

Guidance on Costing Child
Protection Policies and
Advocating for Increased
Investment

Maestral. 



How to support increased budget for child protection policies and plans of action

Decision makers need credible evidence to distribute government funds across sectors. Sectors that are well equipped with compelling evidence and facts as to the public benefits of investment are better positioned to get a greater share of the budget. The sectors with a weaker justification will get the least share of the budget. To secure additional resource allocations for child protection, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Prepare a clear description of the child protection system and its programs and services
2. Develop an agreed plan on how that system might be strengthened
3. Determine the investment that is already in place (the existing financing)
4. Cost the additional investment required (estimate the funding gap) and demonstrate the outcomes from that investment (and in some cases the costs of inaction)
5. Use the cost estimates in the budgeting process
6. Conduct advocacy using the evidence generated
7. Build national and local capacity to support public budgeting for child protection on a regular basis

The steps are outlined in detail below:

1. Prepare a clear description of the child protection system

Determining child protection investments can be a complicated task because the investments are spread across a variety of different sectors such as social welfare, justice, health, and education. Additionally, many of the sectors involved will not have earmarked specific budgets for child protection. It is important to ensure that the objectives, organization, parameters, scope, and activities of the child protection system are well-described at all levels so it is understood what is being costed and advocated for.

2. Develop a plan for strengthening the child protection system

Once the system is described it is important to establish what investments are needed to strengthen it. There needs to be an articulated policy objective, a strategy for achieving that objective, and some idea of what organizational, human and financial resources are needed over at least 3-5 years. A good outline of the types of investments that are needed in the care sector can be found [here](#).

3. Determine the current child protection investment

A starting point for the analysis is to examine allocations and expenditures within the country's current child protection system. Any tools that are utilized for this purpose should be fully consistent with and supportive of national and local budget procedures. In parallel to investigating current child protection investment, advocacy

for the introduction of program budget codes that reflect spending on child protection will help to ensure that funding is easily identifiable in the future.

4. Cost the additional investment required for child protection and demonstrate benefits

Costing provides information about current and future resourcing needs by estimating what additional resources should be invested in addition to the existing allocation (the baseline). Costing allows policymakers and other stakeholders to estimate the resources required to implement a strategy, whether that involves the scale-up of an existing programme or the implementation of a new policy or plan. This can be done through different scenarios (e.g., a low, medium, and high case). A costing process must also consider resources required for public sector reform (i.e., training, communication, and transportation equipment, etc.).

The costing of policies and plans for children covers the needs of the country based on the following criteria (some indicative examples):

- Demographic variables (how is the population distributed by age and other characteristics)
- Laws, policies, plans, and standards for the social service workforce and programs/services
- Consideration of risk factors and challenges facing the country (evidence found in MICS, VAC and prevalence of violence, traditional harmful practices)
- Challenges in normal and emergency situations (emergencies such as man-made or natural disasters)
- Unit cost assumptions
- Macroeconomic variables such as current and projected inflation

Most of the cost of providing social services or children's services comes from human resources, so determining the cost of child protection or social service staffing is critical. The following should be taken into consideration:

- What types of training (pre-service and in-service), resources and tools (communications, IT, transportation, etc.) are needed to ensure the workforce is well-equipped handle a demanding range of tasks and responsibilities?
- What is an adequate staffing level of the social service workforce based upon community needs (ratios, workloads, and caseloads) and how do we ensure an equitable distribution of resources across the state to meet those needs in the different communities?
- What other resources do social service workers need (office space, information technology, furniture/equipment, communications, transportation, etc.).

Once the above issues are addressed, decision makers need to be informed about the resources needed to build a sustainable child protection or social service system and to address the unmet funding gap. Given that countries have limited fiscal space due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other emergencies, the costing of services should

include incremental increases of resources to ensure a gradual increase of resources for CP despite limited resources.

It is extremely helpful to show what outputs and outcomes are associated with public expenditures on child protection. Many budget systems require 'output-based' or similar budgeting to show the expected benefits of expenditure. Advocacy might also be strengthened by conducting an analysis on the costs of inaction to society, as child protection violations can seriously compromise a country's long-term human capital (through losses in education and health status and through increases in social problems).

