICEF Ghana, 2016 RAM analytical statements of progress.

and institutional framework which had been highlighted by the UNCRC Committee's Concluding Observations in 2015 were successfully addressed.[178]

Child marriage, child trafficking, child labour and child online protection

These are all areas where UNICEF has supported legal reform and engaged in advocacy, and which came to a successful conclusion. To address specific gaps and bottlenecks in the policy framework, UNICEF provided support to the **finalisation of the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage (2017-2026) and its operational framework, which was publicly launched in 2017**.[179]

26.   New regulations on the prohibition of trafficking came into force in 2015.[180] UNICEF supported the MoGCSP to develop **a National Action Plan (NPA) for the Elimination of Human Trafficking**. The commencement of the implementation of the NPA saw the formation of the Anti-Trafficking Unit established by MoGCSP to coordinate the implementation, thus providing a strengthened institutional framework.[181]

27.   UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the MoELR to **review the 2009-2015 National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in light of the new Child and Family Welfare Policy and launched a new plan for 2017-2021**.

28.   In order to address the growing concerns around child online protection in Ghana, UNICEF supported **national stakeholder consultations on the review of child online protection framework and its costed implementation plan**.[182] It also supported the development of the Cybersecurity Bill, which was passed by Parliament in 2020. The Ministry of Communications through the National Cyber Centre launched the Child Online Protection Portal in October 2020 and provided a revised Child Online Protection Framework.[183] The intention is for the portal to receive reports of child sexual abuse materials available on the internet and work with network providers to ensure their removal. **UNICEF worked closely with the lead agencies, IOM and UNFPA in the areas of trafficking, child marriage, and online protection, mobilising partnerships effectively.[184]**

Justice for children

29.   Although the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 established a relatively comprehensive framework for children who offend, implementation of the Act has been weak, with the Justice for Children Policy describing "a disconnect between law and practice".[185] The Policy focuses on prevention of offending; strengthening programmes for rehabilitation and social reintegration; the strengthening of formal and community justice systems and the protection of child victims and witnesses. The Justice for Children Policy brought together all the relevant stakeholders, the police service, the judicial service, the Office of the Attorney-General, CHRAJ, the Legal Aid Scheme and social welfare.

30.   The proposed amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act and the Criminal and Other Offences Act include provisions to protect the interests of child victims and witnesses at all stages of criminal proceedings, which is currently missing from legislation. This should ensure that victims and witnesses are supported to participate effectively, protected from secondary victimisation and that child-friendly interviewing and investigation techniques are used throughout proceedings. Other amendments include

[178] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Ghana*, 9 June 2015, CRC/C/GHA/CO/3-5.
[179] UNICEF Ghana, 2017 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[180] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2015.
[181] UNICEF Ghana, 2017 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[182] UNICEF Ghana, 2019 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[183] Graphic Online, Ghana Launches Child Online Protection Reporting Portal, October 1, 2020. https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/ghana-launches-child-online-protection-reporting-portal.html
[184] UNICEF Ghana, 2017 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[185] Justice for Children Policy p. 11

a statement of Guiding Principles and more details on the rights of the juvenile, guidance on issues including data and identity protection, age determination and reform of child panels.[186]

31.   In sum, the **period since 2012 has seen extensive and significant developments in aligning the policy, institutional and legal frameworks in Ghana with international standards. The evaluation finds that UNICEF's technical assistance, financial support as well as its support to policy dialogue and advocacy have been instrumental in achieving these outcomes. In particular, the key achievements include the launch of the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Child Justice Policy and, under the current programme cycle, the comprehensive legal reform process on track to be completed in 2022. Together, these developments provide a comprehensive framework for the Ghanaian child protection system.**

32.   While policy, institutional and legal reform may no longer need to be the central focus of programming, there remains a need for some further, limited legal reform to ensure full alignment with international conventions and norms, particularly in relation to online protection for children. There is still a need to ratify and accede to relevant international conventions and protocols, including the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[187] and to enact new legislation or amend existing laws, as well as clear guidelines on how online abuse or violations should be addressed.

Output/Outcome	Status
2012-2017 Country Programme	
Outcome 1: 1. **By 2016, Child Welfare and Protection Laws and Policies are increasingly aligned with international standards and made appropriate for Ghana** and resources are increasingly available for its application Outcome 2: 1. **Juvenile Justice laws and policies are increasingly aligned with international standards and made appropriate for Ghana** and resources are increasingly available for its application	Outcomes 1 and 2 were highly relevant and have been met in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. The development and approvals of the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Child Justice Policy were highly effective and represent a significant move towards aligning policy and legislation with international standards. Legislative amendments as well as the approval of regulations, policy documents and National Action Plans and Frameworks relating to alternative care, child labour, child marriage, child trafficking and online protection of children are other significant achievements.
2018-2022 Country Programme	
Output statement: By 2022, child and family welfare, justice for children and birth registration laws and regulations are aligned with child protection policies and international standards	On track: Draft amendments of the Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and the Criminal and Other Offences Act have been submitted to Parliament, while the Births and Deaths Registration Act and the Cybersecurity Act were passed by Parliament in 2020.

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[186] UNICEF Ghana, 'A brief on the process of child protection legal review in Ghana (2016-2019)', April 2019
[187] Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000 entered into force on 18 January 2002.

Effectiveness of the national child protection system

> *To what degree has the national child protection system been able to respond to the needs of vulnerable girls and boys, especially the most marginalised, that were separated or exposed to violence? Do barriers continue to prevent women, girls and boys from accessing services? How has UNICEF's child protection programme addressed these?]*

> *Do you think the Ghanaian child protection system sufficiently addresses the needs of all children in Ghana, including the most vulnerable?*
>
> No. I am saying that we are getting there. If I say it has addressed them then it means we are there. I feel more needs to be done. It's a journey and a very long journey but we have started it.
>
> *- Regional Director of Community Development*

33.   UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made considerable contributions to strengthening the capacity of the national child protection system to respond to the needs of at-risk children over the course of both the 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 programme cycles. This work falls largely under Outcome 1 and Output 2[188] of the 2012-2017 programme, aimed at building the capacity of child protection service providers to address child protection risk in line with national policy standards and standard operating procedures, as well as Output 2[189] of the 2018 – 2022 programme; that most vulnerable and disadvantaged girls and boys have access to services to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Building an institutional framework for the delivery of CP response services

34.   When UNICEF's 2012 programme cycle began, Ghana lacked an institutional framework for the delivery of child protection response services at local level. Despite the fact that the Children's Act of 1998 mandates district assemblies to protect the welfare and promote the rights of children, a 2012 mapping and analysis of the child protection system concluded that: *"there is no clear structure for delivery of social welfare and child justice services at the community level"[190]*. Whilst the mapping found that a handful of districts had child protection teams or committees operating, these tended to be ad-hoc projects, and were often limited to addressing specific child protection issues. According to the mapping, such services *"have generally not been conceptualised as the lowest rung of the social welfare service delivery framework. Many do not have clear linkages to district-level social welfare authorities, and are dependent on external funding"[191]*. The mapping and analysis also noted a lack of protocols or procedures to guide social welfare officers in how to provide an appropriate response when a child was identified as being 'at-risk'. In sum, a comprehensive and systematic approach to providing a social welfare response in cases where children are at risk of harm was found to be lacking.

35.   In light of these gaps, both UNICEF and the Government of Ghana developed a more strategic vision for child protection work, adopting a system strengthening approach.[192] **In addition to supporting reforms to the legal framework (described in section 5.2.1 above), UNICEF supported the government to build the capacity of the formal child protection system to respond to the needs of at-risk children, including those who have been separated and exposed to violence, in a more coordinated and systematic way**. This approach is articulated in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection's (MoGCSP) recent 'Capacity Building Strategy for Strengthening the Social Welfare Services Workforce'[193],

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[188] 'Child protection service providers demonstrate strengthened and coordinated capacity to prevent, promote and respond to child protection abuses in line with national policy and standard operational procedures'.
[189] *'*Most vulnerable and disadvantaged girls and boys have access to services to prevent and respond to violence against children'.
[190] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.37.
[191] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.37.
[192] UNICEF, 'Protecting children from violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance. Ghana Country Report.', May 2015, p.viii.
[193] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and UNICEF Ghana, 2020, 'Capacity Building Strategy for Strengthening the Social Welfare Services Workforce, 2020 – 2024'.

developed with UNICEF's support, and drawing upon a 'social welfare workforce capacity assessment'[194] conducted by UNICEF, MoGCSP and the Office of the Head of Local Government Service in 2019. UNICEF also provided support to the development of standard operating procedures for child protection case management, which were published in 2018. Since then, the SOPs have been rolled out progressively, supported by UNICEF's Policy-to-Practice and USAID DCOF initiatives, which have built the capacity of Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development to deliver child protection response service in line with the SOPs. UNICEF's support has also included collaborating with the schools of social work and community development in the University of Development Studies to integrate child protection into the curriculum and establish a certificate course for child protection.[195]

36.   Evaluation findings indicate that **UNICEF's contributions have resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive child protection response service delivered through district administrations (MMDAs)** as part of a broader national child protection system. These changes were recognised and valued by respondents, who emphasised the importance of building an institutional framework for child protection work. As one Regional Social Welfare Director explained, *"structures have been developed. We now have the Department of Social Welfare in all districts. Various committees (community, district, and regional child protection committees) are in place."[196]* Indeed, it is clear that district level authorities have increasingly taken on responsibility for child protection work, as indicated by the number of MMDAs who have child protection interventions in their medium development plans.[197] Yet respondents also noted that **a significant amount of work remains to be done to ensure that the institutional framework for service delivery translates into more accessible and responsive child protection and social welfare services on the ground**. In the cynical view of one stakeholder, *"there is a lot on paper, but nothing practical is done. The main challenge has to do with the authorities knowing exactly what to do and how to do it. Policies are not meant to be just formulated but implemented."[198]*

Identifying and responding to child protection risk

37.   **It is difficult to determine the exact extent of child protection response in Ghana, given that national data on district level child protection interventions was not available at the time that the evaluation was undertaken**. According to administrative data gathered in 57 of the 60 districts visited as part of the evaluation, social welfare authorities responded to a total of 1,763 child protection cases over the period of 2019 and 2020[199], with 654 cases recorded in 2019 and 1,107 recorded in 2020. The change in caseload suggests that response services at district level are expanding and may reflect greater awareness and recognition of reporting channels within communities. The number of cases recorded varied significantly across districts, however, ranging from a minimum of 2 cases to a maximum of 216. Unsurprisingly, metropolitan districts had a larger average caseload (with 63 cases on average) when compared to municipal and ordinary districts (which had an average of 28 and 26 cases, respectively).[200]

38.   As is set out in Figure 1 below, the vast majority of child protection cases were classified as child maintenance cases (986 cases or 56 per cent), followed by custody cases (331 cases or 19 per cent) and parental neglect (277 cases or 16 per cent).

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[194] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and UNICEF Ghana, 2020, 'Social Welfare Service Workforce Capacity Assessment'.
[195] UNICEF Ghana, Annual Reports, 2014 – 2016.
[196] Individual interview, Regional Social Welfare Director, Region 4, 25 November 2020
[197] See for example, June 2019, 'National Development Planning Commission, 'Technical Review of 2018-2021 Sector and Medium Term Development Plans'.
[198] Individual interview, NGO Director, Region 8, NOT DATED 2020.
[199] Data collection was completed in December 2020, therefore it is likely that the total figures for the 2020 caseload are slightly higher.
[200] F=3.49; p=0.0374

Figure 1 Type of child protection cases by gender, from administrative records (N=1,690)

Male (N=795)　Female (N=895)
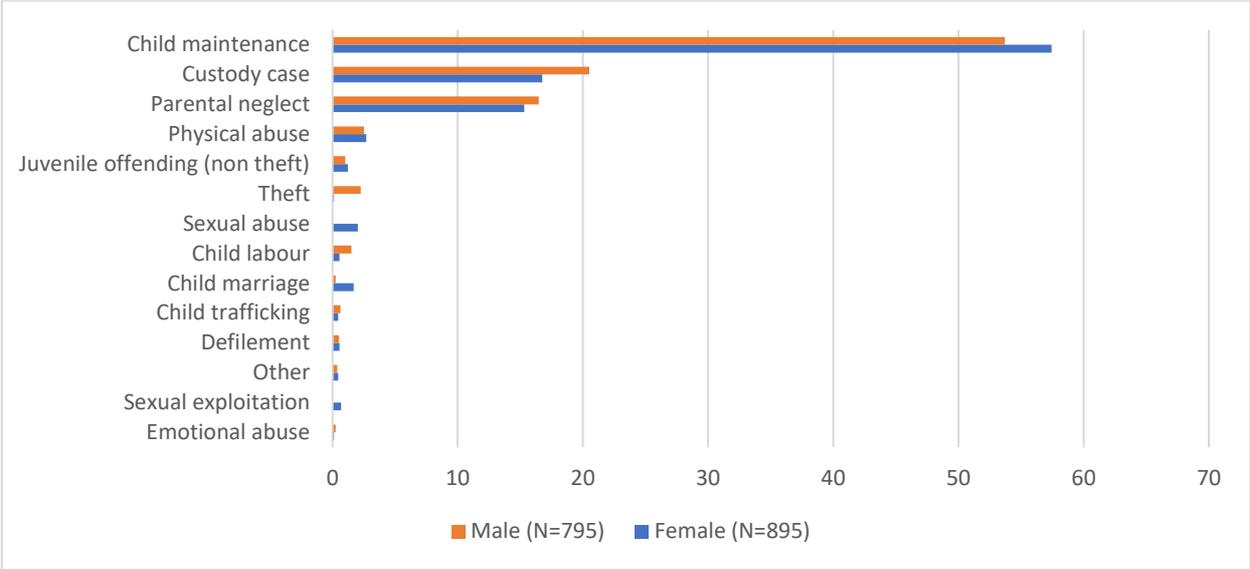
39.　These findings are highly consistent with results from the service provider survey. Survey respondents overwhelmingly identified child maintenance, parental neglect and custody cases as the most common child protection concern in their community, while juvenile offending, emotional abuse and sexual abuse were mentioned far less frequently (Figure 2 below).[201] 'Other' concerns rarely identified by survey respondents included teenage pregnancy (5 respondents), child trafficking (3 respondents), drug abuse (2 respondents) and missing children (2 respondents).

Figure 2 Type of child protection case ranked by level of concern by social workers surveyed
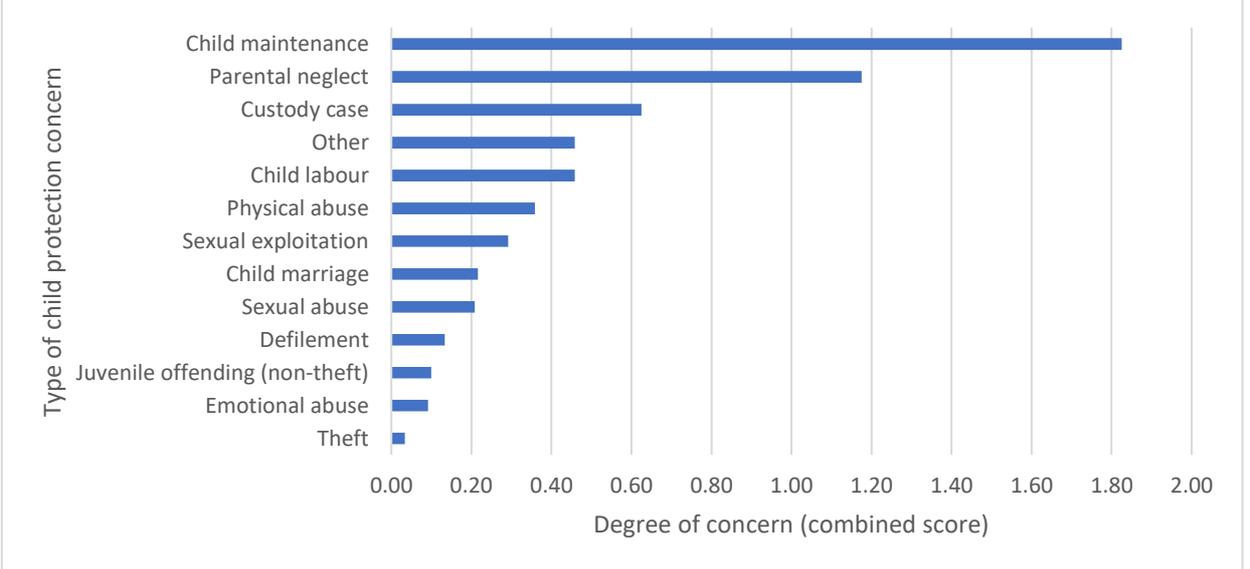
40.　Qualitative data also supports these findings, with district social welfare officers describing their caseload as heavily dominated by child maintenance cases, and to a lesser extent cases of neglect and abandonment. When asked about the most common types of cases the child protection system is responding to, a representative of the Department of Children at national level quickly replied, *"the issue*

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[201] Combined score generated by assigning score of 3 to most common concern mentioned, 2 to 2nd most common concern, and 1 to 3rd most common concern.

of non-maintenance of children – people don't want to pay child support or they don't have money. And it is a huge challenge for social welfare"[202].

41.   These findings are problematic, suggesting that the child protection system is not yet fulfilling its core function of identifying and responding to cases where children are at risk of harm. Ensuring that absent parents provide financial support to their families is likely to promote positive outcomes for vulnerable children and may help prevent family separation. Yet addressing child maintenance and custody cases is not typically the role of a child protection system. **Meanwhile, the low number of cases involving child abuse identified by the CP system is highly concerning, indicating that a significant proportion of cases where children are exposed to violence are not receiving an appropriate child protection response.** When asked about violence against children, the majority of social welfare officers replied that they rarely see this type of case. Instead, a number of key informant interviews at district and regional level suggest that VAC cases are typically handled by the Police Service's Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), rather than by district social welfare authorities. This finding appears to be a continuation of previous practices: the 2012 Child Protection Systems Mapping reported that *"for most children, entry into the formal child protection system is as the result of a report to DOVVSU."*[203]

42.   This pattern is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it suggests that cases of violence against children are only identified when they reach a very high threshold and that a number of cases which could benefit from a social work intervention but aren't yet considered to be a criminal matter may be missed by the system. Indeed, data from DOVVSU also indicates that very few cases of child abuse are coming into the national CP system: according to data contained in Ghana's combined sixth and seventh reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, DOVVSU reported having responded to a total of 348 children 'exposed to harm' over the years 2014 – 2019, an average of only 58 cases per year.[204] Cases involving sexual offences against children were much higher, averaging 1,094 per year for the same period. **Whilst it is positive that cases of child sexual abuse are being reported to law enforcement, these figures suggest that cases where children are at-risk of other forms of violence or abuse, particularly cases that don't reach a criminal threshold, are not receiving a child protection response.**

43.   Another potential issue is whether DOVVSU has sufficient capacity to provide a holistic child protection response in cases of child abuse, including cases of sexual violence. Whilst the unit does have social workers and psychologists on staff to work with victims, its primary focus is on investigation and criminal prosecution, rather than delivering social work services aimed at identifying and addressing harm or underlying risk factors. Furthermore, a mapping of the Ghana Police Service conducted in 2016 found there was a gap in the skills and resources required for crisis counselling and psychosocial support.[205] This highlights the importance of engaging social services in responding to cases of child abuse, in line with the Children's Act, 1998, which holds that any person with information on child abuse, or a child in need of care and protection shall report the matter to the Department of Social Welfare[206].

44.   Several MMDA social workers described having an effective working relationship with DOVVSU and identified this as one of the positive changes that has occurred in recent years:

> *The current system of operation has enabled social welfare and DOVVSU to collaborate effectively. Previously, DOVVSU would decide to work on a case and do family tracing without notifying social welfare. Sometimes the case would be sent to court and the social welfare office*

[202] Individual interview, Department of Children, Remote Interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.
[203] UNICEF Ghana, 'Mapping and analysis of Ghana's child protection system', 2012, pp.44.
[204] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Ghana's Combined Sixth (6th) and Seventh (7th) Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child', November 2020.
[205] Ghana Police Service, 'Integrating child-friendly policing into the Ghana Police Service: Mapping Report Summary', October 2016, pp.1-2.
[206] Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) Section 17.

would not be in the know…. However because of the inter-sectoral collaboration and sensitization going on, the approach has changed.[207]

45.   Yet evaluation findings suggest that **coordination between DOVVSU and social welfare authorities remains weak in many localities.** A district level social welfare officer described the situation:

Abuse cases are not normally reported to us. They go to DOVVSU. But we have told DOVVSU that if cases are reported and there are instances where social welfare is needed, they should call our attention and then we will take it up from there. They should deal with their criminal aspect, and we should deal with the social aspect![208]

46.   Administrative data also suggests that referrals from DOVVSU to social welfare authorities are relatively rare; only 1.7% of the child protection cases recorded in the 57 districts where data was gathered were referred by DOVVSU. **And whilst a number of respondents reported that collaboration between DOVVSU and social welfare is working well, others described a dysfunctional relationship**. This may be due to the fact that Department of Social Welfare and Community Development are perceived as lacking the capacity or resources to respond effectively to CP cases. As one DOVVSU representative frankly explained:

If I may add, we are supposed to collaborate with the Department of Social Welfare to make the work of child protection easier, but the truth is that they are even more financially and logistically challenged than we are. Most of the time we have to handle cases on our own because referring them to social welfare would only prolong the issue, because they are financially incapacitated…[209]

A gender breakdown of CP response data

Administrative data suggests that district social welfare services are similarly responsive in cases involving both girls and boys; cases were fairly evenly split by gender, with 51 per cent of cases involving girls and 45 per cent involving boys.[210] Child maintenance cases were slightly more likely to involve girls and custody cases were slightly more likely to involve boys, which may reflect gendered social norms which place greater value on boys than girls. Cases of theft and child labour were more common for boys, while girls were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and child marriage.[211]

Barriers to identification and referral

47.   Evaluation findings suggest that **effective and reliable referral channels between frontline professionals and district level social welfare authorities are lacking in many districts, undermining identification of cases where children are at-risk**. According to administrative data records from MMDAs, the vast majority of cases were referred by family members (79 per cent), followed by the police (10 per cent). A small number of cases were referred by community members or leaders (3.2 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively) and by the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (1.7 per cent). Education and health professionals were responsible for a negligible number of referrals (10 and 5 cases, respectively). The service provider survey yielded similar results. Family members were also the most common referral source cited by social workers (48 per cent), followed by community members (23 per cent) and the police (15 per cent). Again, teachers and health professionals were not identified as common sources of referrals.

