

BENIN
CHILD PROTECTION
THEMATIC REPORT - GRANT SC149906
January-December 2016
March 2017



©UNICEF / BENIN / 2015/R. David-Gnahoui

UNICEF Benin
Child Protection Programme

unite for
children

unicef

E. Strategic context	6
F. Results in the Outcome Area.....	8
G. Financial Analysis	14
f. Financial Implementation	15
g. Future Work Plan.....	17
H. Future Work Plan.....	18
I. Constraints	18

C- Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPS	Centre de Promotion Sociale / Social Promotion Centre
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EMICOV	Integrated Modular Survey on living Conditions of Households
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
IFMA	Institut des Filles de Marie-Auxiliatrice (Salesian Sisters)
ILO	International Labor Organisation
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Study
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity System
MTFPAS	Ministère du Travail de la Fonction Publique et des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Labour, Civil Service and Social Affairs)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCPM	Office Central de Protection des Mineurs (Central Police Child Protection Office)
OFFE	Observatoire de la Famille, de la Femme et de l'Enfant - Ministère de la Famille (Observatory on Family, Women and Children)
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PNPE	Politique Nationale de Protection de l'Enfant (National Child Protection Policy)
SIDoFFE	Système Intégré des Données relatives à la Famille, la Femme et l'Enfant (Integrated Data System of the Family, Women and Children's Observatory)
SIPAGeS	Système Intégré de Production, d'Analyse et de Gestion des Statistiques – Ministère de la Justice (Integrated system for the production, analysis and management of statistics - Ministry of Justice)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

D- Executive Summary

The situation of children and women in Benin is characterised by persistent socioeconomic challenges including great inequality and poverty, with 36.2¹ per cent of the population living below the poverty line (US\$0.7). The majority of the population lives in rural areas (55.9 per cent) and the urban population represent 44.1 per cent, although there is a 4% rate of urbanization as young people move to the cities for employment. Women compose 51 per cent of the total population. Benin has one of the highest demographic growth rates (2.9 per cent) in the West African region (average, 2.6 per cent). The economy of Benin is based on agriculture, which accounts for 47.1 per cent of the total workforce. In addition, 31.3%² of children live in poor households and undergo at least one severe deprivation, with significant geographic, socioeconomic and gender disparities. The level of poverty is a concern with regard to child protection throughout the country.

Protection of children against abuse, violence and exploitation is a right enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and ratified by the Government of Benin. The Constitution of the country and several other specific legal texts acknowledge this and other rights, but despite this legal recognition, too many children continue to be victims of violence in its different forms (including trafficking, labour, economic and sexual exploitation, sequestration, early and forced marriages, infanticide, traditional and harmful practices and non-registration at birth).

Many of these challenges are rooted in cultural and social norms, which act as barriers to children's harmonious development. Children are often vulnerable and unable to speak out and defend themselves. Culturally in West Africa, children are expected to stay in the background and it is commonplace that a child is best seen and not heard. Communities and the children themselves lack knowledge on children's rights and the empowerment required to ensure that these rights are realised.

In addition, the current mechanisms and systems to protect children are still inadequate and are not well structured and coordinated. It is therefore important to redirect actions towards a more holistic approach, which will encourage dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers and promote an environment that is more protective for children.

However, in spite of mounting evidence of the seriousness of the deteriorating conditions of children and loud outcry from civil society, the capacity of service delivery and child protection to ensure the respect of child rights is hampered by governance issues and the ineffective implementation of existing policy frameworks and action plans. This situation is aggravated by feeble efforts to curb the socio-cultural practices, norms and belief systems that act as barriers to the realisation of child rights. Major gaps in coordination also result in negative outcomes for children. The child protection system remains characterized by the proliferation of countless bodies involved in child protection work yet who lack a sound common vision and goal, as well as a clear division of roles which can often results in duplication of efforts. Nevertheless, efforts continue to improve the situation and implement the recommendations of the CRC and the core relevant conventions, in particular with regard to strengthening the legal and institutional framework for child protection.

In line with UNDAF results, the Benin-UNICEF Child Protection programme supports the Government and other key stakeholders in implementing the strategic options, and achieving results for children. In the current Country Programme cycle (2014-18), the Child Protection programme in Benin focuses on strengthening child protection systems in order to prevent and respond to violence and exploitation including child marriage, in particular where deprivation of children's rights is most prevalent.

¹ INSAE, EMICOV 2011

² SITAN 2012

The current Country Programme therefore aims to reinforce the protection system of childhood in order to prevent and to respond to violence and exploitation issues in seven (7) communes and a peri-urban neighbourhood in the economic capital Cotonou. As per the approved Programme Document, the expected results of the programme cycle are as follows:

Outcome: By 2018, boys, girls and adolescents avoid risky behaviours, have better access to and make improved use of legal and social protection services and communities adopt behaviours and practices in conformity with children's rights, even in an emergency situation.

