



INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN ANALYSIS RWANDA CASE STUDY



Photo Credit: Lynette Lim/Save the Children

FROM INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN ANALYSIS TO FULLY FLEDGED INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN ADVOCACY

WHY AN INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN ANALYSIS?

In 2013, Save the Children began implementing Child Rights Governance (CRG) activities in Rwanda. A CRG preliminary analysis highlighted that while policies and strategic plans for children were in place, their implementation was impeded by limited budgetary allocations. Hence the need for a comprehensive public finance analysis to determine exact budget allocations and assess Rwanda's Investment in Children (IiC) footprint. An in-depth IiC analysis was commissioned in order to gather evidence on progress, challenges and opportunities for Save the Children to improve IiC in Rwanda.

KEY LEARNING FROM IIC ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY PROCESSES

The IiC in-depth analysis aimed to focus on 3 fundamental issues:

- The extent to which the Government of Rwanda (GoR) optimises resource mobilisation to invest in children;
- Whether the available resources are allocated to the maximum extent possible to benefit all children, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable and;
- Whether the available resources are well spent within a framework of open, inclusive, and accountable governance to bring about positive outcomes for children.

Given the highly technical content, the analysis work required an expert with public financing background, familiar with Rwandan systems and able to deliver on the tasks within three months. An external consultant was therefore hired, as in-house capacity was limited. Drafts were reviewed by the CRG local and global teams as well as by thematic teams, the Social Protection Working Group and UNICEF. One positive outcome of this multi-thematic, multi-stakeholder review was the involvement, through the education team, of

Rwanda has made impressive progress in poverty reduction and improving socio-economic indicators since the 1994 genocide. Poverty fell from 59% in 2000/01 to 39% in 2013/2014, with rural poverty falling faster than urban poverty. Inequality has also been reduced, albeit slowly. Progress for children is also undoubtedly positive in many areas, with great strides made in health service delivery - particularly in relation to maternal and child health - and with regard to access to education. There is also an emerging commitment to child protection and child rights issues.

Despite above progress, challenges remain. The national poverty rate is still high and children are disproportionately affected. While access to education has increased enormously there are concerns around the quality of education. The rate of chronic malnutrition in the under-fives also remains high at 44%. At the same time, donor aid supporting social services is expected to decline, while demand for services will continue to grow.

the Rwanda Education National Coordination Platform (RENCP), with subsequent positive outcomes described further.

The liC analysis produced was of high quality and presented substantiated facts on all key liC dimensions as per the Terms of Reference, except for the health and nutrition sector. The health and nutrition sector was initially included in the analysis but excluded from the final report as budget data available was insufficient to construct a full health budget picture. The data for child protection was also insufficient to provide a bigger trend picture.

Following internal validation, the CRG program sought validation from the Government of Rwanda (GoR) before

dissemination, which was not obtained. As a result, the advocacy strategy was adapted to try and approach relevant public officials with liC sectoral briefs instead, and the consultant was asked to develop four thematic briefs and an liC advocacy plan in addition to the study;

In the end, the briefs on increasing fiscal space for liC, investment in social protection, investment in child protection and investment in education constituted the main position papers for dissemination, awareness raising, proposal development, partnership building, etc.

A detailed advocacy plan supported the mid-term advocacy strategy of raising awareness and interest of relevant stakeholders on liC.



The briefs were shared with or presented to key influential stakeholders, including responsible Ministries, public institutions, donor community and development partners:

- The Ministry of Education was quite receptive to the liC messages, while the RENCP platform found the findings very interesting and pledged to support Save the Children in its advocacy efforts in Rwanda;
- The social protection brief was presented to the Social Protection Working Group, co-chaired by the Local Administrative Development Agency (LODA) and UNICEF. The feedback was somewhat positive with the recommendation to update the data used in the report with additional data provided by LODA. This additional data was not made public at the time the analysis was conducted. Later on, Save the Children and UNICEF decided to work together to improve the social protection brief and eventually produce a joint

- publication;
- The fiscal space and child protection briefs did not get enough support and were not discussed much.
- However, there was a good level of collaboration and distribution of tasks between themes throughout the process;
- The role of the CRG team should therefore be to lead and oversee the overall liC work, while other teams take the lead within their respective thematic focus;
- The ability to come up with alternative plans was crucial to achieving the results. Upon realisation that the GoR would not endorse the analysis, the CRG team opted to develop briefs coupled with a presentation, which would represent the main lobbying tools with stakeholders;
- Finally, timing was extremely important in order to keep the momentum. Distancing the advocacy phase from the analysis was likely to give room to detractors who might have wanted to discredit the findings.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESSES

- The liC work opened a window of discussions among child rights and child protection actors on the State's responsibility under the UNCRC;
- It showcased the need for child rights actors to come together to advocate for improved liC in Rwanda;
- Well-substantiated evidence on the returns on liC for State parties help strengthen the case for improved liC;
- It is critical to prepare alternative positions to what the government is implementing, if it needs to be improved, when advocating with governments. Save the Children was not well equipped to suggest comparable models for equitable budget allocations when requested by relevant Ministries;
- The Consultant led most of the research and analysis work, resulting in limited skills' transfer internally;
- liC analysis work could have been more inclusive of other liC actors. This would have given more voice and local ownership to the advocacy messages, as now liC work tends to be seen as Save the Children's work in Rwanda;
- Internally, there could have been more sensitization on liC as a cross-thematic area for shared ownership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To obtain maximum returns from the liC analysis, it is recommended to:

1. Develop a clear liC strategy, including implementation plans;
2. Develop a MEAL plan for liC advocacy work. Results were recorded on an ad hoc basis with no systematic way of monitoring progress and sharing lessons learnt internally and externally;
3. More sectoral integration is needed for liC work to deliver on all of Save the Children's breakthroughs;
4. Include partners, liC stakeholders, development actors in liC and liC advocacy work right from the start, notably to ensure more political clout is available to engage duty-bearers and skills on liC are progressively built;
5. Propose solutions to mitigate advocacy risks, to avoid delayed implementation if they materialise;
6. Ensure skills' transfer is a priority in ToR when external Consultants are used to carry out such research work;
7. Ensure alternative models are available to submit to State parties when the existing models are questioned and critiqued. Otherwise, our credibility might be lost.

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In Rwanda and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

For more information on the Rwanda liC analysis, please contact Save the Children's CRG team in Rwanda: denyse.amahirwe@savethechildren.org or marcel.sibomana@savethechildren.org

KEY RESULTS FROM INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN ADVOCACY INCREASED INTEREST IN INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

Wide use of the education brief findings to foster dialogue on education financing issues, resulting in the creation of the Education Investment Task force (EITF) within RENCP. A joint advocacy strategy and plan were also developed.

The findings also triggered more studies on education financing, such as an analysis of district education budgets. Increased knowledge, skills and confidence within Save the Children in Rwanda.

The analysis contributed to building internal capacity of the country office, which is now able to substantively articulate the importance of liC, gaps and trends as well as engage with stakeholders.

Save the Children has used the findings and recommendations of the liC analysis to engage donors and other major development actors on financing for children issues in Rwanda. Save the Children is now seen as a credible and technically reliable actor on public financing issues. Findings used for resource mobilization and future plans. Save the Children has also used the findings and recommendations to substantiate proposal development for CRG, education and child protection.

The findings also informed Save the Children's Every Last Child Campaign Plan in Rwanda.

Increased interest and support for liC amongst key stakeholders.

Raised interest of public officials, Parliamentarians, donors and other influential stakeholders. There is already a perceived shift in attitude and practice of these stakeholders and stronger support towards building public finance systems that work for children.