

Child Protection and Care Reform in Rwanda

Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Report



June 2022



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Data for Impact

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Cover photo

Nyamirambo Mobile Library Launch. Photo credit: Education Development Center for USAID Rwanda.

Abbreviations

CECA	Center on Children in Adversity
CPMIS	Child Protection Management Information System
D4I	Data for Impact
DQA	data quality assurance
GBV	gender-based violence
IZU	child protection volunteers (Inshuti z'Umuryango)
M&E	measurement and evaluation
NCDA	National Child Development Agency (of Rwanda)
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
RBM	Results-Based Management
TMM	Summative Evaluation for the Tubarerere mu Muryango
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

Over the last decade, Rwanda has taken several measures to ensure appropriate care for children without parental care with particular attention to preventing unnecessary separation of children from their families and ensuring the provision of alternative care for children deprived of parental care. As part of the care system reforms, the Government of Rwanda and its partners have identified the need to strengthen the administrative data collection and reporting systems to improve availability and use of data, including the need to develop an integrated monitoring and information management system for children involved in the child protection system and use of existing and new data for policy and programmatic decision making.

Data for Impact (D4I) Project

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Center on Children in Adversity (CECA) works in countries worldwide to improve the safety, well-being, and development of vulnerable children, with particular attention on preserving and facilitating access to appropriate, protective, and permanent family care. In advancing the implementation of the [Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity \(APCCA\) Strategy](#),¹ USAID has used CECA funding to provide targeted financial and technical assistance for the care and protection of vulnerable children, focusing primarily on those children who are outside family care or at risk of losing family care and protection and on advancing country plans for care reform.

The Data for Impact (D4I) project, with funding from USAID CECA, is working with Rwanda's National Child Development Agency (NCDA) to strengthen data collection, information management, and reporting systems to improve availability and use of data on children who have lost or risk losing parental care.

¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/advancing-protection-and-care-children-adversity>

Methods

The D4I and National Child Development Agency (NCDA) teams worked together to organize a five-day Child Protection Management Information System (CPMIS) stakeholder workshop to gain a better understanding of Rwanda's care reform landscape, identify areas and opportunities for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity strengthening, assess existing management information systems for child protection and care, and to identify priorities and requirements for integrated and reliable information management systems.

As part of the workshop, participants completed an Excel-based group M&E capacity assessment tool designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the functionality, strengths, and weaknesses of the M&E system for child protection and care. The tool was structured around six assessment areas: M&E Planning; M&E Structures and Human Resources; M&E Processes and Procedures; Data and Information Management; Data Quality Assurance (DQA); and Data Analysis, Dissemination, and Use. Participants were divided into groups and asked to respond to specific questions/items under each component. Responses to each question/assessment item were based on group consensus. Secondary information from NCDA M&E staff was analysed and incorporated in the results as it provided greater insight into the status of M&E capacity for staff and the agency at large.

Results

Capacity Area 1: M&E Planning

The care reform process in Rwanda is implemented within the overall policy context established in the country's National Child Care Reform Strategy (2012).² The strategy centers on the prevention of family separation and supporting the transition of children from institutional to family- and community-based care. The strategy is aligned to the [National Integrated Child Rights Policy \(2011\)](#),³ which sets a comprehensive and multisectoral approach to child rights with the following priorities: Identity and Nationality; Family and Alternative Care; Health, Survival, and Standard of Living; Education; Protection; Justice; and Participation. The Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) is complemented with the following legislative initiatives relating to care reform: Law n°71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child,⁴ and Law n°32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family.⁵ In 2019, Rwanda approved the second phase of the strategic plan for the ICRP (2019-2024) which, among other interventions, prioritizes the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities.⁶ The strategic plan for the ICRP (2019-2024) includes a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) section. However, the strategic plan does not articulate the necessary data management procedures, including roles and responsibilities for data management, data flow processes, the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders, data review structures, and the regularity of various reports. The National Child Development Agency (NCD) relies on the Result Based Performance Management (RBM) Policy for Rwanda Public Service and national monitoring, evaluation and learning guidelines from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. In addition, the NCD Agency continues to rely on M&E guidance contained in the procedural manual developed by the National Commission for Children, which was merged with the National Early Childhood Development Program to form the NCD. The M&E section in the manual includes relevant activity monitoring and evaluation protocols, including guidance on data reporting and approval processes.