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[207] Individual interview, Social Welfare Director, Municipal District, Region 9, 4 December 2020.
[208] Individual interview, Social Work Head, Municpal District, Region 9, 5 December 2020.
[209] Individual interview, Head of DOVVSU, Region 8, NO DATE.
[210] In 22 cases gender was 'other' and in 51 cases gender was not recorded.
[211] Pearson chi^2=92.25; p<0.0001.

48.   Given that social workers' caseload is heavily dominated by child maintenance and custody cases it is not surprising that the majority of referrals come from family members. Yet the lack of referrals from other important sources such as law enforcement authorities, community leaders and health and education professionals is likely to have contributed to the low numbers of child abuse cases reaching social welfare authorities, and undermined the ability of the CP system to respond to child protection need.

49.   **There is some evidence that districts that have received UNICEF interventions, particularly those that were part of the 'policy to practice initiative', are more likely to receive referrals from the police, community members and DOVVSU** (Figure 3).[212] This may be due to greater awareness in these districts of the role of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and greater cooperation between police and social workers. However, the number of referrals from health and education professionals is still very low even in these intervention districts.

Figure 3 Referrals by police, community members and family members in the intervention versus comparison districts (administrative data record)
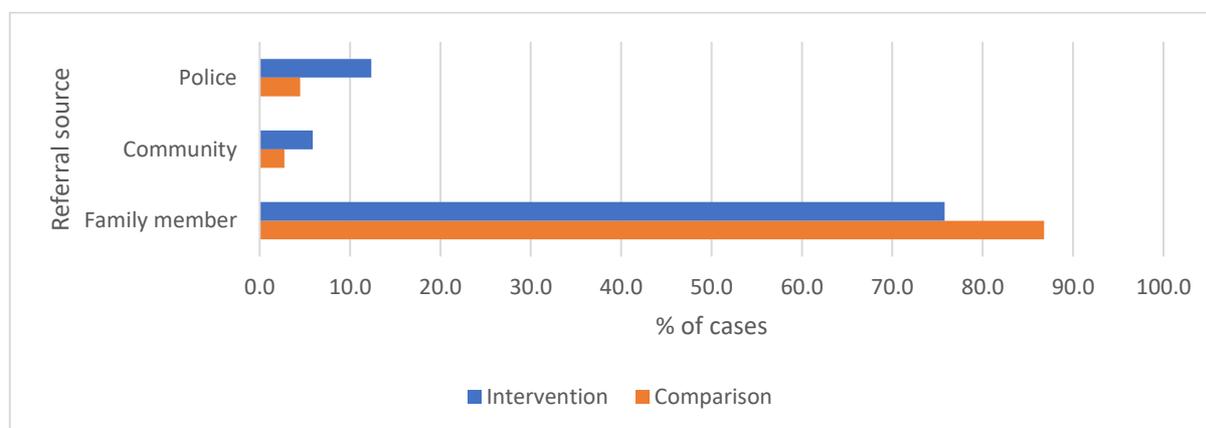
50.   In addition to weak referral links, qualitative interviews point to a **number of persistent barriers which reduce the likelihood that child protection cases will be reported to relevant authorities. These range from persistent stigma around child abuse and attitudes which are accepting of domestic violence, to a lack of awareness of reporting channels and practical barriers, which make accessing services challenging or costly.** The following explanations provided by social welfare authorities are particularly illustrative:

> *Well, the barriers I have seen are the availability and nearness of the facility to the caregivers. Most of the services provided are in the district capitals. Sometimes caregivers do not have the means to travel to these places to access the services provided. So, accessibility is a major barrier.[213]*
>
> *--*
>
> *Poverty is a very huge barrier [to accessing services]. And ignorance of the existing structures on child protection. Religion has a way of silencing people. Or a desire to uphold the family honour. For example, a case where a father abused his daughter and the mother thinks the child should keep quiet. …[214]*

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[212] Comparison versus intervention: Pearson chi^2=41.57; p<0.001; P2P versus not P2P: Pearson chi^2=228.62; p<0.001.
[213] Individual interview, Director of Social Welfare, Region 8, NO DATE.
[214] Individual interview, Director of Gender, Region 4, 25 November 2020.

51.   These barriers to access are certainly not unique to Ghana, and are likely to continue to pose a challenge to the national child protection system for years to come. Yet several respondents described cases where **social pressure not to report child abuse was found to be so severe that it prevented even the most serious cases from being reported or receiving an appropriate response:**

> *We also realized that more often than not abuse cases are not being reported to the police which are the first contact in these matters. This is so because they see themselves as one family, and reporting - especially if the perpetrator of the act is a family member - is seen as a sort of betrayal. Even those that are reported, we don't get the support of the families to pursue the case further to its logical conclusion.[215]*
>
> --
>
> *When an issue of child defilement is reported at DOVVSU families come and request to take the case home even though the cases are criminal cases. The families end up talking to the police and asking the victims to withdraw the case. Sometimes they even threaten the victims with death. I remember Youth Foundation had one case where a 7-year-old was defiled and the father threatened the mother, asking why she reported the case to DOVVSU since it was a close relative that defiled the child. Because she realized that her life was at risk she had to back off. It is difficult to even prosecute such cases because on the day of court the witness will not even show up in court because of the threats on their lives.[216]*

52.   The above example demonstrates **the need for greater alignment between the child protection and justice sectors, and improved access to witness protection, as well as community engagement and awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma around different forms of child abuse and to address gendered power imbalances.** These are areas that UNICEF has targeted in its programming (results are discussed in greater depth in section 3.2.3 on behaviour change and community mobilisation). It also illustrates the importance of strengthening referral channels from other sources, such as health, education, and community leadership, to ensure that cases are referred to child protection authorities even where family members fail to report them.

CP response and the implementation of case management procedures

53.   UNICEF has worked closely with partners to build the capacity of social workers to respond to child protection cases through a case management approach, in line with the Government's newly published Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). [217] In order to assess the extent to which the SOPs are applied in practice, a survey of government child protection service providers (the service provider survey) was conducted in 60 districts, with two respondents surveyed per district.[218] 33 of the districts had received UNICEF interventions aiming to build social worker capacity in line with the case management SOPs, while 27 had not received training on the standardised forms and case management SOPs and so are referred to as 'comparison' districts. As UNICEF has delivered training in all 260 districts on the preparation of medium-term development plans and annual reports, the comparison is made specifically in terms of the districts' approach to case management and use of the SOPs and forms.

54.   Social workers' case management practices were assessed against the stages laid out in the case management SOPs, namely identification, assessment, planning, implementation, follow up and review,

[215] Individual interview, Social Welfare Officer, District, Region 8, NO DATE.
[216] Individual interview, Representative of the Department of Children, Region 7, 25 November, 2020.
[217] UNICEF Ghana, Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Case management standard operating procedures for children in need of care and protection', June 2018.
[218] This included 64 Social Welfare Officers (SWOs) and 54 Community Development Officers (CDOs), one Social Development Officer and one Head of a Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.

and closure. Findings on the implementation of case management, and the degree to which procedures are aligned with the SOPs, are presented below. More detailed results can be found in Annex 6 to the report.

Overall, 80 per cent of respondents had received training on the case management SOPs. As expected, those in intervention districts were more likely to have received this training than those in comparison districts, though 66 per cent of those in comparison districts had still received training.[219] Respondents in comparison districts were less likely to report having been trained by UNICEF and more likely to report having been trained by regional government.[220] In the end-of-survey comments, several respondents requested further training on the case management SOPs, including pre-service training for new staff members and in-service refresher trainings.

Alignment with case management SOPs: One key worker

55.   Ideally a child and their family should be assigned a case worker or manager who is able to provide individualised support based on the child's particular needs, and who can develop a relationship of trust and support with the child and family. Around a third (34 per cent) of social workers surveyed reported that this is always the case in their district, 23 per cent said it happens most of the time, 19 per cent that it happens sometimes, and 24 per cent that it rarely or never happens. **Social workers in intervention districts were more likely to report that cases are assigned to a case manager compared to social workers in comparison districts.[221]**

Alignment with case management SOPs: Identification and registration

56.   During registration, the social worker should register the case; provide a case reference number; open a case file and enter basic information on the child and the case and decide whether the case is statutory, life or health threatening, and therefore requires the involvement of the police or health services. **Almost all social workers (98 per cent) reported that they inform the police or health services when the case if deemed to be life threatening, while 62 per cent said it happens if the case is statutory.**

Alignment with case management SOPs: Assessment

57.   According to the case management SOPs, an initial screening should be carried out in each case to determine the level of risk, and this should be followed by a more comprehensive or 'in-depth' assessment. The initial screening should be done within 24 hours or, if this is not possible, then within 48 hours. Almost half of social workers (48 per cent) said that an initial screening is always completed, 13 per cent said this is done for most cases, 28 per cent for some cases and 11 per cent said it is rarely or never done. In the case file reviews, 36 per cent of files had evidence of an initial screening. **Social workers in intervention districts were more likely to report that an initial screening is carried out as a matter of course and were also more likely to know that the screening should happen within 24 hours.[222]**

58.   During the initial screening, a level of risk should be assigned to determine whether the child is 'safe' or 'unsafe'. The case management SOPs suggest four levels of risk, of which the fourth level is 'not at risk'. Half of social workers (49 per cent) said that all cases are given a formal risk classification, 10 per cent said most and 18 per cent said some cases are classified in this way. Social workers in intervention

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[219] Compared to 88 per cent in intervention districts; Pearson chi^2=8.62; p=0.003.
[220] 90 per cent trained by UNICEF and 4 per cent by government in intervention districts compared to 59 per cent trained by UNICEF and 34 per cent by government in comparison districts; Pearson chi^2=19.73; p=0.001.
[221] Cases assigned to a case manager always or most of the time: 95% v. 84%; Pearson chi^2=3.79; p=0.051.
[222] Initial screening carried out in all cases: 54% v. 36%, rarely/never: 5% compared to 21%; Pearson chi^2=8.25; p=0.041; Initial screening must occur within 24 hours: 43% v. 30%; Pearson chi^2=9.79; p=0.02.

districts were more likely to say there is a formal risk classification system, while nearly half of social workers in comparison districts (46 per cent) said this is not in place.[223]

59.   For cases in which a child protection risk is identified, a further in-depth assessment should be carried out. The in-depth assessment should include interviews with family members and other relevant stakeholders and should gather information on the child's situation, including their health and development, their education, their integration into the family and the community, and the household's living conditions and socio-economic situation. **The majority of in-depth assessments recorded in the case file review involved interviews with both the child and their parents or caregivers, and several noted that home visits were made and evidence gathered about the family environment. While two of the cases of neglect stated that medical reports were involved in the assessment, there was little evidence in other cases that the child's health, education or development had been assessed, suggesting that in-depth assessments could be made more holistic in order to better reflect the child's needs.**

60.   Respondents reported interviewing 5.2 people per case, on average. The child's parents or caregivers were the most common interviewees (97 per cent of social workers reported that they would typically interview them), followed by the child themselves (interviewed by 96 per cent), other family members (71 per cent) and neighbours or other familiar people (61 per cent).

Alignment with case management SOPs: Planning

61.   During the planning stage, the social worker should develop a case plan in collaboration with the child and the child's family. The case plan should outline a set of actions to assist the child and/or their family to respond to concerns raised about their well-being. As well as specific actions, the plan should detail who will be responsible and set deadlines and goals to make sure the appropriate help and support is provided. Around a fifth of social workers said that formal case plans are rarely or never developed, 42 per cent said a case plan is developed for some cases, 17 per cent for most cases and 23 per cent for all cases; however **of the 40 per cent of social workers who said case plans are developed in all or most cases, actual case plans were only observed and verified for 64 per cent of these.**

Content of case plans: Just over half (53 per cent) of the case files reviewed included case plans. Only 39 per cent of the case files reviewed had evidence of the child's own wishes or perspectives on the case, suggesting that case planning could be made more child-centred. Most of the descriptions of the case planning include concrete actions to be taken, for example setting child maintenance payments, finding accommodation for a child, and organising counselling, mediation and education. Many also specified who was responsible for carrying out the actions or for monitoring the case to ensure that actions were taken by others, though several did not include this information. Social welfare officers were most commonly mentioned as having responsibility, though there is also evidence of other organisations being involved, for example residential homes, the courts, the Health Insurance Office, and district or regional level bodies. There is little evidence of deadlines or goals being set against which to measure the success of the intervention, which may make case monitoring and closure more difficult and lead to delays in child protection response.

Alignment with case management SOPs: Case implementation, follow up and review

62.   The case manager should ensure that actions are implemented according to the case plan and within the agreed timeframes, including referrals to relevant service providers, and follow up to provide on-going support and document the case management process. The SOPs recommend that cases be

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[223] For all cases: 59% v. 32%; Pearson chi^2=20.91; p<0.001.

reviewed at least every 3 months. In the service provider survey, 70 per cent of social workers said that follow up is carried out in all or most cases, with intervention districts more likely to report follow up being carried out.[224] The majority of social workers reported meeting the SOP target, with 40 per cent saying that cases are reviewed every 3 months and 50 per cent reporting monthly reviews.

Alignment with case management SOPs: Case closure

63.   In order to close a case, the social worker needs to consult with and receive authorisation from the case manager, who must be confident that the child's safety and well-being are secure before providing such authorisation. The majority of social workers (93 per cent) reported that cases are closed by the case manager, 6 per cent said they are closed by whoever is available, 8 per cent by a regional level social worker, and 13 per cent by an 'other' person. The Head of the Department was the main other example given, though a few social workers said that the child or the child's family may make the decision to close the case.

64.   The most common reason given by social workers for case closure was that the issue is resolved. The death of the child was more likely to be mentioned by social workers in intervention districts,[225] perhaps because this reason is rare but is specifically mentioned in the case management SOPs. There is some evidence that those in comparison districts were more likely to say that cases can be closed when the family refuses to cooperate[226] or if nothing could be done to help the child.[227] Neither of these situations should result in case closure, as it is not clear that the child is safe and protected in such circumstances.

Figure 4 Implementation of case management SOPs: Intervention v comparison districts[228]
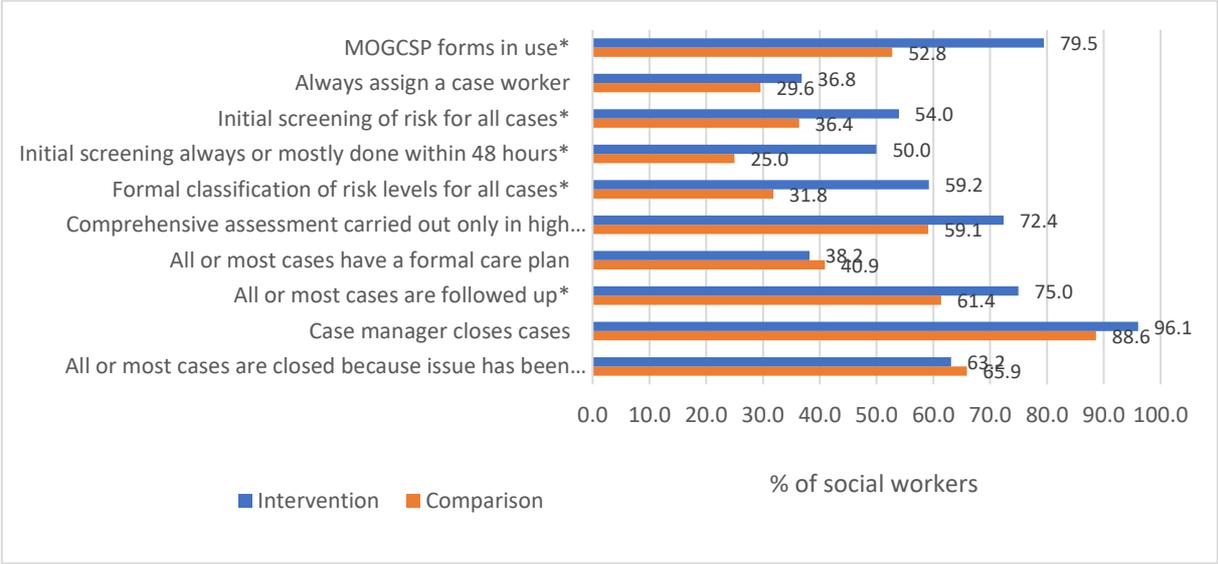
UNICEF's contributions to the implementation of case management

65.   **Whilst the findings set out above indicate that the application of case management procedures in line with the SOPs is imperfect, a considerable proportion of service providers do report to be following the SOPs when responding to CP cases. This is an important achievement and significant change from past practice.** As one member of UNICEF child protection team explained to researchers,

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[224] Follow up in all or most cases 75% v. 61%; Pearson chi^2=14.19; p=0.003.
[225] 59% v. 32%; Pearson chi^2=8.37; p=0.004.
[226] 9% in intervention compared to 21% in comparison: Pearson chi^2=3.05; p=0.081.
[227] 1% in intervention compared to 7% in comparison: Pearson chi^2=2.62; p=0.106.
[228] An asterisk (*) is used to denote indicators where the difference between intervention and comparison districts was statistically significant

"before, when discussing child protection response with social welfare, no one would talk about case management – some were doing a bit of casework, but on a sheet of A4 paper, just writing down the issue or problem"[229]. Furthermore, the results above clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions: the implementation of case management procedures was found to be consistently stronger in districts that received UNICEF support compared to those that did not.

66.   **Evaluation findings demonstrate that UNICEF has succeeded in building the capacity of district level social welfare staff to deliver child protection response services in line with the Government's case management SOPs. The degree to which this has translated into outcomes for children exposed to violence or other forms of child protection risk is less clear, however, particularly given that these cases were rarely found to be reaching the child protection system.**

The availability of response services

67.   **Evaluation findings suggest that in most districts a number of referral services are available for children in need of protection**, as is set out in the chart below. Counselling services, family reunification and social welfare support were the most common services provided, reported by over three-quarters of social workers surveyed. Two-thirds of social workers reported that medical services or costs are provided, but less than half said that legal services or costs are provided. Around half of social workers said that emergency accommodation or alternative care is provided in their district. Other services identified by services providers include probation services, day care, NGO monitoring and child or family tracing.

Figure 5 Types of response services provided to children, by intervention or comparison district[230]
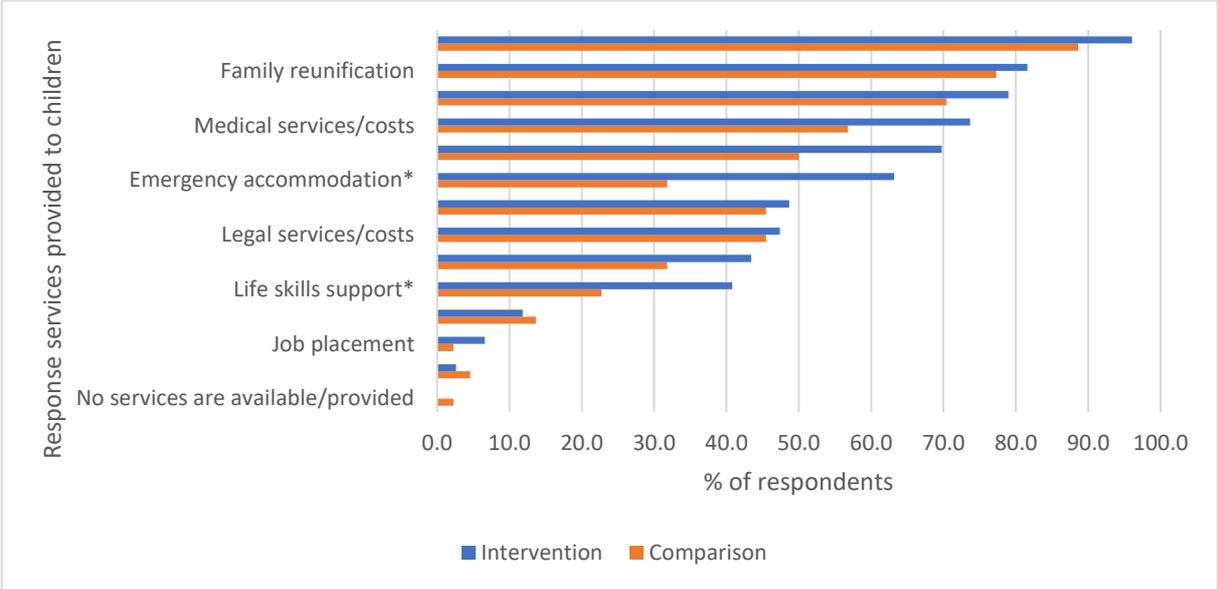
68.   **Findings also point to a number of critical gaps in response services**. When asked to identify services which are not available in their district but would be helpful to them, the most needed service identified by social workers was drug and alcohol rehabilitation (identified by 63 per cent of respondents), followed by emergency accommodation (57 per cent), job placements (43 per cent) and vocational training (37 per cent). Legal services, alternative care and life skills support were also all mentioned by at least a quarter of respondents. **Other gaps in services identified by respondents included services for children in conflict with the law, such as correctional centres and probation services.**

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[229] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[230] An asterisk (*) is used to denote services where the difference between intervention and comparison districts was statistically significant

69.   Qualitative findings indicate a lack of family-based alternative care services, a gap which is discussed in further detail in the section on alternative care reform below. Respondents also emphasised the need to develop specialised psychological services to help victims overcome trauma. Whilst basic counselling services are available in Ghana, more specialised psychological services are reported to be limited. The lack of sufficient emergency shelters was also raised in qualitative interviews, with many respondents describing difficulties finding appropriate emergency accommodation for children:

> *The officials at DOVVSU send these children to us because they cannot keep them behind bars. We also try to make enquiries about their families and get contacts to see if we can trace their relatives. If that is not successful, we announce on the radio stations with help of the police report. If nobody shows up, we are forced to take the children home. The major challenge here is the lack of shelter homes…[231]*

70.   Finally, a number of respondents explained that even where services are available, a number of persistent barriers disrupt the ability of children and families to access those services. In both the service provider survey and qualitative interviews, respondents identified that **a lack of sufficient resources, particularly budgets to cover home visits, disrupt the provision of counselling and other services. Others mentioned that hidden costs for service-users, which create insurmountable barriers to accessing critical services, particularly medical and legal services. A number of social workers expressed a specific concern about the fees associated with medical services for victims of sexual violence.** These points to the need to ensure that MMDAs allocate a sufficient budget to cover transport and other costs associated with child protection response services.

Child protection response and child marriage

Child Marriage has been a significant focus of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme throughout both the 2012 – 2017, and 2018 – 2022 programme cycles. In addition to including social and behaviour change initiatives, interventions to promote girls' empowerment and support to GoG-led regulatory efforts, programming has focussed on strengthening the capacity of child protection service providers to respond in cases where child marriage had occurred.