5. Use the cost estimates in the budgeting process

As noted, cost estimates should be accompanied by a budgeting process that is consistent with the country's Public Financial Management (PFM) framework, and national and sectoral/ministerial plans. While the objective is to reduce dependency on development partners through government-funded structures (ensuring a sustainable transition from development partners to government), an important factor to consider is the available **fiscal space**. This refers to the government's ability to direct funds to child protection, which may entail (i) directing new fiscal resources to the sector, e.g., through increased domestic revenues or external borrowing (World Bank or regional development banks); and/or (ii) redirecting resources from other sectors.

6. Conduct advocacy using the evidence generated

In developing an advocacy strategy, the following questions should be addressed:

- Who is the target audience? The materials should be tailored to the specific target group.
- When is the most effective time to engage with the target audience? This can be determined by reviewing the country's annual budget cycle and associated deadlines. Once these entry points have been identified, a plan with specific dates for engagement can be developed;
- How might the country's 3-5 year budget projection (often called the 'medium-term expenditure framework') include increased investments in child protection over time?
- What is the most compelling case for investing in child protection? Gather evidence to show cost savings and develop an investment case (e.g., ROI through infographics)

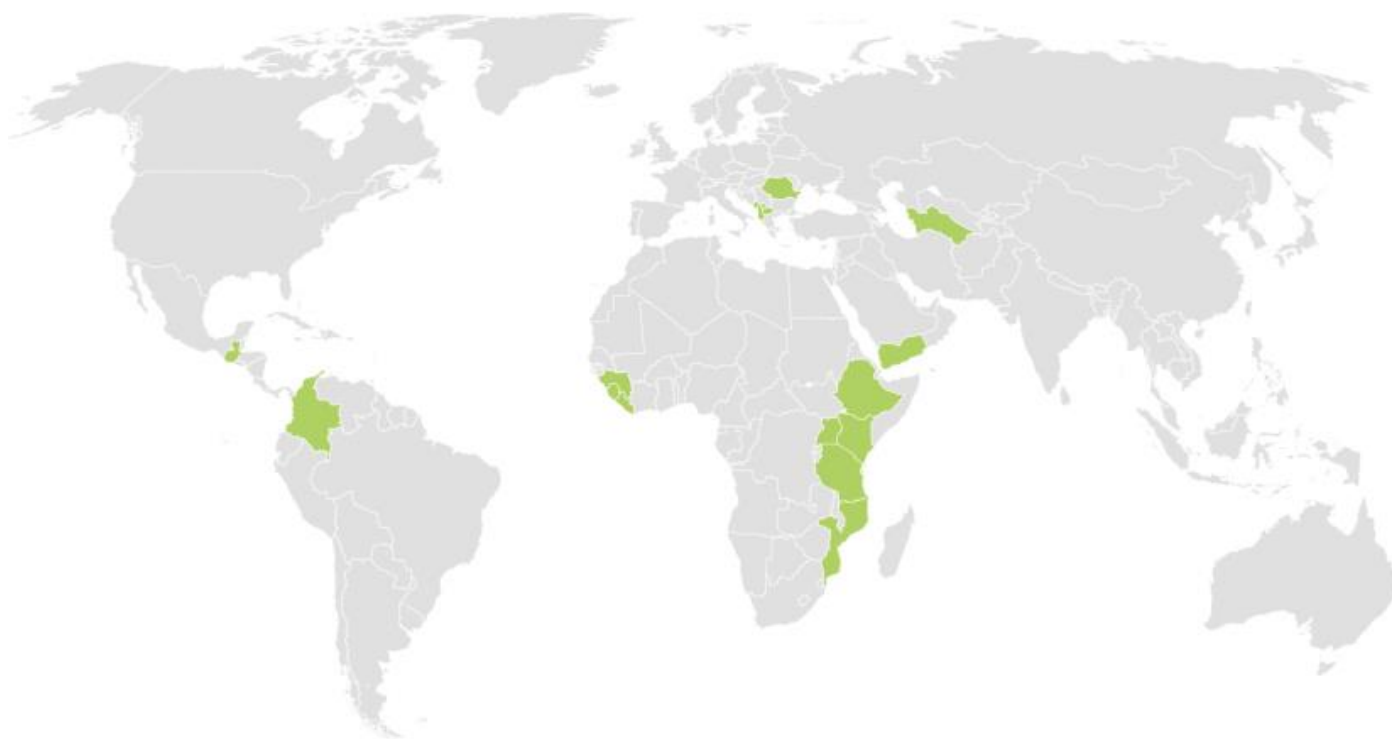
Once the above questions have been answered, an action plan for continued and perpetual advocacy can be developed. Advocacy is not a 'one-off' exercise. It should be conducted throughout the budget cycle, year after year: from review of the execution of the prior year's budget to promotion of continued investments in child protection in current and future years.

