CONFERENCE REPORT

A BETTER WAY TO Protect ALL Children

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

13–16 November 2012
New Delhi, India

unicef
unite for children

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Save the Children.

World Vision

This is a co-publication of United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Save the Children and World Vision.

The conference co-hosts would like to acknowledge the GHR Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development for their generous support of the conference 'A Better Way to Protect ALL Children: The theory and practice of child protection systems'.

This report of the 'A Better Way to Protect ALL Children: The theory and practice of child protection systems' conference has been prepared to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and to stimulate discussion.

All conference papers and presentations, including this report, can be found at http://knowledge-gateway.org/sharekluo5tgnjrn31p71ra1zp7b2hnkl48j5vz27/childprotection/cpsystems/cpsconference/library

Acknowledgements

The success of the conference, 'A Better Way to Protect ALL Children: The theory and practice of child protection systems', would not have been possible without the sincere commitment of all of its participants to share their knowledge and experience to create a better future for all children. The co-hosts of the conference would like to thank the many innovators and influencers of child protection systems who attended, bringing perspectives from government, academia, and multilateral and national organisations. The conference benefited immensely from all of these contributions over the course of the week, and we believe that children will benefit from this important work for many years to come.

The co-hosts would also like to thank Kate Mahoney and Shaula Bellour, the conference rapporteurs, for their unflagging efforts in the development and writing of this report, both during and after the conference itself. Their work is greatly appreciated. Conference participants also provided significant assistance with summaries of discussions from round tables, home group discussions and side meetings. Without their support, the richness and variety of debate would not have been adequately captured.

The conference co-hosts acknowledge the generous support of the GHR Foundation and the Displaced Children and Orphan's Fund of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in making the conference possible and attracting global attention and participation.

The co-hosts would also like to acknowledge the conference steering committee for its work in developing the conference concept, design and bringing it to fruition: Kendra Gregson of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Monika Sandvik-Nylund of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Bill Bell and Eva Bellander of Save the Children and Arelys Bellorini of World Vision. The extensive input from the UNICEF India Country Office and in particular, Dora Giusti, in supporting the coordination of logistics for the conference is greatly appreciated.

We are grateful to Prem Narain, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, India for joining us and opening the conference. Last, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the speakers who provided the springboard for a dynamic week, as well as the many chairs and facilitators who helped to keep the debate focused. These were, in alphabetical order: Sohail Abassi, Agnes Akosuo Aidoo, Essam Ali, Louis-Georges Arsenault, Armando Barrientos, Charles Badenoch, Amy Bess, Rosangela Berman Bieler, Allan Best, Susan Bissell, David Brickey Bloomer, Gwen Burchell, Gary Cameron, Mark Canavera, Thomas Chandy, Laurent Chapuis, Vivian Cherue, Phintsho Choeden, Saisuree Chutikul, Rebecca Davis, Benedito Dos Santos, Montserrat Feixas Vihé, Anna Feuchtwang, Bill Forbes, Pennie G. Foster-Fishman, Laura Fragiacomo, Aida Ghorbel, Philip Goldman, Dilli Guragai, Turid Heiberg, Joanina Karugaba, Theresa Kilbane, Alexander Krueger, Catherine Love, Matilde Luna, Preeti Madan, Bernadette Madrid, Nankali Maksud, Mubarak Maman, Andrew Mawson, Morag McArthur, David McLoughlin, Rolando Melo Latorre, Amanda Melville, Najat M'jid, Alejandro Morlachetti, Bhalchandra Mungekar, Eileen Munro, Florence Mutyabule, Jachen C. Nett, Dan O'Donnell, Jacqueline Oduol, Gabriela Olguin, Marta Santos Pais, Nadine Perrault, Nikhil Roy, Alison Sutton, Diane Swales, Ron Pouwels, Marit Skivenes, Louise Ellen Teitz, Joachim Theis, Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, Nim Thoth, Stephen Wainaina, John Williamson and Fred Wulczyn. Their commitment to child protection and ability to translate their knowledge into action on the ground were vital to the conference.

Contents

Abbreviations iv

Introduction 1

I. The 'State of the Art' in Child Protection Systems 3

What is a child protection system? 3

Why a system? Consolidating and articulating the shift to a systems approach 3

The benefits of a systems approach to child protection 4

Who is involved in the system? 4

What kind of system? 4

What are the scope and boundaries of child protection systems? 5

II. Development of Child Protection Systems in Different Settings 6

Towards a typology of child protection systems 6

Exploring the development of child protection systems across regions 7

III. System Strengthening 14

Systems thinking to guide systems strengthening 14

Approaches to child protection system strengthening: The importance of the different actors 19

Strengthening child protection system components 22

Thinking through the child protection system interface with other social systems 29

IV. Giving Priority to Prevention 33

V. Measuring Systems Performance 35

VI. Issues and Target Groups in a Systems Perspective 40

Child protection system strengthening: Issues as entry points? 40

Considering child protection issues and target groups within a systems perspective 40

VII. Obstacles and Opportunities for Systems Strengthening 50

Lessons from a systems review of child protection in England 50

Overcoming obstacles and leveraging opportunities 51

VIII. Summary of Analysis and Milestones 58

IX. Conclusions 62
Strong areas of consensus 62
New insights 64
Unresolved issues 66
ANNEXES 67
Annex 1: Bibliography 67
Annex 2: Conference participant list 71
Annex 3: Conference agenda 77
Annex 4: Home group methodology 82
Annex 5: Conference photo 85

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CP	child protection
CP MERG	Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EAPRO	East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
ICPS	Integrated Child Protection Scheme
IDP	internally displaced person
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SRSG VAC	Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Child protection (CP) systems are *certain structures, functions and capacities that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children*.[1] In November 2012, more than 130 policymakers, academics, practitioners and other experts committed to CP systems[2] met in New Delhi over four days to:

1) Review and consolidate what has been learned so far about the development and reform of such CP systems;
2) Look at new ideas concerning those systems and explore their relevance; and
3) Outline an agenda for future work on CP systems.

Participants' expectations for the conference:

- Clarify and demystify CP systems and articulate the added value of a systems approach
- Facilitate learning about CP systems' best practices
- Explore how CP systems are considered by different actors and in different settings
- Position the child as key actor and protagonist of the CP system
- Set in motion an enhanced commitment to build evidence-based learning and dialogue for establishing and strengthening CP systems

The group came from 50 countries, including representatives from more than 15 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 20 Governments, 14 academic institutions, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Violence against Children (SRSG VAC) and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as representation from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (for more details please refer to participant list in Annex 2). The conference brought together two key constituencies in the child protection field that rarely have the opportunity to interact but have common interests: One consists of 'innovators', 'influencers' and 'thought leaders' in systems thinking, based in academia or international organisations. The other includes 'implementers' in government or NGOs who are making and implementing policy related to the reform or strengthening of those systems. Four organisations – the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Save the Children and World Vision – co-hosted the conference.

The conference format was designed to reach the following objectives: consolidate areas of consensus; introduce new thinking to expand and refine approaches to work on CP systems; and engage participants in structured discussion to work towards a collective agenda for future work on CP systems. Keynote and other plenary addresses presented views on important issues to stimulate thought and discussion on topics, while plenary panel sessions included two to three speakers who presented different perspectives of a common theme. Concurrent round-table sessions addressed different aspects of a larger issue and usually involved one to three speakers and up to 35 participants. 'Home groups' were comprised of 10 participants who met on each day of the conference to reflect on and discuss key themes, and to articulate findings around the conference objectives (please refer to Annex 4 for more information on home groups). Conference organisers also set up

1 Child Protection Systems Conference, Concept Note, New Delhi, November 2012.

2 Child protection is comprised of measures and structures to prevent and respond to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child article 19 and as discussed in the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 13 (2011), "The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence," CRC/C/GC/13, 18 April 2011.

spontaneous 'side meetings' in response to participants' requests.[3]

The conference itself was a journey of exploration and discussion about CP systems. This report attempts to: 1) encapsulate the substantive content of the presentations and related discussion; 2) provide analysis and document the journey; and 3) suggest an agenda, or at least direction, for future work on CP systems. As such, the structure of the report approximates that of the conference itself and provides a summary of each of the plenary and round-table presentations and related discussions. Text boxes with purple type distinguish summary and synthesis of discussion, and text boxes with green type indicate analysis and serve as 'milestones along the journey'. The report is based primarily on notes from the sessions and presentations and/or papers submitted by the speakers and draws on background documents provided by the conference organisers and in a few cases on papers referenced by speakers. Input from the home group discussions are incorporated throughout the document, usually within synthesis of discussion and analysis. The report is structured as follows:

3 Four side groups met during the conference: academics; government representatives; those interested in discussing the CP system typology; and those interested in working on the post-2015 agenda.

Section I	Draws from background documents as well as the opening keynote and welcome addresses and summarises developments that have led to the current 'state of the art' on CP systems. It highlights areas of consensus and questions for debate articulated prior to the conference.
Section II	Introduces a typology for CP systems and explores how CP systems have developed in different settings and how a typology of CP systems might be useful to categorise and learn from those different experiences.
Section III	Focuses on systems strengthening, introduces recent developments in systems thinking as applied to child protection and other social systems, explores strengthening of CP system components and examines the relationship between CP systems and other related systems.
Section IV	Addresses the importance of prevention as a key characteristic of CP systems.
Section V	Examines the challenges and potential for the measurement of systems performance.
Section VI	Explores specific child protection issues and target groups of children within a systems perspective.
Section VII	Looks at lessons learned about system reform and approaches to overcoming obstacles and leveraging opportunities for systems strengthening, including the role of key actors.
Section VIII	Summarises analysis and highlights the milestones identified throughout the report.
Section IX	Outlines the conference conclusions including areas of consensus, topics that need to be to be explored further and actions to take forward to help continue the evolution of CP systems thinking and practice.

I. The 'State of the Art' in Child Protection Systems

In her opening keynote address, Susan Bissell, UNICEF Associate Director, Chief of Child Protection, noted areas of consensus on CP systems as a foundation on which the conference could build, as well as key issues for discussion and debate to move the agenda forward.

What is a child protection system?

Dr. Bissell emphasised that in spite of slightly different perspectives, many child protection organisations agree that a CP system can be defined as: *Certain formal and informal structures, functions and capacities that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children*.[4] A CP system is generally agreed to be comprised of the following components: human resources, finance, laws and policies, governance, monitoring and data collection as well as protection and response services and care management. It also includes different actors – children, families, communities, those working at subnational or national level and those working internationally. Most important are the relationships and interactions between and among these components and these actors within the system. It is the outcomes of these interactions that comprise the system.

Why a system? Consolidating and articulating the shift to a systems approach

Recent years have seen renewed thinking about how to address child protection risks globally. In the 'global North', many existing statutory CP systems have been in need of reform, and there has been a move away from a narrowly defined forensic understanding of CP towards a greater emphasis on early intervention, prevention and family support, including efforts to rekindle CP as part of everyday life in communities. In low- and middle-income contexts where government capacity may be limited, systems are often a combination of both more formal statutory and less formal customary elements.[5] For the last few decades child protection analysis, programming and funding have focused on particular issues or specific groups of vulnerable children, such as violence against children, child marriage, sexual exploitation, alternative care, justice for children, children affected by armed forces and groups, trafficking, child labour and child separation. However, this 'issues approach' has led to overlapping, uncoordinated and fragmented responses – as evidenced for example by the range of national action plans that countries have developed on different child protection issues. In fact, many children may face multiple child protection problems and such issue-based responses may deal with one problem, but usually cannot provide a comprehensive solution.[6]

Over the last few years a succession of important documents and events has reinforced this move to a systems approach to child protection. In 2006, the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children recommended that "all States develop a multifaceted and systematic framework in response to violence against children, which is integrated into national planning processes."[7] A 2007 UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion on Children at Risk noted that "States should promote the establishment and implementation of child protection systems…."[8] In 2008, UNICEF hosted a Global Child Protection Systems Mapping Workshop

4 Child Protection Systems Conference, Concept Note, New Delhi, November 2012.

5 Ibid.

6 Wulczyn, Fred, et al., 'Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection: Key concepts and considerations', UNICEF, 2010. This paper laid a foundation for further systems thinking in relation to child protection.

7 Pinheiro, Paulo Sérgio, *World Report on Violence Against Children*, UNICEF, 2006, p. 18.

8 UNHCR EXCOM Conclusion on Children at Risk, No. 107 (LVIII) (2007).

at which participants concluded that a common understanding of CP systems would be an important prerequisite for moving child protection efforts forward.[9] Simultaneously, international actors, including NGOs, UN organisations and donors that are active in child protection in both development and emergency settings, have increasingly moved away from a focus on specific issues and groups of children and towards a systems approach to child protection. The four organisations hosting the conference, as well as others active in the field, such as Terre des Hommes, have all recently issued papers stating their understanding of and support for CP systems. [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15]

The benefits of a systems approach to child protection

As Dr. Bissell noted in her address, there is certainly proof that NOT taking a systems approach does NOT work. There is agreement that the benefits of a CP system include:

- Increased coverage by serving all children, as well as focusing on particular children;
- Recognition of the interactions of multiple child protection risks as they affect many children promoting the efficient review and coordination of multiple protection risks and responses;
- Reduced fragmentation of programmes and policies and therefore increased coherence;
- Potential for greater efficiencies through the creation of synergies in administration and targeting, for example;
- Greater focus on prevention while an issues approach tends to focus on response to specific violations;
- A holistic approach that allows us to see a child and her/his problems from multiple angles;
- Recognition of child protection as both a sector and intersectoral and thus requiring integration with other sectors such as health and social protection;
- Involvement of many professionals who bring different expertise and perspectives.

Who is involved in the system?

Dr. Bissell acknowledged wide recognition of the multiple CP actors who work within CP systems. She noted general agreement on the State's role as being accountable for the CP system and on the importance and centrality of the child, family and community to the system. She noted that exploring the relative roles and prominence of different actors within different contexts is an important discussion theme for the conference.

What kind of system?

Dr. Bissell emphasised consensus that CP systems – however incomplete – exist everywhere. A given system may include more and less formal elements and may function more or less effectively, but it is a system nonetheless. There is also agreement that a systems approach does not imply a 'one size fits all' approach. How a system is structured

> "A system that ignores social norms will be rejected. Social norms are not just around problems, but also about solutions."
>
> Conference participant

9 UNICEF, 'Summary of Highlights: UNICEF Global Child Protection Systems Mapping Workshop', Bucharest, 2008.

10 'Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection: Key concepts and considerations'.

11 See, for example, Save the Children, *Why Effective National Child Protection Systems Are Needed, 2006,* and *Building Rights-based National Child Protection Systems: A concept paper to support Save the Children's work*, 2010.

12 World Vision, *A Systems Approach to Child Protection: A World Vision discussion paper* (2011).

13 UNHCR, *A Framework for the Protection of Children* (2012).

14 Terre des Hommes, *Enhancing Child Protection Systems* (2011).

15 The 10-year review of the ground-breaking Graça Machel report on the impact of armed conflict on children followed in 2009 and recommended development of national systems and capacity to protect children against violence, exploitation and abuse following emergency and conflict situations.

and its level of development, cohesiveness and effectiveness depend on the broader context. Key contextual factors include the prevalence and understanding of different child protection risks, the strength of the economy, the quality of governance, the effectiveness of the legal system, the prevalence of natural disasters, conflict situations and the presence of refugees or displaced populations.

A system reflects the sociocultural norms and values of those involved. For example, cultural norms around the extent to which the population accepts the potential intervention of the government in their homes and the relationship of the child to the State, and the family to the State, are fundamental in shaping CP systems. These norms are related to values as regards the treatment of children and children's rights to protection. How such contextual factors determine the form and extent of a given CP system – and how they support or constrain efforts to strengthen it – were important questions to explore during the conference.

> "Families and children do not pay attention to borders; famine and war do not recognise borders.... Countries cannot do it alone, they must rely on each other to collectively provide international trans-boundary protection for children."
>
> Louise Ellen Teitz

What are the scope and boundaries of child protection systems?

There is general agreement that child protection is both a sector and intersectoral. Thus, it is important to explore the scope and boundaries of CP systems and how they interact with other social systems such as health and social protection.[16] Likewise, given the importance of state responsibility in ensuring the protection of children, it is important to examine the coordination of CP systems across geographical or administrative boundaries within countries and also internationally.

Saisuree Chutikul, Representative for Children's Rights to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Commission on the Promotion and Protection for the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), Thailand, spoke on the scope and boundaries of CP systems and commented that the interaction and integration of child protection with other sectors, such as health, education and social protection, may take different forms. She used an analogy to describe the interface between CP systems and other social systems and noted that it "might be a salad in which you can see each part or it might be a cake in which the ingredients are mixed together to form a new identity."

Louise Ellen Teitz, First Secretary at the Hague Conference on Private International Law, Netherlands, addressed such boundaries in her presentation on the Hague Conference and Conventions[17] and stressed the importance of conceiving certain elements of CP systems as operating beyond the limits of national boundaries. She explained how the Hague Conventions form an international normative framework to protect children against specific risks of harm as they cross borders, and how the Hague Conference facilitates the work of international networks of judges and central authorities working within signatory States to uphold the conventions. As Professor Teitz noted, the Hague provides a standardised legal framework within which individual countries can incorporate formal and informal elements as part of their own national CP system. She emphasised that child protection efforts should not and do not stop at borders and thus the legal system needs to cross borders in order to protect children. Another example of this is the steps taken by various regional

16 Child Protection Systems Conference, Concept Note, New Delhi, November 2012.

17 Conventions of the Hague Conference on International Private law include: 1980 Convention on Child Abduction; 1993 Convention on Inter-country Adoption; the 1996 Convention on Child Protection; and the 2007 Child Support Convention. These Conventions can be accessed at <www.hcch.nl>.

bodies such as the European Union with its initiatives on such issues as the treatment of unaccompanied minors and violence against children.

II. Development of Child Protection Systems in Different Settings

Child protection systems have developed in different ways in different countries and regions depending on an array of contextual factors. The move to a systems approach has prompted renewed efforts to review and compare CP systems across countries and regions. A typology of CP systems, as discussed below and referred to in round-table sessions, may be able to support this analysis.

Towards a typology of child protection systems

Many CP systems share similar characteristics or essential features that may provide the basis for classifying or clustering them into different 'types' or categories of systems. Developing a typology or classification of CP systems across the globe has the potential to facilitate discussion about the objectives and performance of such systems and inform the choices made about the way in which a particular system will develop. Grouping together countries according to a shared characteristic or characteristics enables the policymaker or analyst to rise above the detail of every individual system and to focus on similar patterns that recur across countries. The conference paper 'Towards a Typology for Child Protection Systems' proposed a framework for round-table discussions on the development of CP systems in different settings around the world. The typology suggested is intended to be applicable globally – including less formal systems as well as more formal and statutory systems.[18]

The conference paper suggests four possible 'dimensions' or variables that may provide a way of categorising CP systems according to their place along one or more of those dimensions. Each of the dimensions expands on categories used in previous typologies, in an effort to provide categories that are globally relevant.

1) *Orientation* describes the overall approach of the system to the child in her/his family and community. For example:

   - **Punitive:** the system prioritises the protection of society against children who are seen as a threat.
   - **Moral instruction/rescue:** the system prioritises rescuing children seen as at risk of moral contamination because of a lack of appropriate parental care.
   - **Welfare:** the system prioritises deprivation and broader child welfare failings, particularly poverty, as they affect the physical social and psychological well-being of children rather than child protection issues per se.
   - **Communal harmony:** the system is designed to ensure the maintenance of communal and social harmony when children have been harmed (for example through mediation, financial compensation or other form of restitution) with the priority focused on the preservation of family, neighbourhood and communal ties.

18 'Towards a Typology for Child Protection Systems', Discussion Paper prepared for the Child Protection Systems Conference, New Delhi, November 2012.

- **Child protection:** the system prioritises protecting children from harm through legalistic and coercive interventions.
- **Family support:** the system prioritises working with the family to reduce harm to children – helping children and parents in a supportive way.
- **Rights-based child-focused orientation:** the system prioritises the rights of the individual child to protection and the importance of supporting parents and other carers to achieve this.

2) *More or less formal* describes the degree of formalisation of the CP system, particularly the extent to which the State regulates the system through legislation and policy. Most systems include less and more formal aspects that co-exist and interact – statutory elements of the system that are regulated by the State and more community-based elements that are derived from custom.

3) *Context* describes the correspondence between the nature of the CP system and the overall socio-economic and political developments of the country. For example:

- **Fragile:** state institutions to deliver protection are very weak or in a state of collapse – in emergency situations, international humanitarian action may temporarily substitute for the role of the State.
- **Developing:** the State has some capacity, but is not fully able to address the child protection challenges. There may be a legacy of colonial policy and practice.
- **Complex:** the system is governed and financed by the State from domestic resources and has a professionalised workforce.

4) *Performance* refers to the success or failure of the system in delivering positive outcomes in children's well-being and its efficiency in doing so.

Developing a globally relevant typology can assist in understanding how a CP system exemplifies itself in different contexts. It could help to guide the development of systems by clarifying the key choices and options available to those strengthening systems.

Exploring the development of child protection systems across regions

Each of five round-table sessions focused on different regions: high-income countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE); Africa; Latin America; Middle East and North Africa (MENA); and Asia. In each session one or two speakers presented a country case example that explored key characteristics or recent developments within the CP system in that country. Group discussions explored regional characteristics, the utility of the dimensions outlined in the typology above to categorise CP systems and how the typology might be used to guide system strengthening efforts.

High-income Countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Central and Eastern Europe

Laura Fragiacomo, Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF Kosovo, described the CP system in Kosovo with reference to the typology dimensions. She noted that Kosovo's more formal system is developing with donor input and guidance amid a still fragile context due to the conflict in the 1990s. Like many of the other countries in the region, the orientation of the Kosovo CP system could be classified as a mix of punitive and moral instruction/rescue while moving towards a more welfare-oriented approach. It is largely issue based and reactive and lacks a comprehensive and unified approach to protection for all children at risk. Limited budgetary and human resource allocation has induced a focus on specific child protection interventions, which constrains the development of a more comprehensive system. As a result, the family and social welfare sector are seen as responsible for child protection and there is little interaction with other sectors. Ms. Fragiacomo suggested that defining a typology could contribute to and accelerate the policy debates required around strengthening the CP system in Kosovo.