Output 1: By the end of 2018, actors of the child protection system at the national, regional and decentralised levels have an increased capacity to analyse child protection issues, coordinate, implement equitably and monitor national policies and strategies.

Output 2: By 2018, key child protection actors in six municipalities and one suburban area in Cotonou have increased capacity to offer justice and protection services in conformity with international norms.

Output 3: By the end of 2018, adolescents, parents, religious and traditional leaders in six municipalities and one suburban district of Cotonou, have increased capacity to avoid risky behaviours, use protection services and abandon norms and practices harmful to girls and boys.

Output 4: By the end of 2018, six municipalities and one suburban area and their populations have increased capacity to set up and use nearby civil registration services to allow children aged 0 to 5 years to dispose of birth certificates and protection services in conformity with international norms.

The programme interventions further aims to contribute towards achievement of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to child protection Target 5.3 on harmful traditional practices, including child marriage (under goal 5 on gender equality)³: *end all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation* and target 5.3: *eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations*.

It is linked to the global Strategic Plan Outcome (SPO): *Supporting global efforts to prevent violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect through improved and equitable prevention and child protection systems* and to the Country Programme Outcome: ***By 2018, boys, girls and adolescents avoid risky behaviours, have better access to and make improved use of legal and social protection services and communities adopt behaviours and practices in conformity with children's rights, even in an emergency situation.***

The main implementing partners are the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior and Public Security at central level and their directorates and decentralized branches at the regional level. At operational level, the programme works with Social Promotion Centres (CPS), municipalities and NGOs.

As per the 2016 Annual Work Plan, an amount of USD **2,383,313** including USD **1,633,312** of ORR was planned for the Outcome Area 5 (cf. Table 1). All available resources were used.

³ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/08/transforming-our-world-document-adoption/>

E. Strategic context

Country trends in the situation of children

In Benin, violence and abuse against children remain a concern despite the efforts of various actors to improve and strengthen the child protection system. Children are still victims of abuse that includes sexual and physical violence, early marriage, infanticide, female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful cultural practices that affect their rights to health and development. Furthermore, the worst forms of child labour, trafficking and all other forms of exploitation including sexual remain major concerns. On the other hand, the social and cultural environment remains largely unfavorable to the well-being of the child. The MICS survey conducted in 2014 revealed the extent of violence and abuse against children. Child marriage among girls under 18 years was rated at 31.7%, whilst child labor among the 5-17 year-old children was 52.5% and 91.1 % of children aged between 1 and 14 years of age were reported as having been victims of violent discipline and the rate of violent discipline is 91.1 %. Furthermore, thousands of children whether victims or in conflict with the law go each year without justice, due to a lack of legal protection mechanisms for children and social and other norms harmful to children. The realization of the right to an identity is another challenge that remains to be overcome: only 4 out of 10 children in the poorest quintile have birth certificates, compared to 8 out of 10 children in the wealthiest quintile.

A recent study⁴, constituting the mapping and analysis of the national system of protection of children in Benin, conducted by the department in charge of child protection with the help of partners in 2011, listed the following issues:

- **The national child protection legal arsenal is rich, but weakly effective for an actual protection of children.** After the ratification of the Convention on the rights of the child, the national legal arsenal was highly developed in order to ensure its conformity with the commitments made at the international level. The current legislative framework includes a large number of texts, amongst which are conventions and other international tools ratified by Benin. However, internal and external observers cannot help but note that this legislative framework remains highly unimplemented both in the field of the promotion and the effective protection of the rights of the child as well as in the field of punishment of offences committed against children. This led to the adoption of the Children's Act in 2015 which gives more coherence to the various pieces of legislation, a factor that induces their weak enforcement.
- **Weak coordination mechanisms and involvement of key stakeholders.** The current environment for the protection of children in Benin is marked by a limited involvement of the various sectors that have complementary roles in the fields of prevention, management and law enforcement. Similarly, inter sector collaboration is insufficient.
This situation seems more problematic at the central level. Despite the existence of several frameworks of cooperation, high-level dialogue on child protection between the different sectors is barely inexistent. There is no structural connection between the sectors in charge of “social protection” on one side and “legal protection” on the other side, making coordination of all child protection activities weak and therefore inefficient.
- At the operational level, the collaboration between sectors seems to work better, but it is neither well-structured nor based on a clear division of the roles of the various actors and on the functional links

⁴ Cartographie et Analyse du Système National de Protection de l'Enfance au Bénin, Ministère de la Famille, de l'Assistance Social, de la Solidarité Nationale, des Handicapés et des Personnes du Troisième Age, 2011

between them. Common action plans do not exist and the collaboration is limited mostly to the management of specific cases. The child protection structures in charge of facilitating this collaboration at the local level, show varying levels of dynamism, dependent on the players. In addition, community child protection mechanisms are weakly capitalized. This led the government to develop a coordination mechanism at the level of the National Child Protection Policy and Action Plan. However the sector remains **too fragmented and characterised by a duplication of activities. The prevailing approach that classifies children does not contribute to bridge the gap.** It is necessary to go beyond the categorization of children by their specific vulnerability and adopt an inclusive vision that takes into account all types of children in need. These observations led to the adoption in 2015 of the National Child Protection Policy (PNPE) and its national Action Plan in 2016.