7. Build local and national capacity

Countries should develop the organizational capacity, tools, and knowledge needed to develop and execute child protection budgets independently of external experts. This can be accomplished through a public expenditure review, dialogue with key actors, planning, technical assistance, and trainings.

What and where has Maestral engaged in Public Finance and Costing support for Child Protection?

Maestral has contributed to and worked closely with UNICEF, private sector partners, and national governments in the following countries.



Country	Project	Year Completed	Client; Partners
Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, & North Macedonia	Conducted a capacity building of UNICEF programme staff in Public Finance for Children (PF4C) to enhance understanding, knowledge, and expertise on public finance management (PFM) issues.	2021	OPM
Colombia	Costing the INSPIRE National Action Plan in Colombia, the report will include how to elaborate investment costs needed for implementation, measures to identify priority areas for public and private investment, and approaches to advocacy before organizations secure resources for the plan.	Ongoing	University Research Co, LLC
Ethiopia	Developed a national and 9 regional costed action plans as part of the Roadmap for Ending Child Marriage and FGM/C by 2025.	2018	IPE Global
Guatemala	Evaluated the state costs that generate evidence to implement preventive actions and strengthen alternative programs in Guatemala. The work examined the budgets of	2021	MacArthur Foundation; CRS

	the indicated institutions and issues related to the demand and supply of residential and Family Care services in the care of children and adolescents and how to document the budget process.		
Guatemala & Kenya	Developed an investment case tool and training materials to develop public expenditure management to guide budgeting for care reform.	2020	MacArthur Foundation; CRS
Guinea, Liberia, & Sierra Leone	Developed a costing model for the child protection component of Ebola Recovery Plans.	2015	UNICEF
Kenya	Conducted a costing analysis of the child protection system and prevention and response services for children in Kenya and estimated the financing gap to fund national child protection-related programs and strategies.	2018	UNICEF
Kenya	Provided capacity building to relevant government agencies for better costing and budgeting for the child protection system, developed a training package for child protection costing and budgeting, cost the 2019-2022 VAC Prevention and Response Plan, and developed country-specific investment cases for child protection.	2022	UNICEF; Cornerstone
Kenya	Developed a costed National Plan of Action on Online Child Abuse and Exploitation.	2021	UNICEF
Malta	Facilitated a strategy meeting on Childonomics, which presents research findings that help people reflect on the long-term social and economic return of investing in children and families within a given national or sub-national context.	2018	Eurochild; OPM
Mozambique	Developed a Costed Action Plan to accompany the situation analysis of the justice sector in Mozambique in terms of its prevention, response and protection of children in contact with the system.	2021	UNICEF; REFORMAR
Romania	Developed an investment case for a package of cash benefits and care services that could help reduce poverty and social exclusion, particularly among vulnerable children and their families in Romania.	2021	UNICEF
Tanzania	Developed the costing and budgeting of the National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children in Tanzania	2017	UNICEF
Turkey	Document good practices and lessons learned from the child protection component of the CCTE program Conditional Cash Transfer for Education's (CCTE).	2020	UNICEF
Turkmenistan	Completed a health and nutrition sector budget analysis and related capacity development in order to better align Turkmenistan's public finance planning and implementation practices with the requirements of the 2030 agenda.	2020	OPM
Uganda	Developed a costed Child Protection National Action Plan that is aligned to the new National Children Policy.	2018	UNICEF
Yemen	Rapid Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Operational Capacity of the Social Welfare Fund in Yemen to improve the SWF's capacity to deliver cash transfers to beneficiary list recipients throughout the country.	2018	UNICEF; Prodigy