



Opportunities to Strengthen the Child Protection System in Guinea

This document aims to provide concrete recommendations to the World Bank on implementing the [Emergency Response and Nafa Program Support Project \(Nafa project\)](#) to strengthen the child protection system in Guinea.

BIC and Monde Des Enfants (MDE), a Guinea-based child-focused civil society organization, have been engaging around this project since 2021. In our conversations with Bank staff, we have learned that project implementation is delayed. This delay offers a unique opportunity to rethink project implementation to take advantage of the opportunity to bolster the child protection system in Guinea, strengthening the project's approach to supporting the most marginalized groups. Below, we offer nine opportunities moving forward.

Update the stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) to include meaningful consultations with children, civil society organizations (CSOs), and experts on child rights. To address child-specific needs, children and specialized CSOs need to be involved. Consultations should be particularly inclusive and secure for children and CSOs to allow them to share inputs and project concerns freely. Lastly, consultations should be free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation.

Promote school enrollment, with emphasis on girls, as a way to contribute to the strengthening of the child protection system. The Bank should support ANIES in assessing the best strategies to utilize cash transfers as a way to boost school enrollment after COVID-19, promote retention of girls in schools, delay the age of marriage, close the gender gap, and promote human capital development. This can include, but is not limited to engaging with parents and teachers to understand and respond to the root causes of gender gaps in school enrollment and school dropout; setting schooling as a cash transfer condition; using schools as payment sites; etc.

Support ANIES to scale up social protection initiatives. This includes providing technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of child protection services at the community level, facilitating early childhood interventions, promoting birth registration, and providing special support to child-headed and single mother households as well as families with children with disabilities. In doing so, the Bank could utilize its leverage to bring together relevant government agencies and international organizations in charge of social protection, child protection, and gender issues to improve project implementation and bolster the child protection system in Guinea.

Leverage ANIES' ongoing data collection efforts to identify child protection needs and strengthen child protection monitoring systems by providing technical support to strengthen the quality and consistency across ANIES' nationwide data collection exercise.

Scale-up the potential of cash transfers to address gender gaps in Guinea to strengthen the child protection system. The Bank should encourage ANIES to consult on the cash delivery strategies with women and other relevant stakeholders. As a result, ANIES will be better positioned to understand how to address cash transfers in polygamous households with multiple children. This should be accompanied by training and sensitization campaigns to avoid exacerbating intra-household tensions and increasing risks for gender based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/H) due to changing power dynamics resulting from cash transfers. This training must also include references to child-specific vulnerabilities and needs.

Assess SEA/H risks consistently and appropriately. In doing so, the Bank should confirm that the social safeguards specialist working with ANIES has experience in gender, as set forth in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), including in SEA/H and that, ideally, s/he understands the unique risks and response measures needed for children. Additionally, it should closely monitor if the implementing agency is taking concrete and effective accompanying measures to address the gender-related concerns identified in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD). For ANIES, this can include raising awareness, preventing, and mitigating the risks of SEA/H; developing a code of conduct for project workers; and delivering training sessions to raise awareness about the risks of SEA/H for the different project stakeholders.

Support ANIES in implementing project-level grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) adapted for children. The Bank should verify if ANIES has developed, adopted, and implemented a GRM for the

entire project, according to the Bank standards and project documents. Additionally, the Bank should verify that GRMs are widely available, well-publicized, gender-sensitive, child-friendly, and take all the necessary measures to make SEA/H disclosure respectful of children and adolescents' dignity, protecting their identity. GRMs should also be accessible for and adapted to children (i.e., in formatting and languages that children can access; available in a location that children can access, like schools, child clubs; allow complaints to be submitted confidentially or anonymously; etc.). Lastly, GRMs should be guided by the best interest of the child and informed by children's experiences and perspectives.

Utilize the project's communications, sensitization, and accompanying measures sub-component to address long-standing gender inequality and violence against children. The Bank should encourage ANIES to use this component to sensitize the community around critical issues related to GBV, child SEA/H, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and unwanted adolescent pregnancies. The implementing agency should also sensitize community members and front line staff around child labor issues (particularly in domestic work, the mining sector, and on the streets), child trafficking, other forms of violence against children, and discriminatory practices against girls, children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children, children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, etc. Additionally, these campaigns should serve to disseminate the existence of the GRM and connect project-affected people, particularly women and children, with different social and psychosocial support services.

Maximize project outcomes by instructing and supporting ANIES across project implementation to avoid corruption in cash transfer delivery and beneficiary assessment, so the selection of beneficiaries is transparent and reaches the families most in need.