Nonetheless, given that the NCD is a new institution—with new mandates—there is a need to contextualise the [National Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidelines](#)⁷ according to the NCD Agency mandate and incorporate relevant information into NCD operational guidance that has been under development since April 2021.

Budgetary Allocations for the M&E Function

The NCD receives funds from the government and partners such as UNICEF to support routine monitoring activities, including information system development. The government budget allocation for M&E activities depends on the list of M&E activities proposed by M&E staff during the annual budget consultation process. On average, RWF 40,000,000 (US\$39,340) is allocated quarterly to supported M&E activities.

² http://197.243.22.137/ncc/fileadmin/templates/document/STRATEGY_FOR_NATIONAL_CHILD_CARE_REFORM.pdf

³ <https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/national-integrated-child-rights-policy-rwanda>

⁴ The law determines special rights of the child, subject to other rights provided for her/him by other laws, modalities for the protection of the child, and offences and penalties.

⁵ This law covers filiation, adoption, marriage, definition of a person, the best interest of the child, kinship, guardianship, etc.

⁶ Republic of Rwanda, National Commission for Children. (2019). Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy 2019–2024.

⁷ https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minecofin/Publications/POLICIES/RBM_Policy/FINAL_RBM_POLICY_11-8-2015.pdf

In addition, financial allocations are made to support research and evaluation by both the government and partners. National-level research and evaluations are primarily conducted by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). For example, over the past four years, the government has provided funds for conducting a comprehensive assessment of the status of street children and completed numerous research activities on gender-based violence (GBV). UNICEF has funded the Summative Evaluation for the Tubarerere mu Muryango (TMM) programme,⁸ documentation of Care Reform Progress,⁹ and Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys in Rwanda.¹⁰

Capacity Area 2: M&E Structures and Human Resources

This component of the assessment explored the existing M&E structures, as well as M&E staffing and staff capacity in M&E-related skills and competencies.

At the **national level**, the NCDA has the mandate to collect data related to children’s rights and protection. Within the NCDA, there is a dedicated M&E unit. Three staff are employed, with an additional staff member seconded by the World Bank to the unit—which is inadequate to fully execute the M&E mandate as per the assessment findings.

In addition, child rights indicators were mainstreamed into the National Statistical System (NSS), including periodic surveys conducted by the NISR. Established in 2005, the NISR is mandated to provide statistical information and services, and is responsible for (1) the provision of official statistics to the government, the business community, and the public; (2) defining and ensuring the respect of standards and methodologies applied by the National Statistical System (NSS); (3) conducting national censuses and surveys; and (4) coordinating and gathering statistical information and methodologies of sector departments in charge of statistical activities in the country (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2007).

At the **subnational level**, Child Protection and Welfare Officers, Gender and Family Promotion Officers, and community-level volunteers (known as Inshuti z’Umuryango [IZU] or friends of the family) are primarily responsible for collection and reporting data on childcare and protection. IZU were provided with a digital reporting tool (*711#).

Assessment results indicate that most staff responsible for data collection, entry, collation, transfer, and analysis had received some in-service training to enable them to execute their roles. Training is often provided by one of the two government institutions responsible for personnel capacity building and training—the Rwanda Management Institute and Rwanda Development Board¹¹ (Chief Skills Office). These two institutions provide short and certification training on M&E topics. In addition, the National Commission for Children, TMM programme, implemented by UNICEF, Tulane University, and Hope and Homes for Children, organized various technical trainings on appropriate care for children, including sessions on monitoring, evaluation, and reporting for Child Protection and Welfare Officers and Gender and Family Promotion Officers.

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media/1641/file/TMM%20Summary%20Evaluation%20Phase%20I.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/reports/child-care-reform-programme-rwanda>

¹⁰ <https://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/Rwanda-Violence-Against-Children-and-Youth-Survey-Report.pdf>

¹¹ <https://rdb.rw/>

Participants in the assessment underlined the need for additional training, especially at the national level, in data analysis and use, as well as practical training on DQA.

Capacity Area 3: M&E Processes and Procedures

This component of the assessment explored the existence of standardized routine monitoring indicators for the different care options, data tools and equipment for data management, and routine procedures for data transfer from subnational to national levels.

Overall, a number of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Integrated Child Rights Policy (2011) are included in the first Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy in Rwanda, 2011 and the second Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy 2019-2024. This includes indicators on family strengthening, alternative care, and adoption. However, the assessment found no indicator reference sheets with defined data elements, data flow, responsibilities, and reporting deadlines.