Evaluation findings suggest that child marriage is increasingly recognised as a child protection issue by social welfare authorities. In qualitative interviews, many social workers listed child marriage as being among the types of cases to which they respond. Yet several respondents described that they continue to face challenges addressing the issue, particularly in cases where children choose to get married, rather than being pressured to enter a marriage by parents or community leaders. As one child protection authority explained: *"now it is the children themselves who are going into child marriage - it is like peer pressure is causing it" .[232]* This experience is consistent with the findings of a 2017 'Assessment of Strategies and Approaches to Address Child Marriage in Ghana', which suggests that the majority of child marriages in Ghana occur when teenagers become sexually active or become pregnant.[233] The assessment identified teenage pregnancy, particularly outside of marriage, as well as community concerns with adolescent sexual activity as among the main drivers of child marriage; when children 'choose to get married' this typically means they have moved in with a boyfriend or girlfriend, often because this is the only socially acceptable context in which to have a romantic or sexual relationship.

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[231] Individual interview, Social Welfare Officer, Municipal District, Region 4, 26 November, 2020.
[232] Individual interview, Department for Children, Region 7, 25 November 2020.
[233] Lo Forte, Claudia, "Assessment of Strategies and Approaches to Address Child Marriage in Ghana: Learning Brief", Child Protection Section, UNICEF Country Office, November, 2017.

The service provider described the response to such a case in her community; "*The [NGO] had a case where the teenage girl went to live with the boyfriend. The NGO even went to boy's house to convince her to go back to her parents' house with a package to give her skills training (hairdressing) and she refused. She later came back to take the package after getting pregnant. They had no option than to decline to provide it to her.*"[234]

This response is problematic for a number of reasons. If the NGO did in fact deny services to the girl because she had become pregnant, this is likely to reinforce stigma around teenage pregnancy and may actually increase her vulnerability. This is inconsistent with UNICEF's programming approach which seeks to promote opportunities for teen mothers to stay in education. The case study also reveals the need to address the underlying drivers of teenage pregnancy and child marriage, by promoting young people's access to sexual and reproductive health services and confronting cultural norms around adolescent sexuality, in addition to promoting girls' access to opportunities.

Establishing effective data systems

71.   As has been mentioned elsewhere, **an integrated child protection database containing standardised administrative data on child protection cases in Ghana is not yet in place. This is a significant gap in the child protection system, which has made it difficult to monitor the child protection system and understand how it is working in practice, or to strengthen the system by ensuring planning is evidence based**. UNICEF is working closely with government partners to fill this gap, through establishing a digital child protection information management system (CPIMS), using the software platform Primero.

72.   The importance of strengthening data systems was recognised by respondents at district, regional and national levels, who emphasised the importance of moving to a digital data platform that can facilitate coordination between relevant agencies. As a representative of the Office of the Head of the Local Government Service explained, *"when we are able to get the national network connecting all the assemblies to the head office we will be in a better position."*[235] This work is of utmost importance to child protection system strengthening and should be prioritised in the coming years. Yet as respondents cautioned, the roll out of the CPIMS is likely to require significant capacity building support to ensure that users have sufficient skills and technology to use it effectively.

Expected results on child protection response

Progress towards expected results: 2012 – 2017	
From workplans (2015-16 and 2016-17):	
Standards, protocols and procedures finalised for social workers, community workers, health professionals, teachers, and Chiefs and Queen mothers	Achieved
Child Protection Sector Working Group established by the end of 2015 and evidence of more systematic human and financial resource planning in support of CP by end of 2016	Achieved
The number of service providers at district and regional and national level working to prevent and respond to child protection abuses increases by 10%	It appears to have been achieved (given changes in administrative structure, comparable data on staffing is limited.

[234] Individual interview, Department for Children, Region 7, 25 November 2020.
[235] Individual interview, Office of the Head of Local Government Service, remote interview conducted over zoom, 20 March, 2020.

	However, the social welfare workforce was found to have expanded significantly)
From RAM reporting:	
20 MMDAs (local assemblies) implement local protocols for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect (RAM)	Progress made – 4% of MMDAs (9 out of 216 MMDAs) by the end of 2017. **Significant additional progress has been made between 2017 and 2019[236].
Sub-national level workforce guidelines available and formative evaluation (social welfare and community development workers)	Achieved
At least 70% of reunited children are followed up and provided with reintegration support	Achieved
Progress towards expected results: 2018 – 2022	
Existence of a functional social work quality assurance system that entails trained personnel; SOPs to run the system; monitoring and data collection tools and evidence of reporting.	In progress – draft national child protection SOPs and inter-sectoral SOPs on case management with referral pathways are available; information management system has been developed and is being rolled out. For instance, SWOs and CDOs have been trained in its use.

Child protection response and the justice system

73.   UNICEF's CP Programme included a focus on strengthening the capacity of Ghana's law enforcement and judicial service to provide justice for children as both alleged offenders and victims and witnesses of crime. In particular, the 2012 – 2017 programme aimed to build the capacity of justice system actors to apply principles and laws on child justice and promote the availability of programmes in support of young offenders, child victims and witnesses (Output 6), and to build the capacity of community based processes to both prevent and respond to juvenile offending through informal means (Output 7). The 2018 – 2022 programme seeks to build on this work by strengthening the capacities of formal and informal service providers to provide equitable, quality and coordinated child-friendly justice services to girls and boys and their families (Output 3).

74.   For several years, from 2014-2016, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs and the National House of Chiefs to engage with traditional leaders and strengthen community justice mechanisms.[237] Yet towards the end of the 2012-2017 programme a decision was made to move away from this approach, and to focus instead on strengthening the capacity of the formal justice sector.[238] **Whilst traditional leaders are still engaged in prevention activities related to justice for children, it was determined that informal justice approaches were likely to perpetuate gender inequalities, including through failing to hold male perpetrators to account**. This is a positive example of UNICEF's ability to incorporate programmatic learning into their approach and willingness to make adjustments in light of emerging evidence, both from Ghana and other contexts.

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[236] In 2019, Local Government Services reported that 78% of MMDAs implemented child protection protocols (see: http://lgs.gov.gh/index.php/general-documents/#609ba499d1).
[237] UNICEF Ghana, Annual Report, 2014; UNICEF Ghana, Annual Report, 2015; UNICEF Ghana, Annual Report, 2016.
[238] Personal communication during interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.

75.   **UNICEF's support to the formal justice system has included significant investment in police capacity, including through the development of two sets of Standard Operating Procedures (one on cases involving child victims and witnesses and another on cases involving children alleged of offending) and incorporating child-friendly policing into the police curriculum**. This work was done in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and other relevant government bodies, who supported the roll out of the training throughout the country. A representative of DOVVSU at national level recalled the successes of the programme: "*looking holistically, measures were put in place to train staff members to acquire important skills for responding in children's cases. The Domestic Violence Unit and Anti Human Trafficking Unit, key agencies that handle children's issues, were given a specialised training to be able respond to these cases… My last training was in February – at the end of the day the officers really understood their responsibilities"[239].*

76.   The 2018 – 2022 programme focussed in particular on reform of the formal justice system, drawing on the findings of research undertaken in 2018 which examined the extent to which Ghana's justice system incorporates child-friendly policies and procedures.[240] The research revealed an overall lack of child-friendly procedures in the justice system, which UNICEF has been working to address in close collaboration with the Ghanaian Judicial Service. Notable successes include: the decision to designate one circuit court in each region of Ghana to focus on gender-based violence cases, including child sexual abuse; the development of operational guidelines for the GBV courts and a GBV training manual for law enforcement; and the Government's overall "buy in" to the process.[241]

77.   **Evaluation findings suggest that a significant amount of work remains to be done to ensure that children have access to child-friendly justice services**, however. A number or respondents described that problematic practices persist, such as the following example, given by a DOVVSU representative:

> *Here in Ghana when a child is abused and police or an officer of the domestic violence unit prepares the case for court, the child is addressed by the lawyer as an adult. I witnessed this a lot in the Volta Region when I served as the Regional Coordinator of DOVVSU. Once we lost a case involving a 3-year-old child who couldn't respond to questions in court and because of that, the accused person was discharged. I feel it is a challenge as far as child protection is concerned - lawyers treat children as adults during court proceedings.[242]*

78.   UNICEF has recognised the need to continue justice reform work. In addition to acknowledging the need to make services more child friendly, UNICEF expressed concern that slow and onerous justice procedures, which require multiple court visits by children and families, create barriers to access to justice; *"cases end up being settled out of court because families get tired".* [243] This challenge was consistently raised by respondents. When asked to identify the main gaps and challenges in the CP system, one Social Welfare Officer replied: "*The slow motion of the justice system. I find this particularly troubling because according to the Child Act, all child related cases must be addressed within 6 months. However, a lot of cases sent to the courts do not see any settlement because of the consistent adjournment of these cases."*[244]

79.   **Whilst justice reform remains a challenge, evaluation findings indicate a shift in the Government's approach to addressing juvenile offending, in line with UNICEF's approach. In particular,**

[239] Individual interview, DOVVSU Representative, remote interview (zoom), 27 March 2020.
[240] Judicial Service of Ghana and UNICEF, 2018, 'Children Before the Courts in Ghana: Towards Child-Friendly Justice', https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/1906/file/Children%20before%20the%20Courts%20in%20Ghana.pdf .
[241] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[242] Individual interview, DOVVSU, Metropolitan District, Region 8, NO DATE.
[243] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[244] Individual interview, Regional Director of Social Welfare, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.

several stakeholders emphasised that social welfare is increasingly engaged in addressing cases where children exhibit offending behaviour:

> *The national child protection system has been able to respond to the needs of children in Ghana to some high extent. For example, when a child is involved in a criminal act, violence, or abuse the society will want to jail him/her but social welfare does not look at that aspect but rather the reformation of the person.* [245]

80.   Indeed, administrative data from district level social welfare authorities indicates that social welfare officers are engaged in responding to juvenile offending, even if in relatively low numbers: 1.1 per cent of the overall caseload of social workers involved cases of theft and another 1.1. per cent involved other forms of juvenile offending.

81.   **Stakeholders pointed to a lack of sufficient services for children with offending behaviour**. Several mentioned that diversion services remain limited: *"diversion is being rolled out gradually. Sometimes follow up is difficult and the case load is huge – the government needs to build this service"[246]*. Meanwhile others referred to a lack of appropriate juvenile correction facilities and, concerningly, persistent instances where children are treated as adults within the justice system:

> *A juvenile offender is put on remand in this region, they have to be sent to a JCC in another region because the only facility in the region has been abandoned. We have heard that, the police, due to a lack of resources for handling these juveniles across the region, sometimes compel minors to inflate their ages in order for the police to be saved the stress. Sometimes too, these minors are kept at adult facilities in the region. exposing them to all kinds of criminal elements.[247]*
>
> --
>
> *We all know that children are not supposed to be put in adult cells, but when we go to the prisons to do inspections we come across children there. The police try to swell up somebody's age to enable them hold on to that person. This year a boy of seventeen years was arrested, but had been schooled to admit to the crime. He should have been handled at juvenile justice court but was not.[248]*

Expected results on child justice

Progress towards expected results: 2012 – 2017	
SOPs for police finalised and service guidelines and court directives are issued for justice services by the end of 2016	Achieved – SOPs for handling children in conflict with the law and SOPs for handling cases involving child victims and witnesses
SOPs, guidelines and court procedures are integrated into the training curriculum	Achieved – SOPs integrated into Police Training Curriculum
20% reduction in the number of children in detention	Unknown – due to have been measured through justice system research
From RAM reporting:	
Existence of procedures and services for children in contact with the law that are	*Achieved*

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[245] Individual interview, Regional Director of Social Welfare, Region 10, 25 November, 2020.
[246] Individual interview, Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, remote interview (zoom), 19 March, 2020.
[247] Individual interview, Regional Director of Social Welfare, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.
[248] Individual interview, CHRAJ Representative, Region 1, 26 November, 2020.

applied and delivered in line with international norms	
Finalisation of operational plan for the justice for children policy	*Achieved*
Progress towards expected results: 2018 – 2022	
Guidelines and training manuals for judiciary, probation officers, and evidence of the application of the SOPs	In progress – probation manual is revised and updated; evidence collected on the application of the SOPs; operational manual for child friendly SGBV courts has been finalised
63% of justice professionals certified in dealing with child offenders and child victims and witnesses (21,000 out of 35,000)	In progress – partially achieved – 39% in 2019 (but below annual target of 47%)

Children's access to birth registration

82.   Since 2012, UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has dedicated significant resources to promoting access to and uptake of birth registration in Ghana. Output 4, under Outcome 1 of the 2012 – 2017 programme aims for: 'more children under the age of 5 [to] have their births registered'. UNICEF's birth registration work continued into the 2018 – 2022 programme under Output 4: 'Birth Registration services are more efficient for the registration of girls and boys under 5 years of age'.

83.   UNICEF recognises birth registration as an important part of an overall child protection system. Whilst the link between a birth certificate and protection outcomes is complex and requires the fulfilment of numerous other conditions,[249] a birth certificate can play a role in ensuring recognition of a child's age, nationality and entitlements to access basic services and protections under law. It is also a legal requirement in Ghana, and a basic right under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally, birth registration is critical from a policy and planning perspective; birth registration can enable governments to plan service delivery more effectively in order to meet children's needs, as part of a broader system of civil registration and vital statistics.

84.   When UNICEF's 2012 – 2017 programme cycle began, data from the Births and Deaths Registry (BDR) suggested that national birth registration coverage was around 60 per cent. Whilst significant gains had been made in the previous decade (birth registration coverage increased dramatically from only 30 per cent in 2003 to 70 per cent in 2009), progress stalled in 2009 and even began to decline slightly. Furthermore, considerable disparities existed between different regions in Ghana as well as between urban and rural areas: in 2012 81 per cent of children born in the Northern Region of Ghana were registered, compared to 51 per cent of children born in Vola region.

85.   In order to understand the nature of the problem, UNICEF funded research on the barriers and bottlenecks affecting birth registration in Ghana in 2012.[250] The findings identified a number of supply side barriers and concluded that insufficient resourcing is a key driver of limited coverage. In its recommendations, the study called on the GoG to establish a sustainable funding model for birth registration and promote equitable access to meet growing demand.

86.   In an effort to address these barriers, UNICEF's Child Protection Programme made significant investments in strengthening the birth registration process in Ghana. This has included supporting a comprehensive assessment of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system in Ghana by the

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[249] See for example, Coram Children's Legal Centre and the International Observatory on Statelessness, 'Birth registration and children's rights: A complex story', Plan International, 2014.
[250] UNICEF, 'Birth registration in Ghana: A bottleneck analysis for improved coverage that leaves no child out', 2012.

Ghana Statistical Service[251], which informed the development of a Strategic Plan for the Improvement of the CRVS system in Ghana from 2018 – 2022. A key component of the strategy has been to develop a digital systems for the registration of births and deaths. **Whilst evaluation findings suggest that progress towards implementation has been slower than envisaged in the plan, the process has galvanised support amongst key government stakeholders, who were found to recognise the value of investments in CRVS.[252]**

87.   UNICEF's technical support has focussed on the establishment of digital approaches, which would increase efficiency and reliability across all stages, from the initial registration of a birth, to the consolidation of data, to storage and record keeping. A major component of this work was the delivery of mobile birth registration service (m-birth) in partnership with the telecom operator Tigo.[253] M-birth was initially piloted in ten districts with low registration rates in Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Eastern and Western regions. The pilot was gradually expanded and rolled out in 8 regions[254] from May 2016.

88.   By May 2018, 673,051 children's births had been registered through m-Birth, comprising a significant majority of births registered in some regions.[255] Infant birth registration rates increased from 63 per cent in 2016 to 80 per cent in 2019.[256] Following the success of the m-birth initiative, a technology-enabled system has been scaled-up across the country with investment from the Government of Ghana, reducing reliance on paper forms and increasing the quality and efficiency of the birth registration process.

89.   A rapid assessment of the initiative concluded that m-birth had increased the efficiency and accessibility of the birth registration process and contributed to an increase in overall birth registration rates. Furthermore, m-birth programme allowed for real-time monitoring of birth registration, enabling targeted support to be given to districts with low registration rates. The rapid assessment found a number of areas for improvement, however. [257] In addition to recommending supply of a greater number of higher quality tablets, it identified a need for strengthening work based registration services for low uptake groups, such as market dwellers, farmers and others working in the informal sector. It also recommended integrating delivery of birth registration services with other services targeting children, particularly child immunisation services, which have achieved higher coverage.[258]

90.   Evidence suggests that health services are indeed an effective way to promote the joint delivery of birth registration services. For instance, UNICEF worked in partnership with the Ghana Health Service during Child Health Welfare Promotion week to organise a drive for birth registration in 2017. Monitoring data from m-birth has revealed a significant increase in registrations during this period.[259] Qualitative respondents also recognised the effectiveness of collaboration with health care providers: as one births and deaths officer told researchers; "*we were able to liaise with nurses in the municipality and we have registered almost all children before they turn 1 year!*"[260] UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has recognised the potential for collaboration with health authorities and is advocating for information

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[251] Ghana Statistical Services, 'Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System in Ghana', July 2015.
[252] See for example, individual interview, Office of the Head of Local Government Services, remote interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.
[253] UNICEF contributions included providing a central server to store data, a 65k capacity generator, 90 laptops, and 10 desktops, and providing technical expertise; Births and Deaths Registry, 'Assessment of the m-birth project in Ghana', May 2018
[254] Not including Brong Ahafo or Central regions.
[255] Births and Deaths Registry, 'Assessment of the m-birth project in Ghana', May 2018, p.6.
[256] Births and Deaths Registry, 'Annual Report 2019', p.22
[257] Births and Deaths Registry, 'Assessment of the m-birth project in Ghana', May 2018, p.6.
[258] Births and Deaths Registry, 'Assessment of the m-birth project in Ghana', May 2018
[259] Births and Deaths Registry, 'Assessment of the m-birth project in Ghana', May 2018, p.17.
[260] Individual interview, Birth and Death Officer, District, Sissala East, Region 5, 12 December, 2020.

sharing and coordination between Ghana Health Service and the Births and Deaths Registry, to take advantage of high vaccine uptake rates and facilitate birth registration.[261]

91.   Whilst it is clear that UNICEF has made significant contributions to strengthening birth registration in Ghana, available data suggests that registration rates are still below the targets set in UNICEF's 2012 – 2017 programme (set out below). Concerningly, substantial differences in registration rates across demographic groups persist, with just 55 per cent of children in the poorest households registered compared to 86 per cent of those in the richest, and 64 per cent of rural children registered compared to 80 per cent of urban children.[262] This suggests persistent barriers in supply and demand need to be addressed.

92.   A further challenge is that birth registration is now being delivered through two parallel systems: UNICEF's m-birth system, used to register infant births, and the Government's own online system, used to register late birth registrations (though the system has functionality to register infant births).[263] In addition to promoting birth registration uptake in future programmes, including through collaborating with health services, it will be critical that UNICEF works with government to support the integration of these two systems, especially in light of the new Births and Death Registration Act 2020.

UNICEF's Expected Results on Birth Registration

Expected result	Status
2012-17 programme	
75% of children under the age of 1 have their births registered	Not achieved – 64% in 2017, 70% in 2018
75% of children aged 1 to 5 have their birth registered in rural communities	Data only available for children under 5 from MICS Not achieved – 64% in rural areas
Costed Civil Registration Strategy is developed by the end of 2015	Achieved
The BDR Act 1965 (301) is reviewed in line with current national and international standards by the end of 2015	Not achieved but is awaiting approval in parliament – new legislation was drafted in 2016 but faced challenges due to provisions related to naming conventions. Bill was presented to parliament in November 2020 and received presidential assent.
BDR is able to retain part of its service fee ensuring more adequate resources for its services by the end of 2016	Not achieved – amendment to BDR Act specifies that service fees are paid into the bank account of the District Assembly
2018-22 programme	
85% of children aged 0-5 have their births registered with the civil authorities	In progress – rated no progress Most recent figures are for children under 1 2018 – 70% against target of 70% 2019 – 80.4% against target of 75%
Only 10 districts remain with birth registration rates less than 50%	In progress – rated no progress 2018 – 40 districts with rates <10% were provided support in 2018 2019 – missed target of reducing number of districts to 30
95% of children aged 0-1 have their births registered with the civil authorities	In progress – rated constrained 2018 – 70% against target of 70% 2019 – 39% against target of 72% (based on data for first 7 months only)

[261] UNICEF Ghana, 'Status of Birth Registration System', presentation, 2019.
[262] Ghana Statistical Service, 'Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/18: Survey findings report', 2018, p.260.
[263] UNICEF Ghana, 'Country Office Annual Report 2019', 2019.

Effectiveness of alternative care reform

To what degree has the child protection programme contributed to an alternative care system based on family-based care options as well as to the implementation of the Care Reform Initiative?

93.   UNICEF has worked closely with the GoG to promote the reform of alternative care throughout both the 2012-2017 and 2018-2022 programme cycles, with the aim of moving from a system that is primarily reliant on residential institutions to one centred around family based care. The Government's concern about the issue emerged after a survey conducted in 2006 revealed a sharp rise in the number of residential care homes in Ghana, from only 10 in 1995 to 148 in 2006[264]. This was viewed as a highly problematic development in the Ghanaian context, which has a longstanding tradition of family and community-based solutions for children lacking parental care. As one DSW representative recollected:

> *A rise in children's homes is usually the result of a war or epidemic or other reason – but there was really no need for children to enter institutional care at that time. Our first line of protection is our communal way of living. So if someone doesn't have parents there will be an uncle somewhere who is more than willing to take care of the children…So social welfare had to find out why this was happening.*[265]

94.   In order to tackle the problem, the GoG launched the Care Reform Initiative, an effort aimed at reducing the number of residential care institutions in the country, establishing government oversight of residential care homes and ensuring that basic standards of care are in place, as well as promoting the development of family-based alternatives to residential care. UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has provided extensive support to the GoG in all three of these endeavours. Much of this work falls within a 5-year programme, the *Accelerating Child Care Reform Programme*, funded by USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund.

Reducing and reforming residential care

95.   UNICEF's contributions have enabled the GoG to establish a strong regulatory framework for residential care homes, comprised of the 'National Standards for Residential Homes for Children in Ghana',[266] approved in 2018, 'Standard Operating Procedures for Inspection, Licensing, and Monitoring Residential Homes for Children in Ghana',[267] and a 'Manual for the Routine Monitoring of the Alternative Care System in Ghana'[268]. This framework has provided the Government with the tools necessary to reduce the number of residential care homes for children in Ghana and ensure that existing institutions meet a certain standard of care.