- **Weak production of data-driven evidence in relation to child protection issues.** In order to increase knowledge on children issues and promote e of the sharing of key evidence-based reports, the Government with the support of UNICEF conducted several studies and surveys, and documented NGOs practices.
- **Social norms harmful to children continue to hamper their harmonious development.** To address social norms community dialogues and awareness-raising activities were promoted, with a view to inform and educate community members on the rights of the child.
- **The level of punishment against child abuse remains insufficient.** According to the results of the Child Protection Mapping in Benin, specialized procedures and standards necessary for the provision of services to child victims of violence are lacking in the areas of security, justice and health. Actually, most cases of children's rights abuse that should be the subject of judicial penalty are settled "amicably" in the interest of adults rather than in the interest of the child. The vast majority of complaints brought before the social structures resulted in an out-of-court settlement. In addition, in an environment where certain offences against children are not considered crimes and where complaints lodged with the police and courts become a "battle against society" and therefore a "lost battle", impunity remains a major challenge. In such a context, the Government decided to make access to justice easier and set up child friendly police units and courts.

Key challenges and changes a year after the launch of the SDGs

Since the adoption of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government of Benin has taken various actions to ensure ownership by all stakeholders and its mainstreaming into development policies and strategies. The Government presented a roadmap to all stakeholders, with a central commitment to "Leave no one behind". This roadmap is broken down into several stages, the main ones being: ownership by SDG stakeholders; integration and budgeting of SDGs into national policies and planning; the financing of SDGs and the establishment of a monitoring framework in Benin. Among these, it is noteworthy to mention the contextualization and mainstreaming of SDGs into policies and development strategies. This process is still underway with the development of strategic documents, including the finalisation of the Government Action Programme, the Growth Strategy for Sustainable Development (Stratégie de Développement Durable)). UNICEF participated in technical workshops on the contextualization of SDGs in collaboration with UNDP and is currently providing support to the process of developing the new SCDD in particular thematic groups devoted to education, health, child protection and social protection.

The current challenges linked to the achievement of the commitment "to leave no one behind" remains the mainstreaming of social inclusion, that is, the involvement and participation of the right holders, community members in the process of improving their own living conditions. On the other hand, much still needs to be done to strengthen the statistical system in order to ensure a better monitoring of SDGs, and to provide

quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data needed to help with the measurement of progress and to make certain that no one is left behind.

UNICEF position to engage or address equity

UNICEF is supporting the Government in implementing an equity focus approach so as to achieve results upstream, midstream, and downstream. Addressing inequalities and committing towards the progressive reduction of equity gaps remains a priority of the Country Programme. In each of the programmatic areas, UNICEF is supporting at the national level the creation of an enabling environment for children's rights, by supporting the development of "child friendly" laws and policies, advocating for an increase of allocations to basic services. As a convener, UNICEF has created a broad partnership on key issues including sensitive subjects related to social norms and strengthening the system from central level down to district, commune and community level. Moreover, while helping the system to provide quality services, UNICEF is also addressing the bottlenecks related to the demand. For instance, UNICEF's high-level advocacy for a strengthened system of child protection against abuse, exploitation and neglect resulted in the direct support of the President of Benin for the adoption of the National Child Protection Policy in October 2014 and the promulgation of the Children Act in 2015.

Specific challenges

The child protection system in Benin remains ill-adapted to the needs of children. The actors in the key sectors do not work together to provide a coordinated response to children in need. Services available are too limited the human resources at disposal are not well trained. There are no procedures in place to respond to children who are vulnerable or in need of special legal protection. There are gaps in ensuring adequate resources and capacity for service delivery in terms of implementation, monitoring and assessment of child rights intervention. In addition, the social and cultural environment remains to a large extent not conducive to the wellbeing of the child. In the majority of households, parents and caregivers still consider that a child is only raised to accomplish duties and obligations. Insufficient inter-sectorial collaboration, resources (social issues represent less than 1% of the national budget), and the ineffectiveness of local bodies for the implementation of plans and the gaps in service provision for the most vulnerable and the poor quality of existing services are having a heavy impact on the life of children.