In 2020, additional indicators were developed, and various tools were revised and standardised, to track information on inclusive deinstitutionalisation and other child protection information at the community level. In addition, the M&E team, and staff from the NCDA and its partners, have developed the reporting template and indicators for tracking the performance of child protection volunteers (IZUs) across the country. The tools for IZUs were digitalized with USSD, SMS, and web-based technologies.

The ongoing child protection system assessment, combined with efforts to develop a national case management framework by UNICEF, provide an opportunity to review and ensure standardization of existing case management and reporting tools and clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the case management process.

Capacity Area 4: Data and Information Management

The NCDA has a mandate to collect data related to children's rights and protection. The agency, together with other government institutions, is also responsible for overseeing the collection and management of child-rights data. The NCDA is mandated to develop a data management system for regular status reports on children and their rights. Ideally, aggregated data can then be analysed and disseminated to support policy, plans, and programme interventions at all levels.

Currently, several different mechanisms have been used to collect information related to child protection and care, but these have yet to be collated into one central database or information management system. During the CPMIS stakeholder workshop organised by D4I, in collaboration with the NCDA, in June 2021, it emerged that numerous information management systems currently exist, each collecting data specific to a certain component of child protection, and none linking to the others (see Appendix A). These systems address different thematic areas listed in the ICRP, with limited interoperability.

Participants underlined the need for a comprehensive electronic system that can support child case management and follow-up, respond to stakeholder information data needs across the priority areas outlined in the National Integrated Child Rights Policy (2011), and support monitoring implementation of the ICRP.

Assessment results also indicate relevant staff at different levels have trained on data collection processes and reporting tools, including training on digital data collection systems. In 2017, all Child Protection and Welfare Officers were given Android tablets to support data collection and reporting. Some of these tablets may need to be replaced due to wear and tear. Further, under the TMM programme, 29,674 smartphones were distributed to IZUs for digital reporting purposes and use in the child protection case referral process.

Capacity Area 5: Data Quality Assurance

Assessment results indicate that procedures exist to ensure the quality of data collected at different levels, and Child Protection and Welfare Officers and volunteers (IZUs) have received various trainings on DQA. For example, during the training of Child Protection and Welfare Officers on the IZU digital reporting system, all training participants were briefed on ensuring DQA in their reporting activities. Additionally, in July 2021, the Child Protection and Welfare Officers received a refresher technical training on DQA and validating data from the community.

Findings also indicate that NCDA M&E staff regularly conduct DQA activities including field DQA assessment, joint monitoring visits, and technical meetings on DQA assessment findings with district staff.

Capacity Area 6: Data Analysis, Dissemination, and Use

Routine data from the different sources is analysed by NCDA M&E staff and reports are shared with stakeholders. The main platforms for sharing this data and information are quarterly sub-cluster meetings for child development and protection, technical working groups, and meetings with the districts. In addition, the NCDA develops and disseminates information products (e.g., newsletters, reports, etc.) to data users. Relevant information is also shared through the website.

Results from this assessment revealed a need for the NCDA to adjust the data use and analysis, and its presentation, according to the newly developed National Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidelines.

Recommended M&E Capacity Strengthening Areas

Recommendation 1

Review existing M&E practices and draft a comprehensive child protection monitoring and evaluation framework in accordance with the new National Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidelines. The framework should provide a comprehensive, nationally agreed framework to allow the NCDA and partners to monitor progress in the implementation of the ICRP. It should articulate the data management procedures, data flow, and roles and responsibilities of duty-bearers at all levels—family, community, and national. The framework should also include indicator definitions, disaggregates (e.g., age, sex, disability), data sources, a metadata dictionary, data collection procedures, data flow, and reporting timelines.

Recommendation 2

Develop a comprehensive electronic system to support general case management and follow-up, and, in turn, support ICRP M&E framework data requirements.

Recommendation 3

Conduct technical trainings on data collection, management, and use.

1. Conduct M&E technical training for all staff to increase the number of M&E champions and assist the M&E unit in fully executing its mandate.
2. Provide ongoing mentorship and support to M&E staff in the NCD to strengthen their capacity on data management and use.

Recommendation 4

Review the DQA mechanisms and practices by developing and implementing data quality training and supportive supervision materials.

Recommendation 5

Strengthen the CPMIS technical working group, composed of all institutions/stakeholders in child protection, to continue to co-support the next steps toward an integrated CPMIS.