96.   **Existing evidence suggests that whilst the National Standards and Standard Operating Procedures are increasingly being applied, they are far from being fully implemented**. A geographical mapping and analysis of Residential Homes for Children undertaken by UNICEF in collaboration with the MoGCSP and DSW revealed that in the first quarter of 2017, 25 per cent of known RHCs had been licensed[269]. A more recent survey of residential care in Ghana showed modest improvements; it found that at the end of 2019 30.9 per cent of RHCs had a valid license (an additional 25.9 per cent had a license

[264] Census on OVC Care Institutions in Ghana, Orphan Aid Africa, 2006.

[265] Individual interview, Representative of the Department of Social Welfare, remote interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.

[266] UNICEF Ghana and MoGCSP, 'National Standards for Residential Homes for Children in Ghana', August 2018.

[267] Department of Social Welfare, 'Standard Operating Procedures for Inspection, Licensing, and Monitoring Residential Homes for Children in Ghana', 2018, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Accra, Ghana.

[268] Department of Social Welfare, 'A Manual for Routine Monitoring of the Alternative Care System in Ghana', 2018, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Accra, Ghana.

[269] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Analysis of current trends, flows and drivers of children residing in residential care institutions in "hot spot" mapping districts', October 2018.

that was deemed to be invalid).[270] Qualitative evidence from the evaluation suggests that the government is committed to implementing the National Standards, with several respondents describing that the inspection process is being rigorously applied. As one NGO representative recalled: *"our shelter manager came and shared standards and they have closed some shelters. Even ours – we are one of the leading organisations but they assess us… From the body language I can see it is a serious thing. They have closed some shelters and they said that we should implement some standards or they would take away our license – so I would say yes, they are taking it seriously"*[271].

97.   **In addition to supporting national initiatives, the Child Protection Programme has provided considerable support to Regional Departments of Social Welfare (DSW) to implement care reform, through establishing OVC Coordination Committees in each region, supporting the development of regional deinstitutionalisation plans, promoting monitoring and the closure of non-compliant institutions, and developing strategies for reducing the number of children in residential care, including through family tracing and reunification.** These efforts have achieved significant support from regional and even district level governments. A number of social welfare authorities interviewed for the evaluation identified deinstitutionalisation as a priority of their work:

> *4-5 years ago DSW came up with support from UNICEF and other partners, to find ways of closing most of such orphanages and where children can be relocated or unified with their parents…we have been working in these child protection issues since 2016 to date.*[272]

98.   **The Care Reform Initiative appears to have contributed to a change in practices**. A 2018 analysis noted a decline in newly established private residential care homes for children in 'hot-spot' districts and a voluntary reduction in the number of children admitted to existing facilities. Importantly, findings indicate that these trends were due, primarily, to the Care Reform Initiative; "*most residential care homes indicate they had either stopped admitting new children or were focusing on reintegrating children in response to directives from DSW*"[273]. According to more recent figures, at the end of 2019 were 139 residential care homes in Ghana, and around 3,500 children living in residential care.[274] These figures suggest that UNICEF is likely to have achieved the expected result of reducing the number of children in care by 20% over the course of the 2012 – 2017 programme.[275]

99.   Whilst there does not appear to have been a dramatic reduction in the total number of residential care homes in Ghana as a result of the Care Reform Initiative, it is important to acknowledge that care reform is an uphill battle. UNICEF has supported the government to close numerous residential care homes since 2012, yet new homes are constantly being established. As a member of the UNICEF CP team explained, *"it is difficult to know exactly how much progress has been made. In November 2019 there were 139 residential homes, so it looks like we have only closed a few homes, but more have popped up in the meantime."*[276] Furthermore, **even while UNICEF has contributed to a significant shift in attitudes and approaches to alternative care amongst Government authorities and communities alike, several stakeholders noted a number of persistent barriers to deinstitutionalisation**:

[270] Ghana Department of Social Welfare and the United Nations Children's Fund, *Children Living in Residential Care in Ghana: Findings from a survey of well-being*, DSW and UNICEF, New York, 2020.
[271] Individual interview, NGO, remote interview (zoom), 18 March 2020.
[272] Individual interview, Head of Social Welfare, Municipal District, Region 9, 5 December 2020.
[273] Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 'Analysis of current trends, flows and drivers of children residing in residential care institutions in "hot spot" mapping districts', October 2018, p. 20.
[274] Ghana Department of Social Welfare and the United Nations Children's Fund, *Children Living in Residential Care in Ghana: Findings from a survey of well-being*, DSW and UNICEF, New York, 2020.
[275] UNICEF Country Programme Document, 2012 – 2017.
[276] Personal communication during interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.

Another challenge is working with the homes to get their buy in because this is their livelihood… there was backlash at the beginning because they get funding to do this work from churches and foundations. There is huge support in this country for orphanages in general. If a high profile politician wants to do something, the best thing they can do is be seen to support an orphanage. There is a feeling that orphanages are good things.[277]

100.   Whilst UNICEF and government partners have had some success in overcoming these challenges, by providing homes with alternative models for delivering care and support, it is clear that deinstitutionalisation should be viewed as a long term initiative. Further discussion on the achievement of sustainable alternative care reform in Ghana is contained in the sustainability section of this report.

101.   Finally, UNICEF has directly supported the reintegration of children in residential care into family based settings through DSW and NGO partners, with around 1750 children moved from residential homes and reintegrated into family-based care over the course of the 2017 to 2019 programme.[278] **The effectiveness of reintegration work was found to have varied significantly across institutions and service providers. A number of stakeholders raised concerns that reintegration was not adequately supported, resulting in some children being placed in homes where they were at-risk of harm, or even returned to a residential care home**: "*When children are reintegrated or reunified social workers don't have the resources to do the level of follow up that needs to happen. Often times children are going back to original homes – the economic reasons that they left still remain. You will find that children say things are better in the orphanage, where they get three square meals a day.*"[279]

102.   In addition to lacking sufficient follow up, a number of respondents explained that **reintegration support was overly standardised, failing to address the unique circumstances of each child's case**. As one government stakeholder explained:

A *lot of the packages weren't well thought of – you can't have a one-size-fits-all package. Most of the time the reintegration is done in a hurry. The social workers that do the reintegration need more information, more training about how to reintegrate the child - have you assessed the home properly? Have you assessed the child in the institution, linked the family with social protection, ensured all the original driving issues were addressed? Do we have SOPs on how to reintegrate from when the child first enters the home? Back then they would do reunification and think it was reintegration*".[280]

Preventing unnecessary family separation

103.   The difficulties discussed above are to be expected; reintegration of children from residential homes into a family environment is a challenging undertaking, particularly where children have been living in residential care for many years.[281] Where social welfare services are underdeveloped, this is even more likely to be the case. As is discussed further in section 5.4 on the sustainability of UNICEF's programme, in order to reduce the number of children in residential care it is essential to strengthen the social welfare workforce, to ensure that children are only placed in residential care as a last resort and

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[277] Individual interview, donor representative, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.
[278] UNICEF Ghana, 'Fifth progress report to Canada', March 2019.
[279] Individual interview, donor representative, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.
[280] Individual interview, Representative of the Department of Social Welfare, remote interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.
[281] See for example, McCall, Robert & Groark, Christina. (2015). Research on Institutionalized Children: Implications for International Child Welfare Practitioners and Policymakers. International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation. 4. 142-159. 10.1037/ipp0000033. p7-8.

address problems in the family before they reach crisis point, preventing children from entering RCIs in the first place.[282]

104.   Given this, UNICEF's work to strengthen the capacity of social workers to respond when children are at-risk of harm (discussed in detail in the above section on the effectiveness of the child protection response), is a step in the right direction. As a UNICEF staff member explained, *"There is a strong gatekeeping mechanism in the case management SOPs - when social welfare takes decision to place a child they have to go through list of 9 options - first 8 are family-based care, community-based care. The last resort is residential care."*[283] UNICEF's awareness campaigns also included an emphasis on the importance of family-based care. This programming, which targeted religious and community leaders, managers of residential care homes and local government, sought to reduce the overall demand for residential care services in Ghana, and encourage authorities to pursue other options.

The beginnings of family-based alternative care

105.   As part of the *Accelerating Child Care Reform Programme,* UNICEF has supported the establishment of family-based solutions for children without parental care, drawing on the longstanding traditions of kinship care and informal fostering which exist in Ghana. This involved advocacy efforts to support reform of the legal framework around alternative care (achievements are detailed in section 5.1.1 above). Notably, Foster Care Regulations were passed in 2018 which stipulate the guiding principles for foster care in Ghana, including: the responsibilities of the Department of Social Welfare; the processes and procedures for the application and accreditation of Foster Care Agencies, the consideration of eligibility, suitability, training and licensing of foster parents, and the identification and placement of a child in foster care; the rights and responsibilities of children in foster care, foster parents and biological parents; and the responsibilities of the Department with regards to foster care arrangements.[284]

106.   Building on this achievement, **UNICEF developed a Foster Care Operational Manual to provide guidance to the Department of Social Welfare officers and Foster Care Agencies on the delivery of foster care services.[285] Finally, UNICEF has supported the roll out of capacity building to regional authorities to identify, orientate, train and license foster parents.** To date DSW has trained over 500 foster parents and over 120 children have been placed in foster care, a significant increase from previous years when fostering was essentially non-existent in Ghana.[286] **Several foster carers were interviewed as part of the evaluation, while the majority of these placements appeared to have been successful, follow up support was found to be insufficient**. As one foster parent explained: "*The government should be very concerned about such kids who go through such situations. It will be nice to receive some financial support from them. Though sometimes social welfare calls to check up, it would also be better if they come to check how I am taking care of the child."*[287]

107.   A number of stakeholders noted that a lack of necessary resourcing has undermined the foster care service. When asked about the challenges facing the child protection system, one respondent explained; "*Let me first emphasize on the foster care service delivery. The Regional Foster Care Placement Committee is mandated to meet on timely basis to place abandoned children. The work is supposed to be voluntary. People join this committee and agree in principle to work voluntarily, but the problem is when*

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[282] See for examples, Goldman, Philip S et al. "Institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation of children 2: policy and practice recommendations for global, national, and local actors." *The Lancet. Child & adolescent health* vol. 4,8 (2020): 606-633. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30060-2, p623-4.

[283] Personal communication during interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.

[284] Ghana, Foster Care Regulations, Legislative Instrument No. 2361 of 27 June 2018.

[285] UNICEF Ghana and DSW, 'Foster Care Operational Manual', October 2018.

[286] According to data from the 2017 Data Gallery, five children were placed in foster care in 2014, no children were placed in foster care in 2015 and seven were placed in foster care in 2016.

[287] Individual interview, foster parent, Region 6, 29 November, 2020.

the work begins you can't find them to sit. If these committees are unable to meet, children that need to be placed cannot be placed. Prospective foster parents need to be trained, but there is no resource available for this exercise."[288]

108.   **Evaluation findings reveal that the alternative care system in Ghana is still heavily reliant on residential care**; qualitative data on the nature of child protection response suggests that children are still sent to residential institutions where it is not possible for them to return to their families, and foster care options remain limited. **UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has laid the groundwork for the development of a system centred on family-based care options.** As one stakeholder aptly summarised, *"[foster care] is burgeoning in Ghana. The bones are in place and there is potential."*[289]

Effectiveness of behavioural change campaigns and community mobilisation

*To what extent **have behavioural change campaigns and community mobilisation efforts** contributed to the intended transformation of gender norms in communities? How has this led to improved prevention and response to violence, reduction in child marriages and prevention of unnecessary family separation?*

What has the level of satisfaction been among women, girls, boys and men, and communities been with the quality of behavioural change campaigns and community mobilisation efforts that they have received through the programme?

109.   Under Output 2 of the 2012-17 programme, UNICEF worked with the government to create the Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy for the Protection of Children in Ghana.[290] This expansive document set out the framework for nationwide behaviour change campaigns and community mobilisation efforts concerning child protection, designed to transform attitudes and practices at the community level, in order to strengthen VAC prevention and response mechanisms. These campaigns covered topics such as gender equality, female empowerment, child marriage, harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse, physical abuse, child labour, child trafficking, child rearing and positive discipline (Corporal Punishment), Child Online Safety, and the prevention of family separation and promotion of family based care.

110.   Initiatives at the national level (under the SBCC) included the use of mass and social media to raise public awareness concerning child protection issues, and create platforms for engagement, discussion and debate. For example, in 2017 UNICEF worked with the Government to launch the 'Ghanaians Against Child Abuse' (GACA) campaign[291] which used various channels including digital social media, public billboards, and community mobile theatre performances to create awareness about child abuse, and reduce the acceptance of social practices (such as corporal punishment) that have negative impacts on children. The GACA initiative included the 'Safe Schools Programme' which sought to reduce the prevalence of violence at school, including in the context of violent discipline, sexual harassment and bullying. Meanwhile, between 2018-19 UNICEF ran 'Girlz Girlz Power': a TV talk show with 16 episodes covering issues such as child marriage, gender roles and stereotypes, and girls' education.

111.   At a local level, UNICEF worked with Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development (DSWCD) and NGOs to run social and behavioural change initiatives in 56 districts. UNICEF funded and oversaw the development of the Child Protection Community Facilitation Manual and Tool-Kits, which

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[288] Individual interview, Director for Social Welfare, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.
[289] Individual interview, donor representative, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.
[290] The Government of Ghana, The Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy for the Protection of Children in Ghana. Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy.pdf (unicef.org)
[291] See https://www.iamgaca.org/, last accessed March 2021.

were further updated in 2018 and 2019 to add more modules.[292] The tool-kits included training manuals and resources such as flash cards, interactive games, activities and information packs for stimulating conversation on a range of child protection themes. Community 'facilitators', including local traditional and religious leaders, were trained on the use of this tool-kit to raise awareness and discussion about relevant child protection topics (e.g. child marriage) within communities, through games, activities, the use of local 'durbars' (meetings) and community theatre performances. Initiatives at the local level also involved the creation of safe spaces and clubs in communities to engage adolescent girls and boys in awareness-raising activities, and train them in being ambassadors for change. The tool kits have a dedicated monitoring and reporting system.[293]

Awareness, participation and satisfaction with change campaigns

112.   The findings from the KAP survey indicate that the national GACA campaign has had widespread reach in communities across Ghana, potentially reaching as much as a fifth of the entire population. Almost 1 in 5, 19.8 per cent, of respondents in the KAP surveys said that they were aware of the campaign: adults (22.2 per cent) were more likely than children (17.4 per cent) to say that they had heard of the campaign. There were no significant differences observed between UNICEF intervention sites, compared to comparison communities, indicating that the campaign is indeed achieving national level reach.

113.   By far the most common means through which respondents had heard of the campaign was via TV, radio, jingles or programmes (69.8 per cent), suggesting that more traditional forms of media remain the primary means through which child protection messages are reaching communities. By contrast, only 8.4 per cent of respondents had become aware of GACA through digital platforms.

Figure 6 Means through which respondents heard of the GACA campaign
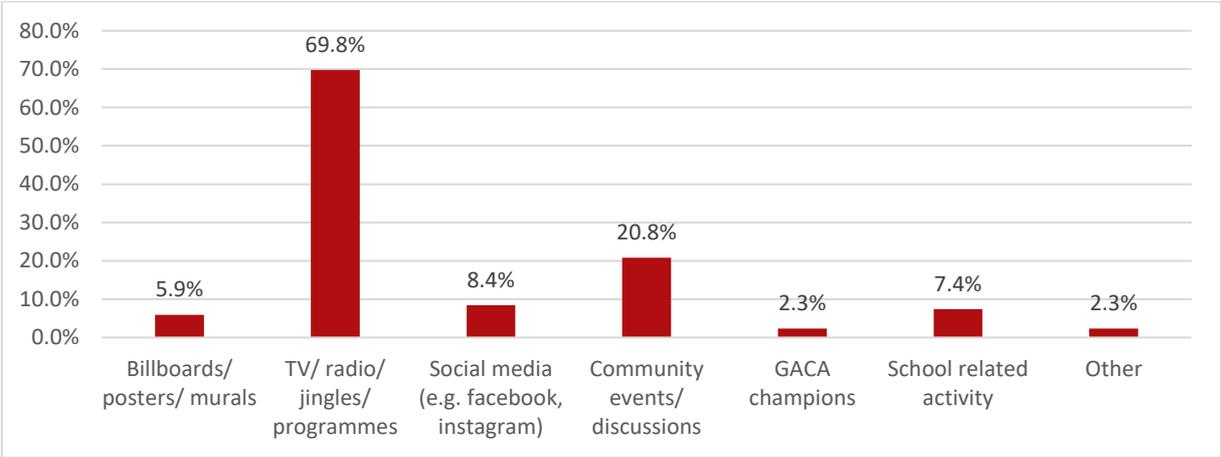
114.   Significant differences were observed between intervention and control sites concerning the mediums through which respondents had heard of GACA. Respondents in intervention sites (29 per cent) were more likely to have heard of GACA through a community event or discussion than in control communities (11 per cent). This reflects the more intensive community-based activities supported by UNICEF at a local level in intervention communities.

115.   Over two thirds, 68.3 per cent, of respondents who had heard of GACA, reported engaging or participating in the programme in some manner. Participation usually entailed more passive activities such as watching a tv programme or listening to the radio. Only a minority of participants had engaged

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[292] Government of Ghana and UNICEF (2018). Protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect: training manual for community engagement.
[293] Child Protection Facilitation Toolkit Monitoring System: www.cptoolkit.net

in the campaigns in more 'active' ways, including through sharing or liking a social media post, becoming a GACA champion, or discussing issues raised in the campaign with friends and family. Participants in intervention sites (24.2 per cent) were significantly more likely to have actively engaged in GACA than those in comparator communities (9.7 per cent).

116.   Survey results indicate that for those respondents who chose to engage, reactions to the GACA campaign were largely positive. Almost ninety per cent of respondents who said that they had engaged in the campaign felt that they "learned something new" as a result of the activity. Eighty four per cent said that they felt that it was "likely" that the campaign would change people's attitudes towards child protection and ninety-three per cent said that they would recommend the campaign to a friend or family member. Interestingly, children were significantly less likely than adults to say that they had "learned something new" as a result of the campaign, perhaps indicating a need for more "child friendly" or child-tailored messaging.

117.   In addition to their knowledge of the GACA campaign, respondents in the KAP surveys were asked whether there were any "events or activities" in their community to discuss or raise awareness of child protection issues (e.g. child marriage, child labour, child trafficking or child abuse). Just over 1 in 3 respondents (34.4 per cent) in intervention sites, and 1 in 4 respondents (24.2 per cent) in comparator communities answered "yes" to this question.

Figure 7 Child protection events and activities in intervention sites
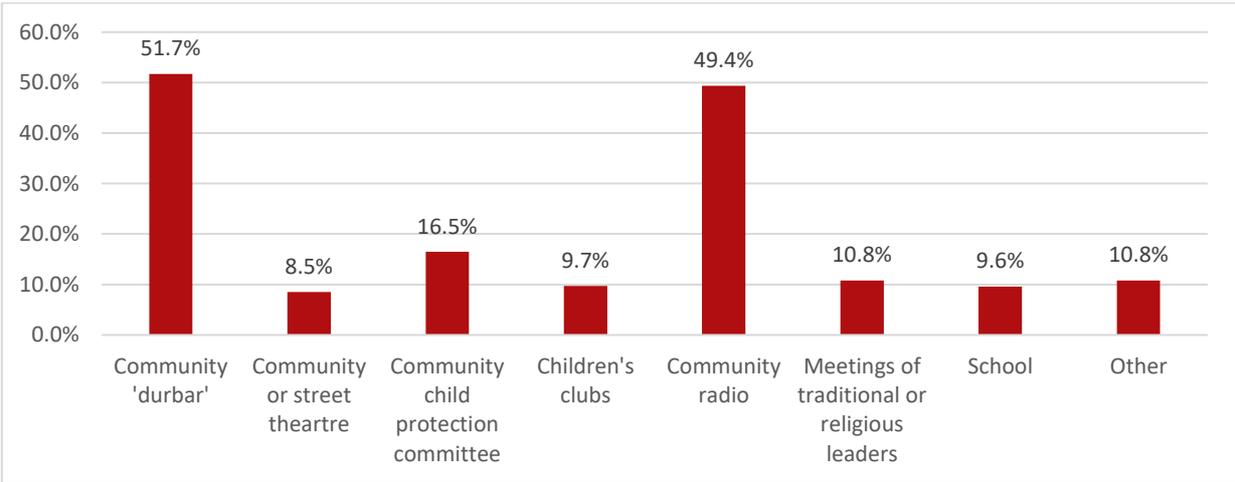
118.   Over two thirds (70 per cent) of all respondents in intervention communities said that they had participated in awareness raising activities: mainly through attending meetings, highlighting the impressive reach and scale of community mobilisation efforts. One in ten children and young people in intervention communities said that they had participated in children's clubs.

119.   **Beneficiary satisfaction with locally based child protection activities in UNICEF intervention communities was also found to be very high**. As many as 97.5 per cent of respondents said that they had learned something new as a result of child protection clubs and activities; 99.2 per cent said that they would recommend these activities to a friend, and 88.2 per cent said that they thought the activities were likely to change people's attitudes towards child abuse and protection.

120.   These highly positive results were also reflected in qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries. Participants were happy to share their experiences of community sensitisation programmes; they were able to articulate what they had learned about child protection during various events and activities, and express the ways they felt they had benefited, as well as their perceptions of the benefits to the broader community:

The campaign has been very helpful. They encourage the girls and promote their interest in education. They educate [the community] on girls' education and its implications [benefits] for the family.[294]

…

We have discussed topics including various forms of child abuse, sexual and reproductive health, drug abuse, the rights and responsibilities of children including right to lead, right to education, right shelter, right to play, right express your feelings. We trust [the facilitators] and they have given us good advice, because it gives us information about how we are supposed to be treated as children - in our home, school and any part of our community. It also teaches us how we are supposed to behave as children in order not to get into any trouble.[295]

121.   **The interactive and participatory methodological approach to the campaign, through the use of the SBCC toolkit was seen as particularly effective in promoting community engagement**. As one key informant explained:

You know, before the toolkit, you [would] only go to communities and give 'long speeches' but now we have tug of war, and flash cards and so now the audience do the talking, discussion, and come out with their own solutions.