Professor Morag McArthur, founding Director of the Institute of Child Protection at Australian Catholic University, shared a paper, 'Being Child Centred in Child Protection: What does it mean?',[19] which reviews the literature on child-centred practice, primarily in Australia and the United Kingdom. The review found four key themes that deserve emphasis and 10 principles to support their implementation as noted below.

1) Critical time frames

- **Principle 1:** Intervene early in life – special attention should be given at every opportunity to link very young children and their families with services and supports, which can improve children's physical, cognitive and social functioning.
- **Principle 2:** Intervene early in the life of the problem – every effort should be made to assist and support children as early as possible in the emergence of problems by linking them with services to strengthen children, and family functioning. These efforts should include assertive outreach to families who are unlikely to use mainstream services.

2) Developmental needs and life worlds of children

- **Principle 3:** All processes involving children should take account of their developmental level across a spectrum of their 'life worlds' including health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development and self-care.

3) Appropriate and meaningful opportunities to participate

- **Principle 4:** Children in contact with the care and protection system should be provided with direct and indirect opportunities to express their feelings and wishes; in this they can be greatly assisted by an adult (other than their caregiver), whom they trust, who provides regular emotional and practical support and who is likely to have continuous involvement with them.
- **Principle 5:** Policies and procedures should specifically discourage a 'one size fits all' approach to participation by children. The settings, language and timing of participation should take into account the age, cognitive and social development,

19 Winkworth, Gail and Morag McArthur, 'Being "Child Centred" in Child Protection: What does it mean?', *Children Australia*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2006, pp. 13–21.

gender, socio-economic background and ethnicity of children.

- **Principle 6:** Models of family decision-making and problem-solving such as Family Group Conferencing should be used wherever possible to maximise the participation of children.
- **Principle 7:** Children should be provided with information about child protection processes, including how to make complaints. They should be well prepared for forums in which they are expected to participate through the provision of developmentally appropriate information, including multimedia packages to supplement information conveyed verbally.
- **Principle 8:** Children and young people should be informed as soon as possible, preferably the same day, of legal and administrative decisions that affect them.

4) Collaboration to protect children and strengthen networks

- **Principle 9:** Knowledge and expertise should be actively shared between professionals who are involved with children at each stage in assessment, case planning and service implementation. An ongoing dialogue with other professionals, including feedback about critical decisions, is an essential part of protection and support.
- **Principle 10:** All interventions should as far as possible seek to create and strengthen the positive everyday networks which surround children, including the provision of appropriate information and support, which will enable these networks to increase protection and support.

The paper questions the meaning of 'child-centred' practice and argues that the term 'child-centred', despite its frequent use in government documents, tends to be used uncritically in child and family work and without a framework with which to evaluate the child-centredness of current policies and practices in human services agencies. The principles noted above can be used to define and frame child-centred practice in more explicit ways and to provide the basis for policies and practices as well as for training. The principles are intended to guide a child-centred practice, and may apply to all child and family agencies, but more specifically in statutory settings.

Discussion: Discussion in the round-table focused on "What is a CP system?" and on the need for a typology. Most participants agreed that the typology is an additional tool that will help to refine the discourse by looking across countries and regions and facilitate understanding of the social and political contexts and the assumptions that underpin the system design and its boundaries. They recommended that any typology should acknowledge that all CP systems include both more and less formal aspects and that it is important to explore and understand the linkages between those aspects within the system. Some participants cautioned about the need to avoid classifying one system as 'better' than another. Others pointed out that comparison of systems is not value neutral and that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) effectively sets a rights-based standard for CP systems. Discussants considered that CP systems reflect the values in a given society such as family privacy, children's status and community interaction, and therefore the position that a society/country takes on these issues may be another way to categorise a specific system in comparison to other similar or different systems. They suggested that how one maps a CP system might be based on the values of the one guiding the mapping. Participants reflected that such values, as well as a country's politics, governance structures and economy, drive the system – for example, understanding of child-centeredness, how child abuse is constructed and the concept of individual as opposed to social problems.

Africa

Jacqueline Adhiambo Oduol, Secretary for Children's Affairs in the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development, Kenya and Vivian Cherue, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Liberia, presented case studies of Kenya and Liberia respectively and identified many common features of African CP systems. The presentations underlined the importance of recognising key aspects of the African context – particularly the primary role of family as a fundamental building block of CP systems and the role of traditional leaders. They noted that it is important to recognise that the family in Africa is not a static entity, but is evolving under the pressure of factors such as urbanisation, globalisation and the HIV pandemic. They also noted that the paucity of the social welfare workforce is a major challenge to the effectiveness of the CP systems throughout Africa.

Discussion: Round-table participants noted that the child protection community should recognise that every country already has a CP system of some sort and that child protection is primarily undertaken by the family, particularly in Africa. Participants recommended that child protection should be better connected to social protection mechanisms, such as cash transfers. They also noted that country-focused studies on violence against children, such as that in the United Republic of Tanzania,[20] can be powerful catalysts for political and public action on child protection and can build consensus and commitment.

"Formal systems have opportunities if they have positive political will behind them."

Agnes Akosul Aidoo

"Kenya's achievements [in child protection] can be attributed to committed leadership at all levels."

Jacqueline Oduol

"Build on what is already there."

Vivian Cherue

20 Mubarak Maman presented the Violence against Children in Tanzania survey, 2011, on Day 3 of the Child Protection Systems Conference, New Delhi, 15 November 2012.

Latin America

Alejandro Morlachetti, Professor of Children's Rights at the University of La Plata, and Research Fellow at National University of Lanus, Argentina, made a presentation on CP systems across Latin America. He noted that an important characteristic of Latin America has been the adoption of a legal framework for child protection that incorporates different aspects of the CRC and establishes an integrated protection system that includes institutions, mechanisms and processes at the national, regional and local levels to respect, promote, and protect *all* children's rights. As Professor Morlachetti described it, the State is the key actor in this rights-based approach, with the active participation of, and in some cases substantial delegation to, civil society.

Several countries in Latin America have established complex systems for the protection of children with separate institutions at national and local levels, deliberative and implementing bodies, specialised administration of justice and ombudsmen. The main obstacle to the success of these CP systems is the lack of resources and political support, which has undermined the functionality of key institutions. Another

"Is integrated child protection the same thing as a child protection system?"

Nadine Perrault

"In Latin America there is a gap between the legislation and its implementation. There is theory, but no context. We prioritise the formal and judicial but don't articulate how to link it with the less formal actors and elements."

Jimena Tito

difficulty is that some CP systems operate in isolation from broader social policy planning.

Discussion: Participants pointed to the broader concept of child protection often used in Latin America as compared to a more narrow focus on protection from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Participants noted that a CP system should be part of a larger system that includes social protection. Participants agreed that the typology provides a useful and applicable analysis although they emphasised that it is important to take the broader concept of child protection into account. They also expressed the need to explore how to more effectively link the less and more formal aspects within one CP system. The group recommended clarifying the meaning of CP systems within Latin America and especially in relation to the concept of integrated child protection.

Middle East and North Africa

"We don't yet have a way to put the components together to function as a system."

Aida Ghorbel

Aida Ghorbel, Managing Director of Child Protection at the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, Tunisia presented a case study of Tunisia which, having ratified the CRC in 1991, has since adopted legislation, policy and administrative mechanisms to enable child protection measures in line with the Convention. The Child Protection Code, which was introduced in 1992 and further developed through 2005, has marked a shift towards a more rights-based and prevention-oriented approach. The code stipulates that the child has the right to be protected, and society has the obligation to ensure that protection. The shift to a rights-based approach has led to the establishment of local child protection networks and coordination mechanisms at the ministerial, regional and local levels. In 24 governorates, CP delegates are in place and can take emergency measures in cooperation with the family or can transfer cases to family judges if a family-based solution cannot be found. The social, economic and political upheaval over the past two years, including a refugee influx, has presented new and additional challenges that have tested the CP system. Ms. Ghorbel noted that, overall, Tunisia has a strong legal and policy framework, but faces challenges in fully implementing it.

"You cannot fix the child protection system unless you talk about political issues like community participation and children's rights… Democracy and a child protection system go hand in hand."

Essam Ali

The concept of a CP system is still nascent in Tunisia and not fully recognised; while many components exist, coordination, monitoring and more significant financial resourcing are needed.

Essam Ali, Consultant, presented an overview of child protection in Egypt and commented on the region more generally. He explained that in Egypt, the State considers children as the property of families and not the responsibility of the State. Thus, there is no concept or resources to support child protection within other sectors. He noted that civil society organisations are the primary CP actors and service providers. The two mechanisms for child protection – communities and governments – operate in parallel. Mr. Ali noted that in the case of Egypt it is hard to see a comprehensive CP system; rather there are components, but they do not interact effectively; thus, it is an incomplete system.

Discussion: In terms of the typology, participants noted that the dimensions provide a good framework for discussion and understanding across systems and emphasised that systems development is a dynamic process. Participants characterised CP systems in the region as being predominantly less formal and having a punitive orientation. Discussion emphasised the fragmented nature of child protection efforts in the region. Participants noted a tendency in MENA countries to

criminalise children, when in fact they are victims; as a result many children do not seek help or report violations. Participants and presenters stressed the importance of a human rights framework to support a CP system; the absence of such a framework in MENA; and the need to harmonise national laws with international standards throughout the region.

Asia

Sohail Abassi, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Pakistan, presented the CP system in Pakistan and noted that it has a welfare orientation in that the State provides indirect child welfare services through poverty alleviation and social protection programmes. He characterised Pakistan's system as less formal in that it relies heavily on family and community support based on custom and practice and is largely unregulated. The CP system operates in a fragile and developing context with extremely weak state structures that provide no coordination and depend on community, NGOs and international organisations to fill gaps left by the State. Mr. Abassi noted that in some areas of Pakistan the relationships between the citizen and the State are not strong. People do not want government 'interference' in their lives, and child protection is a relatively new concept and can be a 'hard sell' in poor communities. Pakistan has recently focused on legislative and policy reform and has undertaken a mapping of the CP system. Mapping the system has itself been challenging due in part to limited knowledge of child protection and the perception that child protection is part of social welfare. Also, the most vulnerable children, such as children living and working on the streets, are not captured in household surveys and services. The mapping indicates that: 1) where the informal sector drives child protection there is a stronger emphasis on response, and less on prevention; 2) there is unequal child protection coverage, with very little presence in remote locations; and 3) capacity is a challenge, because people working in the sector have very limited knowledge of CP. In Pakistan, the mapping has been very important in making the case for a more formal CP system.

H.E. Nim Thoth, Secretary of State of Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, in charge of Social and Child Welfare, Cambodia, explained that Cambodia is shifting from an issue-based focus to a systems approach to child protection due to government recognition of its obligations, an awareness of cost efficiency and a desire to fulfil its coordination role. The Government has recently undertaken a mapping of the CP system that highlighted: 1) the low budget allocation as compared to other ASEAN countries and dependence on donor support; 2) the absence of government-delivered services at the subnational level and in remote areas, where the less formal aspects of the system play an important role and NGOs provide most services; 3) the need to improve the interface between the national statutory aspects of the CP system and the less formal, community-based elements of that system; 4) the need to strengthen the number and capacity of social workers; and 5) the fact that the system is focused more on response than prevention and there are only limited links with education and social welfare.

> "If you don't invest in children now, society will have to pay a significant cost in 20 years."
>
> Sohail Abassi

Discussion: In both Pakistan and Cambodia, mapping was seen as important in making the case for government investment in the more statutory aspects of the CP system and improving connections between the more and less formal aspects. Discussion also focused on how to address attitudes that do not support child protection or more statutory regulations. Participants noted that poverty is relevant in shaping attitudes towards child protection on

issues such as child labour and that CP actors within the more formal elements of CP systems need to understand and take into account those different perspectives and values. In considering the typology, participants also questioned whether the concept of 'more formal': a) implies the statutory as opposed to non-statutory nature of a CP system; and b) prioritises government over voluntary service provision. Participants emphasised that the formality of a system does not speak to the capacity of the system, which is an issue not fully addressed by the typology dimensions. In that vein, discussion turned to how to strengthen the capacity of the system and presenters noted that strengthening the workforce has been a key focus in both Cambodia and Pakistan – particularly study tours to learn about strong systems with professional social workers and internationally supported training on both theory and practice.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: LOOKING ACROSS THE REGIONS TO UNDERSTAND CP SYSTEMS

Presentations and discussion in each of the round-table groups explored how the following issues played out in different regional settings.

Typology: Most round-table groups found the CP systems typology a useful tool to frame discussion because it provides a common language to describe different systems and thus facilitates comparison and dialogue across countries and regions.

Improving existing CP systems: Discussion in all groups touched on shortcomings and areas for improvement within existing systems – for example, the need to strengthen statutory elements, build the capacity of the workforce or improve the linkages between elements of the systems. Even where relatively strong normative frameworks are in place, there is a need for more comprehensive implementation and resources – both financial and human capacity. Participants in all groups recognised that most systems are incomplete, but the elements that are there can still be described as a system.

Context: Discussion highlighted how regional and country-specific values regarding children, families and the relationship between the State and individuals; the integrity of institutions; and the broader political and economic situation all drive and shape CP systems. Discussion also emphasised the dynamic nature of CP actors and how contextual factors such as pressures from urbanisation in Africa or recent political upheaval in the MENA region should be understood as part of the system dynamics.

Children's rights: The importance of human rights and children's rights as a foundation for child protection emerged as an important theme in most groups, although from different angles. In Latin America the prevalent concept of integrated child protection takes a much broader approach that encompasses all children's rights, not just protection from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. This raises questions about the definitional scope of CP systems within that regional context. In MENA the constrained concepts of state responsibility and an absence of

a human rights framework seriously impede a meaningful dialogue about children's rights and child protection.

Interaction with other systems: Most groups commented on the importance of exploring how to strengthen the interaction of CP systems with other social systems, particularly social protection.

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the regional round-table presentations and discussion:

- Introduction of the CP system **typology provided a way to think about and understand diverse CP systems** and the means to categorise and compare them across regions.
- Recognition that **all systems are incomplete and need strengthening** in one way or another helped establish a common basis for further comparison and learning across countries and regions.
- Discussion on context highlighted consideration of regional and country-specific **values regarding children, families and the relationship between the State and individuals** and emphasised the **dynamic nature of CP actors and contextual factors**, which laid the foundation for further discussion of the complexity of systems.
- Acknowledgement of the cross-border nature of child protection and importance of cross-border cooperation between national systems.

III. System Strengthening

Systems thinking to guide systems strengthening

The move to a systems approach to child protection and efforts to strengthen CP systems has prompted CP actors to think more seriously about systems and systems theory. Three plenary presentations focused on systems thinking and brought in systems experts to share current ideas on what actually drives systems change. This laid the foundation for later round-table sessions focused on how to strengthen specific components within a systems framework. Speakers brought conceptual thinking about systems as complex, dynamic and evolving entities into the discussion. They introduced tools to support different types of systems analysis with concrete examples of how they could be used to strengthen systems.

Understanding and promoting systems change

Pennie Foster-Fishman, Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, spoke about understanding systems in order to promote intentional change within those systems. She defined a system as a set of interacting and connected parts that has a shared purpose and functions as a whole. Patterns and interactions within that system determine the outcomes of that system. Systems change is designed to shift the status quo by changing the form and function of a system to realise better outcomes for vulnerable children and families. She also introduced the idea of plural systems – recognising that there are systems within systems. Based on her practical experience in the United States, she suggested five strategies to promote systems change in the arena of child and family welfare as noted below.

> "Different actors have different views of the system – like the five blind men touching an elephant. We need to understand the stories of all stakeholders before we see the whole system."
>
> Pennie Foster-Fishman

1) **Define the problem correctly:** In order to define the problem effectively it is important to engage diverse stakeholders in problem definition processes. This involves understanding their different perspectives on relevant issues. How one delineates and describes the problem creates a boundary around the problem, ultimately determining whose perspective is included and valued and what solutions are considered. These boundaries can be redrawn to include additional perspectives on the problem and potential solutions. It is important to include children, families and service providers in these processes to understand what is working or not working.

2) **Understand and align the system parts:** A system is comprised of parts and the interaction among them, such as the visible service delivery programme but also deeper, less visible parts such as power differentials, mindsets, resource allocations, connections and service components. Often systems strengthening focuses on what can be seen, such as government policy, but this may not change the day-to-day interactions linked to deeper, less visible components. A system scan can help get at these deeper issues and clarify who is providing what services, how they are designed, who can access them and the more formal and less formal aspects of policy and practice, such as who has power and control over money and decision-making. The system scan is done as an interactive inquiry process so that the practitioners themselves have the insights as to what works or does not work. This enables identification of what is misaligned within the system, such as ways in which procedures governing control over money and decision-making may undermine the purpose of the system. In this way it is possible to identify powerful and feasible levers for change.

3) **Change connections and patterns:** Once misalignments within the system are identified it is possible to make changes. Adjusting the interdependencies among actors, creating new, simple rules that guide stakeholders to behave in ways that support the overall goals of the system, and creating and listening to real-time feedback from beneficiaries on what changes are working for them are powerful ways to create change. In this manner systems change can be undertaken in six-month increments – small changes, or tweaks to the system.

4) **Pursue effective implementation:** Effective implementation requires:

readiness among key actors who see change as needed and feasible and are ready to implement it (otherwise they may block it); capacity within the system for the envisioned change; diffusion of key ideas among key actors and within the system to move systems change forward; and realignment of decision-making, resource allocation and other levers in ways that support the pursuit of targeted goals.

5) **Strengthen and align learning and adaptation across the system:** Given the complexity of problems and that every change within a system will cause a reaction, it is necessary to be able to respond to learning and have adaptive capacity throughout the system. This could be some type of action learning cycle that brings together stakeholders on an ongoing basis to engage in problem-solving to constantly improve the system.

Professor Foster-Fishman concluded by noting that these strategies leverage necessary change by working on the deep structures not just the superficial and visible components of the system, penetrating horizontal and vertical layers of the system and incorporating feedback, learning and adaptation across all system levels.

Learning from health system strengthening

Allan Best, Managing Director, InSource and Associate Scientist at Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute, noted that increased complexity and fragmentation are driving the need for systems thinking in health. As in child protection, the health sector is increasingly recognising the challenges of linear thinking. There has been a growing recognition that complex problems require complex solutions and involve understanding and acting on the 'causes of causes'; multilevel, multisector strategies; and better systems thinking tools. Dr. Best shared three stories that illustrate tools and lessons learned from efforts to strengthen health systems.[21]

Story 1: *Systems models for knowledge integration.* Dr. Best described how in the past, knowledge was seen as a product to be passed on, but now there is recognition of the need to better understand system dynamics and to bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Dr. Best has found that collaborative relationships are key to bridging that gap and that these need to start with shared mental models and common language.

> "Logic models are good to get an overall picture, but they don't tell us how the pieces are going to work together; this can lead to new silos."
>
> Allan Best

Story 2: *Initiative on the Study and Implementation of Systems (ISIS).* Dr. Best noted the ISIS project designed to study systems and highlighted some of the tools it employed: 1) concept mapping is a planning tool that invites key stakeholders to collaborate in brainstorming problem solutions and creating a visual map of key factors to include in strategies for system improvement. The map provides a common language and logic for shared action: 2) social network analysis is a tool that can indicate who is connecting with whom, what information or resources they exchange, and the strengths and weaknesses in the current network; 3) dynamic mapping involves examination of how different variables interact around a given issue. Dr. Best differentiated between complicated problems that involve components, and complex

21 See Best, Allan, and Jessie Saul, *Complexity and Lessons Learned from the Health Sector for Country System Strengthening*, Background Paper for the USAID Experience Summit on Strengthening Country Systems, USAID, 2012. Also see Don de Savigny and Taghreed Adam (eds.), *Systems thinking for health systems strengthening*, Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research and WHO, 2009.

problems that also involve people and thus include an additional level of complexity.

Story 3: *The World Health Organization (WHO) and Health System Strengthening*: Best explained that WHO's recent health system strengthening efforts include six focus areas and place people at the centre – as the glue that holds things together and makes them work. Learning from health systems confirms the critical role of context, local innovation, multilevel and multisector collaboration, transformative leadership, longer-term funding for capacity-building and continuous learning and feedback.[22]

22 Information on WHO's recent health system strengthening work may be found at: <www.who.int/health-system-performance>, <www.who.int/healthsystems/en> or <www.who.int/responsiveness/en>.

Child protection systems: Progress and prospects

> "There is no bifurcation of the rights agenda and the development agenda, especially when it comes to child protection."
>
> Philip Goldman

Philip Goldman, President of Maestral International, outlined key consensus points and guiding principles for CP systems that establish a platform for further system-strengthening efforts. He urged participants to build consensus, think multidimensionally and avoid bifurcation; for example, to think in terms of 'systems *and* issues' rather than 'issues *vs.* systems'. He suggested thinking about context in terms of diversity and dynamism but also cautioned against 'exceptionalism' – the assumption that a context is unique or extraordinary in some way – as a default position.

Mr. Goldman framed the need for a strong evidence base to demonstrate the links between effective child protection interventions, equity and human development. He highlighted the connection between child protection risks, lifelong health issues and poor education outcomes in terms of lower incomes and achievements, not only at the individual level but also at the national level, as an example of evidence that that can be used to advocate for investment in CP systems. It is similarly important, he argued, to understand what makes children thrive. Evidence indicates that reducing the prevalence of violence, enabling birth registration, enhancing support for early childhood development and improving education performance all correlate with higher lifetime earnings, improved health over the life cycle and lower social costs. He concluded by emphasising that there is no divergence between the rights agenda and the development agenda; in fact they are one and the same.

Philip Goldman's guiding principles for strengthening child protection systems

- Think contextually as well as conceptually
- Prevent and protect at the youngest ages
- Advocate and educate on the equity life cycle
- Budget and resource
- Let nations lead
- Invest in learning and research
- Use entry points to develop systems
- Fight the good fight that 'does no harm'!