M&E Capacity Strengthening Plan

The M&E capacity strengthening plan presented below provides a response to the key M&E recommendations, as per the capacity areas assessed and documented in the assessment report. The activities included in the plan are aimed at improving skills, tools, and processes that would make the NCDA more agile in implementing and monitoring the Child Protection M&E framework to ensure transparency and accountability to direct beneficiaries i.e., NCDA and indirect beneficiaries such as implementing partners, other agencies supporting children's programs. The plan also contains practical measures to improve coordination and communication among the NCDA, MIGEPROF, and partners such as D4I, UNICEF, and others who play a complementary and supporting role.

To respond to NCDA's M&E capacity strengthening needs, the gaps identified were grouped into three categories: interinstitutional, organizational, and individual level. The main areas for capacity strengthening proposed were:

- I. Increase the level of interinstitutional coordination and cooperation among NCDA, MIGEPROF, and key partners in the child protection M&E space
- II. Strengthen the M&E institutional capacity of the NCDA in child protection
- III. Develop the individual M&E capacities of NCDA employees in child protection

Table 1. M&E Capacity Strengthening Plan

Capacity area	Recommendations from June 2021 M&E capacity assessment	Action/response	Category	Resources	Responsibility	Output	Timeline
M&E Planning	Recommendation #1 Review existing M&E practices and draft a comprehensive child protection monitoring and evaluation framework in accordance with the new National Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support on indicator mapping, identify and build consensus on core indicators 2. Review the CP data flow process 3. Workshop to validate developed CP&M&E framework for use to guide in M&E processes for the sector 	<p>Organization</p> <p>Internal Organization</p>	D4I	D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized indicators for CP • NCDA data flow map • CP M&E framework in place 	<p>Jan. 2022</p> <p>Feb. 2022</p> <p>March 2022</p>
M&E Structures and Human Resources	Recommendation #5 Strengthen CPMIS technical working group composed of all institutions/stakeholders in child protection to continue to co-support the next steps toward an integrated CPMIS.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check functionality of the technical working group using a Governance Framework Maturity tool 2. Participate in the child protection sub-cluster meetings 	<p>Organization</p> <p>Individual</p>	D4I	NCDA/D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance maturity situation/report • Instances of data use in stakeholder forums • Brief on actions taken by child protection sub-cluster 	<p>May 2022</p> <p>Aug. 2022</p> <p>June 2022</p>
M&E Processes and Procedures	Recommendation #4 Review data quality assurance mechanisms and data review practices. This will include putting in place guidelines for data quality trainings, institutionalized review meetings, and supportive supervision in NCDA.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop SOPs for data quality assurance, data review SOPs, and support supervision guidelines 2. Adopt M&E fundamentals training materials for use (data management, data quality, data analysis and use) 3. Conduct a training on M&E fundamentals for TOTs (M&E team at NCDA) 	Organization	D4I	D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPs developed • M&E materials adopted • NCDA TOTs 	<p>Jan. 2022</p> <p>Feb. 2022</p> <p>April 2022</p>

Capacity area	Recommendations from June 2021 M&E capacity assessment	Action/response	Category	Resources	Responsibility	Output	Timeline
Data and Information Management	Recommendation #2 Support progress toward creating a comprehensive electronic system that can support general case management and follow-up and, in turn, support ICRP M&E framework data requirements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder forum, dissemination of assessment findings 2. Enhancement of CPMIS instance in the ICD MIS 3. Framework for enhancement and development of a digital case management information system (CMIS) 	<p>Inter-institutional Organization</p> <p>Organization</p>	D4I	D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting notes for the stakeholder dissemination • Roadmap for enhancing CPMIS module in DHIS2 • CPIMS instance in DHIS2 • CMIS development framework 	<p>Nov. 2021</p> <p>Jan. 2022</p> <p>March 2022</p> <p>June 2022</p>
Data Quality Assurance	Recommendation #3 Conduct technical training on data collection, management, and use. a. Conduct M&E technical training for all staff to increase the number of M&E champions and help the M&E unit fully execute its mandate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct M&E fundamentals training for the estimated 60 CP&WOs: should include data management, data quality, data analysis and use 2. Provide mentorship to M&E staff in NCDA in data management and use 	<p>Individual</p> <p>Individual</p>	D4I	D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training plan for NCDA • Number of staff trained on M&E fundamentals 	<p>March 2022</p> <p>May–Aug. 2022</p>
Data Analysis, Dissemination and Use	b. Provide ongoing mentorship and support to the M&E staff in NCD to strengthen their capacity on data management and use.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Conduct data review sessions for NCDA at national and select districts 4. Provide technical assistance to NCDA to conduct routine data review meeting using standard guidelines and factsheets produced 	<p>Organization</p> <p>Organization</p>	D4I	D4I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased forums for discussing CP data • Improved use of CP and alternative care data (instances) 	<p>May–Sept. 2022</p> <p>May–Dec. 2022</p>