F. Results in the Outcome Area

Within the past years, the child protection system in Benin has been improving on the policy and legislative side. In terms of policy framework, there have been positive developments since 2015 with the adoption of several key policy documents aiming to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach in addressing child rights. These policies and plans include:

- The National Child Protection Policy (PNPE) and its action Plan which offers a multidisciplinary framework that defines a clear and integrated vision for child protection. It provides a national coordination and monitoring mechanism of all intervention to prevent and end all acts of violence against children by 2025. In 2016, a budgeted Action Plan was validated by all stakeholders, under the guidance of the Ministry of Social Affairs. This plan provides a framework for multidisciplinary activities for the period 2016-2018. Actors in the Child Protection field are gradually planning their interventions in harmony with this National Action Plan and at the operational level harmonising their practices and norms with those required by the national minimum standards. Advocacy with the Ministry in charge of Social Affairs is ongoing to ensure a national budget contribution to the Action Plan. Nevertheless, the effective and coordinated implementation of the national child protection policy still remains a challenge.

- Another policy is the National Justice Sector Development Policy and Programme in which a justice for children component is incorporated;
- A Holistic Social Protection Policy and a Multi-sectorial National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescents and Youth (2011-2015) have also been adopted.

Furthermore, institutional bodies have been established within sectorial ministries in order to implement policies, strategies and action plans.

On the legislation front, the legal framework has been strengthened in 2016 through the development and validation of 7 drafts of decrees of Application of the Children's Act promulgated in 2015, of which 2 were adopted, and an outreach strategy of the Act has been implemented by the Government and the civil society, with the support of partners. This has enabled the Government to set up the Central Authority (Autorité Centrale) in charge of regulating the adoption of children

To ensure a better management of data collection, the Government is since 2014, in the process of strengthening and harmonizing the Ministry of Justice Integrated System of Production, Analysis and Management of Statistics Database known as SIPAGeS and the Ministry of Social Affairs Information System and database operated by the Observatory of the Family, Women and Children known as SIDoFFE. The SIPAGeS is developing the first dashboard of Juvenile Justice Indicators.

Benin has also made progress in the field of birth registration, with an increase in the national rate which increased from 80% to 84.8% between 2011 and 2016. To bring the civil registry services closer to the populations, the Government set up in 12 pilot municipalities (8 of which are UNICEF intervention areas) its first secondary civil registry centres. Furthermore in 2016, UNICEF supported the reactivation of the decentralized child protection coordination mechanisms within 17 out of 86 communal child protection coordination committees. These committees were trained on the National Child Protection Policy and Action Plan and several discussions were held with mayors regarding their continued support to these committees. To this end, the government decided to carry out inspection and assistance activities to improve the standards and quality of child protection throughout the country.

In order to reinforce the protection system and enable actors in the intervention zones to provide appropriate legal protection to children facing the justice system, whether they are victims or in conflict with the law, the capacity of 2 courts and 6 police and gendarmerie units to protect children and offer child friendly services has been strengthened. They were provided with equipment, tools and guide books on procedures. A training of more than 89 players on the provision of child friendly services and the referencing of children in the justice system was organized in 2016. As a result, the stakeholders and social actors reached by the programme component interventions are now skilled to better protect children. They were able to reach 3,832 children who had access to psychosocial support from CPS and NGO partners. 544 radio programmes were broadcast by community radio stations on protection issues. 10,791 people including religious and traditional leaders became more aware of the behaviours that put children at risk and engaged in protection action. However impunity prevails and is characterized by threats from some influential people towards stakeholders in the judiciary.

Knowledge on the situation of children has been increased amongst actors and stakeholders through the production of three (3) studies on the situation of children and their dissemination in the communities concerned in Benin. The studies were carried out to allow a better understanding of the extent and drivers of violence against children. They include: the Study on Children involved in Prostitution and Pornography; the Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on sexual violence and abuse against children including child marriage; and the Gap Analysis of the Social Workers Force to assist children. The results of these

different studies will enable key stakeholders to develop specific interventions and programmes in line with the action plan of the PNPE.

In terms of Communication for Development, several key milestones were achieved as part of the “Zero tolerance campaign”. This included the creation of the National Youth Platform comprising more than 60 different youth-led organizations, artists, bloggers, and activists with their unique and innovative mobilizing power, which in turn triggered a social movement intended to break the silence around sexual violence against children. “Zero Tolerance” social media sites were set up to share campaign-related information. Young emerging artists were engaged in a participatory process to produce songs, plays, poems and slams channelling powerful messages aiming at triggering a collective dialogue on child marriage and sexual violence against children.

