Social Development and Child Protection Budget Issues Paper

Introduction

The objective of this budget issues paper is to provide a platform to help articulate focused dialogue to address issues in social development and child protection as part of the FY2019/20 Budget Framework Paper process. It does not attempt to identify a definitive list of ‘what’ key sector issues are – as this would undermine ownership and existing processes – but instead aims to use data and analysis as a basis for sector discussions and support the development of the FY2019/20 Budget Framework Paper (BFP), which is due mid-November 2018.

Sector Outcomes and Service Delivery Challenges

Cases reported by the child protection and family department of the Uganda Police Force have increased by over 60 per cent in the last six years (Figure 1). There is also growing evidence that violence against children (including sexual and gender-based violence) is on the rise both in and out of school. Studies suggest that as many as 74 per cent of school children experience physical violence and 78 per cent sexual violence.\(^1\) While these issues span two budget sectors, they cannot be viewed in isolation of each other since there is an increased strain on the justice system as supply issues escalate due to a breakdown at community level. Service delivery constraints must therefore be viewed from both the social welfare and child justice angles.

**Figure 1:** Cases reported by the child protection and family department (Uganda Police Force)

**Figure 2:** Non-wage per capita releases to community development workers (2015 prices)

Source: JLOS 2016 Sector Performance Report, MTEFs and Annual Budget Performance Reports

Issue 1: Inadequate resources supporting community mobilization efforts

Community Development Workers (CDWs) play a key role in communities, but their operational funds have reduced by 80 per cent in real per capita terms since 2007 (Figure 2). CDWs are intended to ensure services are effectively delivered across sectors and to refer

---

\(^1\) National Development Plan II Mid Term Review
cases of child violence. However, limited and reduced operational funds have meant they are unable to perform these tasks effectively. This has led to overstretched workloads, shortfalls in logistical support and the inability to carry out their important role in communities. Several donor-funded initiatives (such as NUSAF) have used community volunteers to fill this gap, which is a short-term fix that requires a longer-term sustainable solution.

**Plans are underway to ensure that a component of every project is channelled towards supporting the role CDWs play, although details are yet to be firmed up.** This would be a welcome initiative, but will involve careful planning. For example, consideration should be given to how it will be incorporated in project proposals with mechanisms to ensure that the transfer of funds can be tracked. The Ministry of Finance is currently strengthening its Public Investment Management (PIM) systems, which would require the relevant functions to be incorporated so that these plans can be operationalised.

**Issue 2: Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of social welfare and probation officers**

The functions of social welfare and probation officers fall across two sectors and require different skill sets, which are not being considered as part of their recruitment. The two lead sectors in defining the functional roles, responsibilities and pre-requisites are social development (for the social welfare aspect) and JLOS (for the probation aspect). Recruitment is being carried out by the Ministry of Local Government, which creates a coordination challenge and has resulted in officers being recruited without the relevant skills.

Tracking resource allocation for these officers is opaque in the current budgeting arrangement. A more transparent approach would be to choose the relevant lead ministry and decentralise the function. Lead MDAs in JLOS and the social development sector, as well as the Ministry of Local Government are fully aware of this issue, but efforts need to be expedited.

**Issue 3: Social protection programme (SAGE) operating outside the budget process**

The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) programme is currently operating outside the standard planning, budgeting and fiscal processes. The programme plays a critical role in social protection in Uganda, yet its counterpart funding processes have not been sufficiently mainstreamed into the Social Development BFP process. Currently it is classified as off budget, but it has a sliding scale of GoU contributions, which has led to repeated supplementary budgets. There is currently increased demand for the roll out of the project, which could result in a greater GoU contribution. Failure to pay on time will lead to delayed cash transfer payments, which will adversely affect communities.

**Recommendations**

1. **Operational funds for Community Development Workers.** The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to provide concrete proposals in the FY2019/20 BFP on how a community mobilisation component of project funding can be channelled in this area.

2. **Recruitment and budget transparency for social welfare and probation officers.** The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to provide a phased approach to how social welfare and probation officers will be recruited, funded and trained as part of the
FY2019/20 BFP, incorporating the plans of an MOU between JLOS, local government and social development.

3. **Incorporate social protection spending within the MTEF ceilings.** The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to include GoU contributions to the SAGE project as part of the BFP2019/20 MTEF ceiling. This should clearly outline the GOU financing requirements agreed as part of the donor MOU and any planned shortfalls, to avoid disbursement delays and repeated supplementary budget requests.