122.   Despite these positive indications, there were, nonetheless, **a sizeable minority of participants who declined to engage in the campaign and mobilisation efforts (around a third of all respondents who had heard of the campaigns, as reported above).** When asked their reasons for not engaging, most participants explained that they were otherwise occupied by other commitments and priorities: "*I'm always busy with work*"; "*I was taking care of my sick mother*". On the other hand, others expressed negative ideas or indifference towards campaign messaging, including stating that the campaign was "not interesting", "not relevant", and unlikely to change people's behaviour in practice. In qualitative interviews participants suggested that engagement in mobilisation efforts could be improved if participants were to receive some compensation or financial support to enable them to take time off from other essential activities; for example, one participant explained:

The only gap I have noticed has to do with mobilization. Mobilizing the community is very difficult. When they sit in the gathering for about 30 minutes to 1 hour, they expect that we give them something for their time spent. They don't see it as they're being educated, they rather see it as a waste of their time.

Impact of community change campaigns

123.   As well as achieving widespread reach and endorsement in communities, analysis of the data from the KAP surveys provides **some evidence that UNICEF's campaign and mobilisation efforts may be having a significant impact in contributing to transforming community norms and behaviours related to child protection**. Respondents in the KAP surveys were asked a range of questions about their attitudes and practices in relation to a variety of relevant topics including: family separation, violence against children, child marriage, child justice and help seeking behaviour. Changes in results from baseline (2013) to endline (2020) were compared in both UNICEF intervention[296] and non-intervention

[294] Focus group discussion, adult women, Municipal District, Central Region 9, 2nd December 2020.
[295] Focus group discussion, adolescent boys, District, Region 4, 30th December 2020.
[296] Areas where UNICEF has conducted community engagement work using the child protection communication facilitation toolkit or other interventions such as community theatre, Talking Books, or GACA activities.

communities. **Overall the findings indicate a significant improvement over time in attitudes and practices across a range of issues**.

Family separation

124.   To measure attitudes towards family separation, respondents were asked a series of questions about whether it was safe for parents to send children away from home for a variety to reasons, including for the purposes of education, care or work. **Analysis of the data revealed a strong and consistent change from baseline (2013) to endline (2020) in community attitudes towards the safety of sending children away from their families, and a shift towards recognising the child protection risks associated with these practices.** For example, almost a third of respondents (30.2 per cent) at baseline said that it was "safe" to send a 7 year old child to an orphanage, believing that the child would have better opportunities than at home; this percentage dropped to just 13.9 per cent who thought this was safe in 2020 (chi-square, p<.01). Furthermore, almost 1 in 4 (23.1 per cent) of respondents at baseline agreed that it was "safe" for parents to send their 13 year old daughter outside the community to do housework, compared to just 1 in 20 (5.7 per cent) of respondents at endline (chi-square, p<.01).

Figure 8 Proportion of respondents who thought family separation was "safe" in the following circumstances
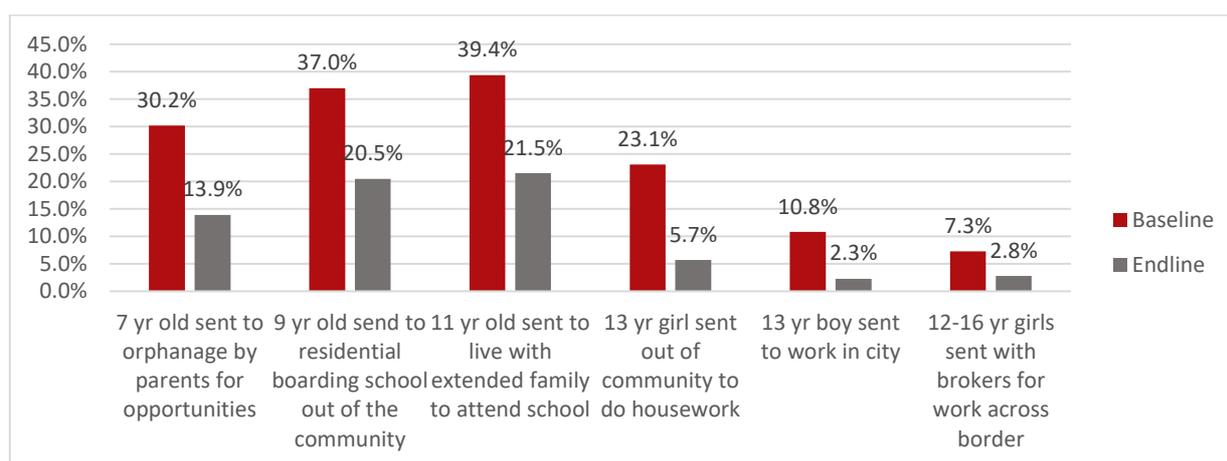
125.   Triangulating these results with qualitative interactions reveals **a widespread recognition of the risks of separating children from their biological parents at endline**: *"[those children] would have no food to eat. Some bad man may defile the girls and they may turn into street children."[297]* In cases where children are left orphaned or abandoned, there appears to be a strong culture of endorsing informal fostering and adoption of orphaned and separated children within families and communities, which has been supported by UNICEF's work on promoting family based care:

> *In our villages, it is not possible for [children] to not have a relation with any family.*
> *So the family they are close to, automatically becomes the next of kin, and [that*
> *family] will be responsible for their welfare, irrespective of their background, until they*
> *are able to locate their family relations.*

126.   Despite the significant change in attitudes from baseline to endline, **the extent to which improvements can be directly attributed to UNICEF's programme remains unclear**. Difference in

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[297] Focus group discussion, adult women, District, Region 6, 27th November 2020.

difference analysis[298] revealed no significant differences in changes in attitudes over time in UNICEF intervention communities compared to comparison communities (even when controlling for a range of other factors such as age of respondent, their gender, rurality, wealth and education).

127.   There could be several reasons for this. On the one hand much of UNICEF work has been through national level campaigns, which have reached both intervention and control groups equally. On the other hand, there appear to be other groups and organisation intervening in comparator communities to deliver child protection activities at a local level: indeed around 24.9 per cent of respondents in comparator communities said that they were aware of local activities to raise awareness about child protection (compared to an only slightly higher 30.2 per cent in intervention communities). Finally there may be other countervailing forces and differences between intervention and control communities, not measured in the KAP surveys, impacting on these results.

128.   In addition to comparing results from baseline to endline, evaluators also analysed the difference in results at endline between respondents who said that they had *engaged* in local child protection interventions, compared to those who did not engage, using propensity score matching.[299] Significant results were observed for two of the questions about family separation, concerning the safety of sending a child to an orphanage to access opportunities[300], and the safety of sending children into residential boarding schools outside the community.[301] These findings indicate that **attending a local child protection awareness raising activity was associated with a change in attitudes towards the safety of institutionalised forms of care: providing direct evidence of the impact of UNICEF's deinstitutionalisation messaging.** (No similar effects were observed for the other questions concerning family separation).

Violence against children

> *Physical abuse such as corporal punishment is very common here in the community. That is the most common way, we use to control our children's behaviour. It's not bad to punish your children when they go wrong.[302]*

129.   The KAP survey asked children about their experiences of violence; **findings indicate that rates of violence against children remain high in communities across Ghana, particularly amongst girls**. Almost 1 in 3 (29.5 per cent) of children and young people reported being subject to any type of violence in the last month. Emotional violence was most prevalent with over 1 in 5 (21. 9 per cent) of respondents experiencing this in the last month. 11.7 per cent of children and young people said they had been subject to physical violence in the last month, and almost 1 in 10 (9.3 per cent) of children and young people (the majority of whom were girls) said that in the last month they had been "touched in a way that made them uncomfortable". Over 1 in 5 (25.8 per cent) of children and young people said that they had experienced violence at home in the last month, and 1 in 7 (14.3 per cent) said that they had experienced violence at school.[303]

Figure 9 Children's experiences of violence

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[298] This is a statistical technique that attempts to mimic an experimental research design using observational study data, by studying the differential effect of an intervention on a 'treatment group' versus a 'comparison group'.

[299] Propensity score matching is a statistical matching technique that attempts to estimate the effect of a treatment, policy, or other intervention by accounting for the covariates that predict receiving the treatment at a given moment in time.

[300] p<0.1

[301] p<0.1

[302] Focus group discussion, adult men, District, Region 2, 28th November 2020.

[303] Violence in school was measured by asking respondents about their experiences in the last month before schools closed as a result of politcy response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

100.0%
80.0%
60.0%
40.0%   30.2%   37.0%   39.4%
20.0%   23.1%
0.0%
Physical violence   Emotional violence   Sexual violence   Any violence

■ Girls
■ Boys
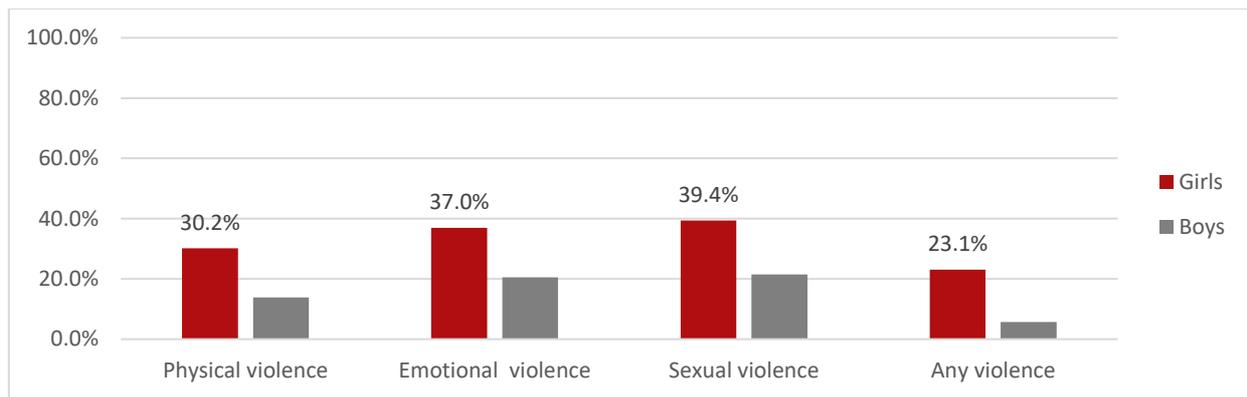
130. As with the results concerning family separation, analysis of the data demonstrates a small but significant reduction in rates of violence against children from baseline to endline.[304] However, there were no significant improvements in rates of violence in UNICEF intervention compared to control sites. In fact, the data reveals some small indications of potentially negative effects, with evidence of increased levels of emotional violence and domestic violence perpetrated against children in intervention sites at endline; (increases which were not observed in comparison communities).

131. Evidence from qualitative interviews and focus groups may help partially explain these negative results. Whilst social norms endorsing violence against children are widespread and entrenched, drivers of violence against children include structural factors such as poverty, low levels of education, lack of opportunity, gender inequalities and children's position of dependency in families and communities. These are complex factors that may not be effectively addressed by sensitisation messaging alone. As one key informant explained:

> *We are operating in an environment of severely negative social norms. You have 94 per cent of children experiencing violent discipline; 1 in 3 girls' first sexual encounter was forced. [It's] really basic starting point trying to convince society at large about good practices.*

132. One of the things we have done a lot is community mobilisation with child protection toolkits. And for violence issues, it is a hard sell. What I have seen is that during those events there seems to be good interaction with child protection officials – they understand the roles. What is harder to get at is whether at the end of the days they are making a difference. You have a lot of training events which go on, excellent policies, you have the framework for service delivery, but [violence] is strongly influenced by social norms." [Emphasis added]

133. Beneficiaries in focus group discussions discussed some of the core issues underlying cases of child abuse in their communities: issues such as poverty, alcoholism, family breakdown, and a lack of access to social welfare and other support services were consistent themes:

> *[In cases where] parents have divorced, when the father doesn't take care of the child - for example paying school fees - the mother directs that anger to the child and that leads to violence against the child.*[305]
>
> *…*
>
> *A [case] happened in this community - a man slept with his daughter. They were both drunkards. The community could not do anything about the matter, and as we speak the man and the girl are dead. There is no organisation in this community that gives support to cases like this.*

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[304] Difference in difference analysis, linear regression. β = -.12 p<0.05. The regression analysis was only carried out on the 'child sample' (young people were excluded).
[305] Focus group discussion, boys, Metropolitan District, Region 6, 1st December 2020.

134.   In addition to asking children about their experiences of violence, respondents in the KAP survey were asked about their perceptions and attitudes towards violence against children perpetrated in the context of violent discipline, as well as their ideas about the roles of caregivers in protecting the rights and wellbeing of children more broadly. Once again, the data indicates a strong and positive improvement in attitudes over time.[306] Respondents in interviews often attributed this directly to UNICEF's programme:

> *Previously, it was common for a mother to beat the child mercilessly, but due to the education provided by the UNICEF, the parents are getting to understand that they don't have the power to abuse their kids. The programme has provided very important advice for parents on the right ways to train their children, which represents significant improvement as compared to the previous situation.*

135.   Nevertheless, analysis of the KAP survey data indicates that the rate of change in attitudes has, in fact, been significantly slower in intervention compared to control sites (even when controlling for demographic factors, such as age, gender, wealth, education and location) possibly indicating an (unintended) negative effect of the programme.[307]

136.   Again, there are likely to be a number of possible reasons for this. First, as discussed in relation to attitudes concerning family separation, there may be other countervailing forces (not measured in the survey) which are impeding attitudinal shifts towards VAC in intervention sites. More rapid improvements in attitudes in comparator sites may have been influenced by UNICEF's national level campaigning work, such as the GACA campaign. In addition, it is conceivable that control communities have benefited from public awareness campaigns delivered by other organisations and partners.

137.   Finally, it is possible that there has been some resistance or backlash to anti- VAC messaging in communities that have received more intensive, local level interventions. Given that these programmes and activities are challenging deeply entrenched social and cultural norms, some amount of community resistance would be unsurprising, especially in the short term; as one key informant put it*: "it is very difficult to change [people's] minds because of deep rooted cultural practices."*[308] Evidence of participants' scepticism concerning key messaging around the eradication of VAC was sometimes apparent in focus group discussions. A group of adolescent girls surmised:

> *These days a parent cannot discipline or correct a child when the child is going wayward. [Our] community norms and taboos are not being regarded anymore. For instance - look at the way the girls are dressed and the way they live now. No one corrects them, [everyone is] quiet. There is need to reintroduce some of these old activities and the norms that used to prevent children from these unwanted activities they get themselves into.*[309]

138.   Finally, some key informants suggested that there is a lack of corresponding action reinforcing key child rights messaging, leading to cynicism and resentment about the purpose of child protection campaigns and their ability to affect change: *"those things will just cause people to abuse children more!"*[310] A key informant recommended:

> *Though the education and sensitization is being done, sometimes, further assistance is required in terms of financial support, which the system is not able to provide. So, there are financial*

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[306] Linear regression, p<0.001
[307] KII with NHIA Director, location redacted, 28th November 2020.
[308] KII with Department of Children, location redacted, 25th November 2020.
[309] KII with female child coordinator, Region 9, 5th December 2020
[310] Comment from the KAP survey

limitations which sometimes prevent the system from being able to address child protection needs sufficiently.

Child marriage

139.   Ending child marriage (acceptability) in communities has been a key focus on UNICEF community mobilisation campaigns, with considerable resources directed towards this goal. Once again evidence from the KAP survey indicates that these efforts may be working: **attitudes towards child marriage appear to have improved over time, with significantly lower levels of acceptance of child marriage in 2020 compared to 2013.**[311] Whilst 1 in 4 respondents found child marriage acceptable in 2013, this was found to have reduced to 1 in 7 by 2020. As with attitudes towards family separation, **rates of change in attitudes concerning child marriage were found to be broadly similar across intervention and control sites, making it difficult to determine the extent to which these changes can be directly attributed to UNICEF's programme.**

Figure 10 Acceptance of child marriage from baseline to endline

Acceptance of child marriage from baseline to endline
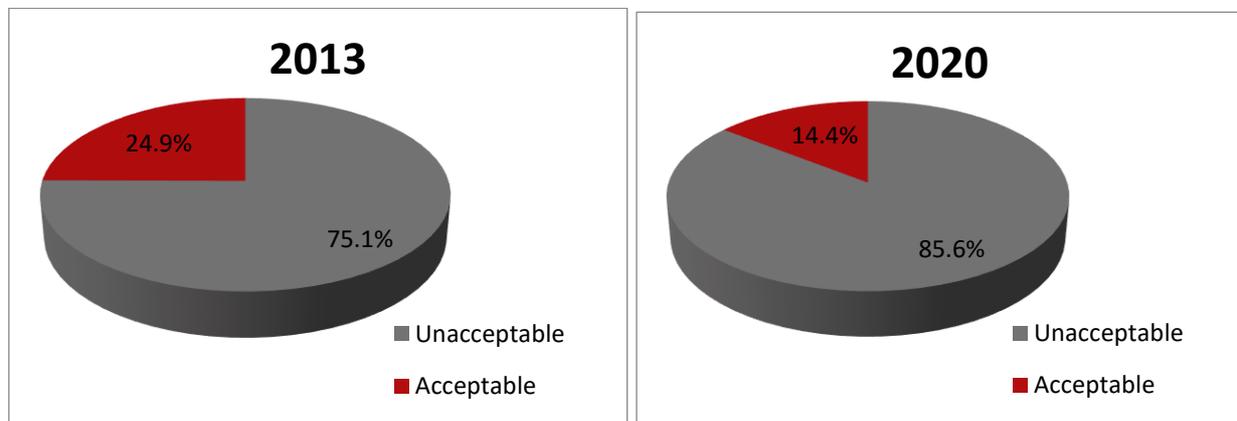
140.   Importantly child marriage of *girls* was found to be significantly more acceptable than child marriage of boys, both at baseline and at endline.[312] This suggests that whilst communities may be absorbing messaging about the risks and harms of marrying children early, gendered inequalities in attitudes towards age and marriage remain widespread. These findings, together with evidence of the continued higher rates of violence directed against girls compared to boys (set out in the section above) indicates that mobilisation efforts have not yet been successful in transforming structural gender norms and inequalities.

141.   In addition to being asked about their personal attitudes towards child marriage, respondents in the KAP survey were asked to speculate on the prevalence of child marriage in their communities in practice. Respondents were asked two questions: "*how many people in this community do you think get married under the age of 18?*" and "*how many people in this community do you think get married under the age of 15?*" Interestingly, respondents at baseline were significantly more likely than at endline to say that these marriage "never" or "only rarely" happen in their communities.[313] These results cannot provide reliable evidence on actual rates of child marriage (as they are based on community perceptions), rather they may indicate a growing awareness by endline of the prevalence of child marriage in communities: perhaps reflecting respondents' increasing willingness to acknowledge and accept child marriage as a

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[311] Difference in difference analysis, β = − -.11, p < .01
[312] T-test, p<0.05
[313] Chi-square, p<0.05

prevalent and significant child protection concern. A group of adolescent boys discussed the situation in their community:

> *Some children are given in marriage at age 15 to men old enough to be their fathers. They are given in marriages in exchange for cows, sheep and other domestic animals. A lot of them are not able to write their BECE and some also are pregnant because of that.*[314]

142.   Despite an improvement in attitudes over time, it appears that child marriage remains a significant child protection concern in communities across Ghana, despite legal prohibition, with a third of respondents at endline agreeing that child marriage happens "a lot". A group of community members described some of the challenges that parents face that may drive them to force their children into early marriage, despite their knowledge that it is wrong: "*some parents owe [money] to some men, and when they are not able to pay the debt, they decide to cancel it off by giving their daughter's hand in marriage.*" One mother described how she had exposed herself to two days of beating from her husband after helping her daughter to escape from an arranged child marriage:

> *My own daughter was given out for marriage without my consent. I refused [the marriage] and quickly sent my girl away to Kumasi. I was beaten by my husband for two days but I endured it. After two days he stopped and I am free. So we the women in this community do not agree to our children marrying at tender ages. The problem is, we do not know where to run to for help.*[315]

143.   In the KAP surveys, respondents' level of education, and the 'rurality' of their location were found to be the strongest predictors of child marriage acceptability: with respondents with higher levels of education and those from more urban areas significantly less likely to find child marriage acceptable than respondents from more rural and less educated communities. These findings are indicative of some of the demographic and structural drivers of child marriage acceptability, and highlight the need for integrated programming, which seeks to transform attitudes, whilst addressing other aspects of vulnerability, including household economic stress, domestic violence, and access to education and other opportunities and support.

Child justice

144.   Section I of the KAP surveys focused on asking respondents about their knowledge and attitudes in relation to child justice, including in cases where children were either victims or witnesses of serious crimes, or alternatively, suspected or accused of criminal offenses.

145.   The data demonstrates **significant improvements in community attitudes towards child justice over time. Respondents at endline were significantly more likely than respondents at baseline to say that "small problems like stealing small amounts, getting into fights or being drunk" caused by children under 18 should be dealt with through informal or restorative justice measures** (e.g. mediation with victim, or counselling and rehabilitation delivered by a local service), rather than through punishment or criminalisation.[316] Furthermore, as many as 94.7 per cent of respondents in 2020 were able to name at least one underlying vulnerability which might lead a child into committing a crime, compared to only just over half (55.4 per cent) of respondents in 2013. In particular, one in four (24.8 per cent) of respondents in 2020 identified past experiences of violence, abuse or neglect as an underlying driver of childhood criminality, compared to just 1 in 9 (11.2 per cent) in 2013.