Sustainability of the M&E Capacity Strengthening Plan

To improve the sustainability of results obtained after plan implementation, the following measures were planned:

- Institutionalization of forms, tools, guidelines, instructions, and processes for data collection, data analysis, DQA, and data use
- Involvement of NCDA in the piloting of a longitudinal case management solution for an information system and institutionalizing the system; development and institutionalization of M&E indicators in the child protection sector with special focus on violence against children, alternative care, and case management performance
- Establishment of a collaboration mechanism among NCDA, MIGEPROF, and partners on M&E issues and facilitation of institutionalizing responsibilities for cooperation practices into normative internal processes aimed at regulating collaboration, modalities, frequency of meetings, and feedback
- Digitizing the D4I training courses, uploaded onto the NCDA e-learning platform for easy use by any new employee

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Appendix A. Management Information Systems (MIS) for Child Protection and Care

System	Description	Technology	Implementor
IZU System	Digitalized Inshuti z'Umuryango (Friends of Family) reporting system (USSD code) for timely collection, analysis, reporting, and monitoring of child protection cases in communities and child protection actors to respond to child protection cases in communities.	USSD, WEB	NCD; UNICEF
Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system	The CRVS system supports country business processes regarding civil registrations and vital information management in Rwanda.	Web	NIDA
GBV Management Information System	The GBV Information Management System is a tool designed to improve gender-based violence prevention, response, and coordination on The Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC).	GBVMIS is a web-based	MIGEPROF; RIB
School Data Management System (SDMS)	The SDMS supports management of all education processes.	Web	MINEDUC; schools
SMS-based reporting system for quick intervention for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of all PWDs in Rwanda (including children) • Interactive dashboards and maps with all relevant (SDG) indicators • Case management support for those most in need information of disability and services including a chatbot • Link with relevant Government of Rwanda database for social support 	SMS, Web	National Council of Persons with Disabilities Rwanda
Integrated labour administration system (ILAS)	ILAS closely follows-up on different activities that include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour • Occupational safety and health • Social dialogue and collective bargaining • Labour inspection • Labour disputes 	Web	MIFOTRA
Stakeholders' mapping tool	Coordination of stakeholders' implementers	Web	MIGEPROF
Nutrition support system	Support growth monitoring and distribution of fortified blended foods (FBF)	Web	MOH; LODA; NCDA
Integrated electronic case management system (IECMSI)	A sector-wide system for judicial cases processing, administration, and management.		The Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST)
SMS technology (SMS-based reporting for quick intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help PWDs to communicate quickly with NCPD and local government structures and receive services or support on time. • Help local authorities to collaborate effectively amongst themselves and other stakeholders when responding to PWDs' needs. • Raise awareness to PWDs on their rights and communities to fights against stigma and discrimination. • Build a centralized database of PWDs' needs that may guide on future interventions. 	SMS, Web	NCPD

System	Description	Technology	Implementor
Monitoring of Reintegrated Children System (MRCS)	The primary objective of the MRCS platform is to digitize case records of children across the country and maintain a central repository to monitor and track the status of cases with a click of a button and generate insightful analytics by mining data while at the same time enabling technology for mobile workforce to improve efficiency by avoiding redundancy and human errors.	USSD, Web	NCD; SOS Children's Villages Rwanda
Delinquency Management Information System (DMIS)	<p>The Delinquency Management Information System is a system developed by RISA on behalf of the National Rehabilitation Service to respond to challenges in rehabilitation among, and lack of accurate information on, delinquents received in rehabilitation centres to psycho-social rehabilitation programs and vocational skills, accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accurate numbers and profiles of delinquents in transit centres and private rehabilitation centres • Difficulties in exchange of information on delinquents in transit and rehabilitation centres • Difficulties in tracking recidivism cases in transit and rehabilitation centres • Lack of digital storage of statistical data to facilitate research and planning • Difficulties in controlling delinquents' movement from one transit centre to another or from one rehabilitation centre to another • Lack of common system to manage delinquents' data across the entire country. 	Web	National Council of Persons with Disabilities; National Rehabilitation Service

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