In response to Philip Goldman's presentation Pennie Foster-Fishman suggested "Seven Rules' to support systems change

1) **Embrace the fog:** Change happens when we allow ourselves to live in the 'in-between space'; in other words avoid bifurcation and instead explore the continuum of issues and ideas 'in between' prevention and response, community and State, more and less formal systems.
2) **Ask "Context for what?":** Under what conditions, and in what ways should we pay attention to contextual differences? Are there some instances in which context is not as relevant and transfer of ideas or practices between different contexts may be very feasible?
3) **Be purposeful in coordination efforts:** A system can be overwhelmed with linkages and this can impede innovation and change efforts.
4) **Form follows function:** In systems strengthening we often rush to build structures because we think we need them, without asking "for what purpose?"
5) **Develop a knowledge system** that allows implementers to be innovators and engages constituents – including children!
6) **Incubate change:** Create small niches where people and partners can innovate and take risks without threatening the status quo.
7) **Framing matters:** How you talk about your work and present the case for child protection will bring funders to the door – or not.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: SYSTEMS THINKING TO GUIDE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

Presenters emphasised key aspects of systems thinking to help systems strengthening including:

- **Think and act multidimensionally and avoid bifurcation.**
- **Examine what is 'visible', such as policy, legislation and institutions, as well as what is 'not visible', such as mindsets, power differentials between actors, and who can make decisions or control resources.**
- **Build common understanding and collaborative relationships among different actors and across different levels within the system.**
- **Engage with a wide range of CP actors with different perspectives on the system to better understand problems correctly and expand the range of potential solutions.**
- **Integrate knowledge and action to allow CP actors to respond to learning and thus embed active knowledge relationships within a system to enable continuous learning, adaptation and improvement.**
- **Promote positive and powerful drivers of change on all levels – empower implementers to be innovators based on knowledge.**
- **Coordinate with a purpose and establish shared mental models and common language to build collaborative relationships that enable actors to bridge the gap between knowledge and action.**

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the plenary panel sessions on systems change and helped to push thinking on CP systems forward:

- The suggestion to avoid 'exceptionalism' **deepened and broadened thinking on context** and echoed the value of exploring, comparing and capitalising on commonalities across countries introduced by the CP systems typology.
- The idea of engaging new and different perspectives as a way to change understanding about the nature of a given problem as well as the scope of potential solutions helped participants think differently about the boundaries of the CP system and recognise that the **boundaries of the system need to be broad enough to capture the full range of different perceptions about the system**.
- Systems thinking shifted understanding of CP systems away from a linear model that draws a direct line between the identified problem and the solution, and instead provided a **more multidimensional and complex concept of CP systems and their many elements**.
- Recognition of different **approaches and a range of tools to integrate knowledge and action within systems** helped participants consider how implementers can be empowered to be innovators and how to enable key actors within the CP system to strengthen it on an ongoing basis.
- Systems thinking offered a valuable conceptualisation of **how systems change happens** and provided a 'blueprint' or framework for considering how to strengthen CP systems.

Approaches to child protection system strengthening: The importance of the different actors

Systems thinking emphasises the value of understanding the perspectives of diverse actors and their interactions within real-world CP systems. It acknowledges that the actors are part of the system rather than separate entities that only act on the system. Presenters shared perspectives on how governmental actors, international bodies and civil society act – or can act – within the CP system.

The role of governments

Governments have an overall accountability for child protection, as noted in earlier discussions on child rights. Government representatives shared their perspectives and experiences supporting and strengthening CP systems.

Prem Narain, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Preeti Madan, Joint Secretary, Women and Child Development, India, shared their perspectives on the Government's role in supporting CP systems and the Indian national experience. They pointed out that India has the largest child population in the world – 440 million citizens under the age of 18, 40 per cent of whom are vulnerable to or experiencing difficult circumstances. India established the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2006 with a mandate to provide holistic cross-sector

support for children and a focus on the most vulnerable. In 2009, the Ministry introduced the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), an important step in strengthening the CP system. The ICPS integrates other existing schemes in an effort to create a safety net of service delivery structures that provides comprehensive support for children in difficult circumstances and reduces the risks and vulnerabilities that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. The ICPS also represents a powerful platform to promote government partnerships with civil society actors and international organisations. The CP system in India includes 10,000 CP staff, statutory bodies in each district, and the provision of care, support and rehabilitation services.

Jacqueline Oduol of Kenya talked about how key government actors can facilitate coordination and change within CP systems by exercising leadership. She noted the distinction between management and leadership and emphasised the need for CP champions. For example, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Women and Child Development can play an important role by reaching out to Permanent Secretaries in all the other ministries to build a foundation of understanding on child protection issues. There also needs to be strong leadership at all levels. In Kenya, the District Child Protection Officers play an important leadership role in expanding the reach and understanding of child protection to rural areas. Ultimately the CP system is the outcome of interactions between components and actors and is for *all* children. Thus, in order to play this leadership role effectively, government actors need to listen to other CP actors – international, civil society, and children themselves – and to act as a referee in determining investment and the direction of policy. Professor Oduol stressed that the cost of not taking action on child protection is the loss of a generation and that this is a cost that developing countries, in particular, cannot afford to bear.

The role of international bodies

Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG VAC), spoke about the role that international actors can play in galvanising global awareness and national action on child protection. She cited two studies – the United Nations Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (1996) and the United Nations Study on Violence against Children (2006) – that: 1) highlighted the low status of children and their extreme vulnerability to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; 2) spurred strengthened cooperation at the regional and global levels; 3) spotlighted national CP efforts; and 4) made recommendations that laid the foundation for national CP systems. In 2011, the Office of the SRSG VAC launched a global survey to assess progress against the Study on Violence against Children's initial recommendations and found that violence against children as an issue is gaining visibility, but that a scarcity and fragmentation of data in many countries provides limited evidence on the extent, impact, risk factors, and underlying attitudes and social norms that perpetuate this violence. Ms. Santos Pais stressed a need for comprehensive and disaggregated data to inform strategic interventions as well as coordination of data sources. She emphasised areas of CP systems work that are important to the office of the SRSG VAC:

1) **Continued support for national CP systems:** Scale up and mainstream national strategies to prevent and respond to all

forms of violence; introduce an explicit legal ban on all forms of violence against children in all settings; and consolidate the national system of data collection analysis and dissemination and research on violence against children.

2) **Child-sensitive and child-centred approaches:** Address the cumulative exposure of girls and boys to various manifestations of violence throughout the child's life cycle. To be effective, national strategies need to be gender sensitive, informed by children's perspectives and tailored to their evolving capacities.

3) **Awareness and action on key factors:** Recognise key contextual factors related to violence, such as poverty, marginalisation, poor rule of law, organised crime, environmental degradation and natural disasters.

Role of civil society

Turid Heiberg, Adviser, Save the Children, Asia, outlined the many important roles that civil society and non-state actors play within the CP system. She noted that the adoption of the CRC created common goals and clarified roles and responsibilities. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has underlined the collective responsibility of ensuring child rights. Within the CP system, governments should provide non-directive support to civil society, human rights groups, child- and youth-led organisations, parent and family groups, faith groups, academic institutions and professional associations. Non-state actors represent the interests of children as rights holders and deliver services. Civil society organisations monitor the situation of children, work to change harmful practices and influence governments to improve policy and practice.

Civil society organisations working for child rights have grown significantly since 1989 and have established coalitions and enhanced their capacity to communicate across borders using modern technology. The international processes around the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness[23] has also been broadened beyond aid to encompass 'development cooperation' and include civil society actors. Finally, Ms. Heiberg noted that to be credible and forceful, civil society must maintain its own internal standards in terms of ethics, transparency and the imperative to 'do no harm' and that the active involvement of children has to be a priority.

23 See <www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/46874580.pdf>.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: ACTORS AND THEIR ROLES IN STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS

Presenters highlighted how each of these actors – multilateral organisations, national governments, NGOs and civil society – play important and complementary roles within CP systems:

- **Governments** have an oversight function, and an ultimate responsibility for child protection that requires leadership at all levels, as a key responsibility in the implementation of the CRC. The government role includes coordination and engagement of multiple CP actors including civil society.
- **Multilateral organisations and international NGOs** can galvanise global awareness, guide policymaking and support national action to strengthen CP systems – including both prevention and response.
- **Civil society** not only plays a role in providing services, but also in monitoring, conducting research, representing children as rights holders, and contributing to legislation and policy development.

How these different actors fulfil their complementary roles as part of CP systems, the interaction between them and with the components determine their ability to collectively enhance CP systems.

Strengthening child protection system components

A CP system is defined as certain structures, functions and capacities – or components – that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. In each of four round-table sessions one speaker presented key issues related to strengthening one of the components – workforce, data, financing, and engagement of children and communities – within a CP systems framework. Discussion explored interactions among the components and integration of systems thinking in efforts to strengthen CP systems.[24]

24 Overview of Workshop on System Components: Instructions for the authors of the papers on system components, Child Protection Systems Conference, New Delhi, November 2012.

Strengthening the workforce to strengthen child protection systems

The CP workforce includes a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental – who staff the CP system and contribute to the care and protection of vulnerable children. In her paper and presentation, **Amy Bess, Coordinator of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance**, echoed the consensus presented at the conference and elsewhere, in highlighting the need for a trained CP workforce as part of efforts to strengthen CP systems. She explained that severe understaffing in CP systems makes it challenging to meet the needs of children

> "It is not possible to analyse and strengthen the social sector workforce without consideration of the broader system."
>
> Amy Bess

and families. Those who are employed often do not receive the training and support they need. The CP workforce is often expected to handle child protection – and other social issues – within a context in which they lack supervisory, technical, moral, community and financial support. High rates of attrition are common. Efforts to strengthen the CP workforce are not new, but doing so within an overarching systems framework has not been done in many contexts. Ms. Bess suggested considering the workforce as a microsystem and notes that strengthening this microsystem will serve to strengthen the entire CP system. In fact, she emphasised integration of the components and posited that it would be impossible to establish a well-functioning workforce in isolation from the other components of the CP system.

Ms. Bess outlined a framework for planning, developing and supporting the CP workforce and provided some examples of how and why these steps cannot be effectively undertaken outside of a broader systems perspective. Planning the CP workforce involves analysing how the supply and distribution of CP workers matches the needs of the system and how improvements can be made by shifting tasks, modifying training, adjusting levels of financing or addressing low retention rates. Efforts to analyse the workforce can be done as part of broader efforts to map the CP system and should take into account the legislative and policy environments, key institutions and structures, budgeting, and community needs and systems. Again referring to systems thinking, she noted that such an analysis is most successful when it engages the participation and perspectives of a broad array of stakeholders and integrates all aspects of the CP system. Developing the CP workforce may take the form of creating a coordinated package of training that is aligned with the findings of the workforce analysis. Supporting the workforce includes strengthening supervisory structures and increasing worker satisfaction in order to encourage stronger performance and staff retention. In terms of supporting the professionalisation of the workforce, many countries are exploring legislation to create social work councils that act as regulatory bodies to establish standards and accreditation and to support professional development.

Discussion: Participants noted the challenges related to workforce development in different contexts. They also commented on the need to clearly distinguish the qualifications required for specific roles within the CP system to reduce the risk of staff causing harm by dealing with issues beyond their capacity. Some countries struggle with how best to incorporate a range of different CP qualifications. For example, in Liberia, some staff have academic training in sociology while others may have six months of training in social work. In many countries paraprofessionals and volunteers are performing the bulk of the work without extensive training or regulation, and there is an urgent need to address the training and capacity development needs for these CP actors within the system. Capacity-building efforts should train people not only to be front line CP workers, but also to think and work within a systems context. Participants recommended: 1) clarifying the definition of the CP workforce as part of the ongoing dialogue and work of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance;[25] 2) supporting countries to conduct a participatory analysis of their CP workforce that includes social workers with a diploma or degree as well as CP professionals with other degrees, and paraprofessionals and volunteers at the community level; and 3) upgrading the skills of the workforce.

25 The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance is a group that aims to generate the knowledge and action to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries.

The place of data in child protection systems: The internal, the external and the global

System strengthening requires a systematic approach to generating and analysing evidence and data across a range of strategic knowledge areas. Each area is a unique as well as collective contribution to child protection knowledge that must be conceptualized, designed, applied, monitored and evaluated and, ultimately, used to develop policy and practice. It is the analytical combination of data on incidence and prevalence, the understanding of the social and structural determinants of child protection issues, information on what works and why, and data on system performance that will eventually lead to robust evidence of what will result in positive change. Too often policy and practice is not built around theories that link relevant social and structural determinants of violence, exploitation and abuse with intervention strategies based on understanding what works and why. Strong results measurement is essential, but unless it is contextualised within wider understandings it may count for little.

While data and evidence are global issues, there is general consensus that limitations on countries' capacities to generate evidence and collect and analyse child protection data adequately are barriers to efforts to strengthen CP systems.[26] **Andrew Mawson, Chief of Child Protection, Office of Research, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence**, reiterated that data are essential for systems strengthening and posited that at the national level putting in place a knowledge framework covering key bases will improve the effectiveness of CP systems. This should incorporate systematic coverage of the following areas:

1) **Understanding of the problem**, including data on the nature, causes, incidence and prevalence of child protection violations, as well as protective factors. Surveys that help establish prevalence of violations and correlated factors are often recognised as important, but so too is qualitative research that seeks to explain why the data are as they are.

2) Systems thinking emphasises that an effective system must include the internal capacity to generate data and analyse them, so that stakeholders are able to assess results and make needed adjustments on a continual and iterative basis. **Results measurement** is essential, and much work has been undertaken in this area.

3) **Evidence on what works under what conditions**, including data to help develop, monitor and manage prevention and response programmes. This includes evaluation research built in from the start of programming as part of the implementation approach, not added as an afterthought at the end.

4) **Robust evidence on costs** that allows meaningful interaction with government budget-setting processes and ministries of finance.

5) **Evidence to make the case for investment** in child protection, including good data on the costs of not investing in preventing or responding to violence, exploitation and abuse, is a powerful political tool to make the case that preventing the exposure of children to violence is not only a child's right, but also a public good.

Echoing Mr. Goldman's advice to look for commonalities, Dr. Mawson suggested that the accumulation of data and evidence from around the world may point to some universal trends to

> "Development of solid evidence is integral to developing systems."
>
> Susan Bissell

26 UNICEF, 'Summary of Highlights, Global Child Protection Mapping Workshop', Bucharest, 11–13 June 2008.

inform policy and practice. Good knowledge management practices can systematically map and make available what is known so that it can be used and built on in different contexts. Data disaggregated by sex, disability and age can be tracked over time to improve understanding of the interaction of diversity issues and child protection issues and the evolution of risk through the life course. He also noted particular challenges including: the omission from most data sets of children who are not part of households; the inconsistency across most international prevalence figures on violence due to differences in the way that violence is conceptualised and measured; ethical issues related to risks for respondents and interviewers involved in data collection on child protection issues; and the scarcity of research on prevention.

Dr. Mawson suggested that researchers need to strengthen consensus around terminology and data collection methods that allow us to make meaningful comparisons between studies. There is a need to advocate for research on the social determinants of violence that impact children at the local, national and global levels. It is also necessary to overcome data fragmentation and explore child protection issues as a series of interconnected issues along the continuum of the life cycle. The economic context is important, too; we need to better understand the complex links between violence and poverty, and violence and inequalities, particularly because external funding is frequently channelled through poverty eradication plans, from which child protection is often missing. Dr. Mawson advocated for work on the following key areas: 1) improving the analytical capacities of major national institutions managing child protection data, including the ability to conduct household and out-of-household surveys and other exercises;[27] 2) strengthening a culture of evaluation, information management systems and active knowledge; 3) supporting global learning about what works and under what conditions, using dissemination tools, a mobilised academia, and South-North and South-South exchange.

Dr. Mawson emphasised that none of this is easy – but neglected issues have limited data, and limited data contribute to the issue remaining neglected. So if CP systems are to take their rightful place in the pantheon of interventions on behalf of children, the issue of evidence and data has to be addressed with some priority.

Discussion: Participants commented on the ethical tension around data ownership when one generates data on children as well as the politics of data and information management and its use in policymaking. Participants reiterated the value of looking for 'quick wins' such as the CP Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG)[28] and the Global Learning Initiative on Violence against Children.[29] At the national level, strengthening routine administrative information systems to more effectively collect CP data is the best area on which to focus. Participants also emphasised that data collection and use should be made more applicable and more relevant to national partners, including governments, so that they can more effectively measure the outcomes of their interventions and adjust policies and programmes as required considering the impact on all aspects of the CP system.

27 UNICEF, 'Summary of Highlights, Global Child Protection Mapping Workshop', Bucharest, 11–13 June 2008.

28 Established in July 2010, the Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CP MERG) seeks to strengthen the quality of monitoring and evaluation, research and data collection in child protection, through the development of standards, tools and recommendations that are relevant for the sector. It also helps facilitate coordination, communication and knowledge exchange across organizations on monitoring and evaluation of child protection. For further information, please visit <www.cpmerg.org>.

29 Refers to the Global Learning Initiative (GLI) on Violence against Children. To be established in 2013, GLI is an independent global research endeavour – involving the public and private sector, academics and policymakers – that will investigate what is working and what needs to change to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Financing child protection systems

Stephen Wainaina, Economic Planning Secretary, Ministry of State for Planning, Kenya, introduced his paper by noting three aspects that determine the financing of CP systems: 1) clarity in terms of defining the boundaries around CP systems, which in turn determines the actors that should be involved for the budget process and the responsibilities of different ministries; 2) context, including the level of development, has implications for the type of system developed and its financing needs and opportunities; and 3) competing priorities – the available fiscal space and therefore the access to funds that can be allocated to CP systems - depend on the capacity to raise revenues and the priority given to different issues.[30]

Mr. Wainaina noted that CP systems generally compete for funding with other needs in the social sector, including education, health, food, nutrition, housing, social security and youth programmes. Finding the funds for child protection may involve other sectors and their budgets, which means bringing the actors together. Echoing Professor Oduol's comments about building collaboration among the ministries, Mr. Wainaina noted that child protection crosses sectors, so having an intersectoral framework assists in obtaining the resources. He highlighted that it is vital to ascertain if requests for allocated resources are for the CP system or for an individual CP activity. He emphasised the importance of presenting clear data to the Ministry of Finance as part of budget preparation and noted that it is essential to address not only what is paid for on whose behalf, but how it is assessed, and to distinguish if expenditures pay for services (i.e. outputs) or for outcomes. There is also a need to be clear on the logic of expenditure, to look at projected capital expenditures as distinct from current expenditures. Further, it is also important to examine the social and financial mechanisms that drive change over time and consider how programmes will optimise the good incentives and minimise the negative. Reiterating the importance of integrating knowledge and action, Mr. Wainaina stressed the need for feedback mechanisms within the system to facilitate change among the people in the system. This links again with the need for quality data.

Discussion: Participants considered how to better understand budget processes and use data to marshal arguments for funding. While there is clearly a moral imperative to protect children, the key question that will influence the Ministry of Finance is "what is the cost of not protecting children." Thus, it is important to prepare the data, arguments and economic models that prove the value of child protection in economic terms. Participants commented that the social sector ministry, which often has limited human and financial resources, might lack the capacity to interact effectively with the Ministry of Finance. In developed countries academia plays an important role in influencing decision-makers, but it does not always have the same role in developing countries. Finally, in terms of finance, participants cautioned against ignoring corruption, the proverbial 'elephant in the room' and 'hole in the bottom of the cookie jar'. Strengthening CP systems must include good governance.

30 Inter-agency Group on Child Protection Systems in sub-Saharan Africa, 'Conference on Child Protection Systems Strengthening in sub-Saharan Africa: Promising practices, lessons learned and the way forward', Dakar, May 2012.

Engagement of children and communities

> "Often children are considered as key informants whereas children should be partners in the evaluation process."
>
> Essam Ali

Essam Ali presented a paper that examined the engagement of children and communities in their relation to CP systems. He argued that children can contribute significantly to the process of strengthening the system through engaging in policy dialogue and advocacy and sharing their unique views on the rights-related issues that affect them. He also highlighted children's specific contributions to the different components of the CP system, specifically in the areas of data collection, the continuum and process of care and capacity development for service providers.

Mr. Ali noted that consultation with children is a primary source of knowledge on children's issues and is the most common form of engagement. Engaging children in data collection can facilitate understanding of the situation for children and the root causes of violence against children. For example in the MENA region, children's contribution to the UN Study on Violence against Children (2006) made it impossible for officials involved in the consultation to deny the existence of violence and difficult for them to justify the violence. He emphasised, however, that it is important to involve children with direct experience of the problems being examined, such as including children who have worked in a study on child labour. He noted that children who are involved in data collection or validation sometimes express frustration that they have answered the same interview questions many times, but nothing has changed in their lives, which highlights the need to improve the impact of policy or legislative changes in the CP system so they may be seen and recognised by children themselves. Mr. Ali noted that children can also play an active role in improving the quality of social services and guaranteeing their accountability through participatory evaluation methods that involve children, not just as key informants, but as partners in the evaluation process. He also noted that engaging children at the policy level can be challenging, especially in non-democratic, highly centralised contexts.

Discussion: In considering how the engagement of children and communities can be strengthened through a systems approach and how engagement of children can strengthen the broader CP system, participants discussed how to increase the involvement of children in service or other governmental planning in a more democratic way. The discussion also examined the role of children in their own protection. Participants emphasised the value of community engagement in making CP systems accountable and effective and noted that there have to be both bottom-up and top-down approaches for public engagement and child participation in the system-strengthening process. Participants strongly urged that more work be done on child participation in CP systems, including a conference dedicated to the topic.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: LOOKING ACROSS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN CP COMPONENTS WITHIN A SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK

Presentations and discussion in each of the round-table groups echoed elements of the earlier discussions on systems thinking, emphasised the complex interaction among the components and indicated that strengthening a given component can serve as an entry point to strengthen the broader CP system as illustrated below.

Finance: There is a clear consensus among the groups that improved financing for CP systems depends on working across sectors and marshalling data to: 1) explain investments in the CP system; and 2) provide evidence on the cost of not investing in CP. In many countries national CP actors and institutions may not have the capacity to present data convincingly to the Ministry of Finance, and this is an important area to consider as part of capacity development for the CP workforce.

Data: All groups highlighted the importance of improving data collection and analysis, including of administrative data, in order to strengthen specific components and the CP system generally. Improving the analytical capacities of key national institutions that collect and manage CP data, strengthening the use of data within CP systems and supporting global learning about what works under what circumstances are ways to enhance CP data and strengthen CP systems.