Figure 11 Awareness of children's vulnerabilities that might lead them into committing crimes

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[314] Difference in difference regression analysis, β = 0.57, p < .001
[315] Focus group discussion, adult women, Region 7, 1st December 2020.
[316] Difference in difference analysis, linear regression, b= 0.57, p < .001
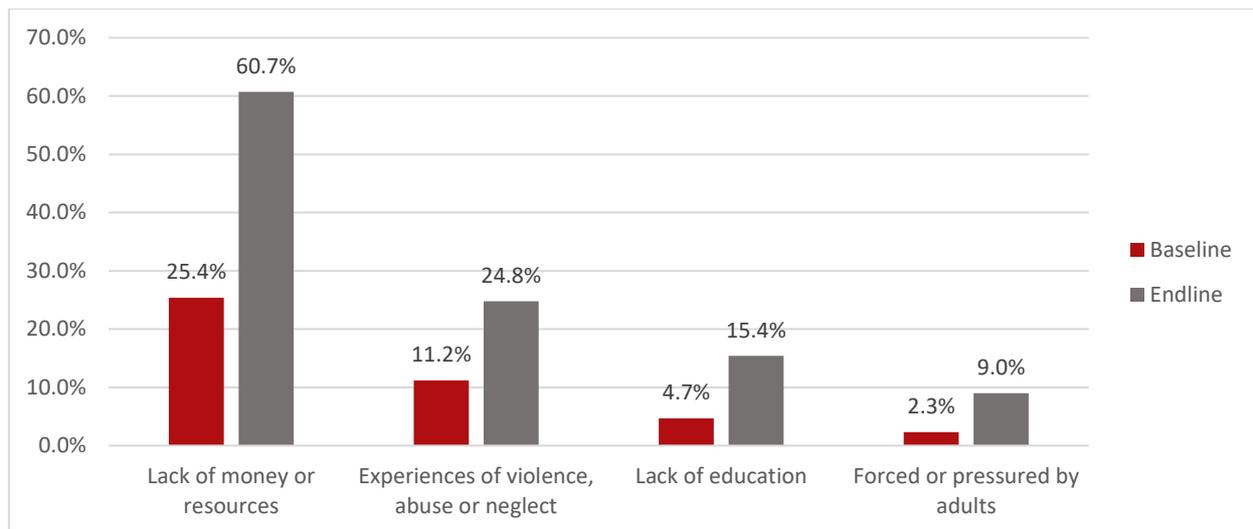
146. In addition, the data reveals a significant change in attitudes concerning the acceptability of various forms of domestic abuse, and respondents' willingness to report serious crimes to the police and other formal authorities. Roughly 1 in 3 respondents (33.1 per cent) in 2013 felt that serious crimes such as violence with a weapon or causing serious injury, murder, rape or sexual abuse could be resolved within the family/ household; by endline this had dropped to just 1 in 7 (14.8 per cent). Furthermore, 79.9 per cent of respondents felt that such crimes could be referred to the police, compared to only just over half (51.7 per cent) of respondents in 2013. These findings were supported by qualitative interviews, which attributed these changes in attitudes to greater awareness and recognition of children's rights:

> *Now people are becoming enlightened, unlike those days when people can just commit crime and go scot free. Now, because we have these children's rights - the United Nations rights on children and others, because of that people are cautions and afraid to tamper with the rights of children.[317]*

147. On the other hand, evidence in qualitative interviews revealed that stigma and shame concerning domestic conflict remains a significant factor in preventing reporting of serious crimes against children in practice. As one adolescent girl explained:

> *If I have domestic problem at home, I may not have the courage to tell anyone outside my home because people will insult me for selling my home affairs to the public. People will even stereotype me for discussing family matters outside.[318]*

Help seeking

　"Speaking up is not something that Ghanaian kids learn in school and that goes across society."

148. The final section of the survey measured knowledge and practices concerning help seeking in cases of child abuse. Once again the results reveal **significant improvements from baseline to endline, with respondents expressing more willingness and more knowledge of how and when to seek support in cases of violence and abuse**. Over half (56.6 per cent) of children and young people in 2020 strongly agreed that "I know who I can tell if someone hurts me", compared to a significantly reduced 37.5 per cent of children in 2013; and 3 out of 5 (61.2 per cent) agreed that "I understand what kind of touching is acceptable and unacceptable", compared to just 1 in 3 (34.0 per cent) at baseline. Finally over a third (34.5 per cent) of children and young people at endline said that if they were badly hurt by someone they

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[317] Key informant interview, Region 8, 25th November 2020.
[318] Focus group discussion, adolescent girls, Municiapal District, Region 9, 4th December 2020.

would report the incident to the police, compared to just over 1 in 5 (22.0 per cent) of children at baseline. These results are supported by evidence from qualitative interviews:

> *Just a few months ago a young girl about 16 years of age walked into my office by herself to report a crime. [It was a] case of sexual harassment which gives a sign of an improvement in the system through sensitization of child rights and advocacy. Nowadays if the child's right is being trampled upon, [children] know where to take the case to and sometimes people around will direct the child.*[319]

149.   As with other results, however, there were **no significant differences observed between rates of change in UNICEF intervention compared to comparison sites, meaning that it is hard to ascertain the extent to which improvements in help seeking outcomes can be directly attributed to UNICEF's campaign and mobilisation efforts.**

150.   Furthermore, findings indicate that, despite progress, there remain **significant barriers to reporting cases of child abuse, violence and neglect.** For example, even at endline, only just over half (51.2 per cent) of all children and young people said that they would report a case where someone badly hurt them to any formal authority (including a police officer, health worker, education professional, or local government officer).

151.   Evidence from the qualitative interviews indicates that **barriers to reporting include: a lack of knowledge and awareness about local support services; a lack of understand of procedures for seeking support; myths and misconceptions about services within communities; inefficiencies in the delivery of support services which have led to a lack of confidence and trust (including perceptions that the system is "too slow" and "ineffective"); and traditional and cultural believes and practices that continue to privilege seeking family-based, or local and informal support for resolving community issues.**

152.   In the survey data the key demographic variables associated with lower levels of help-seeking were education and geographical location: respondents with lower levels of education, and those living in rural areas were significantly less likely to say that they would seek help in cases of child abuse, than more educated, urban dwellers.[320]

Summary of achievement of expected results

2012-2017 programme	
Output indicator	**Status**
Proportion of parents and care-givers who practice physical and psychological abuse of children decreases by 14% points from 44% to 30%	Not achieved 40.7% of caregivers at endline said they "frequently" or "often" abuse their children.
Proportion of children reporting having experiences physical punishment in schools in the past one month decreases by 10% points in at least 3 regions (from 34%)	Not achieved. There was a reduction in the number of children reporting physical violence at school to 26.9 per cent. As well as not achieving the threshold to meet the indicator, this drop was not found to be significant when controlling for covariates (e.g. gender, age, wealth and location).
Proportion of parents who support early marriage (believe that it is ok for girls under 18 to get married) decreases by 7% points from 22% to 15%	Achieved. The percentage of parents supporting early marriage of girls dropped to 12.5%.

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[319] Key informant interview, DOVVSU, location redacted, 25th November 2020.
[320] Linear regression, p<0.05

Parents, care-givers, community members and children report significant change in relation to behaviour for protection of children as evidenced by at least 50 positive stories annually reflecting expected behavioural results	Appears to have been achieved but indicator is not reported in MSC synthesis report – 704 stories collected, 545 stories selected following story rating and ranking exercise, majority of stories attested to the positive impact
2018-2022 programme	
Output indicator	**Status**
1,250 new communities engaged through child protection facilitation toolkit as part of the social drive campaign by 2022 (2,050 communities in total)	In progress – targets for 2018 and 2019 achieved 2018 – achieved 540 against target of 250 2019 – achieved 472 against target of 250
9% of the population aged 10-18 (810,000) and 12% of the adult population (1.2 million) reached by UNICEF-supported programmes that target parents and primary caregivers to address child-rearing to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and that aim at increasing girls' and boys' capacity to identify, prevent and/or report more than one form of violence	In progress – targets for 2018 and 2019 almost achieved 2018 – achieved 150,338 against target of 165,000 2019 – achieved 114,864 against target of 150,000 Results not disaggregated by age

Effectiveness of monitoring and reporting

Has sufficient attention been given to measuring, monitoring and reporting results including results related to gender equality? How effectively has evidence been used to inform programmatic changes and adjustments?

153.   Since the beginning of the 2012 programme cycle, UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has devoted significant resources to measuring, monitoring and reporting on the results of programming. In addition to regular monitoring activities, evidence has been gathered through a series of assessments and evaluations relating to specific areas of programming (see Annex 7).

154.   The challenge of measuring changes in child protection outcomes, particularly those related to social and behavioural change, was recognised by UNICEF early on and significant improvements have been made over the course of the two programmes. The child protection team worked closely with the country office Monitoring and Evaluation team and recruited a child protection specialist in 2015 to build the programme's monitoring and evidence measurement capacity.[321] This appears to be reflected in improvements in internal monitoring systems from 2015 onwards.

155.   Internal monitoring systems include a tracking system to monitor activity implementation and fund utilisation against anticipated results.[322] In the 2012-17 programme, many indicators were not assigned baseline or target measures, making it difficult to assess whether the programme had achieved its anticipated results. Reporting on the indicators was not always done effectively. For some outputs the indicators reported in annual Results Assessment Module (RAM) reports differ from those in the workplans, which is inefficient and means that the workplan indicators have no reporting against them. Other opportunities to report on these indicators, for example, through the research studies commissioned, have also been missed, suggesting that reporting on these indicators has not been prioritised.[323]

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[321] UNICEF Ghana, 'First progress report to Canada', March 2015, p.15
[322] UNICEF Ghana, 'Second progress report Dutch grant', February 2016, p.17
[323] Review of UNICEF child protection programme annual workplans and RAM reports, 2013 – 2017

156.   For the 2018-22 programme, monitoring of results appears to have improved. The use of the TrackMe system clearly sets out the indicators and associated activities to allow for easy monitoring, and output indicators have clear definitions, baseline and target measures. Targets are set both overall and annually to allow for measurement of progress throughout the programme. The Results Assessment Module allows for annual monitoring of the indicators and annual reports are also made on Strategic Monitoring Questions.[324]

157.   Reporting to donors is done primarily through annual or biannual reports which report achievements against programme components or outputs. [325] These reports take a primarily qualitative approach to reporting results without the integration of more quantitative information, particularly evidence related to increases in knowledge or satisfaction with services which could help to more robustly demonstrate results.[326]

158.   Field visits have been an important aspect of the programme's approach to monitoring, with the field level presence in the Tamale office being strengthened to allow for closer monitoring of results in the field throughout the course of the two programmes.[327] In the words of a representative from the Ghana Education Service, "*They are always in the field to ensure that what is reported is what actually has taken place*."[328] Many stakeholders commented on the field visits, which help UNICEF and their partners to develop a shared understanding of the issues being addressed and strengthen partner capacity to monitor initiatives.

159.   In addition to field visits, the programme has developed an "app" to track the implementation of community engagement activities such as the child protection toolkit. This facilitates real-time reporting on activities and has improved reporting between community and national levels. In recognition of the difficulties in measuring results from social and behavioural change programming, an innovative 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) story approach was taken.[329] This participatory approach provides a way to measure qualitative indicators such as 'child protection' through the systematic collection and analysis of stories of change provided by programme participants and other stakeholders.[330] Training was delivered to government and civil society partners in 2014 and 2015 and in 2017 to participants at a regional level from organisations including Departments for Social Welfare and Community Development, GES, NCCE, and NGOs.[331] The MSC approach enabled the identification of dominant child protection issues and demonstrated examples of positive changes in behaviour and attitudes resulting from UNICEF's programme. Stories also highlighted challenges and areas for improvement in programming.[332] The approach itself is a useful monitoring and evaluation tool but does require investing in building the capacity of partners, who may not have a background in qualitative interviewing, and securing their cooperation. The limited cooperation and buy-in from Community Development Officers would need to be addressed in order to use the MSC approach as an integral monitoring tool. The assessment of the MSC approach also found that some community members struggled to recall stories

[324] Review of UNICEF child protection programme annual workplans and RAM reports, 2018 – 2019
[325] Review of major donor reports, 2015 – 2019
[326] Review of major donor reports, 2015 – 2019
[327] UNICEF Ghana, 'First progress report to Canada', March 2015, p.15; UNICEF Ghana, 'Second progress report Dutch grant', February 2016, p.17
[328] Key informant interview, Health Education Coordinator from Ghana Education Service, Upper East Region, 30 November 2020
[329] UNICEF Ghana, 'Significant Change Stories on Child Protection in Ghana: Synthesis Report', May 2018
[330] UNICEF Ghana, 'Significant Change Stories on Child Protection in Ghana: Synthesis Report', May 2018
[331] UNICEF Ghana, 'Significant Change Stories on Child Protection in Ghana: Synthesis Report', May 2018; UNICEF Ghana, 'Results Assessment Module', 2014; UNICEF Ghana, 'Results Assessment Module', 2015
[332] UNICEF Ghana, 'Significant Change Stories on Child Protection in Ghana: Synthesis Report', May 2018; UNICEF Ghana, 'Results Assessment Module', 2014; UNICEF Ghana, 'Results Assessment Module', 2015

related to changes in attitudes and behaviour (as opposed to tangible changes such as infrastructure), which could reduce the effectiveness of this approach for monitoring such changes.[333]

160.   Both the Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Justice for Children Policy have operational plans for their implementation, supported by the 2018 -2022 Child Protection Programme. The Department of Children is responsible for monitoring policy implementation and this process is tracked and reported through the National Child Protection Coordination Committee and regional level committees.[334]

161.   Most partners at the district and regional level reported that evidence from monitoring is used to inform adjustments to programme activities:

> *Whenever the report is presented to UNICEF, questions are asked, and recommendations are also provided which enhances the work and inform changes or adjust the program.*[335]

162.   *When we go for evaluation meetings, I present my feedback. I can't write, though I can read [a little]. I however know that what I tell them during review meetings reflects in their next approaches.*[336]

163.   Other participants, however, expressed doubts that the data they provide informs new projects or to help improve practice at a district level. A representative from a donor agency commented:

> *There is a feeling that data is for reporting [on what has been done] – there isn't a culture of using data for decision making or planning. Oftentimes when you talk to social workers you find that they see data as useful for reporting but when you ask how it is used… I don't find there is a culture of using data. Social workers don't look at their caseload and make decisions on how to focus their work for that week.*[337]

164.   While monitoring is carried out and reports are made to UNICEF on a monthly or even bi-monthly basis on what activities have been carried out, results may not be sufficiently monitored after implementation to provide evidence of the impact of UNICEF activities. One partner commented that *"we engage the community but at the end of the day, maybe we visited a community two or three times a day… but we don't go back to monitor what is going on now or… evaluate to see [the] differences."*[338]

Monitoring and reporting results related to gender equality

165.   In 2015 a gender audit process found that UNICEF staff lacked adequate skills and knowledge on gender assessments and mainstreaming.[339] Efforts have been made by the child protection programme to remedy this through the recruitment of a dedicated gender specialist. The 2018-22 programme has a Child Protection Programme Gender Strategy which is guided by UNICEF's Gender Action Plan. The strategy includes building a strong evidence base to support gender equality actions, improving sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis, strengthening capacity for gender data collection, analysis, documentation and learning, and investing in monitoring, documentation, performance tracking and evaluation to support the scale-up of evidence-based programmes by government and partners. The Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS) is identified as an important opportunity for sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis.[340]

166.   Across programme activities, results are sex-disaggregated where relevant and partners reported that gender equality is monitored and that disaggregated data is collected and used to inform

[333] UNICEF Ghana, 'Significant Change Stories on Child Protection in Ghana: Synthesis Report', May 2018
[334] UNICEF Ghana, 'Third progress report to Canada', March 2017, pp.27-28; UNICEF Ghana, 'Outcome Approved Report', 2017
[335] Key informant interview, Director of Social Welfare, Region 10, 25 November 2020
[336] Key informant interview, Traditional leader, Region 5, 3 December 2020
[337] Key informant interview, Donor agency, 19 March 2020
[338] Key informant interview, Head of Social Welfare, Region 10, 27 November 2020
[339] UNICEF Ghana, 'Country Office Annual Report 2015', 2015
[340] UNICEF Ghana, 'Child Protection Programme Gender Strategy 2018-2022', March 2018

programming. Many partners cited data on teenage pregnancy as having been important both in informing UNICEF's PASS intervention and in monitoring the success of its implementation.

Research conducted to inform programming

167.   Several research studies, evaluations and assessments have been carried out over the course of both programmes (see Annex 7). Investing in formative evaluation and research was highlighted by UNICEF as an important way to challenge assumptions and to inform more effective programming:

> *For instance, in the case of child marriage again, we did some programming with the belief that it was caused by certain things... That people didn't know any better. [The assessment of strategies to end child marriage] revealed how it is due to structural issues across sectors and that was a lesson learned.*[341]

168.   The assessment included a series of recommendations, described by UNICEF as 'vital and helpful'. Several of these recommendations have been implemented during the 2018-2022 programme, for example designing a gender strategy and focusing on a more holistic programme with linkages to areas such as teenage pregnancy and education.[342]

169.   Recommendations from the formative evaluation of the 'policy to practice' initiative have also been integrated into the 2018-2022 programme to inform the scale up of the initiative to the national level. This has included the development of Intersectoral Case Management SOPs to better embed coordination in district governance systems and revising and strengthening the OHLGS training manual to promote capacity strengthening among social welfare officers in monitoring, reporting and information management.[343]

170.   UNICEF described the baseline assessment on child protection knowledge, attitudes and practices as "*a watershed moment*"[344] in setting out the approach for the child protection programme. The study demonstrated the scale of child protection issues in Ghana and hence the need for a systems-strengthening approach, as well as the high acceptance of violence against children, which demonstrated the need for prevention work. This ultimately contributed to the development of the child protection toolkit and the GACA campaign.

171.   **While the study informed programming and was used extensively to advocate with government stakeholders, using the data to effectively measure programme impact in the long term has been something of a missed opportunity**. Unfortunately, the UNICEF office did not store all of the original datafiles securely and were only able to produce the child data for this evaluation to use as a baseline. In addition, the data that was retained only related to a small number of the current intervention areas. The need to retain data and make it available in the years following is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed by UNICEF Ghana.

Building partner capacity to monitor and measure results

172.   The programme is reliant on partners, particularly MOGCSP, to carry out monitoring and collect data on results. However, monitoring systems at the outset of the programme were weak or non-existent. Both programmes have recognised this and invested in strengthening the internal monitoring capacity of Government departments and partners. During the 2012-2017 programme, UNICEF provided technical support for the restructuring of the Social Protection Directorate at the MOGCSP, including the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.[345] To facilitate decentralised monitoring of social

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[341] Group interview, UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 26 March 2020
[342] UNICEF Ghana, 'Assessment of strategies and approaches to address child marriage in Ghana', Learning brief, November 2017
[343] UNICEF Ghana, 'UNICEF Evaluation Management Response Template', 2018
[344] Group interview, UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 26 March 2020
[345] UNICEF Ghana, 'Annual workplan 2014-15'

welfare services at a district level, technical support was provided in 2017-18 to the Office of the Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS) to develop and include indicators related to child protection and sexual and gender-based violence in their performance management system.[346] The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) also delivered training to planning and social welfare staff in all districts on writing good quality progress reports and including child protection in medium-term development plans. The NDPC assessed the quality of the 2019 district annual progress reports and found that compliance with requirements had increased significantly, making more data available for evidence-based decision-making. The report also highlighted a number of remaining challenges, including poor record-keeping by district departments, limited capacity for monitoring and evaluation activities, and limited reporting on child and social welfare indicators. The report recommends that UNICEF conducts further sensitisation with district authorities to support them to monitor child and social welfare-related interventions in their annual progress reports.[347]

173.   Support was also given to the Ghana Police Service in 2015 and 2016 to reform its database and case tracking system to improve record keeping and ensure more robust data for monitoring cases involving children.[348] Ghana Police Service now has a system in place to track and report data at the national and sub-national level on reported cases and convictions of violence against children. While data is disaggregated by sex, age, and type of violence, it does not include information on children with disabilities.[349]

174.   **Further capacity building work has included improving the monitoring of children in alternative care.** Standard Operating Procedures and standardised monitoring forms were developed to improve the documentation of case management and to improve the quality of the data collected by social workers. As described in the section on 'establishing effective data systems', the programme also aims to establish a national child protection information management system. This process began during the 2012-2017 programme but is mainly being implemented during the current programme. UNICEF has developed a Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS) and delivered training but at the time of writing the system was yet to be rolled out in most districts, with 34 districts live on SWIMS and 144 social welfare officers registered as SWIMS users. Social workers interviewed for the evaluation were anticipating that SWIMS will make information sharing much easier and more efficient:

> *After the training, I have seen that I just need to email something on a case to a caseworker in Kumasi, it will be simple, I just have to export the case since people sometimes do relocate... What we used to do is email and then post but SWIMS, I think it will get better.[350]*

175.   Monitoring and evaluating the roll-out of the SWIMS system will be important to identify and address challenges and to ensure that momentum is maintained.

Preliminary conclusions on the effectiveness of UNICEF's CP Programme

EFF 1. UNICEF's technical assistance, financial support and support to policy dialogue and advocacy have been instrumental in achieving a strong legal framework for child protection in Ghana, in line with regional and international standards. [Paras 11 – 32].

EFF 2. Evaluation findings clearly demonstrate that UNICEF's contributions have supported the establishment of a comprehensive child protection response service delivered through district administrations (MMDAs) as part of a broader national child protection system. [Paras 4 – 5].

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[346] UNICEF Ghana, 'Fifth progress report to Canada', March 2019
[347] NDPC, 'Report on Assessment of the 2019 District Annual Progress Reports', July 2020
[348] UNICEF Ghana, 'Outcome Approved Report', 2015; UNICEF Ghana, 'Outcome Approved Report', 2016
[349] UNICEF Ghana, 'Strategic Monitoring Questions Child Protection 2018-19'
[350] Individual interview, Social welfare officer, Metropolitan District, Region 10, 26 November 2020

EFF 3. Multiple data sources confirm that child protection response service are dominated by child maintenance and custody cases, and that at present very few cases of child abuse are identified and addressed by the CP system. Findings identified numerous barriers to reporting, identification and referral, including a persistent tendency to rely on DOVVSU to respond to child abuse. [Paras 37 – 52].

EFF 4. UNICEF's Programme succeeded in strengthening the capacity of social welfare authorities to deliver child protection services in line with the Government's case management SOPs. A considerable proportion of service providers report to be following the SOPs when responding to CP cases and the implementation of case management procedures was found to be consistently stronger in districts that received UNICEF support compared to those that did not. [Paras 53 – 66].

EFF 5. UNICEF's considerable investments in strengthening the capacity of the judicial service and law enforcement authorities to deliver child-friendly justice services have galvanised support amongst duty bearers and led to a shift in approach. Yet evaluation findings suggest that a significant amount of work remains to be done to ensure that children have access to child-friendly justice services. [Paras 73 – 81].

EFF 6. UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made significant contributions to strengthening the birth registration process in Ghana, including through piloting digital systems for birth registration, yet barriers to delivery and uptake continue to limit registration rates. [Paras 82 – 92].

EFF 7. Evaluation findings demonstrate that UNICEF's contributions have advanced alternative care reform in Ghana, including by enabling the GoG to establish a strong regulatory framework for residential care homes which is increasingly being implemented. [Paras 93 – 99].

EFF 8. A number of persistent barriers, including difficulties effectively reintegrating children into family environments and a lack of family base alternative care services, continue to hamper the transition for a system based primarily on residential care. [Paras 99 – 108].

EFF 9. UNICEF's behavioural change and community mobilisation work achieved an impressive reach and was generally endorsed by participants. [Paras 109 – 122].

EFF 10. Evaluation findings indicate a significant improvement over time in attitudes and practices across a range of issues, including: family separation, violence against children, child marriage, child justice and help seeking behaviour. Yet despite the significant changes which occurred, there were no significant differences in rates of change in UNICEF intervention sites compared to comparison sites, making it hard to determine whether changes can be directly attributed to UNICEF's programming. [Paras 123 – 152].

