

WORLD BANK SAFEGUARD POLICIES REVIEW

Summary

Save the Children welcomes the World Bank's comprehensive review of its safeguard policies and is pleased to see for the first time, positive steps to protect children from harm and improve their lives. Nonetheless, the Bank should go further and make explicit references to safeguarding children in the new standards. For the safeguards to translate into practice it will be necessary to provide tools and support; we welcome the opportunity to work with the World Bank and its partners to implement the safeguards.

Background

The World Bank's Safeguard Policies are designed to embody significant protections for people and the environment. Save the Children commends the Bank for embarking upon a comprehensive review of the policies. As the world's leading independent organisation for children, in this submission we are focussed on safeguarding children's rights.

Save the Children is keen to pursue a constructive partnership with the World Bank. We recognise that the Bank is an important standard setting organisation for other multilaterals, governments, private sector and non-government organisations. The safeguards review represents a critical opportunity to put measures in place to protect children from harm and improve their lives.

We note that the Proposal Document potentially enhances protection for children in several ways. For instance, going forward, social assessments will likely assess the impacts on 'disadvantaged' or 'vulnerable' groups with reference to age. In terms of work, children under the age of 18 may not be employed in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's development.

In our view, these steps are a positive move in the right direction but require some refinement. Children are not just one category within 'vulnerable' groups. They are *uniquely* vulnerable. As adults, we have the responsibility to 'do no harm' and protect their childhood. The sections below summarise our position and the Attachment marks up suggested changes to the draft safeguards.

Risk Assessment – More explicit reference to children

Children are arguably the most vulnerable to negative project impacts – on their health, nutritional growth, cognitive development, safety and learning:

- At least in their earliest years, children are totally dependent on adults for survival and protection.
- The harms are often life-long and irreversible.
- The costs of these harms are borne not only by children and young people individually – they spill over into wider society, through adult behaviours, social costs and economic losses.
- Last but not least, almost all governments have taken on obligations to protect children through their adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Particular project-related risks for children include:

- Violence and exploitation – for example child sexual exploitation associated with construction projects and influx of non-local workers (child ‘marriage’ and casual sex work).
- Neglect and lack of supervision when parents engage in full time work and no childcare is provided.
- Infrastructure such as schools or health facilities that are not disaster-risk proof posing undue risks for children.
- Projects in remote or isolated settings with limited scope for regular supervision.
- Water and sanitation projects that involve personal hygiene, especially for girls.
- Physical danger posed by project activity in the absence of education of children e.g. increased traffic flows.

In the Bank’s Proposal Document, several policies reference the need to consider disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, including minors. Nonetheless, children risk being missed in this catch-all provision. Given their unique vulnerabilities and central importance to the Bank’s goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity, a more explicit focus on children is warranted.

In the overarching vision, policy and standard (ESS1), we recommend the Bank make explicit reference to ‘children’ and upholding the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We also recommend the Bank make explicit reference to ‘children’ in the following standards to ensure children’s unique needs are protected in situations where a project may pose a threat to their health, or they may be displaced by a project due to the following reasons:

- Community Health and Safety (ESS 4).

Children are at increased risk of harm from the negative public health consequences of mining, power plants, and other projects that may leach harmful chemicals into the air and water.

- Involuntary Resettlement (ESS 5).

Involuntary resettlement may interrupt children’s access to education and other vital social services, and expose children to an increased risk of violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation when new towns are created around projects.

A stronger focus on children will make it clear that the Bank will only fund projects and partners that have appropriate measures to protect children from harm.

Children and work

We welcome the draft standard on Labor and Working Conditions (ESS2), which aims to protect all workers, including children of working age, and avoid forced and child labour. Save the Children works across the world to eliminate harmful work and economic exploitation of all children.

We also support the Bank's recognition that children under the age of 18 can and do work, but this must¹:

- Exclude work that is hazardous, interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; and
- Involve a careful risk assessment and regular monitoring.

Children and young people work for many reasons. Many children must work to help support their families. Equally, children and young people choose to work because it offers them opportunities to learn and grow. Children may be engaged in domestic work, in agriculture or industry. Our objective is to ensure that children engaged in work have access to adequate support, protection, education and skills training to improve their opportunities.

Examples of leading practice of in this area include:

- ***Children Lead the Way***² A partnership between Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development and Save the Children in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nicaragua and Peru. We aim to ensure that children have access to quality education, learn skills that will improve their futures, and are protected from exploitation. For example in Nicaragua we work with coffee estate owners and local government to ensure children of migrant workers (often also working themselves) have an 'education passport' to continue their education as the children and their families move around for work opportunities.
- ***Work2Learn***³ A partnership between Danida, several Scandinavian textile companies and Save the Children in Bangladesh. The model aims to provide young workers with basic schooling and life skills, technical education, apprenticeships and in the end a decent job. For young people under the age of 18, the focus is on safe work, including child protection considerations, and over the age of 18, decent work.