CP workforce: All groups addressed the importance of developing the capacity of the CP workforce to ensure that it can effectively provide prevention and response services but also compile, analyse and learn from CP data to strengthen CP systems. It is important to assess how the supply and distribution of CP workers matches the needs of the system in a way that involves many actors and perspectives and then make improvements by: 1) adjusting financing, tasks or training to align the system; 2) providing coordinated trainings in line with the analysis; and 3): supporting the workforce through supervisory structures and retention efforts.

Engaging children and communities: The engagement group highlighted how involving children can enhance the quality of data collection and accountability mechanisms such as evaluations but noted that the CP workforce and policymakers in many countries may not be open to their participation, in part due to a lack of understanding and capacity.

Systems thinking: Discussion in most round-table groups touched on some elements of systems thinking discussed previously, such as integrating knowledge and action, listening to many perspectives, and understanding and aligning system parts and building collaborative relationships.

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the round-table presentations and discussion on strengthening CP systems components and actors:

- Exploration of the different CP system components highlighted how the functions and the actors are all part of the system. It is not the actor working on the system as an outsider, nor the components determining the actors, rather it is **the interactions among components, functions and actors that together comprise a CP system**, and the outcomes of all of these interactions are the outcome for the system.
- Emphasis on the need to gather and compare data and global learning across contexts **reinforced the importance of avoiding 'exceptionalism'** in efforts to understand and strengthen CP systems.
- **Consensus on the interaction among CP system components advanced recognition of system dynamics** and how efforts to strengthen one component will reverberate through the whole system.
- Consideration of how to strengthen CP system components reinforced an understanding of **how systems thinking and models can inform understanding of real-life efforts to strengthen CP systems**.
- Reiteration, particularly in the finance group, of the **importance of building collaborative relationships across sectors and key ministries** solidified consensus on the need to improve capacity to garner support for investment in CP systems.

Thinking through the child protection system interface with other social systems

Child protection is a discipline and also interdisciplinary. Interaction between the CP system and other social systems can take different forms, and result in different boundaries between them in different contexts. There is consensus that CP systems have much to learn about how to interface effectively with other systems and also to learn from them.

There is also consensus that as a child may have contact with a number of social sector systems, it is important to understand the relationships between those systems and the impact that they have on the child. Three plenary sessions focused on the relationship between the CP system and other social systems.[31]

31 A planned plenary session on the interface between the education and the CP system did not take place because the speaker (Miguel Székely) was unable to attend the conference. Although the education sector is not specifically represented in this report, it is an important system that interfaces with child protection.

Child Protection systems and health

Bernadette Madrid, Director of the Child Protection Unit (CPU) at Philippine General Hospital, University of the Philippines, highlighted the close links and commonalities between health and CP systems in terms of definitions, determinants and the interaction of rights – especially the CRC right to health (article 24) and the right to protection from

violence (article 19). Dr. Madrid discussed the health consequences of child maltreatment and shared the results of the Metro Manila Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study.[32] Illustrating a relatively strong, graded relationship between the number of ACEs, health-risk behaviours and poor health, the study concluded that ACEs are a main determinant of the health and social well-being of the nation, throughout the lifespan of an individual. These findings correlate with another study mentioned by Dr. Madrid that found that people with six or more ACEs died nearly 20 years earlier on average than those without ACEs.[33]

The Metro Manila study provided evidence that child maltreatment is a public health problem and requires a public health approach to address it, with a focus on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce the prevalence of health-risk behaviour and morbidity in later life. Dr. Madrid explained that this evidence became the foundation for an important advocacy message for policymakers in the Philippines and helped drive the CP agenda forward. This provides a good example of how evidence-based advocacy can be used to support a systemic approach to child protection and illustrates the power of data to make a case and support systems strengthening.

The evidence also pointed to a need for an integrated response to child protection violations, which led to a paradigm shift in paediatrics, with paediatricians going beyond usual practice to work closely with social workers, teachers, policymakers, NGOs and other actors. In line with this shift, Dr. Madrid went on to describe CPU at the Philippine General Hospital as an example of an interdisciplinary approach to child protection. The unit is comprised of a multidisciplinary team with a clear process – from intake to case management – involving medical, social services, mental health, legal and police services. As of 2012, the Child Protection Network comprised 54 CPUs in 35 provinces and cities, covering 47.7 per cent of children. By 2014, it is expected to expand to 85 CPUs and 75.8 per cent coverage.

> "What we're all working towards is the same child…whatever road you take."
>
> Bernadette Madrid

In his presentation, **Armando Barrientos, Professor and Research Director at the Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester**, explored in more depth the connection between social protection and child protection that was referenced repeatedly during the conference. Professor Barrientos provided some key reasons why CP specialists should be interested in social protection:

- Children are overrepresented in the target group of social protection: 1.4 billion people survive on less than US$1 a day, of which 1 billion are children.
- Social protection shares common objectives with child protection in terms of child development, well-being and survival; however, while social protection efforts generally stop at children in poverty, child protection efforts seek to protect all children.
- Social protection objectives can contribute to child protection outcomes. For example, birth registration is a key mechanism to access social protection programmes and schemes to increase registration, such as Brazil's single registry, also provide essential information that can strengthen CP systems. Child labour is another area where a social protection objective can help make an impact.

32 Ramiro, Laurie S., et al., 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Adults in a Developing Country Setting', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 34, no. 1, November 2010. Available at: <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20888640>.

33 Brown, David W., et al., 'Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Risk of Premature Mortality', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, vol. 37, no. 5, November 2009.

Professor Barrientos highlighted the tension between individual rights and family agency, and noted that it is important to consider how we engage families: Social protection programmes are individually based, but the effects reach everyone in the household, especially children. He also noted that for both social protection and child protection, stable institutions are important. Ministries of social development, in addressing poverty, can also address child protection. Discussion focused on social protection and its potential as a preventive measure. Participants explored the idea that social protection is an investment in human capital and supports healthy development aims. However, participants also re-emphasised the difficulty of measuring prevention. There are many points of overlap and interface between child protection and social protection, and there is a need to engage in more dialogue to ensure stronger and more systemic synergy between the two.

CP systems and social welfare

Marit Skivenes, University of Bergen, Norway, presented on the trends and orientations of CP systems in OECD countries and the interaction between CP systems and family services in efforts to combat child abuse, neglect and exploitation. She emphasised concepts related to power differentials and the balance between rights and responsibilities of different actors, noting that power affects all aspects of the CP system. She highlighted the tensions within a CP system between the right to privacy and state power and stressed the nature of the relationship between children, parents and the State. Professor Skivenes noted that CP systems are often defined by differences – by what is special and unique – but she underlined that there are common features, values and ideas underpinning many CP systems. Since the 1990s, several trends have shaped the development of CP systems in OECD countries: 1) systems have expanded their domain, and more children and families receive services from the social welfare systems; 2) child protection has come under critical public scrutiny; 3) most child welfare systems have increasingly emphasised legalistic and systemic thinking, evidence-based methods and procedural tools; and 4) there is a growing recognition of the challenges around racial and ethnic minority groups, which are overrepresented in the child welfare systems in several OECD countries.

> "Power affects all aspects of the child protection system."
>
> Marit Skivenes

Based on a study of 10 OECD countries,[34] Professor Skivenes described two main system orientations: family service and child protection. A third approach, which is a mixture of the other two orientations, is the child-focused orientation. This alternative orientation concentrates on the child as an individual with an independent relation to the State, rather than seeing the child only as part of the family; puts children's rights above parents' rights and emphasises parents' obligations as caregivers. A child-focused system is not restricted to narrow concerns about harm and abuse; rather the object of concern is the child's overall development and well-being. This orientation requires a need to balance rights and responsibility relationships with the child, parents and the State. Comparing the three orientations reveals different drivers for intervention as well as different roles of the State. Professor Skivenes underlined both the importance of context and the volatile nature of child welfare systems and noted that the focus and orientation of a CP system can change rapidly, particularly when there is financial, political or media pressure.

34 Gilbert, Neil, et al. (eds.), *Child Protection Systems: International trends and orientations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: THINKING THROUGH THE INTERFACE WITH OTHER SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS

In examining the interface with other social sector systems, presenters highlighted:

- **How child protection is a sector, but also intersectoral.**
- **How rights underpin CP systems, noting the tension between children's rights and family agency.**
- **How understanding child protection from a health or poverty alleviation perspective can promote prevention using public health and poverty alleviation approaches.**
- **How a CP systems typology can be used to explore the commonalities and differences of CP systems across countries (OECD examples).**
- **How the orientation of a system may shape its interface with other social welfare systems.**
- **That all social sector systems have the potential to be working with some of the same children and their families.**

System dynamics: **Presenters also highlighted the dynamic nature of CP systems and how internal or external changes can reverberate throughout and beyond the CP system. For example, changes in understanding of health and causes of poor health can shift policy and investment in favour of CP systems, as in Dr. Madrid's example. Likewise, efforts to ensure systematic birth registration, linked with social protection, can also strengthen child protection as Professor Barrientos described. Similarly, Professor Skivenes that noted the focus and orientation of a system may change depending on financial, political or media pressure.**

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the panel session on CP system interface with other social systems:

- Exploration of the linkages between child protection, social protection and health – especially as related to prevention – seems to shift the focus towards a **broader concern with children's rights and overall well-being, an approach similar to a broader concept of 'integrated child protection'** as raised by Latin American participants during the round-table discussions on regional development. This perhaps warrants further discussion and exploration.
- Recognition of the potential for **promoting synergies between CP systems and other social systems** suggests a possible area for further exploration.
- Reflection on the tension between children's rights and family rights reiterated the **importance of understanding the relationship between the State and the**

individual and how it differs in different contexts, which furthered thinking about CP systems and children's rights, and power dynamics

- Reflection on the interface between CP systems and other social welfare systems, particularly social protection schemes, reiterated **governments' central role in CP systems**.

IV. Giving Priority to Prevention

The need to strengthen prevention has been cited as an important reason to move to a systems approach. There is wide recognition of the need to shift the focus to preventing children's exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in the first instance, but it is not clear how to put in place the mechanisms to do this. Systems thinking may shed light on how to more effectively prevent CP violations. It is important to identify and learn from examples of prevention within a systems context and consider how we can strengthen CP systems in a manner that explicitly strengthens prevention.

> "The child protection system has been likened to having an ambulance waiting down at the bottom of a cliff."
>
> Morag McArthur

In her keynote address, **Najat M'jid, UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography**, defined prevention as: *Measures and actions undertaken to prevent all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and violations of children's rights*. She noted that prevention is a critical part of child protection, which specifically includes preventing, prohibiting and responding to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children. Many actors have undertaken prevention actions and activities, but these efforts have usually been comprised of uncoordinated and unsustainable activities in the absence of a comprehensive and holistic approach. They have been more reactive than proactive, have not accounted for the multidimensional aspects of the underlying factors and risks and have not measured impact. In order to enhance effective prevention, Dr. M'jid recommended the following:

1) **Consider prevention as an integral part** of comprehensive and rights-based CP systems. Project activities do not add up to prevention as they may not address the underlying factors that lead to CP risks and violations.

2) **Adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach** before any violation occurs, taking into account risk factors related to the context. This includes better understanding and knowledge of:

   - The complex and multidimensional risk factors that increase vulnerability of children, ie. push/pull factors related to context at local, national and international levels;
   - The different forms of neglect, exploitation and violence and how they may be interlinked, i.e., a child can be both or successively a victim of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;
   - The harmful social norms and practices;
   - The places where violations can occur (family, community, school, local institutions, neighbourhood, cross border);
   - The demand for commercial sexual exploitation of children;
   - The various profiles of children at risk, including situations and degrees of risk;
   - The profiles of offenders and exploiters;

- The short-, mid- and long-term consequences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation on the lives and development of children.

3) **Establish proactive, comprehensive, context-specific and sustainable prevention**. This approach should take into account all of the risk factors and enable action before a violation occurs.

Dr. M'jid emphasised that comprehensive prevention efforts require: common understanding, links between actors, accountability mechanisms, quality human resources, adequate budget allocation, assessment and impact measurement. Children's involvement and participation in all aspects of prevention is essential. Legislation can also be a powerful preventive tool, particularly when protective regulations include strong sanctions and criminalise perpetrators and not children. It can be a long process, but effective prevention is also about changing social perceptions and working closely with communities to make them actors of change. Finally, there is a need to ensure regular follow-up and assessment of the preventive measures undertaken in order to measure their impact on children's protection.

In responding to Dr. M'jid's address, **Rebecca Davis, Professor and Director of the Center for International Social Work at Rutgers University**, suggested that prevention might be relative to the context. She explained that in the case of Romania, prevention of institutionalisation initially focused on outcomes related to reducing the number of children in institutions – with institutionalisation defined as the risk factor. Within that context, at that time, prevention was understood in this narrow way, and very little was known about broader risk factors. Over time the focus shifted from institutionalisation as the risk to the underlying causes of institutionalisation being the risk, and to well-being as the desired outcome.

Discussion: Plenary participants reiterated the importance of documenting the cost of not addressing child protection risks to make the case for investing in prevention. Participants emphasised the importance of understanding and reinforcing protective factors, as well as addressing risk factors – thus moving away from a deficit model to an assets model. Discussion also addressed context, values and social norms as regards different concepts of prevention – and the fact that some social norms intending to protect children within a given cultural context may be perceived by outsiders as rights violations. Dr. M'jid also noted that it is important to work with the community to highlight good practices with leaders, families and religious leaders in a non-pejorative way. Discussion highlighted that local NGOs and civil society have a key role to play in prevention efforts given their cultural awareness and local linkages and can empower local ownership of prevention and child protection. In order to build sustainability it is important to include prevention in the political agenda at both national and international levels, as well as at the local level. As noted by many, prevention is a long-term process and measuring the impact of prevention efforts will take time. Funders, however, operate on a much shorter time frame of one to two years, which is an obstacle to sustained support for prevention efforts. Thus, participants noted that there is a need to educate donors about the value of investing in prevention and advocate for longer time horizons that enable more effective monitoring and measurement. It is also important to look for innovations for short-term success in primary prevention and assess their effectiveness.

> "Not all harm is reversible. Why doesn't prevention get the traction it needs and deserves? Perhaps because it is not a rescue effort."
>
> Rebecca Davis

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the plenary session on prevention:

- Building on earlier discussion on the importance of early intervention, this session spelled out more clearly what needs to be done – specifically **understanding the nature of CP risks – not just the child at risk but all the factors at play**.
- Examination of the push-and-pull factors within a global context reiterated the importance of **CP systems functioning on a transnational level**, as suggested by earlier speakers.
- Emphasis on realisation of **children's rights as a strong protective factor highlighted the important interface between CP systems and other social systems**. This pushes the boundaries of the CP system and underlines the relationship between the child and the State, which warrants further discussion.
- **To make CP systems stronger it is necessary to make prevention a stronger part of the system**. Systems thinking and models may help facilitate understanding of how to strengthen CP systems in a manner that fortifies prevention. This includes understanding a system's visible and non-visible aspects and the complex and multidimensional factors that affect children's risk, vulnerability, resilience and protection.
- **Strengthening prevention is a priority, but it is a process**, and there is recognition that it remains a challenge for various reasons including points touched on in the round-table discussions: insufficient financing, data, workforce capacity, engagement of communities and children, power dynamics and the cultural context, as well as the need for longer time horizons.
- The **context may define the risk**, and over time the identification of the risk may change.

V. Measuring Systems Performance

The effectiveness of a CP system is ultimately measured at the level of the child – whether children are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence. Measuring the performance of CP systems is hugely challenging, specifically the causality between the change in the CP system and changes in outcomes for children. The first priority is to help determine the status of children and whether their outcomes are changing. The second is to identify what elements and dynamics of a system provide the most leverage for goal-directed change.[35] Three plenary speakers presented examples of how data have been collected and used to measure and strengthen system performance.

35 Fluke, John, and Fred Wulczyn, 'A concept note on child protection systems monitoring and evaluation', Discussion Paper, UNICEF, 2010.

Using a review to assess and document system performance

Rolando Melo Latorre, National Director of the National Service for Minors (SENAME), Chile, presented on the collection, analysis and use of data to affect systems change. He described the operations of SENAME, which is a centralised public service and an auxiliary body of the judicial system within the Ministry of Justice. SENAME ensures programmes for children whose rights have been violated or those in conflict with the law, and it provides alternative care through residential centres and a foster families programme. Part of its function is to monitor efficient and effective use of resources and evaluate the functioning of its network of service providers. From 2009 to 2011, SENAME collected and analysed data on trends of children in residential care and those in foster care and documented the benefits of children living in a family environment. This information was used to generate a cultural change – a shift to a greater respect for children's rights and support for their placement in a family environment. This entailed: 1) increasing the supply of subcontracted projects that prevent separation through focused intervention and family strengthening; 2) awareness-raising with key actors on the child's rights to grow up in a family and community; 3) strengthening work with the family courts; and 4) technical strengthening of the network of foster families. Building awareness about children's right to grow and develop in a family context has helped to generate a change away from an automatic reliance on residential care and towards foster care. SENAME is currently developing an information management system to track and monitor data in family courts and on children in residential centres and in foster families in order to more effectively promote alternatives to institutionalisation.

Using systems modelling and systems thinking to understand and measure systems performance

Fred Wulczyn, Senior Research Fellow at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, presented on his work assembling data on children in out-of-home care and using systems thinking and systems modelling to better understand how specific changes within a system affect the whole system. Better understanding of how the system behaves can inform how to design policies, programmes and interventions that promote better outcomes for children. Chapin Hall, within the University of Chicago, assembled a rich repository of data about children in out-of-home care. The database includes data on approximately 3 million children in out-of-home care, their gender, age, race/ethnicity, and why they entered out-of-home care. The database tracks 3.5 million individual placements for these children into settings with kin, strangers and institutions, over a period of 10–35 years. The database is linked to population data at the state, county and census tract level, which enables the study of the social, political and economic drivers of demand for out-of-home care.

> "Systems are more than an approach. We have to understand the tools and methodologies one needs to understand their behaviour."
>
> Fred Wulczyn

Dr. Wulczyn described one example of how the team at Chapin Hall has used this data to better understand how CP systems behave. This work focused on understanding how the supply and demand for beds in residential settings impact the placement of children, specifically to understand if residential placements are in fact driven by supply rather

than need. To understand the correlation between supply and demand, they examined the number of admissions side by side with the number of children leaving care and found a correlation between increasing discharges and increasing entries. Based on this initial evidence that placements are possibly supply driven, they are building a model of the system using two approaches: a systems dynamic model and an agent-based simulation. They are seeking to understand what happens when the number of children occupying beds in the residential care system falls below a certain level or pushes close to capacity – to determine the point at which providers of residential care change the supply by adding or subtracting beds and how those decisions interact with demand. This model allows for understanding a range of system-level behaviours (good and bad), in order to manage maladaptive behaviour, reward adaptive behaviour and ultimately understand the forces interacting within the system. Understanding system behaviour in this way can enable more thoughtful adjustments to the system – through changes in policy or programming – to create better outcomes for children.

Developing a baseline on violence against children: United Republic of Tanzania

Mubarak Maman, Zanzibar representative for Save the Children Tanzania, presented a case study on the United Republic of Tanzania's efforts to provide evidence on and respond to violence against children. In 2009, the Government undertook a National Study on Violence Against Children[36] measuring all forms of violence (sexual, physical and emotional) among girls and boys. A multisectoral task force led this baseline study, consisting of government ministries and partners from social welfare, the police and legal system, education and health care sectors, the United Nations and civil society. Launched in August 2011, the study found that nearly 3 out of every 10 girls and nearly 3 out of every 20 boys in the United Republic of Tanzania claim to have experienced sexual violence. Almost three quarters of girls and boys questioned had experienced physical violence before the age of 18 at the hand of an adult or an intimate partner. Around 25 per cent of the children in the study had been subjected to emotional abuse by an adult during childhood.

The study provided irrefutable evidence of the scale and scope of abuse and highlighted the critical need to translate the findings into actions that will reduce the prevalence of violence against children. In response, the Government launched a National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2011–2015). The plan includes recommended targets and interventions that are being implemented across a number of sectors, including justice and police, health, education, social welfare, civil society, community and media. Efforts are also ongoing to strengthen and scale up district CP systems, including CP training, improved information management and roll-out of regulations, guidelines and standards. The United Republic of Tanzania's experience is a good example of how multisectoral research on a specific issue can be used as an entry point to strengthen the broader CP system and its components. The next challenge is to deliver on these obligations, which requires committed action from each sector working together to mobilise an effective national response to violence against children in the United Republic of Tanzania.

36 United Republic of Tanzania, *Violence Against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey 2009, United Republic of Tanzania,* August 2011

Using governance indicators to measure the system

Diane Swales, Regional Adviser for Child Protection for UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), presented a proposed framework of core indicators for measuring and monitoring national CP systems in the East Asia and Pacific region.[37] Ms. Swales emphasised that national CP systems are the most effective and sustainable means to protect children from all forms of maltreatment. Thus, governance of the CP system is a critical link in the process of translating inputs to outputs, and is something that has been overlooked in previous issue-based analysis – the 'missing middle' of the results chain.

In order to fulfil their accountability and governance role, governments and their partners require accurate, regular and up-to-date data and information on how such systems are functioning. Ms. Swales noted that past efforts have produced generic cross-cutting indicators, however, most data sets identified issue-based statistics. UNICEF EAPRO sought specific information on such data sets and disaggregation. The proposed framework aims to monitor policy and practice improvements (against a baseline); assess whether policies and programmes to strengthen CP systems are having an impact over time; collect indicator based evidence on roles of key ministries and departments involved in child protection; support local, national and regional advocacy to strengthen national CP systems; and compare the status of national CP systems across countries. Ms. Swales went on to explain the details of the framework, which is comprised of seven key child protection domains (see box) that examine overlaps, interrelations, attitudes and values affecting the system. It also includes 37 indicators, 3 types of indicators (determinant, performance, exogenous), 37 benchmarks, and standards graded A, B, C, D. The indicators, used either in concert or selectively, support monitoring and assessment of the enabling environment or governance of national CP systems, including the relevant legal and regulatory structure, the social welfare system for children and families, and the justice system as it relates to child protection. The framework is currently being piloted.