EFF 11. The challenge of measuring changes in child protection outcomes, particularly those related to social and behavioural change, was recognised by UNICEF early on and significant improvements have been made over the course of the two programme cycles. [Paras 154 – 156, Paras 158 - 164].

EFF 12. UNICEF has invested in a number of research studies, evaluations and assessments which have been used effectively to inform programming and challenge assumptions. [Paras 167 – 170].

10.3.   Efficiency of the CP Programme

Use of resources in the CP programme

How has UNICEF mobilised and used its resources (human, technical and financial) to achieve its planned results for child protection? To what extent have resources (human, technical, financial) been sufficient, both in quantity and quality? Do more cost-effective ways of achieving the same child protection results exist?

176.   UNICEF's Child Protection programme was successful in mobilising significant financial resources to support its system strengthening approach over both the 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 programme

cycles. This is a notable achievement given that UNICEF Country Offices have often struggled to obtain funding for CPSS work;[351] with 'issue based' programming tending to be more popular amongst donors who are keen on reaching large numbers of children and focussing their efforts on priority issues. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that CPSS work often requires investment over many years, and may not reach a high numbers of beneficiaries in the short term.

177.   The Child Protection Section was innovative in recognising that issue-based and systems strengthening approaches are not necessarily incompatible: that funding for an 'issue' can be incorporated into, and used to form part of, a systems strengthening approach. They have successfully directed issue-based funding towards promoting a broader systems strengthening agenda. As one member of the CP team explained: "*if we do have issue-based money we can invest it in system-strengthening programming. For instance the funding from USAID for the Care Reform Initiative was specifically for alternative care, but the way it has been used has been much broader.*" [352]

178.   Whilst credit should be given to donors for remaining flexible and supporting an integrated systems strengthening approach to child protection work, it is clear from interviews with programme staff that UNICEF was instrumental in envisaging this approach and negotiating with donors to justify its value, while committing to meet donor priorities. In addition to bringing in significant funds, this approach has the potential to be more efficient, by promoting coordinated services at scale and avoiding duplication.

179.   Finally, UNICEF's programme was designed to utilise resources in an efficient way through a set of mutually reinforcing interventions, strengthening key components of the child protection system. For instance, the community mobilisation and behaviour change programming (which received the largest proportion of programme funds, see figure 13) was intended as a prevention tool: both to prevent violence and other child protection risks, and at the same time to avoid overloading burgeoning child and family welfare services with child protection cases.[353] As is discussed in the effectiveness section of the report, however, community mobilisation programming and child and family welfare services have faced a number of challenges and the potential benefits of this design have yet to fully materialise.

Figure 12 Distribution of 2018 - 2022 programme budget

Legend:
- ■ Alignment of laws
- ■ Child and family welfare services
- ■ Child-friendly justice services
- ■ Birth registration services
- ■ Communication for behaviour and social change

Pie chart values: 22%, 25%, 13%, 13%, 27%
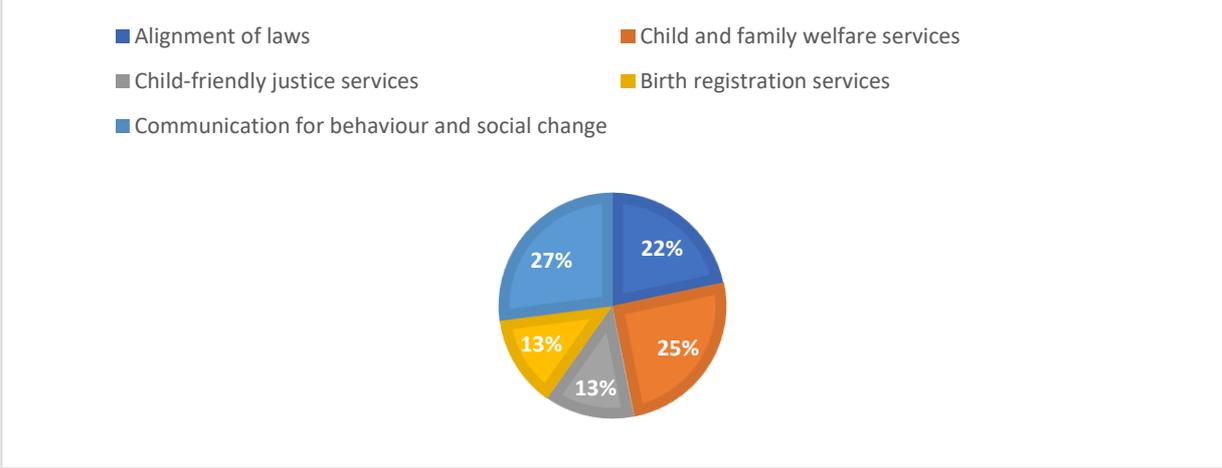
Adequacy of resourcing for child protection outcomes

[351] Strengthening child protection systems: evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance, E/ICEF/2019/23 16 July 2019, para. 6..
[352] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020
[353] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020

What I have realized is that the Department [of Social Welfare and Community Development] lacks funds to do their work

- NGO Worker

180. **Evaluation findings clearly demonstrate that district level child protection services remain severely underfunded, resulting in significant disruptions to their effective delivery**. This challenge was noted in the National Development Planning Commission's 2019 report assessing annual progress reports from MMDAs.[354] It was also raised by nearly all social welfare officers interviewed for the evaluation, as well as other stakeholders who identified insufficient funding as one of the greatest barriers to effective child protection response work. The following explanation, by a social officer in a municipal district, is typical:

> *Moving from the office to the community is very challenging. We write to the municipal assembly for funds but we get no response and as result, sometimes we need to use our own money for transport. There are a lot of cases that need follow-up but as a result of transport costs among others, it becomes a challenge and therefore we end up doing some of these visits over the phone when we should be going there to see things for ourselves. So, as a child protection officer, issues of transport and movement to the communities pose challenges.[355]*

181. UNICEF has acknowledged the lack of sufficient resources for frontline social workers, and the Child Protection Programme has included several initiatives aimed at advocating for budget commitments from Government at central, regional and MMDA levels. These have included a 2014 – 2015 analysis estimating the cost of child abuse, which made the business case to the GoG for investing in child protection prevention and response, as well as advocacy to promote the inclusion of resourcing for child protection in municipal budgets and Regional Development Plans. Whilst this work has resulted in some successes[356], notably an increased prioritisation of CP in national, regional and district level planning and budgeting processes[357], it has yet to translate into sufficient funding for child protection response services.

182. **Adequate funding for local child protection response services is critical to ensuring that resources are used efficiently within the child protection system. When front line service providers lack sufficient human or financial resources, the child protection system is unlikely to identify child protection risk or coordinate an appropriate response across a network of available services. Without this component of the child protection system in place, the efficiency of other investments made by UNICEF, the GoG and other partners, are likely to be undermined, as cases are missed and duplication and fragmentation are more likely to occur.**

Coordination and collaboration

How effectively have coordination mechanisms been working between UNICEF's child protection programme and other UNICEF programme outcomes (across education, health and nutrition, social protection and social policy, adolescent and youth empowerment, communication for development, and early childhood development) to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to community engagement for the prevention of child marriage (KRC 6), violence against children (KRC 2) and birth registration (KRC 4)?

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[354] National Development Planning Commission, July 2020, 'Report on Assessment of the 2019 District Annual Progress Reports'.
[355] Individual interview, Social Work Head, Municipal District, Region 9, 5 December 2020
[356] For example, successful advocacy resulted in increased budget allocation (3% of budget of MoGCSP)for the Central Adoption Authority and Child marriage in 2019.
[357] See for example, June 2019, 'National Development Planning Commission, 'Technical Review of 2018-2021 Sector and Medium Term Development Plans'.

Coordination with other UNICEF programme outcomes

183. Child protection is a highly multi-disciplinary field of work which requires effective collaboration and coordination across health, education, law enforcement, justice and social welfare sectors. UNICEF's Child Protection Section has taken advantage of the established relationships and expertise within the UNICEF Ghana Country Office by working closely with other sections to strengthen engagement on a number of programme areas, including violence against children (KRC 2) and child marriage (KRC 6). A member of the child protection team emphasised the added value of this approach; "*a lot of protection issues don't find an answer within child protection – they are cross sectoral – they have a health aspect, and education aspect – now we have a lot more cross-sectoral work because we are recognising that the answer to many of these issues is not just from child protection*"[358].

184. In the area of VAC prevention and response (KRC 2), the Child Protection Team has established an effective partnership with the Education Section to deliver the Safe Schools Initiative.[359] The project, which involved close collaboration with the Ghana Education Services, aims to end corporal punishment in schools, promote positive discipline techniques, address bullying and sexual harassment, and strengthen identification and reporting of school-based violence.[360] UNICEF's Child Protection Programme funded the development and implementation of resources for educators, students and parents associations and partnered closely with the Education Section to promote their uptake.

185. The Child Protection Team has also collaborated with UNICEF's Health Section to strengthen the ability of the Ghanaian health service to identify and respond to cases of child abuse. As discussed in the effectiveness section of the report, referral links between the health sector and district level social welfare authorities are weak at present. In 2018, UNICEF CP supported the development of a set of guidelines to support health workers in preventing and responding to child abuse, including supporting child victims of violence and following the correct procedures for collecting and preserving evidence for potential use in legal proceedings.[361] Yet the guidelines have yet to translate into effective identification of child protection cases. UNICEF is exploring the possibility of promoting their integration into training curricula at teaching hospitals to ensure their effective implementation.

186. UNICEF's CP programme has also contributed significantly to cross sectoral work on child marriage. These efforts are in line with the recommendations of the 2017 Assessment of Strategies and Approaches to Address Child Marriage in Ghana', which emphasised the importance of engaging all UNICEF sections in child marriage prevention work as well as ensuring multi-sectoral response interventions which address underlying drivers of child marriage in a holistic way.[362] The commitment to a cross sectoral approach in this complex area of programming was recognised by a UNICEF staff member outside of child protection, who observed that: "*there have been significant efforts [by the CP team] to do cross sectoral work and make sure contributions are aligned*"[363]. In addition, the Child Protection Programme is working closely with social workers to promote the delivery of integrated response services for girls who are at-risk of marriage, married or are teen mothers, including social welfare and protection

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[358] Group interview with the UNICEF Ghana Child Protection team, 25 March 2020.
[359] Group interview with UNICEF Ghana Education Health Section, 24 March 2020.
[360] UNICEF Ghana, Annual report 2016.
[361] Ghana Health Service, 'Child Protection Guidelines for Health Workers', 2018.
[362] Lo Forte, Claudia, "Assessment of Strategies and Approaches to Address Child Marriage in Ghana: Learning Brief", Child Protection Section, UNICEF Country Office, November, 2017.
[363] Individual interview, Gender Specialist, UNICEF Ghana, remote interview (zoom), 25 March 2020.

services, maternal health services, sexual and reproductive health services, education, livelihoods and income generation support.

Complementarity and coordination in service delivery

187.   Effective coordination is particularly important given the vast number of actors operating in the child protection space in Ghana, which creates potential for duplication and inefficiencies in the delivery of child protection work. Respondents consistently recognised that UNICEF is well placed to facilitate coordination between child protection actors, particularly between government and civil society, and noted their successes in doing so:

> *A lot of NGOs are implementing various kinds of child protection programmes in Ghana with different tools and strategies. As a global organization, UNICEF can help rally these NGOs together in order to streamline child protection systems in Ghana. This would also avoid the duplication of resources and ensures efficiency.[364]*
>
> *--*
>
> *We have a network for CSOs working in child protection – the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child. Yes, there are times we disagree but often we have collaborated, especially under the UNICEF partnership – UNICEF has helped to facilitate the partnership.*
>
> *--*
>
> *Thanks to UNICEF we have a good working relationship with our NGO partners. UNICEF provided good capacity training and most of our partners were involved from the outset. One person cannot do it alone.[365]*

188.   And yet **despite UNICEF's contributions to improving coordination, evaluation findings suggest that it often continues to pose a challenge**. As one NGO representative explained: "*sometimes it becomes confusing as to who is doing what.*"[366] **The effectiveness of coordination was found to vary across localities, depending on the initiative and relationships of the service providers involved. A number of stakeholders observed that cross-sectoral work has stalled because of service providers' limited resources: whilst collaborative working can save resources in the long run, it often requires upfront investment in order to establish effective partnerships in the first place.**

189.   UNICEF's recent support to the development of inter-sectoral SOPs for child protection and family welfare services are likely to lead to further improvements in complementarity. The ISSOPs, which include sector specific SOPs for all relevant agencies, have the potential to significantly improve inter-sectoral coordination in the delivery of child protection response services. As one stakeholder explained: "*what the framework will do is to see how we can work together so we don't duplicate efforts. Various stakeholders are working in their field – this will harmonise our work, to make sure there is a standard approach and that referrals and linkages are done properly. Before this all of the actors were just using their own templates…*"[367] Finally, many respondents also emphasised the importance of an integrated information management system for facilitating efficient coordination in child protection response. Indeed, the roll out of the Social Welfare Information Management System (Primero) will ease information sharing between relevant actors and may reduce barriers to efficient cross-sector working.

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[364] Individual interview, Director for Gender, Region 4, 25 November 2020.
[365] Individual interview, Social Welfare Officer, Municipal District, Region 9, remote interview (zoom), 20 March 2020.
[366] Individual interview, NGO director, Region 8, NO DATE.
[367] Individual interview, MoGSP, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.

EFFIC 1. UNICEF's Child Protection Programme succeeded in mobilising considerable financial resources to support its programme, in line with its system strengthening approach, and used resources efficiently. [Paras 177 - 180].

EFFIC 2. A lack of sufficient resourcing continues to undermine child protection service delivery at district level, and is likely to compromise the efficiency of other child protection investments made by UNICEF, the GoG and other partners. [Paras 181 – 183].

EFFIC 3. UNICEF's Child Protection Section has taken advantage of the established relationships and expertise within the UNICEF Ghana Country Office, using a cross-sectoral approach to address child protection issues. [Paras 184 - 187].

EFFIC 4. UNICEF is particularly well placed to coordinate between child protection actors and has succeeded in creating linkages within the sector. The evaluation found that coordination continues to pose a challenge, however, with the effectiveness of coordination and cooperation varying across localities. [Paras 188 - 190].

10.4.   Sustainability of the CP Programme

What are the enabling as well as constraining factors that are likely to influence replication and sustainability?

Sustainability of programme outcomes / CP changes

To what extent are the benefits and achievements of the UNICEF supported programmes likely to continue after the programme has ended? What measures were taken so that the Government of Ghana and targeted communities could take ownership of the child protection programme?

190.   One of the most important advantages of a system strengthening approach to child protection programming is its potential for sustainability. Evaluation findings suggest that this is the case in the Ghanaian context. Many of the outcomes of UNICEF's Child Protection programme have been institutionalised, enshrined in law, policy or practice, and are therefore likely to continue even after programming ends or changes its focus. Several respondents emphasised the value in this approach, and attested to the fact that the government has increasingly taken ownership for programme activities. This commitment is demonstrated by the fact that numerous MMDAs have priorities child protection interventions in their medium development plans.[368] Furthermore, UNICEF's approach of funding NGOs to work alongside government by supporting service delivery in the short term whilst government increasingly takes responsibility for this work is also conducive to sustainability.[369]

191.   Yet despite these positive measures, as is discussed elsewhere, UNICEF's achievements at policy level have yet to fully translate into results at the community level, across both prevention and response work. These findings indicate that significant additional support is likely to be required to ensure that child protection systems reform leads to outcomes for children across Ghana. This transition is likely to be undermined by the GoG's failure to commit sufficient resources to the delivery of services. As is set out in the efficiency section above, the social welfare sector in Ghana is severely underfunded and remains heavily reliant on donor support. This challenge was raised repeatedly by respondents, from both

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[368] See for example, June 2019, 'National Development Planning Commission, 'Technical Review of 2018-2021 Sector and Medium Term Development Plans'.
[369] See for example, interview with Challenging Heights, remote interview (zoom), 18 March 2020.

within and outside government, who repeatedly pointed out how donor dependence is likely to constrain sustainability:

> *What do you think are the most important measures that are needed to improve child protection in Ghana?*
>
> *Commitment on the part of government. A lot of the work on children protection is being spearheaded by external partners like UNICEF, World Vision, Plan Ghana etc. the Government does not commit as much financial resources into child related interventions as donors do. The moment these partners pull out, the projects suffer too. The Inter-Sectoral Standard Operating Procedure could have a great impact. UNICEF is piloting it in some districts. But the project like many others will die at the end because of lack of commitment including resource commitment.[370]*
>
> *--*
>
> *And of course I'm also thinking that UNICEF can use their resources to encourage government to commit resources to this area – leveraging their government to give a budget to these issues. The government neglects social services because they say – you get funding from UNICEF.*
>
> *--*
>
> *In five to ten years could government work without UNICEF?*
>
> *It is not realistic. Social issues come up – and this will impact on families – and this will impact on children. Government as we stand now will not be able to take all the responsibility. [371]*

192.   This highlights, again, that UNICEF should continue to prioritise achieving budget commitments from government in upcoming programme cycles.

Sustainability of capacity generation

> To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels? How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme?

> *The UNICEF's programme has contributed to the capacity of national and sub-national actors. They have trained them and provided materials... I am very sure the contribution would last.*
>
> *- Regional Director of Social Welfare*

193.   UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made considerable contributions to building the capacity of Ghanaian government counterparts at national and sub-national levels. These contributions, which are discussed in greater detail throughout the effectiveness section of the evaluation, developed the government's capacity to deliver a case management response to child protection cases, to monitor residential care institutions, to apply child friendly policing techniques in cases involving children, and to identify and refer cases where children are at risk of harm to social services, to name a few. These contributions were recognised and valued by stakeholders across Ghana, and at national, regional and district levels. As one enthusiastic respondent expressed; "*as I have already emphasised, the Department of Social Welfare has received tremendous support in terms of capacity building for their regional and the district level staff. Amongst our external partners, UNICEF stands out*"[372].

194.   Furthermore, and as is evidenced elsewhere, UNICEF's capacity building support was found to have resulted in genuine improvements in the abilities and practices of beneficiaries. The impacts of

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[370] Individual interview, Director for Social Welfare, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.
[371] Individual interview, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, remote interview (zoom), 19 March 2020.
[372] Individual interview, Director for Social Welfare, Region 4, 25 November, 2020.

capacity building were recognised by many respondents, including a district level DOVVSU representative, who articulated appreciation for UNICEF's contributions:

> *UNICEF has contributed a lot to building the capacities of actors, as we are more knowledgeable of how things are supposed to be done as far as child-related issues are concerned - how to interview a child, how to treat a child, how to fish out information from a child. We know all of these things because of the training organized by UNICEF. The knowledge we have acquired stays with us and will go a long way in supporting the work we do.[373]*

195.   UNICEF's programme design has been conducive to sustaining capacities in the longer term. In addition to supporting the delivery of training, UNICEF developed materials, manuals and tools, which can continue to be used by relevant agencies going forward. Indeed, several stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that training is ongoing and continuous in order to ensure its sustainability:

> *[The benefits from training] will last to a point. You know as we are training some people are leaving the service while others too are retiring, so it must be a continuous training. The gap is that only a few sections of people have been trained. The training should be opened up to include more stakeholders and beneficiaries…[374]*

It is a positive finding in this regard that UNICEF's Child Protection Toolkit has been taken up and used by NGO and government partners within their own programmes.

196.   Additionally, where possible, UNICEF supported the integration of training materials into national curricula to ensure their continued use. A notable success has been the incorporation of training on child friendly policing into all police trainings,[375] and supporting the development of a curriculum for the Regional Police Training Schools.[376] Whilst is too early to comment definitively on the sustainability of capacities generated through the Child Protection Programme, particularly given that many capacity building efforts are in their early stages, evaluation findings clearly indicate that they have the potential to continue after the Programme's conclusion.

Sustainability of alternative care

What would be the strategy to follow to ensure an alternative care system based primarily on family-based care and not on residential care?

197.   As is set out in the effectiveness section above, UNICEF has made significant contributions to the reform of alternative care services in Ghana, laying the groundwork for a transition from a system based on family-based care rather than residential care. And yet a significant amount of work remains to be done to realise this transition. In particular, despite the amount of work that has been done to promote oversight and closure of residential care institutions in Ghana, as well as the reintegration of child from residential care institutions into family care, new residential care homes continue to open and children continue to be admitted to them. As one UNICEF staff member described the problem: *"we did a survey within institutions in the past three to four months and we found that there are more kids in residential care than we thought and the conditions are not great. The team is aware of where things stand – but there is a question of 'what next'?"[377]*

198.   Evaluation findings indicate that a lack of early intervention in child protection cases and limited child protection response services in Ghana have served to constrain UNICEF's efforts at alternative care

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[373] Individual interview, DOVVSU, Metropolitan District, Region 8, NO DATE.
[374] Individual interview, Director for Social Welfare, Greater Accra Region, NO DATE.
[375] UNICEF Ghana, 2016 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[376] UNICEF Ghana, 2017 RAM analytical statements of progress.
[377] Individual interview, Deputy Representative, UNICEF Ghana, remote interview (zoom), 25 March 2020.

reform. As is mentioned in the effectiveness section of the report, cases where children are experiencing abuse and neglect rarely receive a child protection response until the case escalates to a crisis point, at which stage it may be too late to address underlying risk factors, and the child is likely to be temporarily or permanently placed in residential care. Until child protection response services are strengthened, removal from the parents is likely to continue. Further, until a viable foster care service is in place, children are likely to continue to be placed into residential care. Without a focus on funded foster care, alternative care reform is unlikely to be sustainable.

199.   At the same time, capacity constraints on district level social welfare services, such as lack of budget to conduct field visits, undermine the ability of social welfare and community development officers to provide sufficient support to children who are reintegrated from residential care into a family setting, increasing the likelihood that reintegration will fail and children will end up returning to residential care.

200.   The UNICEF Child Protection Programme should continue to invest in the development of family-based alternative care services, such as foster care and, potentially, supported kinship care, in line with the Foster Care Operational Manual. This will require additional capacity building, as well as dedicated resources towards, and increased oversight and support for, foster care services. There will always be a population of children in need of alternative care in Ghana, and until a well-functioning foster care system is in place, demand for residential care services for children is likely to persist.

Preliminary conclusions on the sustainability of UNICEF's CP Programme

SUST 1. Evaluation findings confirm that many programme outcomes have been institutionalised, enshrined in law, policy or practice, and are therefore likely to be sustained, with the Government increasingly taking ownership for programme activities. [Para 191].

SUST 2. These achievements require considerable government investment in order to fully translate into the outcomes for children in the short term, and to ensure that these outcomes are sustained in the longer term. [Paras 192 - 193].