We note that a limitation of draft ESS 2 is that it only applies to project workers.

We strongly recommend that the provisions around forced and child labour extend to all contractors and suppliers associated with the project. The Bank has the reach and influence to be a catalyst for major change in this area. We stress, however, that simply banning child labour from supply chains is not in the best interests of children – often this pushes working children into the more hazardous informal sector. Rather, the Bank has the potential to lead the way on engaging working young people in a socially responsible manner⁴.

¹ We suggest 'may' in draft ESS 2 be replaced with 'must'.

² <http://www.savethechildren.ca/CLWCountries>

³ <http://work2learn.dmopt.dk/en/>

⁴ Useful toolkits include: Children's Rights and Business Principles <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/childrens-rights-and-business-principles> From Child Labour to Children in Charge <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/child-labour-children-charge-handbook-child-led-organisation-and-advocacy-child-labour> Child Labour Toolkit: Responsible Approaches to Child Labour in the Textile and Garment Industry http://hvr.dk/Files/NW/PDF/Ydelsler/CSR/13236_RB_Child-Labour-Toolkit_web.pdf

Children with disabilities

Save the Children also supports more systematic inclusion of disability into the Bank's operations, ensuring that all relevant Bank-funded projects are inclusive in design and implementation, and ensuring strong, clear policy language modelled after the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Tools for success

Requirements for projects to assess risks posed to children are a welcome development. Putting the policies into practice will involve a step change for many Bank partners. Therefore, it is important that organisations such as Save the Children are available to assist in the development of the Bank's guidance and information tools.

We have a range of child safeguarding resources and are happy to share these with the Bank, including:

- Child Safeguarding - policies, procedures, good practice guidance, tools and training
- Child Rights and Business Principles - tools and guidance for business and civil society

We are also developing a range of tools as part the Safe Schools Program (under the World Bank-led Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction) which aims to ensure school construction practices take disaster risks into account, with a particular focus on community construction.

About us

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children. We work in over 120 countries responding to humanitarian crises and delivering education, health, child protection and local economic development programs. With global revenue of nearly \$2 billion and over 20,000 staff, in 2013 we reached 143 million children, including 52 million children directly through our programs.

Globally, we have a World Bank funded portfolio of activities worth US\$50 million (active and near-term projects), spanning 14 countries in the areas of health, education, child protection and humanitarian response. In the majority of cases, Save the Children is the recipient of World Bank funds through partner governments, but also sometimes through multi-donor trust funds. Examples of our work include: child protection in the Democratic Republic of Congo; early childhood education in Mozambique and Vietnam; and high impact primary healthcare in South Sudan.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Melissa Wells
Senior Economist
Email: melissa.wells@savethechildren.org.au

Jessica Winn
World Bank Partnership Manager
Email: J.winn@savethechildren.org.uk



Fergus Drake
Director of Programmes, Save the Children UK
On behalf of the Save the Children Movement

Attachment: Revisions to the draft framework

The following table sets out specific revisions to the Draft Environmental and Social Framework (as per consultation draft released 30 July 2014).

page, para	Text with changes tracked or in bold
A Vision for Sustainable Development	
5, 3	...It also embraces action to remove barriers against those who are often excluded from the development process, such as women, children, youth, and minorities, and to ensure that the voice of all citizens can be heard. In this regard, the Bank's operations are supportive of human rights and will encourage respect for them in a manner consistent with the Bank's Articles of Agreement human rights.
5, 5	Therefore, within the parameters of a project, the Bank seeks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to people and the environment; • Uphold and protect human rights consistent with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities...
World Bank Environmental and Social Policy	
9, 4	(b) Social risks and impacts, including... (ii) risks that project impacts fall disproportionately on children and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups...
ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	
27,26	(b) Social risks and impacts, including... (ii) risks that project impacts fall disproportionately on children and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups...
ESS2: Labor and Working Conditions	
38,16	Children under the age of 18 may must not be employed in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous...
ESS4: Community Health and Safety	
46,2	ESS4 addresses the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on project-affected communities and the corresponding responsibility of Borrowers to avoid or minimise such risks and impacts, with particular attention to children and vulnerable groups.
48,19	<i>Community Exposure to Disease</i> The Borrower will avoid or minimise the potential for community exposure to water-borne, water-based, water-related, and vector-borne diseases, and communicable diseases that could result from project activities, taking into consideration differentiated exposure to and higher sensitivity of children and vulnerable groups.

ESS5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	
55	<p><i>Objectives</i></p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that resettlement activities do not disrupt children’s access to education or other social services or expose them to increased risk of violence.
Glossary	
102	<p><i>Project Worker</i> is used to refer to people employed or engaged directly as employees, contractors or subcontractors by the Borrower, the project proponent and/or project implementing agencies...</p>