



The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2011: Budgeting for Children

Presentation of Key Findings and Recommendations

Information Note

Maputo 2011

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The Chissano International Conference Center in Maputo, Mozambique.

The African Report on Child Wellbeing

Background

In 2008, The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) issued the first edition of its biennial report, under the title: ***The African Report on Child Wellbeing: How Child-friendly are African governments?*** The report focussed on wellbeing as the umbrella title-theme and on the extent to which African governments are living up to their commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and other major international treaties; but most notably, it introduced a novel concept of global appeal, the child friendliness index developed by ACPF to track and compare the performance of governments in the region.

The report was a great success, well received among civil society, the media and more importantly among government circles. Indeed, the report has proved to be a leading source of information on the wellbeing of children in Africa. In terms of government reception, for instance, the then Vice-President of Kenya welcomed an ACPF team in his presidential complex and vowed to bring Kenya higher up in the child-friendliness ranking in the years ahead. The credibility of the report has equally been glaringly witnessed in the recent remark by the Deputy Prime Minister of Swaziland, Mr Themba Masuku who, responding to comments on Swaziland's position on the Ranking, expressed his strong hope that the reform exercises his country has embarked upon, once completed, "will help remove the country from this list as it does not belong there."

In accordance with the recommendations made by the 2008 Report, namely of putting in place pro-child laws and policies and the allocation of budgeting for their implementation, the second and 2011 edition of the Africa Report on Child Wellbeing was dedicated to ***budgeting for children***.

The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2011: Budgeting for Children reviewed the budget performance of 52 African governments between 2006-2008 focusing on spending in sectors that most directly impact on children. It found a continent of contrasts and that the governments of Tanzania, Mozambique and Niger are the three most committed to budgeting for children, along with Gabon, Senegal, Tunisia, Seychelles, Algeria, Cape Verde and South Africa who make up the category of best performers allocating the maximum of their available resources to children.

The Report explored the obligations of African countries to invest in their children, the arguments for doing so from a moral, social, political, and economic perspective, and more importantly, gave profuse factual evidence on the state of government investments in child-focused sectors. As Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UNFPA, noted, the report underlined "the central place of public finance ... in the realisation of child rights".

In addition to offering the irrefutable material for budget advocacy groups to constructively engage governments, the Report has revealed to the latter their strengths and weaknesses by subjecting their performance under the lens of international and regional standards, as well as supplying them with information on how to do better.

Presentation of the Report in Mozambique

ACPF is joining hands with the Joaquim Chissano Foundation and ChildFund to recognise the performance of the Government of Mozambique, by having an opportunity to present the Report to H.E. the President and Senior government officials. This will provide an opportunity to share the separate analysis made on the performance of countries in the region as well as presenting the profiles of individual countries in respect to investment in children issues. By so doing, it will provide a platform for a state-civil society dialogue on the key findings and recommendations of the Report. We also hope that such an event would receive due consideration as this will give us a great opportunity to share the progress that Mozambique is making in investing in children.

The event would also provide a platform to explore possibilities of engaging key government, civil society organizations and other key players in discussions on opportunities for promoting national action on budgeting for children aimed at bringing-in the perspectives of, and fostering constructive engagement among, various actors, including representatives from government, CSOs, international development partners, and the media.

We propose the following possible activities for engagement at national level:

Monitoring the child-friendliness of Government

ACPF developed a tool for assessing the performance of governments in terms of laying down the appropriate legal and policy frameworks, for protection, and for provision for children in terms of budgetary commitment and achievement of child-related outcomes. This tool – called the Child-friendliness Index - (CFI) not only made it possible to rank governments in terms of their relative child-friendliness, but also proved to be a valuable source of self-evaluation for governments and a tool of advocacy for CSOs.

As part of ACPF's efforts to roll out the Child-friendliness Index as an important tool in measuring government's performance and as a tool for child rights advocacy, a project has been designed to be implemented in collaboration with national governments and other local actors such as CSOs that aims to adapting the CFI within a national context. Such efforts will influence budget planning, budget decision making and budget execution at the national level and create a national sense of achievement for better performance in budgeting for children among national actors.

Capacity building in Budgeting for Children (CSOs, Government and the Media)

The public budget plays an indispensable role in the implementation of rights of children enshrined in child rights instruments. Although governments are the principal stakeholder in budgeting for children, civil society and the media also have a powerful role in influencing budgetary processes. Despite this important role of budgeting, and the potential role of these actors in promoting budgeting for children, capacity-related challenges have constrained them from making their respective contributions.

Some of these capacity challenges include the lack of knowledge about child rights among budget officers and the lack of budget advocacy and analysis skills among experts serving in child-focused ministries. Equally importantly, the media seldom looked at and appreciated the critical nexus between budgets and children's rights for lack of skills and lack of materials produced to that effect. As part of the government system, parliamentarians are the top decision making body in anyone country. Budgets are proclaimed by this group and their knowledge of child rights determines the level of attention that can be given to children in public budgets.

ACPF's proposed project under the general rubric of capacity building in budgeting for children includes a) the development of how-to-manuals/tool-kits and training on budgeting for children for budget officers and child-rights experts; b) the provision of training on child rights and budgeting for parliamentarians; and c) the engagement of the media in raising the awareness of the general public on issues related to budgeting and children rights and their linkages.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

The African Child Policy Forum

The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) is a leading, independent, pan-African centre of policy research and dialogue on the African child.

ACPF was established with the conviction that putting children first on the public agenda is fundamental for the realisation of their rights and wellbeing and for bringing about lasting social and economic progress in Africa.