SUST 3. The Child Protection Programme has succeeded in building the capacity of child protection duty bearers at national and subnational levels. Interventions were designed to promote sustainable improvements in capacity and contributions are likely to be sustainable. [Paras 194 - 197].

SUST 4. A lack of early intervention in child protection cases and limited child protection response services in Ghana have served to constrain UNICEF's efforts at alternative care reform. These gaps must be addressed to make alternative care reform sustainable. [Paras 199 - 201].

11. LESSONS LEARNED

The findings indicate that Ghana has taken significant steps towards building an effective child protection system over the course of 2012 – 2020. Many of the activities have achieved or gone beyond the expected output but, not unexpectedly, some aspects of the programme have not been fully achieved and, as all would acknowledge, there is still further work to be done to ensure a fully functioning child protection programme. This evaluation has thrown up a number of lessons to be learned.

1. Legal reform is more likely to be successful when it is evidence based, drawing on analysis of existing laws, research that provides solid empirical evidence on the issues at stake and wide-ranging consultation and engagement of stakeholders. Going through these processes not only facilitates more effective legal reform: it ensures buy in from key stakeholders, raises public awareness and interest on child protection issues, stimulates debate and has the capacity to contribute to changes in attitudes, values and practices.

2. Building a fully functioning child protection system involves not only the introduction of a legislative framework, but also a number of other elements, including effective governance structures, a continuum of services, human, financial and infrastructure resources; robust data collection and monitoring systems; minimum standards and oversight and mechanisms for child participation and community engagement. These require a long term commitment. Even when governance and regulatory frameworks are in place, the task of raising public awareness, training all relevant stakeholders on new policies, laws and practices and ensuring full implementation of new laws, structures, systems and practices, takes time. As a result, child protection system strengthening may require three or four country programme cycles before the child protection system strengthening reaches a level of maturity.

3. The identification and referral of suspected child abuse cases to the appropriate body is an essential step in child protection system building and requires both effective referral processes and widespread training and awareness raising over a period of time. Education and health services are the most likely to come into contact with children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation and it is vital that they receive repeated and continued training in order to understand and use the referral process**.** Without effective referral, the child protection system cannot deliver effective response services for children who have experienced violence, abuse or neglect.

4. Prevention and early intervention are more effective, efficient and sustainable than response for child protection cases. Acting early when risk is first identified can prevent many cases reaching crisis point and requiring an emergency response. Adequate resources for frontline child prevention services are critical to promoting the efficient use of resources with the child protection system and more likely to address the best interests of children.

5. Coordination amongst different bodies with child protection duties and roles is key to ensuring effective implementation of the child protection system. Local coordination bodies which focus on the functioning of the child protection system are a mechanism for ensuring both effectiveness and efficiency. Without this component of the child protection system in place, the effectiveness and efficiency of the various bodies is likely to be undermined, with cases missed and duplication and fragmentation of child protection services.

6. In order to ensure that social messaging campaigns are effective and to minimise the risk of negative reactions, resistance and backlash to campaign messaging, **it is necessary to ensure that services which support that messaging (social welfare, livelihoods, access to education, justice) are available on the ground**. This is particularly the case where campaigns are aimed at challenging deeply embedded attitudes and norms.

7. Developing family-based, alternative care services, and especially foster care, frequently presents a challenge. Adequate provision of sustainable foster care requires appropriate funding and cannot rely wholly on the goodwill of community members, regardless of how willing community members may be. Budgeting for the delivery of child protection services must include funding for foster care and support of kinship care if the needs of children for family-based alternative care are to be delivered. Foster carers also require support from the social services workforce to assist them in looking after children, who frequently face loss, grief, a lack of education and poor physical and mental health.

8. Gender empowerment programming may produce unintended consequences, including, in some cases, the entrenchment of particular gendered norms. It is important to be sensitive to the way that messaging and services designed to protect adolescent girls (for example by discouraging teen pregnancy or early marriage) may interact with existing gender norms and power dynamics, and ensure that programming avoids reinforcing stigma or discrimination.

12. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation demonstrates that UNICEF Ghana's Child Protection Programme has made significant contributions to strengthening the national child protection system in Ghana across both the 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 programme cycles. In addition to being well aligned with UNICEF's global strategies, the Programme's system strengthening approach was found to be highly relevant in the Ghanaian context given that Ghana lacked both an integrated legal framework and an institutional structure for the child protection system when the 2012 Programme began. The Programme was found to have delivered effectively on commitments to donors, and the consultative and responsive approach which UNICEF adopted across its programming has ensured the relevance of interventions to beneficiaries, including children themselves.

The evaluation found that UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has been delivered effectively, and has achieved important results in line with its broader system strengthening agenda. UNICEF's contributions enabled the development of a strong legal framework for child protection and supported the establishment of a comprehensive child protection response service delivered through district administrations as part of a broader national child protection system. Furthermore, UNICEF's Programme succeeded in building the capacity of stakeholders to conduct child protection prevention and response work in line with that framework. Yet child protection response services continue to be dominated by child maintenance and custody cases, with very few cases of child abuse identified and addressed by the CP system. Findings identified numerous barriers to reporting, identification and referral, including a persistent tendency to rely on police authorities to respond to child abuse.

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has succeeded in strengthening the capacity of the judicial service and law enforcement authorities to deliver child-friendly justice services. The programme has made significant contributions to improving the effectiveness of birth registration, and advanced alternative care reform. Yet across these areas of programming, additional work is required to ensure that UNICEF's achievements fully translate into outcomes for children across Ghana.

UNICEF's behavioural change and community mobilisation programming achieved an impressive reach and was broadly endorsed by participants. Whilst evaluation findings indicate significant improvements in attitudes and practices across a range of child protection issues, there were no significant differences in rates of change in UNICEF intervention sites compared to comparison sites, making it hard to determine whether changes can be directly attributed to UNICEF's programming.

The Child Protection Programme was successful in mobilising considerable financial resources to support its system strengthening approach, and used resources efficiently, including through drawing on partnerships and facilitating coordination between relevant actors. Resource constraints were found to undermine the efficiency of the child protection system however, particularly at district level. A lack of sufficient funding for child protection response services is likely to compromise the efficiency of other child protection investments made by UNICEF, the GoG and other partners.

UNICEF made significant efforts to mainstream gender equality throughout the child protection programme, including by recruiting a dedicated gender specialist and developing a Child Protection Programme Gender Strategy for the 2018-22 programme. Social and behaviour change programming has raised awareness on gender equality and appears to have contributed to shifts in some norms, particularly those related to women's economic empowerment and child marriage. However, much

work remains to be done to address entrenched norms, particularly around sexuality and gender roles and responsibilities, and to reduce the high levels of violence reported by girls in Ghana.

Evaluation findings confirm that many of the outcomes of the Child Protection Programme have been institutionalised or taken over by Government, and are likely to be sustained when the Programme ends or changes focus. Yet as mentioned above, UNICEF's achievements will require additional work and considerable government investment in order to fully translate into outcomes for children in the short term, and to ensure their sustainability in the longer term. Priorities for future programming are set out in the recommendations below.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having brought about so much change to the policy, legislative and practice framework with respect to child protection and juvenile justice, it is recommended that in the next Country Progamme, UNICEF should focus on consolidating and implementing the reforms to ensure that they produce the anticipated improved outcomes for children.

13.1. Training

Output 6 of the 2012-2017 Child Protection Programme concerned integration of standard operating procedures, guidelines and court procedures into the training curriculum of professionals working within the child justice system. This was followed in the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme: Output 3 requires guidelines and training manuals for the judiciary, probation officers and evidence of application of the SOPs. Child-friendly policing was successfully integrated into the police training curriculum and is delivered. However, pre-service or in-service training on child friendly procedures, child justice and child protection is not currently a mandatory requirement for magistrates, judges or lay members of the Court taking such cases.

Further training for the judiciary and other law enforcement personnel working in the justice system and in child protection would be beneficial, and **it is recommended that UNICEF:**

➢ **Work with the Judicial Training Institute to integrate child protection and child justice into the pre-service and in-service training curriculum of magistrates and judges and make such training compulsory**.

For relevant findings see paras 73 - 75.

The majority of social workers have received some training on case management, but the KAP Survey and qualitative data indicated that further training is needed and has been requested by social workers. Further qualitative evidence indicates there is a need for more training on reintegration of children with their families. **It is recommended that UNICEF:**

➢ **Support universities offering social work courses and bodies providing vocational training for social workers to review curricula and develop course materials that reflect the most recent amendments to policy, law and practice.**

➢ **Provide technical assistance and support to the Ghana Association of Social Workers to develop training on child protection that can be delivered both in face to face in-service training courses and on-line.**

For relevant findings see paras 102 - 104, 174.

In 2018, the Child Protection Programme supported the development of a set of guidelines to support health workers in preventing and responding to child abuse, including supporting child victims of violence and following the correct procedures for collecting and preserving evidence for potential use in legal proceedings.[378] At present the Guidelines are not integrated into the training curricula of

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[378] Ghana Health Service, 'Child Protection Guidelines for Health Workers', 2018

medical students and there is a lack of in-service training on the Guidelines. **It is recommended that UNICEF:**

> **Give priority to advocating for integration of the guidelines into pre-service and in-service training of medical staff to ensure their effective implementation.**

For relevant findings see para. 185.

13.2.   Referrals

The findings of this evaluation suggest that referral of child protection cases to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development at district level remain low. While police referrals have increased, it is noticeable that despite the Guidelines for health professionals; the 'Safe School' Guidelines and a revised Code of Conduct for teachers and school staff, referral of child protection cases from the education and health sectors remain at a particularly low level, suggesting that these bodies are not identifying and responding to cases where children are at risk of harm. Training on the recognition of abuse, its signs and the referral pathways is likely to be effective in increasing referrals. **It is recommended that each health clinics, hospitals, pre-schools and schools should nominate at least one child protection focal point or 'champion', who should receive training and be responsible both for raising awareness of child protection amongst children, school staff and health professionals and for making case referrals to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.**

For relevant findings see paras 37 - 53.

13.3.   Case management

While UNICEF has worked closely with partners on promoting the uptake of standard operating procedures, the data obtained for this evaluation shows that 56 per cent of cases dealt with by social workers relate to non- provision or non-payment of child maintenance. Custody disputes account for a further 19 per cent. This means that 75 per cent of cases, three-quarters of all cases dealt with by social welfare in 2019 and 2020, related to private disputes between parents and / or family members. While not underestimating the impact of children of these private law disputes, these issues are not generally be regarded as 'child protection' cases. The time spent on these cases inevitably detracts from that which can be spent on cases involving violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is noticeable that apart from neglect cases which form 16 per cent of case load, other forms of child protection cases dealt with by social workers including cases of physical abuse, sexual exploitation and juvenile justice cases are small. **It is recommended:**

> **That social workers should no longer deal with cases related to the non-payment of maintenance, and that responsibility for this should pass to a new service attached to the Family Tribunal.**

> **UNICEF should provide technical assistance to the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice on alternative mechanisms for dealing with maintenance cases, such as a Child Maintenance Service attached to the Family Tribunal.**

For relevant findings see paras 38 - 41, 46, 48, 61.

13.4.   Community based services (fostering)

There is a strong culture of informal fostering and adoption of orphaned and separated children within families and communities, but this does not extend to formal fostering of children unknown to the foster family. New foster care regulations were adopted by Parliament in 2018, and although over 500 foster parents and over 200 children have been placed in foster care, a significant increase from previous years when fostering was essentially non-existent in Ghana, there are still an insufficient number of foster carers to provide for children in need of family based alternative care, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. At present, formal foster care appears to run largely on a volunteer basis, with no compensation for foster carers or for members of the Regional Foster Care Placement Committee. In addition, there is currently no funding for the recruitment and training of prospective foster carers. Children placed in foster care may need considerable support, and well trained, experienced foster carers. An effective, efficient and sustainable foster care service cannot be provided on a purely voluntary basis. Foster carers need to be compensated at least to the extent of covering the child's expenses and some may need to be paid a small retainer if they are to remain available as foster parents. It is recommended that UNICEF:

➢ **Continue to advocate with the** Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Finance to provide further resources to the Foster Care Fund and, in particular, to cover the expenses of a foster child while placed with foster carers. UNICEF should also continue to advocate to DSW at different levels to provide social work support to foster families.

➢ **Continue to provide technical assistance to local district councils to develop a sustainable foster care service.**

➢ **Consider innovative measures to support foster care in the short term by, for instance making it a condition of registration for residential homes, that each must provide social work support to a specified number of foster carers.**

For relevant findings see paras 105 - 106, 125.

13.5.   Coordination between social welfare and the police

Findings from the evaluation suggest that VAC cases are often handled by the Police Service's Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), rather than by district social welfare authorities. Whilst in some locations MMDA social workers described having an effective working relationship with DOVVSU and identified this as one of the positive changes to the child protection system of recent years, coordination between DOVVSU and social welfare authorities was found to remain weak in many localities, with some respondents describing a dysfunctional relationship between the two bodies. The failure to work together may, if not addressed, lead to the development of two parallel systems, fragmenting the local child protection response. DOVVSU lacks sufficient capacity to provide a holistic child protection response, but territoriality and the desire to provide a domestic violence centred approach rather than refer the children to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development may lead to the threshold for intervention in child protection cases being raised.

The recently developed inter-sectoral Standard Operating Procedures for Child Protection and Family Welfare by the MOGCSP and UNICEF address the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Social

Welfare and Community Development and DoVVSU, but DOSVVU and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development would benefit from more practical guidance.

It is recommended that UNICEF support the development of a joint working protocol specifically between the DoVVSU and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development setting step by step the procedural measures to be taken by each body when a relevant referral is received, the time frames for those steps and the coordination mechanisms to be put into place to ensure a joint and holistic approach to domestic violence and child protection. It is recommended that this task should be completed within the current programme and accompany the roll out (and training on) of the Inter-Sectoral Standard Operating Procedures.

For relevant findings see paras 41 - 46.

13.6.   Information management systems

Evaluation findings confirmed that an integrated child protection database containing standardised administrative data on child protection cases in Ghana is not yet in place. This is a significant gap, but one that UNICEF is working closely with government partners to address, through developing a digital social welfare information management system (SWIMS), using the software platform Primero. The roll out of SWIMS is likely to require significant capacity building support to ensure that users have sufficient skills and technology to use it effectively.

> **UNICEF work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, MoLRD and decentralised Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development, and other relevant stakeholders to roll out the Social Welfare Information Management System in all districts and as well as some relevant services providers (NGOs, RHCs, etc.).**

> **UNICEF support the roll out of the SWIMS through the provision of coaching, training and (where necessary) information technology.**

The system should include a database for child protection services delivered by multiple agencies, including those provided by social welfare officers and community development officers, as well as other first responders, such as DOVVSU, NGOs and other service providers.

For relevant findings see paras 165, 174 - 176.

13.7.   Children's services plans

There was little evidence that districts were aware of the level of need of children within their area or that they had plans which would enable them to meet that need. Without knowledge of the need for child protection services, MMDAs are stumbling in the dark when it comes to knowing what services to make available within their district. Preparing a bi or tri-annual children's plan would enable MMDAs to provide more effective and efficient child protection services. In preparing the plan, reference should be made to the Social Services Directory which covered available services in 260 district areas . Case management data and records should also be reviewed to help assess the likely demand for services within their district. This information would assist the district in deciding what services to provide and to budget accordingly. For instance, the information contained in the Directory and the demand review would allow the district to determine how many children are likely to be in need of alternative care over the course of a year and to ensure that they recruit sufficient foster carers to

meet that need. It would also enable them to decide where, geographically, preventive services are most needed to ensure access.

It is recommended that UNICEF consider providing technical assistance to the intervention areas under Output 1 to draw up a children's plan before the end of the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme to enable effective budgeting.

For relevant findings see paras 67 - 70.

13.8.   Social norms

Social norms endorsing violence against children in Ghana are widespread and entrenched, and changing such attitudes requires ongoing, persistent, community awareness programmes. UNICEF has succeeded in raising the recognition of child protection concerns amongst government, service providers and within the population more broadly through a series of innovative communication and local community programmes under both the 2012-2016 and the 2017 -2020 Child Protection Programmes. While the KAP study shows a significant improvement over time in attitudes and practices across a range of issues, such as placement of children in residential care or in boarding schools, there has been less of a change in attitude as regards the use of corporal punishment and towards child marriage in rural and less educated communities. It is recommended that UNICEF :

➢ **Deliver campaigns messaging in tandem with services to families (social welfare, livelihoods, access to education, justice etc.)** to avoid creating 'sensitisation fatigue', and minimise the risk of negative reactions, resistance and backlash to challenging messaging.

➢ **Conduct a 'gender sensitive analysis' of its behaviour change campaigns, to consider the extent to which these programmes are having their intended effects.** In some cases messaging and services designed to protect adolescent girls (for example by discouraging teen pregnancy or early marriage, or promoting the entry of women and girls into areas of work previously gendered male) may interact with existing gender norms and power dynamics, to exacerbate stigma, discrimination and inequalities (e.g. creation of double work burden for women and girls, further entrenchment of discrimination against pregnant girls, etc.)

For relevant findings see paras 109 - 152.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term: Should be implemented within the next 2 years, possibly within the course of the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme.

Medium term: Should be implemented within 2-5 years

Long term: Should be implemented within 5-10 years

	Relevant findings	Recommendation	Time-frame
		1. Training	
1.1	*For relevant findings see paras 73 - 75.*	Work with the Judicial Training Institute to integrate child protection and child justice into the pre-service and in-service training curriculum of magistrates and judges, and make such training compulsory.	Short term: if possible, during the course of the current Child Protection Programme
1.2	*For relevant findings see paras 73 - 75.*	Support universities offering social work courses and bodies providing vocational training for social workers to review curricula and develop course materials that reflect the most recent amendments to policy, law and practice.	Short term: may need to wait for the passage of the amendments to the Children's Act and other legislation.
1.3	*For relevant findings see paras 73 - 75.*	Provide technical assistance and support to the Ghana Association of Social Workers to develop training on child protection that can be delivered both in face to face in-service training courses and virtually, through on-line courses.	Short term: within the 2018-2022 Programme.
1.4	*For relevant findings see paras 73 - 75.*	Prioritise advocating for integration of the guidelines into pre-service and in-service training of medical staff to ensure their effective implementation.	Short term, to be started within the course of the 2018-2022 Programme.
		2. Referrals	
2.1	*For relevant findings see paras 37 - 53.*	It is recommended that UNICEF advocate with the Ministries of Health and Education to ensure that each health clinic, hospital, pre-school and schools nominates at least one child protection focal point or 'champion', who should receive training and be responsible both for raising awareness of child protection amongst children, school staff and health professionals and for making case referrals to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.	Short-term
		3. Case management	

3.1	*For relevant findings see paras 38 - 41, 46, 48, 61.*	UNICEF should advocate for an amendment to the ISSOP for Child and Family Welfare to remove maintenance cases from the remit of MGCSP Social workers, with this role passing to a new service attached to the Family Tribunal.	Medium term
3.2	*For relevant findings see paras 38 - 41, 46, 48, 61.*	UNICEF should provide technical assistance to the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice to develop alternative mechanisms for dealing with maintenance cases, such as a Child Maintenance Service attached to the Family Tribunal.	Medium term
		4. Community based services (fostering)	
4.1	*For relevant findings see paras 105 - 106, 125.*	Continue to advocate with the MGCSP and local government in relation to an increased budget for child protection, and in particular, payment of expenses to foster carers.	Short term /medium term
4.2	*For relevant findings see paras 105 - 106, 125.*	Continue to provide technical assistance to MMDAs to develop a sustainable foster care service by providing assistance with recruitment, training, selection and support of children placed with foster carers and the carers themselves.	Short term / medium term
4.3	*For relevant findings see paras 105 - 106, 125.*	Provide technical assistance to NGOs and FBOs to introduce innovative ways of recruiting foster carers and raising awareness of the rewards of fostering.	Short term / medium term
4.4	*For relevant findings see paras 105 - 106, 125.*	Consider innovative measures to support foster care in the short term by, for instance making it a condition of registration for residential homes, that each home must provide social work support to a specified number of foster carers.	Short term / medium term
		5. Coordination	
5.1	*For relevant findings see paras 41 - 46.*	It is recommended that UNICEF support the development of a joint working protocol specifically between the DoVVSU and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development setting step by step the procedural measures to be taken by each body when a relevant referral is received, the time frames for those steps and the coordination mechanisms to be put into place to ensure a joint and holistic approach to domestic violence and child	Short term, within the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme

		protection. It is recommended that this task should be completed within the current programme and accompany the roll out (and training on) of the Inter-Sectoral Standard Operating Procedures.	
		6. Social norms	
6.1	*For relevant findings see paras 109 - 152.*	It is recommended that UNICEF conduct a review of its communication programmes in the light of the findings of the KAP study and determine how it can most effectively address entrenched social norms and attitudes which accept the use of violence against children. Deliver campaigns messaging in tandem with services to families (social welfare, livelihoods, access to education, justice etc.) to avoid creating 'sensitisation fatigue', and minimise the risk of negative reactions, resistance and backlash to challenging messaging. Conduct a 'gender sensitive analysis' of its behaviour change campaigns, to consider the extent to which these programmes are having their intended effects. In some cases messaging and services designed to protect adolescent girls (for example by discouraging teen pregnancy or early marriage, or promoting the entry of women and girls into areas of work previously gendered male) may interact with existing gender norms and power dynamics, to exacerbate stigma, discrimination and inequalities (e.g. creation of double work burden for women and girls, further entrenchment of discrimination against pregnant girls, etc.)	Short term
6.2	*For relevant findings see paras 109 - 152.*	A further KAP survey should be undertaken in five years to determine the level of change to knowledge, attitudes and practices.	Medium term / long term
		7. Children's services plans	
7.1	*For relevant findings see paras 67 - 70.*	It is recommended that UNICEF consider providing technical assistance to the intervention areas under Output 1 to draw up a children's plan before the end of the 2018-2022 Child Protection Programme to enable effective budgeting.	Short term

		8. Information management systems	
8.1	*For relevant findings see paras 165, 174 - 176.*	It is recommended that UNICEF continue to support the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, and other relevant stakeholders to roll out the Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS) and continue to provide coaching, training and (where necessary) information technology.	Short term / medium term

15. APPENDICES

Annex 1: Evaluation ToR

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Annex 3: Summary of Qualitative Interviews

Annex 4: Data Collection Tools

Annex 5: Ethical Guidelines

Annex 6: Implementation of CM SOPs

Annex 7: List of research reports, assessments and evaluations funded by UNICEF Ghana child protection programmes 2012 - 2019