> "Investing in child protection is not only a moral imperative; it is also a sound economic investment, with high rates of return if systems of governance are well managed."
>
> Amartya Sen (2001), quoted by Diane Swales

Key child protection domains

- Child protection policy framework
- Public financial management
- Human resources child protection
- Statistics and information
- Child protection systems coverage
- Surveillance, gate keeping, referral and quality assurance
- Public attitudes and values

37 UNICEF, Measuring and Monitoring Child Protection Systems: Proposed regional core indicators for East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 2012.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: MEASURING SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Presenters introduced different methods to collect data, build an evidence base and better understand CP systems in order to change an aspect of the system. Presentations during this plenary session echoed points made earlier by Dr. Mawson on the different ways in which data can be used to strengthen CP systems. Each illustrated that different types of measurement and different types of data (e.g. administrative, special surveys) are required at different times and for different

ends. Like Dr. Madrid earlier, they noted how evidence on CP system performance could be used to advocate for systems change, highlighting the examples below.

- **The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania's study on violence against children provided irrefutable evidence of the scale and scope of abuse and spurred the Government to launch and implement a National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children.**
- **In Chile, a government-led review of children in residential care and those in foster care documented the benefits for children living in a family environment. This information was used to generate support for the placement of children in family-based care.**
- **In the United States, modelling enabled a better understanding of how specific changes within a system impact the whole system. This can inform more thoughtful adjustments to the system – through changes in policy or programming – to create better outcomes for children.**
- **In East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF is piloting an indicator framework to monitor whether policies and programmes to strengthen systems are having an impact over time and also collect evidence on roles of key ministries and departments involved in CP in order to improve governments' capacity to fulfil their accountability and governance role.**

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the plenary panel session on measurement:

- Building on earlier discussion about the types of data needed, this session articulated **the importance of measuring system inputs and system outcomes for children** to understand a system's performance and its patterns of behaviour and thus be able to make more thoughtful adjustments.
- The examples of measurement presented in this session demonstrated **the importance of integrating knowledge and action, particularly for government**. Data and evidence can empower government to act to improve the CP system, and government can play a key role in measuring system performance.
- It remains **difficult to measure the causal relationship between the CP system and the outcomes for children**, and this is an area to explore further.
- Data not only inform current programmes but **may result in a change in the identification of the risk factor**.

VI. Issues and Target Groups in a Systems Perspective

In child protection there are certain groups of children that attract specific attention and have unique requirements. Shifting to a more comprehensive CP systems approach recognises that these children need to continue to receive the specific services they require as well as benefit from the entire child protection system. An initial plenary presentation framed the discussion around the shift from an issue-based approach to a systems approach and laid the foundation for round-table sessions to explore evidence-based strategies on working with specific target groups within the child protection system, thereby establishing a solid platform to increase prevention and response mechanisms for all children.[38]

Child protection system strengthening: Issues as entry points?

Alexander Krueger, Director and Co-founder of Child Frontiers, highlighted the benefits and risks of using issues as entry points to strengthen CP systems. He opened his presentation by acknowledging the different concepts and terminology around issues, systems, themes and target populations within the broader field of child protection, which can fuel misunderstanding and polarisation. He posited that CP issues and systems approaches may not need to be exclusive to each other and could instead be mutually strengthening. He noted the benefits of using CP issues and contexts as entry points for strengthening CP systems. For example, an emergency context can serve as a catalyst and bring together actors and resources around specific issues to create momentum. Work on a specific issue, like alternative care, has provided opportunities to engage with a population, gather data, garner political support and raise funds and in this way has also served as a catalyst. Work on specific and complex CP issues has also generated valuable knowledge and data. For example, organisations and individuals concerned with children living and working on the street have knowledge and expertise relevant to the broader CP system.

Mr. Krueger also highlighted the risks of focusing on issues as entry points, including the potential for competing issues and subsystems and uneven development of CP systems. He suggested that it might be more useful to consider issues as discourse changers rather than entry points per se. In looking forward he suggested considering the relationships of specific issues and the broader CP system; it is important to look at how an issue fits within the system, how it overlaps with the rest of the system and how it might require a change in purpose or a reassessment of system boundaries as well as how the issue contributes to the system's development. Mr. Krueger closed by suggesting that, in fact, the CP system may be the entry point to sustainably and equitably addressing the majority of CP issues.

> "The child protection system is the entry point to sustainably and equitably address the majority of child protection issues."
>
> Alexander Krueger

Considering child protection issues and target groups within a systems perspective

Five round-table sessions explored ways in which specific groups of children with particular needs may be addressed within a systems framework. The sessions featured up to three presentations focused on one of the following target groups: children without parental care; child refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); indigenous children, families, communities and land; child migrants and trafficked children; and children in contact with the justice subsystem. The presentations and discussions examined

38 'Issues and Target Groups in a Systems Perspective: Instructions for presenters and facilitators', CPS Conference, New Delhi, November 2012.

the challenges and benefits of working within a systems framework to address the requirements of these specific groups of children and considered how a focus on specific groups of children could strengthen the overall system.

Children without parental care

> "Placing care at the heart of a child protection system reflects an acknowledgement that how well children are cared for is fundamentally important to their broader protection."
>
> Anna Feuchtwang

Anna Feuchtwang, Chief Executive of EveryChild, shared a model for placing care at the heart of CP systems.[39] The goals of such a system are in line with the CRC articles that relate to children's care and the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2010), and include: ensuring that more children grow up in stable, safe and caring families; providing a range of temporary, high-quality alternative care choices; and promoting better and more participatory decisions about children's care. Ms. Feuchtwang emphasised that care is pivotal to ensuring children's broader protection. Childcare reform can act as an impetus for broader change – and failure to address children's care has a major impact not only on children's current well-being, but also on their ability to contribute to societies as adults. It is essential to link efforts to promote better care for children with health, education, justice and social protection systems and coordinate activities to help them. She noted that there has been progress in the care sector, including strong guidance, tools and pockets of good practices. However, to strengthen care for children, the sector needs to work with all actors, including both the State and NGOs, and also recognise the role of faith-based organisations. It is also important to build on the strengths that exist in families and communities, understand the obstacles and ensure diversity-friendly approaches.

Gwen Burchell, Director of United Aid for Azerbaijan (UAFA), presented a case study on how children with disabilities have been prioritised in child protection reform in Azerbaijan. She explained that although there was often good work at the local level, there was no funding to be able to document and communicate it. Other challenges included a lack of care providers, an insufficient understanding of vulnerability, poor cooperation between service providers and ministries, and failure to prioritise children with disabilities in de-institutionalisation efforts. To address these issues, the UAFA approach involves: long-term planning and implementation; investment in staff through skills training; working in institutions and communities simultaneously; a balanced effort on advocacy, empowerment of community-based groups, policy work and raising of public awareness – through a strong community-based network. Ms. Burchell highlighted that disability awareness is a key part of the training model and case management approach. Through these efforts UAFA successfully introduced early intervention, prevention and family support mechanisms for children with disabilities and their families. UAFA was also able to promote a social approach to the protection of children with disabilities through a community-based rehabilitation model, and has supported advocacy efforts by children with disabilities and their families, along with piloting state contracting of NGOs as service providers.

Dilli Guragai, Senior Adviser, Save the Children Nepal, presented on Safe Communities, a Save the Children initiative to protect children in jeopardy in Nepal (2009–2011). The project was aimed at developing a

39 EveryChild, 'Placing Care at the Heart of Child Protection Systems', EveryChild, November 2012.

community-based care model in response to a rapid increase in the number of children in residential care facilities in Nepal. At least 60 per cent of children in institutions had one or two living birth parents. Some of the challenges in addressing this issue included a lack of professional social workers, ineffective gatekeeping, and difficulty finding family placements. The project had four components: 1) establishing a system for monitoring child rights; 2) preventing children from being separated from their parents; 3) reintegrating children from institutional care to parental/community-based care; and 4) strengthening CP systems at national and community levels. The project successfully established child protection committees, mobilised local resources, and supported policy changes related to alternative care, such as the inclusion of the village protection committee model in the draft 2012 Child Act. Residential care was sought only as a last resort. Some of the lessons learned included the crucial importance of gathering data on children in jeopardy, the key role of prevention in minimising the need for alternative care, emphasis on early detection and support, and the role of local child protection structures in promoting family and community-based care.

Discussion: The session emphasised the importance of addressing children without appropriate care within a systems framework – ensuring that there are national data and monitoring systems, laws, policies, and intersectoral collaboration (education, health, and social protection). Participants underlined that care and family support should be part of the system package to ensure that more children grow up in stable, safe and caring families – with appropriate investment. Participants also suggested that alternative high-quality care should be provided and more participatory decisions about children´s care should be promoted. Mapping and analysis need to address these aspects. In particular, the session shed valuable light on the situation of children with disabilities in alternative care. Participants agreed that in going forward there is a need to:

- Gain a better understanding of how and where children are best cared for in each context;
- Make sure protection systems are also family strengthening;
- Ensure that national strategies, policies and guidance on care reflect international guidelines on children in alternative care;
- Demonstrate evidence of the damaging effects on children of being out of parental care;
- Promote investment in family support and in a range of quality alternative care options;
- Ensure that data collection is disaggregated – to capture and reach marginalised groups;
- Make the system accessible to children with disabilities and other groups that are vulnerable and subject to discrimination.

> "Disability should be at the core of the system; it will make the system inclusive for all."
>
> Conference participant

Child refugees and internally displaced persons

The round-table session on child refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) outlined the challenges involved in, and benefits derived from, linking refugees and IDP communities with more formal CP systems.

Monika Sandvik-Nylund, Senior Adviser (Children) for UNHCR, presented UNHCR's perspective on CP systems, reflecting its unique protection mandate with a very specific focus on refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and returnees. Given the high proportion of children among displaced populations[40] and the fact that girls and boys face unique protection risks as compared to adult refugees, responding to their specific needs is a key priority for UNHCR. Because of its exclusive focus on these persons of concern, UNHCR has faced some challenges in shifting to a systems approach in its work. For example, in many cases, state national CP systems are only available for its citizens or permanent residents and not accessible or protective for refugees or IDPs, in which case UNHCR has a legal responsibility to ensure protection for refugee children. Ms. Sandvik-Nylund noted that despite these constraints, UNHCR recognises the benefits of CP systems for refugees and IDP children. For example, the shift to a systems approach has increased efforts to work with national CP actors to ensure access to national CP systems for refugees. It has also increased awareness of community-based elements of the CP system and its links with the more formal aspects of the national system. The Framework for the Protection of Children[41] marks an institutional shift from targeting categories of children at risk towards a systems approach to protect all refugee and IDP children, and an evolution in UNHCR's policy and practice. Ms. Sandvik-Nylund suggested that working with refugee and IDP children may be considered a 'sub system within the CP system.' She also suggested that working with national and community actors – including children – to enable a CP system to better accommodate refugee and IDP children can be an entry point for system strengthening.

> "Emergencies provide opportunities to test and question how the system is working."
>
> Jacqueline Oduol

Jacqueline Oduol presented on access to child protection services for refugee children in Kenya. In addition to the Constitution of Kenya, the Children's Act of 2001 provides a rights-based legal framework for the care and protection of all children, in line with the CRC and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Act further specifies that no child shall be subjected to discrimination, that the Government has the responsibility to provide protection for any child who may become a victim of armed conflict or natural disaster, and that every child has the right to free basic education. Professor Oduol noted that since the Act was adopted there has been increased enrolment of refugee children in public schools, and the possibility for integration of refugee children in the five-year National Education Framework. In addition, the Department of Civil Registration is mandated to register all births, in collaboration with UNHCR, within the first six months. For example, a child found in Kenya who appears to be less than 8 years of age, and whose nationality and parents are not known, is presumed to be a citizen by birth. Other key elements of this institutional framework include the National Council for Children's Services, and nationwide deployment Child Protection Officers under the Director of Children's Services. These legislative developments benefit refugee children, but clearly strengthen the CP system more broadly.

Amanda Melville, Consultant, Save the Children/UNHCR joint project on strengthening child protection systems for refugee and other children in Lebanon and Jordan, spoke on the joint Save the Children/UNHCR project. In the past, agencies working in child protection involving refugee children focused on responses to protection violations and on separated children and unaccompanied minors. It was necessary to move beyond that narrow focus and mobilise other actors to work

40 UNHCR, *Global Trends 2011: A Year of Crises*, Geneva, 2012, available at: <www.unhcr.org/4fd6f87f9.html>. According to this report, 46 per cent of all refugees are children – and children make up 34 per cent of asylum-seekers, 47 per cent of IDPs and 54 per cent of stateless populations.

41 UNHCR, *Framework for the Protection of Children*, Geneva, 2012.

with and support protection for refugee children, thereby strengthening the sector. Key aspects of work on CP systems have included gathering data on incidence and prevalence of child protection violations among refugee children and the broader population, and aligning response to needs. Priority areas of work include: coordination mechanisms, policies and regulations, strengthening case management, continuum of care and alternative care, and engaging communities to better protect all children.

Discussion: Participants emphasised that coordination is important to ensure smooth, effective communication with government officials on integration of refugees into the CP system. Participants noted that a key result of this effort has been emerging consensus that it is possible to make concrete changes in a few vital areas to demystify and demonstrate the value of working towards CP systems in refugee, humanitarian and development settings.

Indigenous children, families, communities and land

The round-table group focused on indigenous children, families, communities and land discussed how indigenous groups[42] are challenging the assumptions and structures of CP systems from their perspective in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South America, the United States and West Africa. Many areas of the world are grappling with the interface between indigenous communities and state CP systems, particularly because of the overrepresentation of indigenous people in state child protection responses. In general, state CP systems have been destructive for indigenous communities rather than protective, and there are examples of how CP systems have harmed rather than helped children in those communities. There are many challenges involved in finding ways to effectively address the child protection concerns of indigenous children and families, with few examples of where this has worked effectively. Current efforts are therefore charting new territory.

Catherine Love, National Manager for Ahikaa/ENZ Trust, presented on the Maori context in New Zealand and shared sobering statistics on high rates of suicide, unemployment, incarceration, and lack of education qualifications among Maori young people. In this context, issues of child protection and family welfare tap into fundamental beliefs about the nature of self, children, families, society and the role of government. Indigenous and Western conceptions of well-being are derived from very different systems, with a differential focus on issues such as local vs. bureaucratic control, types of authority and linkages, an emphasis on the collective vs. the individual, and breadth of intervention mandates. All of this is directly linked with conceptions of self, which underpin systems, structures and taken-for-granted 'common sense' in societies. Dr. Love emphasised that understanding Maori dimensions of self is critical to working with this community, and efforts to improve child and family well-being need to be situated within the existing Maori systems. The Ahikaa learning centre and teaching method, which acknowledges that all learning comprises personal, social and environmental perspectives, is one initiative focused on building youth capacities.

> "Indigenous means people of the land; an articulation based on the definition of self."
>
> Catherine Love

42 There is no widely accepted definition of indigenous peoples. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues developed a modality to understand the term based on: Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; distinct social, economic or political systems; distinct language, culture and beliefs; form non-dominant groups of society; and resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

Benedito Dos Santos, Professor at the Catholic University of Brasília and UNICEF Consultant, presented on Brazil's Child Rights Guarantee system, which is focused on child rights protection, not only child protection. The system is comprehensive and encompasses the three spheres of the State, including all safety net services and three levels of intervention and implementation. Despite this framework, there are still challenges around responding to specific vulnerabilities that are exacerbated by colour, gender, race or ethnicity. While the indigenous population only represents 0.4 per cent of Brazil's population, this diverse group includes 305 different ethnicities and 270 languages – and is a growing population (1991–2010 saw a 205 per cent growth). Indigenous populations face many social and economic disadvantages. The Indigenous Children Protective Safety Net seeks to address this at different levels: at the indigenous village level and through structures, policies and sectors at national, state and municipal levels. Professor Dos Santos explained how debates regarding this system focus on the relationship between the different parts of the system serving the indigenous population and the majority population. Suggested options include: 1) separate systems run by indigenous populations; 2) regular institutions with their own specific strands for indigenous populations; and 3) regular institutions with specific training to assist indigenous populations. These options raise a number of questions; at the moment, however, there is no official orientation, and the system operates differently in each municipality.

Discussion: Participants highlighted that there are no easy answers on how to construct CP systems in societies with indigenous communities and for indigenous children who are in contact with the state social welfare/justice sector. Experience suggests that it is essential to work with the indigenous communities on the ground and listen to them – working locally and tribally, dialoguing with people of the land, working to understand the influences of power relations – from multiple perspectives. Participants mentioned some good examples, such as the manual that was developed by Maori researchers to provide guidance on how to conduct research in their community in a culturally sensitive manner. Brazil's CP system is emphasising sensitivity to indigenous children's situations, for example, and one positive change is that the birth registration authority has made exceptions for indigenous communities related to cultural traditions, including allowing more flexibility on the time limit for registration and permitting the use of indigenous names. Other positive examples that might be effective across contexts include:

- Creating spaces for children and families within specific ethnic/indigenous communities to define the best approaches, establish parameters for programme response, engender mutual respect and promote regular dialogue to achieve consensus.
- Sharing information on effective programming in indigenous communities between countries and communities. In some countries this represents a specialised and important area of child protection due to the more frequent interface between formal protection systems and indigenous families.

Child migrants and trafficked children

Saisuree Chutikul provided a global overview on child migrants and trafficked children. Trafficking is covered by the CRC and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocols[43] define three critical components of trafficking in persons: 1) the transport of persons; 2) by means of coercion, deception, or consent; and 3) for the purpose of exploitation such as forced or consensual labour or prostitution. It should be noted that children cannot give consent to being moved, therefore the coercion or deception elements do not apply. Dr. Chutikul noted that most examples of child trafficking are related to forced prostitution, forced labour, debt bondage, theft of organs, etc. This is different from smuggling. It is also different from migration, although undocumented migrants could be more susceptible to being trafficked. Further, she outlined 10 key considerations when dealing with trafficking, which can be equally relevant when addressing other child protection violations (see box).

Considerations when dealing with trafficking:

- National policy (these can be conflicting, e.g., the policy on tourism and the policy on prostitution in Thailand)
- Legal framework (may be most effective to refer to international framework)
- Protective services (complete and consistent with national standards)
- Standards (procedures, monitoring and evaluation)
- Capacity-building
- Mechanisms (international, national; and multisectoral)
- Research and knowledge-building (building an evidence base can help develop policy, leading to legal revisions, etc.)
- Involvement with actors
- Partnership with international bodies
- Involvement of children themselves

Discussion: The group discussed ways to prevent unsafe migration and the trafficking of children and how the resources devoted to combating trafficking can be used to strengthen systems more widely. Prevention is critical, yet there is a tendency to work in an issue-based manner that precludes it. The high level of interest in trafficked children, for example, can lead to a complete – and often semi-autonomous – subsystem being set up on this issue. In other contexts, however, sudden attention to trafficking has forced statutory bodies such as police, social workers, health workers, etc. to start working together, and this in turn has led to more joint work on other protection issues.

Participants also noted that the definition in the Palermo Protocols can also be problematic as actors do not know whether to focus on cross-border or internal movement. Under the Palermo Protocols the main response of States has been a criminal justice response, not a human rights response. One participant noted that the Protocols do not work from a rights perspective because law and order, and the interests of the State, have taken first place, and negative responses, such as stopping people at the border and deportation, are the measures that States use to demonstrate success. Migration and trafficking are often conflated, and women and children are most affected by this. They may be denied entry to a country as migrants for example, on the suspicion that they have been trafficked.

Participants suggested that a systems approach would promote a more holistic, rights-based orientation that would see children as individuals and focus on their best interests, their right to be heard and to participate in their protection. To promote protection of migrant children, Dr. Chutikul suggested that

> "In the final analysis, every arrow should come to the family and the community. We have to ask ourselves what kind of family? Everything that happened to the child comes back to the family. How do you look at the system above and below, link them together, protect children and make it sustainable?"
>
> Saisuree Chutikul

43 See: <www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/>.

governments should make all national services – health and education – accessible to migrant children, and national laws such as laws on violence against children and juvenile justice should also extend to these children. She also recommended that working with local government is potentially another point of influence, particularly for NGOs.

Justice for children

Dan O'Donnell, Consultant to the UNICEF Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office, presented on justice for children. He noted that justice for children has both regulatory and protective functions, but there is a tendency to focus more on the regulatory role. It is important to infuse protection elements throughout all aspects of justice for children, including the processes for perpetrators, victims, witnesses, custody cases and childcare orders. He outlined key entry points and ways for enhancing protection for individual children in conflict with the law in a manner that also strengthens the broader CP system:

> "We need to think of children not just as actual or potential offenders but as children in need of protection."
>
> Nikhil Roy

- Abuse and neglect are correlated with increased rates of offences, and children may be offenders in part because the CP system did not provide them sufficient protection.
- Good outcomes for child offenders often depend on information and assessment reports provided by many different CP actors.
- CP actors provide diversion services and non-custodial dispositions that help avoid unnecessary imprisonment and prevent recidivism.
- Children who are detained before trial may need psychosocial assistance, which CP actors provide, as well as legal assistance.
- Children who have been involved in criminal activity but are too young for prosecution need assessment and intervention.
- When children are sentenced to prison CP actors play a key role in liaising with the family and determining when the child is released.
- If a juvenile offender is still a child when released, CP actors are responsible for assisting her or him to reintegrate into the family and community.

He emphasised that in exploring justice for children, prevention of juvenile offences is critically important, not only from the perspective of reducing criminality later in life, but also for prevention in and of itself. Children who become offenders often do so due to failures of the CP system and should be understood to be on a continuum of vulnerability. Understanding this dual prevention function better will help identify children vulnerable to violations early and at the same time enhance child protection as a strategy to reduce juvenile offences.

Discussion: Participants highlighted the importance of prevention and noted that the risk and protective factors for child victims and child offenders are frequently the same and that juvenile offences are often the consequences of protection failures in the past. It is important to recognise the importance of prevention – but also to refine the definition of prevention to encompass broader protection goals. Participants shared positive examples of prevention programmes:

- South Africa developed a diversion programme for young people in the 1990s that worked with the police and provided mediation and family group conferencing to keep children out of the judicial system.
- In Ethiopia, the police established child protection units that proved to be successful in providing protection at an early age for children in many circumstances.
- In Zimbabwe, districts with child-friendly courts are doing preventive work including awareness-raising programmes with schools.

