

Child Sensitive Social Protection

A key strategy to combat child poverty





Save the Children

WE ARE the world's leading independent organisation for children.

OUR VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

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Arif - ten years old – has been working since the last two years in different shops. His day starts early in the morning with washing utensils and extends till late in the evening. Many of his friends have a much shorter day with most of the time spent in school and at home studying and playing. Arif would also have had a similar routine if circumstances had not forced him to drop out of school and become a child labourer. Arif was taken out of school when his father met with a serious accident and could no longer earn enough for the family.



Arif lives in Mymensingh district, Bangladesh.

Our initiative

In 2010 we launched the Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) initiative in South Asia to combat childhood poverty. CSSP aims to address socio-economic vulnerabilities of children like Arif through a range of social protection measures. The initiative emerged from the realization that deprivation of children mostly stems from household chronic poverty, stress or shock. CSSP aims to build resilience and enhance child sensitivity of poor households to ensure that children have improved development opportunities.

CSSP in South Asia is a three-year initiative (2011-2013) developed by Save the Children Finland with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The initiative is implemented by the respective Save the Children country offices in South Asia who are partnering with the programme – i.e. Save the Children in Bangladesh, Save the Children in Nepal, and Save the Children India (Bal Raksha Bharat).



Why focus on children and social protection?

South Asia is home to 584 million children. It is the most child populous region in the world, and has among the worst child development indicators. Nearly half of the world's undernourished children live in South Asia. One out of every three child deaths in the world occurs here. The region is home to more than a third of the world's children who lack a basic education. Progress towards closing the gender gap in education has been slow. Child labour is still rampant. Recent estimates suggest that at least 43 million children (between the ages of 5 to 14) in South Asia are engaged in hazardous labour.¹

Child poverty and vulnerability are multi-dimensional and closely entwined with how resources and labour are organised within the household. Households that remain in a constant state of chronic poverty or slide into poverty due to various stresses and shocks often resort to coping mechanisms that may have an adverse impact on children; such as depriving them of adequate nutrition, health care, education, protection and sometimes even life. Moreover, a large proportion of children may be pushed into hazardous labour and other forms of exploitation and abuse. Children are particularly vulnerable due to their age and dependency on adults. It is widely accepted that shocks and stresses during childhood can have detrimental consequences throughout life – negatively affecting children's capacities and opportunities.

While Save the Children generally supports initiatives that aim to improve different dimensions of childhood vulnerability and poverty, there is a growing consensus that development prospects of very poor and vulnerable children can only improve once programmes focus more rigorously on protecting children from circumstances that render them deprived of essential childhood development opportunities. The Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) programme in South Asia is based on the realisation that there is an intrinsic link between household and childhood poverty. This means that there is a need to work in a more focused manner with the socio-economic setting of the household to improve development outcomes for children. Reducing risk and vulnerability through social protection means that poor people need not resort to coping strategies that can further aggravate household as well as child poverty.²

What is Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP)?

CSSP is a cross-cutting thematic area that largely focuses on the economic and related social causes of child poverty and aims to achieve comprehensive improvements in children's lives.^{3,4} In essence, child sensitive social protection means that social protection measures should be designed in such a way that they result in positive development outcomes for poor and vulnerable children.

In order to narrow down the broad concept of social protection and to distinguish it from other development policy and programmes, social protection can be defined as '*a sub-set of public actions that help address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty*'. To make social protection more comprehensible and practical, social protection measures can broadly be summarised as four types of interventions, as described in the table below.

Types of measures	Description
Social Assistance	Regular predictable transfers in cash or kind such as fee waivers, employment generation, pension, and stipends. Examples: Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India, Mid Day Meal in India, Female Secondary School Stipend Program in Bangladesh, Old age and Disability pensions in Nepal and other countries.
Social Services	Services for groups who need special care. Examples; alternative care for children, rehabilitation services, and alternative education for child labourers.
Social Insurance	Pooling of contributions by individuals which enables them to receive financial support in times of crisis. Examples of social insurance are health, weather, crop and livestock insurance.
Policy, Regulation and Legislation	Measures that protect household access to resources, promote employment and support the child-care role. A core area is to protect people at the workplace and ensure that labour standards set by the government are followed for the formal as well as informal sector. Examples relevant to CSSP include abolition of child and bonded labour, enforcing minimum wage rates, paid maternity leave and ensuring that health and safety standards are met.

Laxmi, about 14 years old, works as a construction labourer and also manages various household chores. Her younger brother, who has migrated to Mumbai, works at a roadside restaurant. Laxmi's mother says that "it was impossible to keep the children in school after their father died due to a prolonged illness". Laxmi and her brother had no choice but to leave school and start supporting the family.

The CSSP project in Dungarpur aims to support families like this one to access social protection programmes so that children like Laxmi can remain in school.



Laxmi lives in Dungarpur district of Rajasthan, India.

What are the key components of the South Asia CSSP programme?

The CSSP programme is based on the following three key components:

COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2	COMPONENT 3
<p><i>Improve access to social protection programmes for poor households and children.</i></p> <p>1. Social Assistance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support access to existing government programmes. b. Develop initiatives at community level. <p>2. Social Insurance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support access to government insurance programmes. b. Develop community-based micro insurance. <p>3. Social Services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support rehabilitation of child labourers through government programmes and/or non-formal education. 	<p><i>Enhance child sensitivity of parents, other care givers and selected service providers.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop understanding of the multiple causes that influence vulnerability of children. 2. Develop communication dialogues and tools to be used for enhancing child sensitivity. 3. Establish community-based norms and practices to support children to be in school, not to be engaged in child labour, to have better nutrition and to be given medical assistance. 	<p><i>Advocate for more child sensitive social protection policies and programmes.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document experiences and learning from implementation. 2. Support forums or platforms at district and state levels to discuss, learn and act to improve social protection programmes and policies for the benefit of children.

How will the programme impact children?

The objective of the programme is to improve children's lives in the following ways:

- ◆ **Increase the number of children enrolled in and regularly attending school**
- ◆ **Reduce child labour**
- ◆ **Increase health-seeking behaviour for children**
- ◆ **Improve nutrition and food sufficiency for children**

The Child Sensitive Social Protection programme will reach 115 000 children directly, and 221 000 children indirectly. In total, the programme will cover *336 000 children in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.*



Endnotes

1. www.unicef.org.
2. Social protection interventions are being increasingly viewed as key contributions to the achievement of all eight Millennium Development Goals. Social safety nets and job creation can smooth or raise incomes (MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty); increased incomes can reduce child labour and increase school attendance (MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE)); Health insurance can make medical treatment more accessible (MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality) etc. See e.g. Unicef. 2010. Social Protection: Accelerating the MDGs with Equity-Social and Economic Policy Briefings; the World Bank. 2003. The contribution of Social Protection to the Millennium Development Goals.
3. CSSP contributes to the global work of Save the Children International by promoting improved health, survival, education and reduction in child labour.
4. At the field level, the CSSP programme will be implemented in two districts of Bangladesh, two districts of India and one district of Nepal.



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