Participatory dialogues were held with religious and traditional leaders in Lokossa, Parakou and Porto-Novo, providing an open space for reviewing social norms and identifying endogenous solutions. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors joined hands to blow the whistle on child marriage by calling on authorities, organizations, civil society, the media and communities to unite and work together to eradicate the phenomenon. After a year of intense lobbying with government counterparts, the multi-sectoral *ad hoc* steering committee for the “Zero tolerance” campaign was put in place by a ministerial decree. It will strengthen coordination, planning, reporting and will help harmonizing interventions amongst all partners (NGOs, bilateral organizations, civil society, FBOs, Youth Platform, technical partners, etc.).

In the field of birth registration, progress was observed as the rate increased from 80% to 84.8% between 2011 and 2016. However, civil services do not always deliver the birth certificate, and even when they have established them, people do not come to collect them. This explains why the rate of children who actually hold a birth certificates is only 48.2% (Source: MICS 2014). Hence in 2016, free birth certificates distribution campaigns have been organized in priority areas. 60 journalists were trained to produce and disseminate messages. In addition, awareness sessions took place and 3,180 programmes were broadcasted by 30 community radio stations. 100 micro programs and 6 shows in French and in twenty (20) local languages allowed social mobilization activities around the birth registration subject and the retrieval of birth certificates. These interventions helped 198,390 children in 55 communes (which includes 7 communes of intervention of UNICEF and the joint PCA) to receive their birth certificates. The process of a further assessment of the of civil status is ongoing, in compliance with the approach of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Africa (UNECA) and 6, 974 children obtained their birth certificates in 73 courts in 2016.

Results Assessment Framework

National Result	A. Making Benin a safer place for children to grow up between 2014 and 2018		
	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016
Percentage of girls and boys identified who have access to social and legal protection	TBD	90%	25%

Number of cases of violence and abuse against children reported to the police and Social Promotion Centres	3,733	15,000	12,557
--	-------	--------	--------

Outcome

Outcome	By 2018 boys, girls and adolescents avoid risky behaviour, have a better access to and make improved use of legal and social protection services, and communities adopt behaviour and practices in conformity with children's rights, even in an emergency situation.		
OUTCOME INDICATORS	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016
Number of girls and boys at risk or victims of violence who use social (CPS) protection services	N/A	12,000	28,450
Percentage of complaints on abuse and crime against children taken to court	N/A	25%	5%
Percentage of children (0 to 5 years old) who have birth registration certificates	80%	90%	84.8%
Duration of pre-trial detention for children in prison	8 months	3 months	7 months for boys 29 months for girls

Output Results

Output 1	By the end of 2018, actors of the child protection system at the national, regional and decentralised levels have increased capacity to analyse child protection issues, coordinate, implement equitably and monitor national policies and strategies.		
OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016
Children's Act voted and adopted	No	Yes	Yes
Number of application Decrees established for the Children's Act	0	1	7

National Child Protection Policy available	No	Yes	Yes
National Plan of Action for the National Child Protection Policy available	No	Yes	Yes
Number of studies on child protection available	0	6	7
National Child protection and follow up coordination mechanism available	No	Yes	Yes

Output 2	By the end of 2018 key child protection actors in six municipalities and one suburban area in Cotonou have increased capacity to offer justice and protection services in conformity with international norms		
OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016
Number of municipalities with child protection coordination, follow up and referral mechanisms	0	3	N/A
Number of child friendly courts	0	4	2
Number of police and gendarmerie units with child protection services	1	8	6
Number of key protection actors trained on child protection mechanisms and procedures	N/A	1,200	895
Number of children in pre-trial detention	159	50	191

Output 3	By the end of 2018, adolescents, parents, religious and traditional leaders in six municipalities and one suburban area in Cotonou have increased capacities to avoid risky behaviour, use protection services and abandon norms and practices harmful to girls and boys		
OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016

Number of information and awareness raising campaigns organised to prevent abuse and protect children from abuse, violence and exploitation	0	1	0
Number of cases of violence reported to the police or to social promotion centres	3,733	15,000	7,190
Number of adolescents at risk or victims who have visited social promotion centres	4,524	10,000	4,524
Number of radio programmes broadcast with the participation of children, adolescents, parents, religious and traditional leaders	N/A	2,688	0

Output 4	By the end of 2018, six municipalities and one suburban area and their populations have increased capacity to set up nearby and use civil registration services to allow children aged from 0 to 5 years to have birth certificates		
OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELINE (% OR #) 2014	TARGET (% OR #) 2018	PROGRESS (% OR #) 2016
Number of municipalities with a functional secondary civil registration centre	0	10	12
Percentage of birth certificates withdrawn	20%	35%	48.2%

G. Financial Analysis

As per the 2016 Annual Work Plan, an amount of USD **2,383,313** including USD 1,633,312 of ORR was planned for the Outcome Area 5 (cf. Table 1). All available resources were used.