Discussants also addressed the age of criminal responsibility as an interesting entry point for strengthening the CP system as it enables a more holistic reflection on how children below or above the age of responsibility experience justice both in positive and negative aspects. They noted that it is important to address the age of criminal responsibility not in an abstract way as a legal construct, but practically, in terms of what happens to children below or above that age. Dr. O'Donnell stressed that raising the age of criminal responsibility does not necessarily offer better protection because, with the age of responsibility come procedural process rights such as having a lawyer in place when interviewing a child. Also, it is important to have good intervention programmes in place for those children under the age of responsibility. For example, in the Philippines, a new law increased the age of criminality from 9 to 15, but was enacted without suitable programmes in place, which resulted in no support for children aged 9–15 and public outrage that "children were getting away with murder."

In closing, participants highlighted the importance of children in contact with the law as a subsystem within the CP system. One participant noted that it is important to think of children not just as actual or potential offenders, but as children in need of protection. Justice has a protective as well as a regulatory function and it is important to understand the role of justice as part of a wider CP system. Participants agreed that justice is an excellent entry point for strengthening the broader CP system.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: ISSUES AS ENTRY POINTS FOR SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

Each of the round-table groups explored the challenges and benefits of working within a systems framework to address the requirements of specific groups of children, and considered how this focus could also serve to strengthen the overall system.

Issues and systems: Participant reflections indicate that thinking and discussion on approaches to CP issues and CP systems is evolving. The discussion is no longer a debate about systems OR issues but instead about good ways and bad ways to combine them; specific issues can be reconciled in a systems approach and issues can be used to strengthen systems.

Issues as entry points: Round-table discussions yielded several examples of how work on specific issues – and with specific groups of children – can lead to outcomes that strengthen the broader CP system. The discussion also highlighted how system

strengthening can benefit marginalised groups of children, as illustrated in the round tables on refugee and IDP children and trafficking/migration.

Prevention: **Discussion in round tables on children without parental care, justice for children and trafficking/migration emphasised the potential of CP systems to prevent CP risks and violations such as unsafe migration, trafficking, juvenile offences, etc.**

Marginalised groups: **For certain groups, particularly indigenous children, state CP systems have often been destructive rather than protective, and there are many challenges involved in finding ways to effectively address the child protection concerns of indigenous children and families. Experience suggests that it is essential to work locally and tribally, to discuss with people of the land in order to understand power relations and find ways to improve the interface between indigenous or other marginalised groups and state CP systems.**

Data, evidence and understanding: **Discussion highlighted the importance of gathering disaggregated data and understanding CP risks and violations in order to better reach marginalised and at-risk individuals and groups.**

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the round-table presentations and discussion on issues as entry points for system strengthening:

- Presentations and discussion indicate a **recognition that we have moved beyond 'issues or systems' – to consensus** that a systems approach can effectively address specific issues, and issues can be used to strengthen systems.
- Addressing **the deeper and less visible aspects related to CP issues and marginalised groups – such as power relations** – may strengthen CP systems for all children.
- Systems thinking provides a framework, approaches and tools to enable us to **better understand the perspectives of specific groups or issues** and the linkages between actors and aspects of the CP system. This offers the potential to work more effectively on issues and in a way that strengthens the broader systems. This is an area to explore further.
- Recognition that **just because a system exists, does not mean it is protective for all children** reiterates the importance of understanding context, including social and cultural norms, values and perspectives on risks and protective factors.

VII. Obstacles and Opportunities for Systems Strengthening

There are significant obstacles to instigating and sustaining positive change in CP systems, but opportunities also exist. Lessons from systems that have attempted reform can help to inform systems strengthening efforts by others. The systems review of the CP workforce in England, described below, provides such lessons.

Lessons from a systems review of child protection in England

Eileen Munro, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics, United Kingdom, used a systems approach/analytical framework to conduct a review of child protection in England.[44] She presented on lessons learned from that review – particularly as regards the CP workforce. She emphasised that bringing about change in CP systems is a significant and complex process. It is also unpredictable, less like a train on a railway line and more like a ship on an uncertain course in rough seas. She noted that instead of a rigid system with unbending rules, what is needed is a flexible system in which actors within the system are empowered to change course depending on the conditions. A linear view, in which the person at the top gives an order and it cascades down the system is very tempting, but that structure has not proved effective. As a result, social services and child protection have been reorganised many times.

Professor Munro's systems review sought to understand what had actually happened within the CP system following a series of reforms. Her presentation focused on lessons learned from the workforce aspect of the review. Munro described how during the series of reforms the CP system was shaped by four key driving forces: 1) extreme public criticism when a child dies of maltreatment; 2) a belief held by many that uncertainty in child protection can be eradicated; 3) a tendency in inquiries to focus on professional error without examining the causes of any error; and 4) the undue weight given to procedures, performance information and targets as the way to improve performance. These drivers interacted to create a defensive system in which good practice was defined in terms of compliance with procedures and meeting performance indicators, with front-line staff spending up to 80 per cent of their time in front of computers. Staff were demoralised and felt deskilled, resulting in serious problems with recruitment and retention. People tried to strengthen the system by strengthening rules, but this only made the system more fragile. The system cannot be controlled from the top in a hierarchical manner. The causality is complex and unpredictable, not linear. Professor Munro labelled this "vulnerable system syndrome" and noted that it may be characterised by blame, denial and "the single-minded and blinkered pursuit of the wrong kind of excellence." In this situation, key factors such as uncertainty, requisite variety, the child's journey, emotion, relationships and the influence of tools on practice have been overlooked and undervalued.

She explained how this learning has helped structure a new approach that considers performance in context. This new approach values expertise and structures the workforce to reward excellence in social work. It educates politicians and the public about social work and examines why social workers make mistakes. Management of the system focuses on the system's impact on the child. Inspection looks at why mistakes were made, not just that they were made or who made them, and feedback should be available from the front line and service users. Professor Munro suggested that reform and strengthening efforts should aim for a system that:

44 Eileen Munro's reports written as part of the review of the child protection system in England can be downloaded from this government website: <www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren/protection/b00219296/munro>.

- Learns whether children are being helped, and how they have experienced the help;
- Innovates in response to feedback;
- Expects errors and tries to catch them quickly;
- Is free from all but essential central prescription over professional practice;
- Has clear rules about where and how to coordinate to protect children;
- Uses research and evidence to inform professional practice;
- Empowers workers to be able to make competent judgements when the work is too varied for rules;
- Is 'risk sensible', i.e. has a realistic understanding of what it means to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

Jachen Curdin Nett, Professor in the Social Work Section at Bern University of Applied Sciences, responded to Professor Munro's presentation and shared highlights from a study he led that examined CP systems in Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom[45]. The study sought to examine current evidence for effective delivery of CP services among countries with similar economic and social development to Switzerland and to identify international examples of good practice to learn from their reform efforts in order to reform the Swiss system. Interestingly, the study was also conducted within the framework of a public/private partnership. The study found that all the countries sought to have in place laws and procedures that balanced the rights of parents to privacy with the rights of children to protection and were informed by an understanding of child development. All the countries share a central dilemma with respect to determining at what point the State intervenes to protect the child, and there is evidence that both over- and under-intervention in family life may bring unintended and unwanted consequences. The study indicated consistent and coherent lessons learned, as reflected in recommendations that address: governance; legal responsibilities of different CP actors; coordination mechanisms; training standards; continuum of services; development of practice guidance for social workers; assessment tools; audit of intervention methods; establishment of a vetting and barring scheme for those working with children; and a national data system to track both system outputs and child outcomes. These recommendations provide a basis for designing reform of the Swiss system.

Overcoming obstacles and leveraging opportunities

There can be significant challenges to achieving systems change – such as developing understanding and interest among those from whom support is needed, responding to the political dynamics, overcoming the opposition of vested interests, and finding and gaining the appropriate fiscal space to be able to drive change forward. Each of five round-table sessions focused on one of the following themes: institutional incentives, cross-sector incentives and coordination; social norms and systems change; mobilising support and understanding; parliament; and fiscal space. The concurrent sessions examined key obstacles and opportunities for system change and what has been learned about effective ways to respond to them.

45 Nett, Jachen C., and Trevor Spratt, *Child Protection Systems: An international comparison of "good practice examples" of five countries (Australia, Germany, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom) with recommendations for Switzerland*, Fonds Suisse pour des projets de protection de l'enfance, 2010.

Institutional incentives, cross-sector incentives and coordination

Phintsho Choeden, Executive Director of the National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan, shared a case study on Bhutan's experience mapping and assessing the CP system. Undertaken in 2011-2012 with support from UNICEF, the mapping exercise involved consolidation of existing data and information on CP initiatives in order to institutionalise a systemic and comprehensive CP system.[46] The process brought together people who had not worked together effectively before. Stakeholders jointly outlined their definition of what a CP system does and developed a collective vision of "what is a protected child in Bhutan." The mapping gave them a common purpose, a reason to work together and a structure in which to do so effectively. Ms. Choeden explained that although child protection is a new area for Bhutan, this initiative came at the right time, at a point when the mapping could support implementation of the 2011 Child Care and Protection Act and also feed into national planning efforts. Findings from the mapping highlighted six priority areas and identified gaps and recommendations for each dimension: 1) laws, policies, standards and regulations; 2) services and service delivery mechanisms; 3) capacity and resources; 4) knowledge management; 5) communication and advocacy; and 6) coordination, collaboration and accountability. The resulting Report and National Plan of Action for Child Protection received endorsement by the Committee of Secretaries, were reflected in the 11th Five Year Plan Guidelines[47] and agency submissions, and in the draft United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Ms. Choeden highlighted some key lessons learned through Royal Government of Bhutan's child protection mapping exercise:

- **Encourage partner participation:** highlight each organisation's child protection work and define roles; include both operational staff and decision-makers in the process; and give each sector a sense of ownership.
- **Locate child protection in broader national development efforts and build a common commitment for child protection:** link child protection to overall development goals; bring policymakers on board and garner support from the top; use mapping and assessment to build understanding of child protection and the need for a comprehensive CP system; and identify resources required for system strengthening.

> "Implementers need to be passionate but need the blessing and support of the leadership."
>
> Conference participant

Discussion: Participants found it interesting to learn about the journey Bhutan has made in such a short space of time and how they were able to get child protection onto the agendas of policymakers. Drawing on other examples from Bhutan, Brazil, Liberia, Mexico, the Philippines and Tunisia, participants stressed the importance of promoting relationships and teamwork among CP actors and having tools to help identify roles and responsibilities and shape working relationships in a productive way. These country examples also shed light on the different experiences of national commissions – including composition, coordination and integration with other sectors – and how they can work better. Discussion also touched on the value of national coordination structures, particularly for interacting with international actors. However, participants noted that in some places, like Eastern Europe, coordinating bodies

46 The mapping exercise used the UNICEF 'Child Protection Systems: Mapping and assessment toolkit' and adapted it to their needs, i.e., inclusion of children with disabilities and child monks and nuns.

47 Royal Government of Bhutan, Gross National Happiness Commission, 11th Five Year Plan (2013–2018).

do not always have the right people, power or budget, which limits their effectiveness. In terms of where to start and how to focus CP system strengthening efforts, participants offered different examples based on their experiences. While each country context is different, the group stressed the importance of finding and using available opportunities – leveraging entry points such as health, education, justice or a specific issue. Coordination is key and can be initiated in a variety of ways. Participants noted that joint budgets could help bring different sectors together. In conditional cash transfer programmes, reporting requirements can help push forward much greater information sharing that is operationally useful. Discussion emphasised that it is important to start with what is available, which will vary between contexts and change as time progresses, and to take advantage of opportunities to revise and improve efforts along the way. In the case of Bhutan, the mapping itself proved to be an effective entry point and an ideal opportunity in terms of timing.

Social norms and system change

Theresa Kilbane, Senior Adviser, Child Protection, UNICEF, provided an overview on the interface between social norms and systems change. Beliefs and expectations around social and cultural norms underpin, and are integral to CP systems. There has often been a lack of effective understanding of how the norms can reduce risk factors. Interventions that have not taken into account social norms have led to poor outcomes and an inability to influence changes and sustain them long term. Ms. Kilbane noted that many forms of harmful practices and violence against children are tacitly or explicitly condoned by society, and will also be expressed within the social sectors/systems, and even upheld by those systems. Addressing harmful practices represents a critical entry point for prevention and response and expands the potential of CP systems' impact. Systems have the capacity to challenge harmful social norms and contribute to a transformation, both within the system and also the larger society. Using a social norms perspective helps systems reflect on what they do that works and what they do that is less effective or may actually cause harm to certain groups/individuals. Solutions need to fit existing norms; CP systems need to understand what is behind people's reactions, and what supports or constrains their access to the services.

> "Social changes have to come from communities. If we make children, family and community central to the system, then social norms also become a central part of the system."
>
> Conference participant

Ms. Kilbane also emphasised that addressing social norms has programme implications. This involves: addressing socio-economic issues and undertaking good situation analysis (understanding what needs to be changed and how to influence communities and individuals); improving monitoring and evaluation to be able to assess impact of interventions and change in social norms (building evidence); using communication and public awareness as key interventions to change and shift social norms within systems; bringing a range of partners on board (community leaders, etc.); and identifying innovative approaches that can bring about lasting change.

Discussion: Participants noted that laws reflect culture and context and can be a powerful driver for both condoning and challenging social norms. Programmes need to address the underlying socio-economic causes of abuse, including societal beliefs and norms but also must be underpinned by robust legislation, outlawing all forms of violence and abuse. In Sweden, for example, implementation of the ban on corporal punishment in schools

was triggered by broad dialogue and was accompanied by significant efforts to inform children about their rights. This contributed to reducing their vulnerability and the incidence of violence in families and other settings. Lessons learned from female genital mutilation/cutting demonstrate the importance of working at the community level to influence the way individuals within communities can influence each other. Knowledge is key, including in-depth understanding of context and promotion of positive alternatives that are culturally appropriate, as well as evidence to evaluate whether the work is making progress. Participants emphasised that the CP system needs to be meaningful and appropriate for it to facilitate positive changes in outcomes for children.

Mobilising support and understanding

The presentation by **Enakshi Ganguly, Co-director HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, India**, engaged the group around a wide range of issues and factors that have been found to be critical in mobilising action around the strengthening of CP systems in India. The importance of having a rights-based focus underpinning CP activities is critical for ensuring widespread and sustained change. The process of strengthening CP systems must be recognised as being long term, requiring continuous awareness-raising and internal advocacy, as well as persistence and optimism. Ms. Ganguly noted several factors that have been critical for mobilising action on CP systems in India:

- Being opportunistic when the policy environment is conducive to change;
- Grooming champions for CP to catalyse change;
- Allocating structures and resources at all levels, from national to local;
- Converging recognition across different government ministries that children are regarded as the responsibility of ALL ministries, to prioritise allocation of resources for CP activities;
- Ensuring that staff trained in child protection are present in all key ministries, especially the police and judiciary;
- Mobilising the judiciary through strategic litigation.

> "Persistence and optimism are the two essential requirements for sustained CP system strengthening."
>
> Enakshi Ganguly

Discussion: Round-table participants explored effective ways to respond to obstacles and mobilise support for systems change, underlining the importance of engaging a range of local support. In India and the United Arab Emirates, for example, police and judges have become sensitised to child protection issues through training, one outcome of which has been that police are no longer wearing their uniforms when working with children. In Togo, all police officers now undergo mandatory basic training in child protection issues, using a training approach that is focused on systems strengthening and is based on people's own experience. Participants emphasised that facilitating active collaboration among civil society and government actors can enhance the synergies among these actors, resulting in better monitoring and policy development. Partnering with personnel in other social sectors can serve to strengthen the system as a whole, using legal reforms to strengthen justice for children, for example. It is also critical that ministries of planning and finance are involved so child protection activities can be included in budgets.

Discussion further highlighted that evidence and arguments on the cost of not investing in child protection can provide a good trigger

for action. In general, participants noted that there is a fundamental need for evidence-based work in local contexts. Undertaking research creates an evidence base, which can mobilise change and action. If civil society undertakes research on a child protection issue it may prompt government to undertake further investigation that can reinforce the findings. It can also be important to have staff from local universities and research institutes involved in research and evidence gathering, as they can provide insights to interpret local context and governments may be more readily convinced. Additional recommendations put forward by the group include: 1) the co-chairs of the Global Learning Initiative on Violence Against Children should come from countries from the South; and 2) the post-Millennium Development Goals debate provides a good opportunity to introduce child protection into globally shared goals for governments, donors and international agencies.

Parliament

Bhalchandra Mungekar, Indian Economic Association President and Member of Parliament, presented on the key role that parliamentarians can play in child protection. He explained that in India, the issue of child protection is very personal, and parliamentarians are not always clear as to what they can do. Budget allocation for child protection is very low and there is confusion around child rights and children's right to protection. However, he emphasised that parliamentarians can play a critical role in: developing legislation and the policy framework for child protection and providing oversight; allocating resources/budget; working domestically and internationally to sign, ratify and implement conventions and agreements; raising awareness on specific issues; using data and stimulating research; building bridges between human rights and child protection; and listening to children and involving them in political debates. With data and accurate information at their fingertips, parliamentarians can become effective advocates and champions for children, and reallocate resources to children's services and in support of child protection.

> "We are all challenged by the fact that child protection involves what is seen to be very personal intrusion into the lives of families – this makes us uncomfortable."
>
> Bhalchandra Mungekar

Discussion: To support system strengthening efforts, CP actors need to ensure that parliamentarians have the evidence, data and information that they need to talk with confidence and authority. Advocating with parliamentarians on the reallocation of resources can be an important strategy to support child protection. Participants discussed the personal elements related to addressing child protection, touched on by Mr. Mungekar. For example, if 30 per cent of the child population has experienced sexual abuse, then there are many adults who have had similar experiences and this may influence their ability to act. While it may be a sensitive topic, the personal/family nature of abuse and these experiences and attitudes could be explored further; unless they are addressed, progress may be impeded.

Fiscal space

Armando Barrientos presented on fiscal space and the urgency of increasing budgetary allocations for CP systems. Fiscal space is the government's 'room' or capacity to allocate resources to activities or programmes. Some of the key obstacles to enlarging the fiscal space for child protection include: lack of common understanding on what key CP services will

be financed at national level; low government commitment since child protection does not carry much political weight and evidence is scarce; social sectors including child protection tend to be more dependent on aid, which further decreases government ownership and commitment; and lack of data on how much countries spend on child protection. Professor Barrientos explained that there are two sides to fiscal space – the income side (how money is raised) and the expenditure side (how money is spent). On the income side, how resources are collected is important for legitimacy and effectiveness – and how this is done differs between countries. On the expenditure side there is a need to understand the budget cycle and potential entry points. To make a financial case for child protection, it is necessary to assess needs as opposed to current expenditure levels; and to measure the social benefits from child protection, both political and financial. Professor Barrientos also discussed the functional classifications of budgets, noting their limitations, and suggesting an examination of how each country gathers the data on expenditures. He noted that financing is politics by other means – in other words, it is not a neutral, politics-free process.

Systems thinking enables government to better estimate and project budgets needed for child protection. It can be a vehicle for developing more standardised measures, such as a 'child protection index' that would show countries' child protection investments. Professor Barrientos noted that this type of benchmarking of national investments in health, education and poverty alleviation has been very useful for cross-country comparisons and influencing of policy. For example, in Chile the Government publishes poverty statistics every year through the Ministry of Social Development, which creates visibility and public demand for government action. Creating such public demand by increasing sensitivity to child protection issues can be helpful. Utilising a 'child protection index' – or benchmark – could be a tool to help generate that sensitivity. The speaker also emphasised that establishing a relationship with the Ministry of Finance and understanding budget cycles and sources of government revenues is also very important. A key policy tool would be to establish rates of return to investment in child protection, meaning that a programme is "welfare enhancing if the returns to the programme are greater that the marginal cost of social funds." This would be helpful even if undertaken in one or two countries where data are available. There are already examples from the United States that show how this approach was helpful and a powerful tool for policy and resource allocation around child protection and early childhood development.

Discussion: The session concluded that CP actors should develop better data on investments in child protection, as well as stronger relationships with governments when it comes to allocation of resources and tracking expenditure. Both political and fiscal arguments are relevant for making the case to increase the budget for CP systems. Further recommendations included:

- Engaging with governments to understand better how they allocate budgets and help them collect the information on budgets from a child-focused perspective.
- Developing 'benchmarks for child protection' through cross-country data analysis.
- Constructing the rate of return of investment in child protection to help with advocacy for policy changes and greater allocation of resources.
- Establishing relationships with Ministry of Finance at country level.
- Sensitising the public to create pressure for change in policies and allocations.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS: OBSTACLES, OPPORTUNITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM SYSTEMS REFORM

Presentations and discussion in the plenary and each of the round-table groups examined key obstacles and opportunities for system change and explored effective ways to respond to them.

Data, evidence and understanding: All of the groups discussed the importance of data, evidence and understanding of the issues and context to: mobilise action; understand social norms and how to influence communities and individuals; facilitate collaboration among key CP actors; argue for enhanced fiscal space; inform professional practice; and provide CP champions with the information they need. Developing Benchmarks for Child Protection through cross-country data analysis was suggested as a potential way to improve data on investments in CP.

Collaborative relationships: Most round-tables discussed the importance of engaging a range of actors with different perspectives and facilitating collaborative relationships, for example across government ministries and among community actors, so that children are regarded as the responsibility of all. Participants also highlighted the importance of joint work through partnerships at all levels and noted, for example, that joint budgets can help bring the different sectors, such as education, health and CP, together. Some groups placed particular emphasis on the value of leveraging relationships and opportunities to create champions and secure high-level buy-in for CP efforts and system strengthening.

Advocacy and awareness as a strategy: Creating public demand for effective CP through increasing awareness, understanding and sensitivity to CP issues can help to create pressure for change in policies and budget allocations. For example, the social norms group referenced the case of female genital mutilation/cutting and the strategy of using communication and public awareness to change and shift social norms within CP systems.

Look for synergies and leverage opportunities: A few groups noted examples of opportunistic timing that allowed CP actors to leverage opportunities, and bring sectors together, which helped ensure buy-in by key actors, put CP on the agendas of policymakers, and cultivate CP champions to catalyse change. For example, in Bhutan, locating child protection within broader national development efforts helped build a common commitment for CP.