ACPF is governed by an International Board of Trustees consisting of distinguished institutions and world-renowned authorities on social and economic development. The Board is chaired by H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, former Prime Minister of Tanzania and Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (1988-2001). The standing members of the Board include the Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Chair of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The last eight years of ACPF are marked by significant achievements towards its objectives and a considerable amount of work in a wide range of areas. ACPF has also been able to introduce and initiate innovative and pioneering work that contributed to drawing attention to the rights and wellbeing of children in Africa. These first eight years were also marked by increased participation in international fora and the establishment of a wider network of partners and donors. The organisation has attained significant levels of influence, reach, and recognition. ACPF is rapidly becoming a recognized leader in the field of children's rights and issues.

ACPF's studies on violence against children in Africa have informed and been cited in global and pan-African publications. These documents have also become major reference documents on the harmonisation of laws in Africa. The International Policy Conferences, the recently launched African Report on Child Wellbeing, the African Child Information Hub, pioneering work on the harmonization of law in support of children's rights and a number of other ACPF products have become major sources of information, research publications, and good practices on children in Africa. ACPF has been and continues to be invited to collaborate on various research and advocacy initiatives on children and share its expertise. It increasingly receives invitations to deliver keynote addresses and make presentations in international and pan-African conferences and meetings on issues related to children. More specifically ACPF's work has involved:

- Continued and more intensive focus on government accountability by monitoring government compliance and the child-friendliness of African governments through its respected and flagship publication *The African Report on Child Wellbeing* and *theme-specific publications* on laws and economic policy;
- Preparation of *Reports on Children in Crisis*. Examples of these kinds of reports include The case of albinos in Tanzania; children orphaned by AIDS and driven on to the streets accused of witchcraft; and the situation of children in failed states such as Somalia;
- Highlighting and documenting - through the application of surveys and scientifically tested methodologies - problems that affect children in general (for example, *child survival, violence against children* and *child poverty*), or, drawing attention to hitherto neglected subjects or themes, for example, *children with disability, child-headed households*, or, highlighting such a manifestly important but neglected subject as the *role of the family and parenting*;
- Enhancing the voices of children in public policy by building on pioneering methodologies already developed by ACPF (e.g. *polling of children and young people*) and ensuring that they inform public policy debates;
- Promoting *legal reform*, especially ensuring *access to justice* to children and those in conflict with the law, through assessment of national laws and identifying mechanism to bridge the gap between law and practice such as through the *establishment of children's legal protection centres* in as many African countries as possible;
- Preparation of *policy guidelines and manuals based on positive lessons and good practices* especially on economic policy, social protection mechanisms and legal reform;
- Promoting policy dialogue and helping child rights' organisations to organise into a political force for children in Africa through the *AfricaWide Movement for Children* and popularising the *International Policy Conference on the African Child* which has now become the premier forum on children in Africa;

The Joaquim Chissano Foundation

The Joaquim Chissano Foundation is a Mozambican registered Non-For Profit Organization with three core objectives, which are the Promotion of Peace, Socio-Economic Development, and the Mozambican Culture. The foundation is also an advocate of equal provision of educational opportunities, health care and social services to all citizens, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

Establishment in 2005, by President Joaquim Chissano, the Former Head of State of the Republic of Mozambique, the vision of the Foundation to see the populations of Mozambique and of Africa with improved standards of living, enjoying peace in a more integrated continent free from armed conflicts and misery, devoid of severe hunger and preventable endemic diseases, and with a greater capacity for the integrated use of its resources and assets towards a sustainable development, particularly in rural areas.

In order to strengthen its scope of operations and ensure a successful implementation of its established goals, the Joaquim Chissano Foundation established several domestic and international partnerships, with public and private entities in order to achieve its statutory objectives to ensure the perpetuation of its work for future generations.

The Government of the Republic of Mozambique awarded the Joaquim Chissano Foundation the legal standing and it was granted the status of an entity of Public Interest, through Resolution n° 71/2004, of 31 December.

ChildFund

ChildFund exists to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children have the capacity to become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change in their communities. ChildFund promotes societies whose individuals and institutions participate in valuing, protecting and advancing the worth and rights of children. It started operating in 1938 with an effort to build orphanages for the children who had been left without homes or families in the wake of the second Sino-Japanese War. Its modest effort to build and operate orphanages in China evolved into a child focused development approach – a global force working for children’s welfare throughout the world.

ChildFund works in 31 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas assisting approximately 15.2 million children and their family members, regardless of race, religion, creed or gender. ChildFund distinctive approach is focused on working with children throughout their journey from birth to young adulthood, as well as with families, local organizations and communities globally to create the environments children need to thrive.

ChildFund started operating in Africa 1970. Currently ChildFund works in eleven countries: Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, Senegal, Serra Leone, Uganda and Mozambique. Its work focuses on empowering deprived, excluded and vulnerable children to thrive in their respective communities and become leaders of enduring changes in the communities. Our program areas includes our work in education and health sectors, Early Childhood Development, HIVAIDS programs, Income Generating Activities, Food Security, as well as local institutional development and capacity building. The Africa Regional Office currently operates from Ethiopia Addis Ababa legally registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ChildFund established its operations in the country in 2005. The first operational Area was in Zavala District, In Hambane Province. Within the same year an Area Association – Associação Kulani Kwati Vanana (AKKV) was formed as a key implementing partner. In March 2008 a second Area Office was established in Gondola District, Manica Province and an Associação Kurera Wana (AKW) was also set up as a local implementing partner. Both of these operating areas focus their interventions on promoting the well being of children in their communities. Current Project Activities in Zavala and Gondola areas include Child Protection, School Management support, school construction, and educational support for vulnerable children, food security and livelihoods, income generation for youth and vulnerable families, primary health care, water provision and institutional capacity building for the Associations.

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