Outcome Area 06 Child Protection

Benin

Table 1: Planned and Funded for the country programme 2016 (in US Dollar)

Row Labels	Funding Type	Output Planned
06-05 Birth registration	RR	0
	ORR	279,000
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	RR	0
	ORR	232,500
06-08 Child Protection # General	RR	313,325
	ORR	294,224
Unknown	RR	436,675
	ORR	827,588
Total Budget		2,383,313

Other resources in 2016 came mostly from the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund SC149906, a contribution from the Norwegian committee for UNICEF (SC150251), a non-earmarked contribution of the Netherlands Government (SC140861). As can be seen in the table below, other partners did not directly contribute to thematic funding for Benin, and their contribution were rather earmarked in response to specific proposals. The availability and flexibility of thematic funding made it possible to find a reasonable way to allocate resources to all areas of the programme.

Table 2 : Country-level thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2016

DONORS	Grant number*	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Global Child Protection	SC149906	292,764	273,611
Total		292,764	273,611

f. Financial Implementation

In 2016, almost all implemented activities fall within the scope of the SP 2014-2018 Key Programme Areas under Outcome Area 6 (cf. Table 3). The activities with the most far-reaching impact were the following: prevention of violence and abuse, to enable children, adolescents and women, namely the most vulnerable, to avoid risky behaviour, provision of access and use of protection services against abuse, violence and exploitation; and enabling communities to adopt social practices in harmony with human rights; reinforcing Government and municipalities capacities to conduct administrative, economic and institutional reform and to implement development policies and programmes. The funded activities targeted remote areas and children excluded. They were pivotal for improving quality, for establishing a link with service delivery, and accelerating the development of policies and strategies favourable to children.

Table 3 : Expenditures in the Outcome Area

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Benin - 1170
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection

2016 Expenditures by Key-Results Areas (in US Dollars)

Row Labels	Expenditures Amount			
	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	All programme accounts
06-01 Data and Child Protection	672	40,117	91,695	132,484
06-02 Child Protection systems	961	32,461	167,522	200,944
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	2,471	234,281	210,612	447,364
06-04 Justice for children	777	69,798	71,778	142,352
06-05 Birth registration	1,721	170,665	135,801	308,187
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	1,470	210,152	22,005	233,628
06-08 Child Protection # General	3,878	166,637	623,966	794,481
Total	11,949	924,110	1,323,380	2,259,439

In 2016, UNICEF Benin utilized USD 2,259,439 for programme activities and interventions related to child protection. The funds utilization is summarized in the table below.

Table 4 : Thematic expenses by programme area

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Benin - 1170
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection
Donor Class Level2	Thematic

Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Regular	91,851
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	2,095
06-04 Justice for children	2,257
06-05 Birth registration	68,337
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	1,407
06-08 Child Protection # General	17,755
Grand Total	91,851

Table 5 : Expenses by Specific Intervention Acts

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Benin - 1170
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection

Row Labels	Expense
06-01-01 Child Protection and violations # periodic data collection and analysis	40,535
06-01-02 Child Protection and violations # routine administrative data collection and analysis	62,341
06-02-01 Child Protection systems strengthening	91,103
06-02-02 Child Protection # mapping and assessment	56,052
06-03-01 Violence against children (general)	254,914
06-03-02 Prevent and address emotional and physical violence (including corporal punishment)	25,911
06-03-06 Prevent and address child labour	92,330
06-04-01 Access to justice (for all children)	98,855
06-04-02 Diversion programmes and other alternatives to detention of children	20,035
06-05-01 Birth and civil registration	260,453
06-07-01 Child Protection # parenting programmes	10,774
06-07-02 Child Protection -Alternative Care	114,194
06-07-06 Prevent and address child marriage	40,617
06-07-07 Child sensitive social protection to prevent, reduce vulnerability and/or exclusion	59,446
06-08-01 Child Protection # general	569,717

06-08-03 Child Protection -support to achieving global and regional goals	24,078
08-01-04 UNDAF preparation and review	5,028
08-01-06 Planning # General	24,783
08-02-03 MICS # General	12,919
08-02-04 DevInfo	7,678
08-02-05 Other multi-sectoral household surveys and data collection activities	4,236
08-03-02 Communication for Development at sub-national level	42,523
08-05-01 Supply # General	28,315
08-06-02 Building global/regional/national stakeholder evaluation capacity	7,217
08-09-06 Other # non-classifiable cross-sectoral activities	288,825
10-07-12 Management and Operations support at CO	384
4041 Birth registration	3,058
4113 Systems and programmes in support to prevent and respond to violence against children including at home	5,146
7921 Operations # financial and administration	6,598
7931 Human resources and learning	160
Unknown	1,215
Grand Total	2,259,439

g. Future Work Plan

Table 6: planned budget and Available Resources for 2017

Intermediate Result	Funding Type	Planned Budget	Funded Budget	Shortfall
06-05 Birth registration	RR	90,000	90,000	0
	ORR	189,000	39,213	149,787
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	RR	302,150	302,150	0
	ORR	293,150	6,222	286,928
06-08 Child Protection # General	RR	253,147	253,147	0
	ORR	282,129	271,077	11,052
Unknown	RR	398,876	398,876	0
	ORR	208,673	103,251	105,422
Sub-total Regular Resources		1,044,173	1,044,173	0
Sub-total Other Resources-Regular		972,952	419,763	553,189
Total for 2017		2,017,125	1,463,936	553,189