Dynamic nature of the child protection system: Recognising the system as dynamic also means it is less predictable, and it is important that the actors within the system are empowered to respond to changing conditions, not overly hindered by rules, but rather guided by the principles of CP.

ANALYSIS AND MILESTONES

The following milestones emerged from the presentations and discussion on overcoming obstacles to systems strengthening:

- Recognition that **effective systems are flexible, rather than rigid**, informed thinking and approaches to strengthening systems – and suggested prioritising efforts that empower actors to innovate in response to feedback and to change course if needed.
- The idea of **developing *'benchmarks for child protection'*** advanced discussion and offered potential for better data on investments in CP.
- Reflection on **a range of different experiences in overcoming obstacles and leveraging opportunities** suggested successful practices for how to achieve systems change.
- Reflection on **learning from reform efforts suggested the potential to transfer such learning across countries** – particularly those with similar types of CP systems.
- Recognition that child protection **risks exist and will continue to exist**. The focus therefore of the child protection system and of any reforms is to reduce the risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

VIII. Summary of Analysis and Milestones

Over the course of four days, formal presentations and the exchange of ideas and perspectives among conference participants broadened the conversation and consolidated learning on CP systems. The analysis and milestones, highlighted throughout this report, are summarised and organised by theme below. They show an evolution in participants' collective thinking about and understanding of CP systems and how to strengthen them.

Commitment to a systems approach

Discussion during the regional round tables, as well as the side group on typologies, recognised that CP systems exist everywhere and that all CP systems are incomplete and need strengthening in one way or another. This recognition of the range of different types of systems affirmed the commitment to a systems approach and helped to establish a common basis for further comparison and learning across countries and regions.

Context

The importance of context was a vital area of discourse throughout the conference. Discussion on context during the regional round tables highlighted consideration of regional and country-specific values regarding children, families and the relationship between the State and individuals, which was a theme throughout the conference. Round-table

discussions also introduced the dynamic nature of contextual factors influencing CP systems, which broadened and deepened understanding of context.

The suggestion to avoid 'exceptionalism' expanded thinking on context and echoed the value of exploring, comparing and capitalising on commonalities across countries introduced by the CP systems typology. Round-table presentations and discussion on strengthening CP systems components further emphasised the need to gather and compare data and global learning across contexts in efforts to understand and strengthen CP systems.

State responsibility and the role of government

Consensus around the role of government was reiterated throughout the conference. Governments have an oversight function, and an ultimate responsibility for CP that requires leadership at all levels. The government role involves coordination and engagement of multiple CP actors including civil society. The panel session on CP system interface with other social systems prompted reflection on the interface between CP systems and other social systems – particularly social protection schemes – and the importance of understanding the relationship between the State and the individual. This furthered thinking about children's rights and governments' central role in CP systems and the need to look across sectors and systems.

Measurement, evidence-building and learning within child protection system

Recognition of different approaches and tools to integrate knowledge and action within systems emerged during the plenary panel sessions on systems thinking and helped participants consider how measurement and data could empower implementers to be innovators and thus could enable key actors within the CP system to strengthen it on an ongoing basis. The plenary panel on measurement illustrated ways in which data and evidence can empower government to act to improve the system; and how government can play a key role in measuring system performance. This session also highlighted that despite widespread recognition of the importance of measuring performance it remains difficult to measure the causal relationship between the CP system and the outcomes for children and that this is an area to explore further. The idea of developing 'benchmarks for child protection' was presented as a possible way to document and compare investments in child protection and related outcomes.

Prevention

There is general consensus that a systems approach should improve prevention and that enhanced prevention improves the system and the protection of children. The plenary session on prevention spelled out more clearly what needs to be done to realise broader prevention – specifically to understand the nature of CP risks – not just the child at risk but all the factors at play. Strengthening prevention is a priority, and is a process. There is recognition that it remains a challenge for various reasons including points touched on in the round-

table discussions: insufficient financing, data, workforce capacity, engagement of communities and children, power dynamics and the cultural context, as well as the need for longer time horizons. Systems thinking and models may help facilitate understanding of how to strengthen CP systems in a manner that reinforces prevention. This includes understanding a system's visible and non-visible aspects and the complex and multidimensional factors that affect children's risk, vulnerability and protection. During the session on the interface between CP systems and other social systems, exploration of the linkages between child protection, social protection and health – especially as related to prevention – seemed to shift the focus towards a broader concern with children's rights and overall well-being.

Understanding child protection systems

The plenary panel sessions on systems thinking shifted understanding of CP systems away from a linear model that draws a direct line between the identified problem and the solution, towards a more multidimensional and complex concept of CP systems and their many elements. These sessions offered a valuable conceptualisation of how systems change happens and provided a 'blueprint' or framework for considering how to strengthen CP systems as well as tools to do so. Round-table presentations and discussion on strengthening CP system components highlighted how the functions and the actors are all part of the system: It is not the actor working on the system as an outsider, nor the components determining the actors, rather it is the interactions among components, functions and actors that together comprise a CP system, and the outcomes of all of these interactions are the outcome for the system. These discussions reinforced an understanding of how systems thinking and models can inform understanding of real-life efforts to strengthen CP systems. Building on earlier discussion about the types of data needed, the plenary session on measurement articulated the importance of measuring system inputs and system outcomes for children to understand a system's performance and its patterns of behaviour and thus be able to make more thoughtful adjustments. Finally, reflection on a range of different experiences in overcoming obstacles and leveraging opportunities suggested successful practices for how to achieve system change.

Commitment to 'do no harm' and support the best interests of the child

Discussion on issues as entry points for system strengthening prompted recognition that just because a system exists, does not mean it is protective for all children – and reiterated the importance of understanding context, including social and cultural norms, values and perspectives on risks and protective factors.

Child protection systems as dynamic rather than static entities

The dynamic nature of the CP system and the contextual factors that shape it were first introduced during the regional round tables, and this laid the foundation for further discussion of the complexity of systems. The plenary sessions on systems thinking described the dynamic nature of systems and suggested tools and approaches to help understand them.

Presentations and discussion on strengthening the CP system highlighted how efforts to strengthen one component reverberate through the whole system, which consolidated consensus on the interaction among CP system components and advanced recognition of system dynamics. Presentation and discussion on learning from reform efforts emphasised the recognition that effective systems need to be flexible, rather than rigid. This understanding informs thinking and approaches to strengthening systems and prioritises efforts that empower actors to innovate in response to feedback and to change course if needed.

Child protection system boundaries

The idea of engaging new and different perspectives as a way to change understanding about the nature of a given problem as well as the scope of potential solutions helped participants think differently about the boundaries of the CP system and to recognise that the boundaries of the system should be broad enough to capture the full range of different perceptions about the system. In identifying a boundary, assessment of reform also requires looking at the impact of any reform on areas outside that boundary. Recognition of the potential for promoting synergies between CP systems and other social systems suggests a possible area for further exploration. The plenary session on prevention examined the push-and-pull factors within a global context and reiterated the importance of CP systems functioning on a transnational level, as suggested by earlier speakers.

Typology of the child protection system

Introduction of the CP system typology provided a way to think about and understand diverse CP systems and the means to categorise and compare them across regions. The session examining the CP systems' interface with other social systems illustrated how a CP systems typology can be used to explore the commonalities and differences of CP systems across countries. Finally, reflecting on learning from reform efforts suggested the potential to transfer such learning across countries – particularly those with similar types of CP systems.

Child protection issues within a systems perspective

Plenary and round-table presentations and discussion on CP issues within a systems perspective indicate a recognition that we have moved beyond 'issues or systems' to consensus that a systems approach can effectively address specific issues, and issues can be used to strengthen systems. Addressing the deeper and less visible aspects related to CP issues and marginalised groups – such as power relations – may strengthen CP systems for all children. Systems thinking provides a framework, approaches and tools to enable a better understanding of the perspectives of specific groups or related to specific issues, and the linkages with other actors and aspects within the CP system. This offers the potential to work more effectively on issues within a systems framework and in a way that strengthens the broader systems. This is an area to explore further.

During the regional round table, recognition of how conceptualisations of children's rights differ in different countries or regions laid a foundation for further discussion on how the relationship between individuals and the State shapes CP systems. The panel session on CP systems' interface with other social systems explored the linkages between child protection, social protection and health, especially as related to prevention, and shifted the focus towards a wider concern with children's rights and overall well-being, an approach similar to the broader concept of 'integrated child protection' raised by the Latin American round-table participants. The concept of children's rights as a strong protective factor emerged during the plenary session on prevention and underlined the important interface between CP systems and other social systems.

IX. Conclusions

This final section identifies the key results from the conference in terms of areas of strong consensus, new insights and unresolved questions. The presentations, discussions and group work during the four days of the conference resulted in a rich learning experience that affirmed certain developments, questioned others and introduced new perspectives and ideas. During that short but intense period, the conference provided an opportunity to accelerate and deepen the way that CP systems thinking is moving – a journey that began a relatively short time ago and will continue for many years. In doing so, the conference confirmed the value of bringing together a mixed group of innovators and influencers, of comparing experiences from a range of country contexts from high-income to fragile settings, and of injecting new thinking from outside the child protection sector.

Strong areas of consensus

1. The value of a systems approach

Continued commitment to the development of a systems approach was perhaps no surprise from a conference devoted to that subject but it was not an inevitable outcome. There was broad recognition that, despite unresolved issues and the ongoing evolution of thinking and practice, a systems approach to child protection represented a useful step forward that had already delivered some significant benefits (e.g., methodologies that enable the mapping of the child protection sector in a country; a reality check on the impact of many statutory child protection services).

2. The importance of context

The context in which the CP system operates was seen as fundamental to the way in which each national system seeks to answer the key child protection challenges present in a country. Context – most obviously perhaps the nature of the scale and severity of the most important child protection issues present in a country – was seen as shaping significant aspects of the system. A whole variety of other contextual issues were seen as important, however, including the overall level of development of the country, the institutional capacity of the State, the ethnic make-up of the population, the presence or absence of a legacy of colonisation, etc. The regional context in which a country sits is also relevant, particularly where there are significant cross-border issues that different national systems have to address collaboratively if they are to have any impact. At a deeper level, the conference emphasised the importance of factors such as the understanding of family privacy, the degree of

trust in the State to act in the best interest of its citizens, and the extent to which children are seen as separate from or integral to their families and communities.

3. State responsibility and the role of government

The ultimate responsibility of government to secure children's protection was strongly emphasised, deriving from government's obligations to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights. CP systems are seen as the most effective, sustainable and comprehensive way to ensure this. The way in which government delivers this responsibility will vary from country to country, including the government's maintaining a monopoly of child protection services, through a 'mixed economy' of service providers, to the complete delegation of service provision to non-governmental actors. Regardless of that choice, the government is seen as having responsibility to maintain oversight over the system, ensuring that it is delivering effective protection to children and intervening when individual or systemic failures are identified. Strong political leadership and commitment was seen as a key factor in the extent to which governments live up to these obligations and duties.

4. Measurement, evidence-building and learning within child protection systems

A recurring theme during the conference was the focus on a renewed emphasis on the importance of measurement, evidence-building and learning within a CP system. These were seen as major priorities: to monitor the performance of the system (and parts of the system); to inform deliberative changes and adjustments to the system; to understand the nature of child protection problems and their immediate and root causes; to mobilise political and public support for action on child protection; to build the case for increased budgetary support; to improve professional practice; and to understand the conditions under which practices, policies and services can be usefully replicated. Some of these arguments were familiar before the conference but were given added force during the conference by the emphasis given to CP systems as dynamic and adaptive learning entities.

5. Making prevention a priority

The introduction of a systems approach has enabled greater attention to be paid to the importance of prevention within the overall system. The conference confirmed the importance of this emphasis and the need for greater attention to be paid to integrating it into the system as a fundamental principle and set of actions (e.g., early intervention and social protection measures). It was recognised that there are significant obstacles to this, both in terms of the current capacity of the system (e.g., insufficient data, the skill set of workers and the allocation of financing) and the bias towards crisis response among decision-makers. The relatively early stage of CP system thinking and the underdeveloped status of many systems should, however, provide the opportunity to make prevention a core imperative of system strengthening in the future. A key element to this, of course, is the central place of children and families in the discussion. The focus on the more institutional or abstract elements of systems should never obscure the absolutely critical place that children and families have in every system.

6. Understanding child protection systems

Discussion during the conference also clarified certain basic understandings about CP systems. First, that 'real-world' CP systems are incomplete and imperfect. The conceptual model of CP systems that is often presented, with its various components and functions, is a standard that provides a goal to aim for. As recent mappings of national CP systems have shown, most countries are far from having

a fully functioning system. Nevertheless, whatever is present makes up the current system and provides the baseline for system strengthening. Second, it was agreed that it is impossible to imagine that 'one size fits all' – in other words, there is not an expectation that all CP systems should look exactly the same. While the key components remain constant, the way in which they are designed and strengthened has to recognise the importance of context. Each CP system should be best shaped for its context. On the other hand, there was also agreement that this should not mean that every system is very different or exceptional. The basic tasks of CP systems are common to all, including the outcomes for children, and the components required to deliver these tasks are also very similar. Context should shape but not determine the basic framework of the child protection system.

7. Commitment to 'do no harm' and support the best interests of the child

Children and families have a central place in the discussion of systems. The outcome of the system is to have a positive impact on children, and the system itself exists to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

There was an important caution discussed during the conference in that there is always a risk that CP systems could themselves become abusive, discriminatory and harmful. The experience of many existing systems, especially in high-income countries, demonstrates that they can be damaging both to particular groups of children such as those from ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and children living in poverty and to whole communities (such as indigenous populations in countries with a history of settlement by a colonial power). The principle of 'do no harm' was seen as an important guideline for those involved in system strengthening, ensuring that such efforts truly work in the best interests of individual children and their communities.

8. Strengthening child protection systems in a way that better integrates their more and less formal aspects

The conference affirmed the importance of treating 'the more and the less formal' aspects of child protection systems as a single dimension rather than approaching each of these aspects as distinct. During previous meetings there had been agreement on the 'more and less formal' formulation (as distinct from separate formal and informal systems) but the discussion tended to focus on the two aspects as separate dimensions rather than seeing them as integral parts of one whole. During the conference the focus was on how to strengthen systems in a way that better recognises their more and less formal aspects. Furthermore, while it is often noted that the 'more formal' aspects of the system are more prominent in the higher-income countries and the 'less formal' are more prominent in lower-income countries, the conference brought out examples where the focus on the less formal is increasing in higher-income countries, and vice versa in lower-income countries.

New insights

1. Child protection systems as dynamic rather than static entities

One of the most significant new perspectives discussed in the conference was the treatment of CP systems as dynamic rather than static entities. This resulted from the input provided by academic and other presenters on the application of systems theory and thinking to child protection and other welfare services. At the beginning of the conference CP systems were principally seen as a set of fixed system components such as policies, capacities and accountability. By the end of the conference there was a much stronger focus on the interactive nature of all of these

components. This can be seen as a shift away from a 'building block' approach to CP systems and to systems strengthening. The building block model focuses on the components of the system but neglects their interaction. By focusing only on individual building blocks, it misses how each building block impacts on the others in a dynamic and iterative way. Further, in a building-block model the actors within the system are acting on the components, whereas in the dynamic model the actors are themselves part of the system. This places people within the system itself rather than as outsiders who only respond to the building blocks.

This was seen as having particular importance in bringing about systems change to improve the protection of children. Treating systems as dynamic, interactive entities requires new ways of thinking about how to drive forward deliberative change, bearing in mind that any change in one part of the system will have impacts throughout the system. This also highlighted the risk of unintended consequences of working without a good awareness of the interactive nature of systems. A range of tools and key guidelines were suggested to inform the way that systems change is implemented including the importance of multilevel and multisector collaboration, transformative leadership, establishing shared mental models and common ways of framing issues, and addressing the 'invisible' (such as power differentials) as much as the 'visible' (such as laws and policies). Crucially, the importance of continuous learning and feedback in the system was seen as essential to the creation of an adaptive, flexible and responsive system.

2. Child protection system boundaries

In thinking about systems as dynamic entities the conference also looked at the importance of this perspective for the question of boundaries. CP systems have a variety of boundaries – some geographical, some administrative and some resulting from decisions made about their mandate and the mandate of other child and social welfare systems. The discussion of boundaries is key to the understanding – and mapping – of any system and the conference looked at some of the complexities resulting from the 'layering' of local, national and supranational levels of a system. Reflecting on a more dynamic view of systems also focused attention on the fact that by redrawing the boundaries of the system, the understanding of both the problem being addressed by the system and the best solution may change. Seen as a deliberate strategy, changing boundaries could itself be seen as a way to stimulate and catalyse change.

3. Typology of child protection systems

Another new perspective came from the consideration that the conference gave to the value of developing a typology of different kinds of CP systems. A typology is a systematic classification of types or categories of something that have characteristics or traits in common. At the beginning of the conference the utility of such a typology was unclear, and it was uncertain whether it was possible to develop a typology that might have global application while at the same time capturing enough of the national and regional specificities of different systems.

By the end of the conference it was recognised that many CP systems indeed share similar characteristics or essential features that may provide the basis for classifying or clustering them into different 'types' or categories of such systems. Developing a similar typology or classification of CP systems across the globe has the potential to facilitate discussion about the objectives and performance of such systems and inform the choices made about the way in which a particular system

will develop. Grouping together countries according to a shared characteristic or characteristics enables the policymaker or analyst to rise above the detail of every individual system and to focus on similar patterns that recur across countries.

4. Child protection issues within a systems perspective

The conference also addressed the question of the relationship between CP systems and work on individual CP issues such as alternative care, refugee and IDP children, and justice for children. This question was a particular focus of the conference because of the uncertainty about how to reconcile these two approaches and a sense that they might be mutually exclusive ways of working. In fact the discussion at the conference identified a path through this debate that was summarised by one participant as "issues and systems not issues or systems." The two were seen as complementary and mutually enriching, with systems creating the essential infrastructure for tackling any issue (e.g. laws, professional workforce and finance) and work on issues creating specialist capacity, learning to inform wider systems development, and deeper understanding of the way that systems function.

Unresolved issues

In addition to the above, a number of issues were left unresolved by the conference and warrant further exploration and discussion.

1. Consistent terminology and definitions

The lack of agreed terms and definitions continues to plague the child protection field and is further complicated when the translation of key terms into other languages is problematic. Work to address at least some of the key terms would be of significant benefit.

During the discussion of how different regions were approaching work on CP systems it appeared that the Latin American region (and possibly the Middle East and North Africa) might be working with a different conceptual understanding from other regions. The Latin American region uses the formulation 'integrated child protection system' to describe what other regions might call a 'comprehensive child rights system', i.e. a system that addresses the full range of child rights, including but not limited to the cluster of rights that concern CP. Other regions refer to the CP system as addressing only that cluster of rights concerning the protection of children. There was no opportunity to work through this question in the conference, and it is one for future discussion.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Bibliography

For all conference papers and presentations, please see:

http://knowledge-gateway.org/sharekluo5tgnjrn31p71ra1zp7b2hnkl48j5vz27/childprotection/cpsystems/cpsconference/library

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Annex 2: Conference participant list

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
1	Sohail Saeed	Abbasi	UNICEF Pakistan
2	Agnes Akosua	Aidoo	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
3	Souad	Al Hebshi	UNICEF Cambodia
4	Essam	Ali	Consultant
5	Bharti	Ali	HAQ: Centre for Child Rights
6	Louis-Georges	Arsenault	UNICEF India
7	Juliet	Attenborough	UNICEF Bhutan
8	Charles	Badenoch	World Vision International
9	Katy	Barnett	Child Protection Working Group
10	Armando	Barrientos	Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester
11	Kattiya	Baykham	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR
12	Bill	Bell	Save the Children UK
13	Eva	Bellander	Save the Children Sweden
14	Arelys	Bellorini	World Vision
15	Shaula	Bellour	Rapporteur
16	Rosangela	Berman Bieler	UNICEF
17	Amy	Bess	Social Service Workforce Alliance
18	Allan	Best	InSource Research Group
19	Susan	Bissell	UNICEF
20	Leonora	Borg	Consortium for Street Children
21	Charlotta	Bredberg	Swedish Development Cooperation Agency
22	David	Brickey Bloomer	Save the Children
23	Gwen	Burchell	United Aid for Azerbaijan
24	Jasmina	Byrne	UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
25	Jane	Calder	Save the Children UK
26	Gary	Cameron	Wilfrid Laurier University
27	Mark	Canavera	Child Protection in Crisis Learning Network
28	Faouzia	Chaabane Jabeur	Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, Republic of Tunisia
29	Kalyani	Chadha	Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India
30	Thomas	Chandy	Save the Children India
31	Laurent	Chapuis	UNICEF
32	Vivian J	Cherue	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Liberia
33	Phintsho	Choeden	National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan
34	Jayakumar	Christian	World Vision India
35	Saisuree	Chutikul	World Vision Foundation Thailand
36	Jenny	Clarkin	Penal Reform International
37	Jaime	Costigan	The International Rescue Committee
38	Rebecca	Davis	Center for International Social Work Studies, Rutgers University
39	Brigette	De Lay	Oak Foundation
40	Benedito	Dos Santos	The Catholic University of Brasilia
41	Catalina	Encarnacion Marte	World Vision, Dominican Republic
42	Montserrat	Feixas Vihé	UNHCR India
43	Anna	Feuchtwang	EveryChild
44	Bill	Forbes	World Vision
45	Pennie	Foster-Fishman	Department of Psychology, Michigan State University
46	Laura	Fragiacomo	UNICEF Kosovo
47	Irene	Fraser	Terre des Hommes

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
48	Enakshi	Ganguly Thukral	HAQ: Centre for Child Rights
49	Vabah	Gayflor	Ministry of Labor, Republic of Liberia
50	Aida	Ghorbel	Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, Republic of Tunisia
51	Michael	Gibbons	Wellspring Advisors
52	Dora	Giusti	UNICEF India
53	Philip	Goldman	Maestral International
54	Kendra	Gregson	UNICEF
55	Dilli	Guragai	Save the Children Nepal
56	Turid	Heiberg	Save the Children
57	Trish	Hiddleston	Consultant
58	Reni	Jacob	World Vision
59	Vandhana	Kandhari	UNICEF India
60	Lena	Karlsson	Save the Children
61	Joanina	Karugaba	UNHCR
62	Kiran	Kaur	UNHCR
63	Stuart	Kean	World Vision International
64	Sherin	Khan	International Labour Organization
65	Theresa	Kilbane	UNICEF
66	Alexander	Krueger	Child Frontiers
67	Aniruddha	Kulkarni	UNICEF India
68	A. K. Shiva	Kumar	National Advisory Council, India
69	Nenita	La Rose	Child Helpline International
70	Tom	Lent	Protecting the Future Alliance
71	Catherine	Love	Ahikaa/ENZ Trust