H. Future Work Plan

UNICEF will seek to strengthen the child protection system, in order to prevent and respond to violence and exploitation in six communes, and a peri-urban district of Cotonou where the deprivation of children's rights is prevalent. This will enhance the ability of vulnerable children and adolescents to protect themselves from the risks to which they are exposed, including HIV and support victims of abuse in rebuilding their lives. UNICEF will improve the delivery of protection services by supporting the equitable enforcement of protective legislation and policies to ensure that children have better access to justice, civil registration services and social services.

Furthermore, through Communication for Development programme, children, families and communities will make an increased use of protection services and adopt a social behaviour that protects children. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs, this component will strengthen the existing partnership with other sectors.

UNICEF will continue to focus on supporting the Government in the implementation of various child protection policies and decrees contributing to the strengthening of the protection system and mechanisms at the central, regional and community levels, and reinforcing data collection and analysis mechanisms for gathering information and evidence.

The National Child Protection Action Plan will be implemented to ensure equitable provision of quality social and legal protection for all children, in particular the most vulnerable. Four child friendly courts, eight police units, and other social services and referral mechanisms will be reinforced and extended through training and equipment to improve the delivery of protection services and access to justice, civil registration services and social services for children. Referral mechanisms for children will also be set up in the intervention zones.

UNICEF will focus on raising awareness on violence against children, as well as on capacity and skills development for children, adolescents, youth and adults, to encourage dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers. It will thus promote an environment that is more supportive of children. A "Zero Tolerance of Violence" campaign centered on the fight against child marriage will be launched.

UNICEF will continue to focus on raising awareness on the importance of birth registration and to mobilise people through radio programmes and other information campaigns. The creation of secondary civil registration centres will remain instrumental for bringing services closer to the population. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Interior to set up the Rapid Pro platform and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Civil Registration Vital Statistics (CRVS) system through a one year technical assistance programme.

Constraints

A lack of sufficient and qualified Government staff, as well as resources and expertise to support the implementation of interventions, hindered implementation process. UNICEF had to use external technical expertise for the development of the child protection national policy and the children's component of the justice sector development policy.

The absence of an operational national coordination mechanism for child protection interventions remains a concern in the planning of field activities. There were delays in the adoption of policy

documents and the Children's Act. UNICEF carried out high level lobbying to foster political will and commitment. This enabled a more rapid adoption of policies, and the voting on the Children's Act. However the lack of adaptability of the existing law on the protection of children victims of abuse, violence and exploitation impedes an effective legal protection.

The shortage of qualified personnel remains a constraint for the improvement of child protection in Benin. UNICEF addressed the issue by signing agreements with several NGOs.

I. Expression of thanks

UNICEF-Benin would like to acknowledge the significant assistance of all the donors who contributed to the implementation of Child Protection activities. The flexibility in the use of thematic contributions made it possible to evenly cover the funding needs of various sub-components of the Programme, and in particular to support strategies on birth registration including the issuance of birth certificates. The thematic funds were critical to respond to the needs of the children of Benin, and to further contribute to the achievement of SDGs related to child protection.

Annexes: Human Interest Stories and Donor Feedback Form

TESTIMONY OF VULNERABLE GIRLS – UNICEF PROJECT 2016

Faith-based structure helps Françoise recover from a sad experience

On meeting Françoise, one could never imagine her story.

This 7 year old little girl is reserved and smiling. Her black eyes are particularly expressive and vivid. Françoise does not have an easy history. The smallest of 5 children, she lived with her father and mother in Sô-ava, a lake community in the Southern department of Atlantique, about 20 km from Cotonou, the economic capital. She was learning to read and write at primary school, like most girls of her age. But at that young age she was raped by a 25-year-old man who is currently in prison.

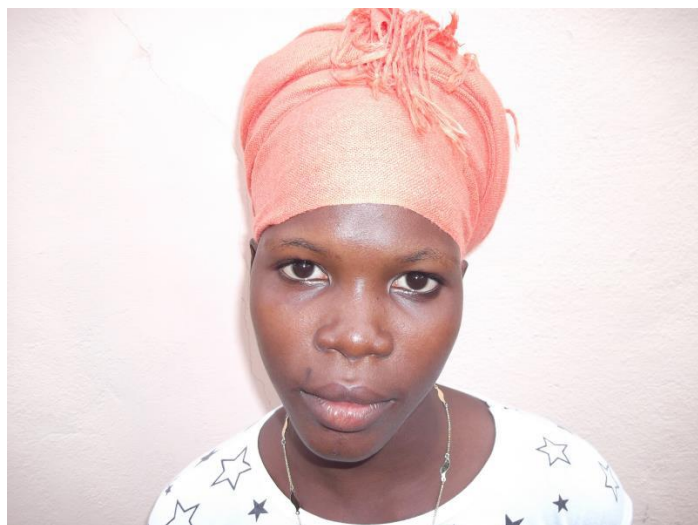
In Sô-Ava, the Salesians sisters' team who run the UNICEF-supported *Institut des Filles de Marie Auxilliatrice* (IFMA), fight to promote the denunciation of violence and, in the most serious cases, provide care for the victims of violence. The cases that solicit most the intervention of the structure are those concerning forced marriage and sexual abuse, like that of Françoise. As a result of the sensitization carried out by the workers of IFMA, the case of Françoise was reported by a sensitive person from the community and referred to the local gendarmerie brigade. Then, the intervention of the Salesian team was requested. Thanks to the existence of the counselling centre set up by the Salesian Sisters with financial, technical and material support of UNICEF, Françoise was taken in to the IFMA Laura Vicuna home for girls. Today, she is receiving full and appropriate care and support, with the help of a well-trained team of psychologists, social workers and educators. She recovers well and she has access to education again. In addition to this, Françoise was recently summoned to the Juvenile Court of Abomey-Calavi, an important step of the judicial procedure of her case. She was defended by a lawyer trained on child rights, a member of a women lawyers' association working in partnership with UNICEF.

"I am now going to school and I rank 11th in my class of 20 pupils. The Salesian sisters gave me a new school satchel, exercise books, school books and other school supplies. The bad person, who hurt me, is in prison and can no longer do me any wrong. "

Unfortunately Françoise, who seems to get on with her father, cannot return home yet, due to the tense relationship she has with her mother. Things are strained between them for reasons that are not quite clear. The little girl has for the moment, subconsciously decided to erase all memory of her mother from her mind, to the point of declaring her dead to the Salesian sisters. The IFMA psychologist is working with her and her mother to help them restore their mother and daughter relationship.

UNICEF's technical, financial and material support enables IFMA not only to help prevent violence against children through sensitization activities, but also to respond adequately to the care needs of Françoise and other vulnerable girls and victims through the provision of care, support and reinsertion activities. It also facilitates collaboration between the NGO and other government offices such as the Social Promotion Centres and the police brigades.

Former child trafficking victim finds her way back to school



Camelle O. is a 14 year old girl. Originally from Avrankou in the Southern department of Ouémé, she was born from a father baker and a mother reseller. After losing his job, Camelle's father began drowning his sorrows in alcohol. As a source of income for his supplies, he had his daughter work to recover her remuneration. This state of things aroused tensions at the end of which she was dismissed from the house by her father. She had therefore joined her aunt Marie O., who, over time, had forcibly taken her to Nigeria. She was placed as domestic worker for a period of three years against high remuneration.

Camelle was subjected more and more to violent acts on the part of her guardian, and unable to bear the continuous beatings, ran away at the end of a month, thanks to the financial help of a daughter of her guardian. Camelle was taken to the Laura Vicuña home following the collaboration with the Nigerian authorities. There she received full care. From the interviews and discussions held with her by social workers, psychologist and other caregivers, it became apparent that Camelle was a strong willed child and ready to turn the page and move forward.

The social team held meetings with Camelle's parents and the Head of the Social Promotion Center of Avrankou. The various investigations made it quickly clear that Camelle's father had completely given up his responsibilities. The custody of the child was given to her mother, under the inspection of the agents of the local Social Promotion Centre.

Collaboration with the Chief of the gendarmerie brigade of the commune of Avrankou facilitated the arrest of the child's aunt, Marie O.

UNICEF's technical, financial and material support enables the *Institut des Filles de Marie Auxilliatrice* (IFMA), founded and managed by the Salesian Sisters, not only to help prevent violence against children through awareness-raising activities, but also to respond adequately to the needs of vulnerable girls and victims of violence such as Camelle, in collaboration with other government offices. In 2016, a total of 192 girls benefited from the collaboration between IFMA and UNICEF.

Today Camelle is happy to have rejoined her family and resumed classes. "I am so glad to have found my mother again! I thank the Salesian Sisters and all those who helped me, like Aunt Pélagie and Big brother Serge" (as she calls the IFMA social workers). "They gave me exercise books and other school supplies so that I can go back to school and look forward to a brighter future."