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
72	Maria Matilde	Luna	RELAF, Latin American Network for Foster Care
73	Preeti	Madan	Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India
74	Bernadette J.	Madrid	Child Protection Network Foundation, Inc. and University of the Philippines, Department of Pediatrics
75	Kate	Mahoney	Rapporteur
76	Nankali	Maksud	UNICEF
77	Mubarak	Maman	Save the Children Tanzania
78	Fassil	Mariam	Oak Foundation
79	Andrew	Mawson	UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
80	Morag	McArthur	Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University
81	Viniti	Mehra	UNHCR
82	Rolando	Melo Latorre	Servicio Nacional de Menores (SENAME), Chile
83	Amanda	Melville	Consultant
84	Juanita Catalina	Mendoza Eskola	Concejo Cantonal de la Niñez y Adolescencia de Cuenca, Ecuador
85	Gopi	Menon	Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)
86	Claire	Milligan	Absolute Return for Kids [ARK]
87	Najat	Mjid	United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
88	Mohammad	Aftab	Save the Children India
89	Alejandro	Morlachetti	University of La Plata, Argentina
90	Bhalchandra	Mungekar	Indian Economic Association- President and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
91	Eileen	Munro	London School of Economics
92	Florence	Mutyabule	Parliament of Uganda
93	Prem	Narain	Ministry for Women and Child Development, Government of India
94	Pravina	Nair	UNHCR

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
95	Jachen Curdin	Nett	Bern University of Applied Sciences
96	Dan	O'Donnell	Consultant
97	Jacqueline Adhiambo	Oduol	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, Government of Kenya
98	Josefa	Ojano	UNHCR
99	Gabriela	Olguin	World Vision
100	Timothy	Opobo	Child Fund International
101	Nina	P. Nayak	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPR), Government of India
102	Nadine	Perrault	UNICEF
103	Celina	Peters	Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, South Sudan
104	Chhaya	Plong	UNICEF Cambodia
105	Ron	Pouwels	UNICEF
106	Nidhi	Pundhir	SOS Children's Villages International, Asia Office
107	Nikhil	Roy	Penal Reform International
108	Verity	Rushton	UNICEF Lao People's Democratic Republic
109	Mauricio	Salinas Chaud	Servicio Nacional de Menore (SENAME), Chile
110	Monika	Sandvik-Nylund	UNHCR
111	Jyoti	Sanghera	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
112	Marta	Santos-Pais	Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children
113	Dominique	Sbardella	Save the Children Lebanon
114	Hans	Schodder	UNHCR
115	Rasa	Sekulovic	Plan International
116	Ashutosh	Sinha	Save the Children India
117	Shantha	Sinha	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, India
118	Marit	Skivenes	University of Bergen

No.	First Name	Last Name	Institution/Affiliation
119	Justo	Solorzano	UNICEF Guatemala
120	Alison	Sutton	UNICEF Mexico
121	Diane M.	Swales	UNICEF
122	Sonia	Taneja	UNHCR
123	Carmela	Tassone	Global Child Protection Services
124	Louise Ellen	Teitz	Hague Conference on International Private Law
125	Joachim	Theis	UNICEF
126	Manish	Thind	UNICEF India
127	Arun	Thomas	World Vision India
128	Nim	Thoth	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Kingdom of Cambodia
129	Chitra	Thumborisuth	World Vision Thailand
130	Jimena	Tito	World Vision
131	Emmanuelle	Tremblay	Canadian International Development Agency
132	Tamara	Tutnjevic	World Vision
133	Harleen	Waha	Ministry of Women and Child Development, India
134	Stephen	Wainaina	Economic Planning Secretary, Kenya Ministry of State for Planning, National Development
135	Cornelius	Williams	UNICEF
136	John	Williamson	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, USAID
137	Anna	Wrange	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
138	Fred	Wulczyn	Chapin Hall, University of Chicago
139	Makiba	Yamano	World Vision

Annex 3: Conference agenda

A Better Way to Protect ALL Children:

The theory and practice of child protection systems

Delhi, 13–16 November 2012

Time	Session Type	Session Title	Conf. room	Speakers	Chair/ Facilitator/ Moderator	Notes/ Language
DAY 1, 13 November 2012 – THE STATE OF THE ART						
09.00–09.45	Plenary	Welcoming to the Conference	Diwan I Am	***Louis-Georges Arsenault*** Representative, UNICEF ***Montserrat Feixas Vihé*** Representative, UNHCR ***Charles Badenoch*** Partnership Leader for Global Advocacy and Justice for Children, World Vision ***Thomas Chandy*** CEO, Save the Children India	***Chair –*** Bill Bell, Head of Child Protection, Save the Children	English, Spanish
09.45–10.30	Keynote Address in Plenary	The 'State of the Art' in Child Protection Systems	Diwan I Am	***Susan Bissell*** Associate Director and Chief Child Protection, Programme Division, UNICEF	***Chair –*** Bill Bell, Save the Children	English, Spanish
10.30–11.00	Break and Market Place					
11.00–12.30	Panel	"The Scope of Child Protection Systems" Scope of the CPS, more and less formal What is systems change International and national boundaries of CP systems	Diwan I Am	***Saisuree Chutikul***, ASEAN, Thailand ***Pennie G. Foster-Fishman***, Michigan State University ***Louise Ellen Teitz***, Hague Conference on Private International Law	***Moderator***– Bill Bell, Save the Children	English, Spanish
12.30–14.15	Lunch and Market Place					
14.15–15.30	Parallel Round-tables	"The Development of Child Protection Systems in Different Settings" 1) OECD and CEE/ CIS	Aftab Mahtab	***Laura Fragiacomo***, UNICEF ***Morag McArthur***, Australian Catholic University	***Facilitator*** – Eileen Munro, London School of Economics	English, Spanish Note taker – Eva Bellander
		2) Sub-Saharan Africa	Diwan I Khas	***Vivian Cherue***, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Liberia ***Jacqueline Oduol***, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, Government of Kenya	***Facilitator*** – Agnes Akosuo Aidoo, UN CRC	English Note taker – Bill Bell
		3) Latin America	Long Champ	***Alejandro Morlachetti***, ECLA	***Facilitator*** – Nadine Perrault, UNICEF	English, Spanish Note taker – Gabriela Olguin

Time	Session Type	Session Title	Conf. room	Speakers	Chair/ Facilitator/ Moderator	Notes/ Language
		4) Middle East	Diwan I Am	***Aida Ghorbel***, Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, Tunisia ***Essam Ali***, Consultant, Egypt	***Facilitator*** – Laurent Chapuis, UNICEF	English, Spanish Note taker – Susan Bissell
		5) Asia	Villa Medici	***Sohail Abassi***, UNICEF Pakistan ***H.E. Mr. Nim Thoth***, Secretary of State, Ministry of Social Welfare, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia	***Facilitator*** – David Brickey Bloomer, World Vision	English Note taker – Monika Sandvik-Nylund
15.30–16.00	Break and Market Place					
16.00–17.00	Home groups	Home group Discussion + Close of the Day				English, Spanish
17.00–18.00	Plenary	What have we learned from Health System Strengthening	Diwan I Am	***Allan Best***, InSource	***Chair*** – Rosangela Berman Bieler, UNICEF	English, Spanish
18.00–20.00	Market Place					
DAY 2, 14 November 2012 – SYSTEM STRENGTHENING						
0900–0915	Plenary	Recap and Objectives of the day	Diwan I Am	Rapporteurs		English, Spanish
09.15–09.45	Plenary address	"What is system strengthening and how do we achieve it?" "What drives change"	Diwan I Am	***Philip Goldman***, Maestral International Respondent: ***Pennie Foster-Fishman***, Professor, Michigan State University	***Chair*** – Ron Pouwels, UNICEF	English, Spanish
09.45–10.15	Break					
10.15–10.30	Plenary	Opening of the Conference by the Indian Government	Diwan I Am	***Prem Narain***, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, India	***Chair*** – Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF	English, Spanish
10.30–11.30	Panel	"Approaches to System Strengthening" – the importance of the actors Role of international bodies Role of civil society/ NGOs Role of Government	Diwan I Am	***Marta Santos Pais***, SRSG Violence Against Children ***Turid Heiberg***, Thematic Advisor, Save the Children ***Preeti Madan***, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, India	***Moderator***– Mark Canavera, Columbia University	English, Spanish
11.30–12.00	Plenary	An experience in CPS strengthening – a government perspective	Diwan I Am	***Jacqueline Oduol***, Secretary for Children Affairs, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, Government of Kenya	***Chair*** – Mark Canavera, Columbia University	English, Spanish
12.00–13.30	Lunch					
13.30–14.45	Round-tables	Strengthening Systems Components				

Time	Session Type	Session Title	Conf. room	Speakers	Chair/ Facilitator/ Moderator	Notes/ Language
		1) Workforce	Aftab Mahtab	***Amy Bess***, Coordinator of the Social Service Workforce Alliance	***Facilitator*** – Matilde Luna, RELAF	English, Spanish Note taker – Amanda Melville
		2) Data Collection and Use	Long Champ	***Andrew Mawson***, Chief of Child Protection, Innocenti Research Centre	***Facilitator*** – Joachim Theis, UNICEF	English, Spanish Note taker – Laurent Chapuis
		3) Finance	Diwan I Am	***Stephen Wainaina***, Economic Planning Secretary, Ministry of State for Planning, National Development, Kenya	***Facilitator*** – Armando Barrientos, University of Manchester	English, Spanish Note taker – Kendra Gregson
		4) Community engagement	Diwan I Khas	***Essam Ali***, Consultant	***Facilitator*** – Bill Forbes, World Vision	English Note taker – Mohamad Aftab
14.45–15.15	Break					
15.15–16.30	Plenary Panel	"The Interface with Other Child-focused Systems" Social Welfare Health Social Protection	Diwan I Am	***Marit Skivenes***, Bergen University College, Norway ***Bernadette J. Madrid***, Child Protection Unit of the University of the Philippines, Manila ***Armando Barrientos***, University of Manchester	***Chair*** –Kendra Gregson, UNICEF	English, Spanish
16.30–18.00	Home groups	Home group Discussion and Close of the Day				English, Spanish
19.00–22.00	Dinner					IHL Lawns
DAY 3, 15 November 2012 – MEASUREMENT AND TARGET GROUPS						
09.00–09.15	Plenary	Recap and Objectives of the day	Diwan I Am	Rapporteurs	***Chair*** – Monika Sandvik-Nylund, UNHCR	English, Spanish
09.15–10.00	Keynote Address	"Giving Priority to Prevention"	Diwan I Am	***Najat M'jid***, Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography Respondent: ***Rebecca Davis***, Rutgers University	***Chair*** – Monika Sandvik-Nylund, UNHCR	English, Spanish
10.00–11.30	Panel	Measuring Systems Performance Example of a review Computer modelling Tanzania study Indicators to measure the system	Diwan I Am	***Rolando Melo Latorre***, SENAME, Chile ***Fred Wulczyn***, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago ***Mubarak Maman***, Save the Children ***Diane Swales***, UNICEF EAPRO	***Moderator*** – Bill Forbes, World Vision	English, Spanish

Time	Session Type	Session Title	Conf. room	Speakers	Chair/ Facilitator/ Moderator	Notes/ Language
11.30–12.00	Plenary	Introduction to a discussion of issues and target groups in a systems perspective	Diwan I Am	***Alexander Krueger***, Child Frontiers	***Chair*** – Bill Forbes, World Vision	
12.00–13.30	Lunch					
13.30–15.00	Round-tables	To consider the questions above				
		1) Children without parental care	Diwan I Khas	***Philip Goldman***, Maestral International ***Dilli Guragai***, Save the Children, Nepal ***Gwen Burchell***, United Aid for Azerbaijan ***Anna Feuchtwang***, EveryChild	***Facilitator*** – John Williamson, DCOF	English Note taker – Lena Karlsson
		2) Child refugees and IDPs	Villa Medici	***Monika Sandvik Nylund***, UNHCR ***Jacqueline Oduol***, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, Government of Kenya ***Amanda Melville***, Save the Children/UNHCR Jordan	***Facilitator*** – Joanina Karugaba, UNHCR	English Note taker – Souad al-Hebishi
		3) Indigenous children, families, communities and land	Long Champ	***Benedito Dos Santos***, Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil ***Catherine Love***, Ahikaa New Zealand	***Facilitator*** – Gary Cameron, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada	English, Spanish Note taker – Theresa Kilbane
		4) Child migrants and trafficked children	Aftab Mahtab	***Saisuree Chutikul***, ASEAN Thailand	***Facilitator*** – Gabriela Olguin, World Vision	English, Spanish Note taker –Katy Barnett
		5) Children in contact with the justice sub-system	Diwan I Am	***Dan O'Donnell***, Consultant, US	***Facilitator*** – Nikhil Roy, Penal Reform International	English, Spanish Note taker – Juliet Attenborough
15.00–16.00	Home groups	Home group Discussion and Close of the Day				
16.00–16.30	Group photo and break					
	OPEN	FREE TIME				
DAY 4, 16 November 2012 – WAY FORWARD						
09.00–09.15	Plenary	Recap and Objectives of the day	Diwan I Am	Rapporteurs	***Chair*** – Kendra Gregson, UNICEF	English, Spanish
09.15–10.00	Plenary address and respondents	"The Gain from Pain: Lessons from the development of child protection systems in high income countries"	Diwan I Am	***Eileen Munro***, London School of Economics, UK Respondent: ***Jachen C. Nett***, Bern University	***Chair*** – Nankali Maksud, UNICEF	English, Spanish

Time	Session Type	Session Title	Conf. room	Speakers	Chair/ Facilitator/ Moderator	Notes/ Language
10.00–11.30	Round-tables	Obstacles/ Opportunities to Systems Strengthening, how to overcome them and the role of key actors				
		1) Institutional Incentives/cross sector incentives, coordination	Aftab Mahtab	***Phintsho Choeden***, National Commission for Women and Children, Bhutan	***Facilitator*** – Alison Sutton, UNICEF	English, Spanish Note taker – Trish Hiddleston
		2) |Social Norms and systems change	Long Champ	***Theresa Kilbane***, UNICEF	***Facilitator*** – Pennie Foster-Fishman, Michigan State University	English, Spanish Note taker – Nadine Perrault
		3) |Mobilising Support/ understanding	Diwan I Khas	***Enakshi Ganguly Thukral***, HAQ, India	***Facilitator*** – Susan Bissell, UNICEF	English Note taker – Stuart Kean
		4) |Parliament	Villa Medici	***Bhalchandra Mungekar***, Parliamentarian, India	***Facilitator*** – Florence Mutyabule Parliamentarian Uganda	English Note taker – Jane Calder
		5) |Fiscal space	Diwan I Am	***Armando Barrientos***, University of Manchester	***Facilitator*** – Kendra Gregson, UNICEF	English, Spanish Note taker – Tamara Tutjenvic
11.30–12.00	Break					
12.00–13.30	Home groups					English, Spanish
13.30–15.00	Lunch					
15.00–15.45	Plenary	Conclusions	Diwan I Am	Conference Organisers: ***Kendra Gregson***, UNICEF ***Bill Bell***, Save the Children ***Eva Bellander***, Save the Children ***Arelys Bellorini***, World Vision ***Monika Sandvik-Nylund***, UNHCR	***Chair*** – Susan Bissell, UNICEF	English, Spanish
15.45–16.30	Plenary	Closing Ceremony	Diwan I Am	***John Williamson***, DCOF ***David McLoughlin***, UNICEF Deputy Representative, India	***Chair*** – Susan Bissell, UNICEF	English, Spanish

Annex 4: Home group methodology

HOME GROUP INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose of the Home Groups

The co-organisers of the conference on 'A Better Way to Protect ALL Children' were keen to encourage dialogue and the sharing of experiences and views among the diverse conference participants. They organised 'home groups' – mixed groups of participants who shared a common language, met once a day throughout the conference, and worked as a group to: 1) discuss the sessions they had participated in; and 2) address key questions that the conference was seeking to answer – identifying areas of consensus and areas where there is a lack of consensus, noting areas where further work is required and suggesting potential gaps in the conference agenda where there is a need for another "discussion group" on a particular topic during the conference.

Working Arrangements

The membership of the home groups was predetermined by the organisers to maximise the benefits of dialogue across regional and professional boundaries. Groups were encouraged to work on their own initiative during the conference to address issues of particular concern to the group and bring their work to the attention of the conference overall.

Conference organisers wished to capture home group discussion and recommendations in several ways to share them with all participants. They used the visual metaphor of a 'river system' to represent conference discussions on child protection systems. Rapporteurs provided a large-scale, mural template of a river system divided into four segments, one for each day of the conference. Home groups captured the outcomes of their discussion using coloured paper cut-outs that represented different aspects of the 'river system.' These cut-outs, with written comments, built a collage mural over the four days of the conference. The mural was located in a central location, and participants were able to review each other's reflections. Rapporteurs collected and incorporated all written comments into a daily summary of conference conclusions that were presented in a bulletin form and also shared with the plenary at the start of each day. The group was also able to provide handwritten or electronic notes in addition to the cut-outs.

Role of the Chair: The Chair for each home group was responsible for gathering home group members for the meeting each day and facilitating discussion as outlined in the agenda and instructions below and ensuring that key points and outcomes of the discussion were captured by the note taker. The chair also served as the contact for the rapporteurs and conference organisers. Chairs were preselected, and each group had the same Chair for all four days.

Role of the Note taker: The note-taker was responsible for documenting the home group's reflections and recommendations using the provided markers and coloured paper cut-outs; labelling session outputs; and bringing them to the rapporteurs for each day of the conference.

Rapporteurs supported the home group meetings by: Preparing the mural template and all the cut-outs; providing instructions, coloured paper cut-outs and black markers; circulating during home groups to clarify instructions as needed; collecting all outputs (notes and cut-outs from the home group meetings); reviewing all notes and outputs and using them to develop the Daily Bulletin and conference conclusions; and grouping and posting the cut-outs on the mural.

Recommendations: Each day home group participants were asked to share any recommendations for organisers on 4x6 sticky notes, including on: the structure or content of the meeting for the next day; important issues

that should have been addressed but were not; or a need to form any side groups.

Home Group Meeting Agenda: Day 1, 16.00–17.00

Objectives:

- To get to know one another
- To identify key issues raised during the day's sessions
- To provide feedback on the structure and content of the meeting

Introductions:

- All participants share their name, position and, in their opinion, the most interesting issue raised today and/ or points that were not raised, but are important. This should be the starting point for discussion (see below).

Discussion:

- What does the group feel are the most important issues raised during today's sessions and why? Please capture the top three issues in your notes and write one on a GREEN TRIANGLE TREE.
- Does the group have aspirations for what the conference can achieve or what they hope to take away from it? Please capture the top three aspirations in your notes and write one on a GREY CLOUD.
- Are there different perspectives among 'implementers' and 'innovators', the different regions, different actors or those who focus on specific aspects of child protection? If so, please capture the different perspectives in your notes and on sticky note leaves (one perspective on each sticky note leaf please – you may stick different perspectives on the same issue together).

Home Group Meeting Agenda: Day 2, 16.30–18.00

Objectives:

- Discuss approaches to systems strengthening
- Identify the most promising practices for system strengthening
- Identify the most significant obstacles to system strengthening

Discussion:

- How can we effectively strengthen systems? What works and why? Please capture the top three aspirations in your notes and write one on an ORANGE STAR.
- Reflecting on the different components, consider the most significant obstacles to systems strengthening? Why have these issues been so challenging? Please capture the top three obstacles in your notes and write one on a STONE.
- What can/should be done to overcome or 'swim past' those obstacles? Are there any evidenced-based examples? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a FISH.
- Are there different perspectives among 'implementers' and 'innovators', the different regions, different actors or those who focus on specific aspects of child protection? If so, please capture the different perspectives in your notes and on sticky note LEAVES (one perspective on each sticky note leaf please – you may stick different perspectives on the same issue together).

Home Group Meeting Agenda: Day 3, 15.00-16.00

Objective: Explore a particular question arising from the various sessions during the day.

- Home Groups Numbers 1-5: How can work on specific issues be reconciled with a systems approach? Do we have evidence of strategies for specific target groups within the child protection system that increase prevention and response mechanisms for all children? What factors make such strategies effective or not? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a CHILD FIGURE.
- Home Groups Numbers 6-10: How should the performance of a child protection system be measured and assessed? What are appropriate objectives and criteria? What should be measured? Do we have examples? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a RULER.
- Home Groups Numbers 11-15: How can the shift to a systems framework facilitate a shift to prevention? What are the challenges and implications in making this shift given the issue-based focus that has been the basis for child protection approaches? How can prevention be given the priority it deserves in the face of countervailing pressures arising from resource constraints, media attention and other similar disincentives? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a YELLOW/ ORANGE TRIANGLE.
- Are there different perspectives among 'implementers' and 'innovators', the different regions, different actors or those who focus on specific aspects of child protection? If so, please capture the different perspectives in your notes and on sticky note LEAVES (one perspective on each sticky note leaf please).

Home Group Meeting Agenda: Day 4, 12.00-13.30

The home groups met on the final day of the conference for an hour and a half. The groups had the opportunity to summarise what they saw as the main outcomes from the conference and to recommend the next steps that need to be taken to progress the child protection systems agenda. This input was collected from the groups and formed part of the concluding feedback in the final session of the conference.

Discussion and conclusions:

- What does the group see as the key outcomes of the conference? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a piece of FRUIT.
- What does the group see as the top three key steps that need to be taken, and by what actors, to progress the child protection systems agenda? Please capture the top three conclusions in your notes and write one on a FOOTPRINT.
- Are there different perspectives among 'implementers' and 'innovators', the different regions, different actors or those who focus on specific aspects of child protection? If so, please capture the different perspectives in your notes and on sticky note LEAVES (one perspective on each sticky note leaf please – you may stick different perspectives on the same issue together).

Annex 5: Conference photo

June 2013