

Assessing Administrative Data Systems on Justice for Children

A tool for country-level self-evaluation

PART 1 | **Instructions**



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for every child

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PART 1

Instructions

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Overview

Children come into contact with the justice system in a host of ways – as victims, witnesses, because they are in conflict with the law, or as parties to civil or administrative processes, such as alternative care arrangements or asylum hearings, respectively. Children’s encounters with the justice system, along with information on the surrounding circumstances, are usually recorded by the authorities and service providers that form part of the justice sector. Such information is essential to monitoring and evaluating the performance of the justice system and to understanding the profile of children who come into contact with it. Yet these data are often overlooked, especially in low- and middle-income countries, since they may be incomplete in terms of coverage and information. Moreover, they often lack reliability due to an absence of quality controls and may not be up to date.

High-quality and reliable information is necessary for all reporting and decision-making on issues involving children in contact with the justice system, whether the aim is policy development and implementation, development of governance and regulatory structures and

procedures, human resources development, determining education and training needs, improving service delivery and financing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and achievements, or conducting research.

The Tool to Assess Administrative Data Systems on Justice for Children can be used to evaluate the capacity of statistical systems to collect, collate, analyse and disseminate administrative data on justice for children at subnational and national levels. It consists of two self-assessment questionnaires, presented in two separate booklets. The first, the Sectoral Questionnaire, is to be filled out by stakeholder institutions in the justice sector, including the police, prosecution services, courts, social welfare and corrections institutions. These respondents are then asked to come together, along with other key personnel (as described on page 16), to discuss and jointly fill out a second questionnaire, the Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders, which looks at the system from a broader perspective, at the national level.



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The tool can be used to:

- Inform key stakeholders about aspects of administrative data on justice for children that they may not be familiar with
- Provide an evaluation of the administrative data system on justice for children that can be used as a baseline for monitoring improvements over time
- Consult and build consensus on the current state of the administrative data system on justice for children and needed improvements and priority investment areas
- Mobilize technical and financial support to articulate and implement a strategic plan to improve/strengthen particular areas and/or sectors of the administrative data system on justice for children.

How the tool was developed

The development of this tool relied on existing diagnostic tools, none of which focused on justice for children. Good models were found that assess health information systems and civil registration and vital statistics, providing the foundation upon which this tool is built.¹ Insights gleaned from country studies undertaken in Montenegro and Uruguay in 2018, Jordan and the Republic of Tanzania in 2019, and a stakeholder workshop in Canada in 2019 were used to refine the tool.

Assessment criteria

As illustrated in Table 1 (page 10), a mature administrative data system on justice for children possesses the following characteristics:

- A comprehensive and coherent legal and normative framework for data and statistics on justice for children
- Effective governance and the ability to plan in the area of administrative

data on justice for children

- A well-equipped data infrastructure – that is, stable access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and database software – along with adequate human resources (sufficient personnel with the necessary training without a high turnover rate) and financing to support data collection, analysis and reporting
- Strong coordination of data on justice for children
- Completeness of data on justice for children
- Effective and secure data transmission
- Standardized data and practices in relation to justice for children
- Administrative data quality assurance
- Relevant use, robust demand and regular dissemination of such data.

Accordingly, these components are used as subsections in the tool's questionnaires. The tool asks country stakeholders to assess their systems by identifying gaps and strengths at the sectoral level (courts, police, social services, etc.) and in relation to the thematic components outlined above.

¹ Health Metrics Network, 'Strengthening Country Health Information Systems: Assessment and monitoring tool', 2006, <www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2011/HMN-Assessment-Tool-1.96.pdf>; World Health Organization, 'Section 3. Health Information Systems', in *Monitoring the Building Blocks of Health Systems: A handbook of indicators and their measurement strategies*, WHO, Geneva, 2010, <www.who.int/healthinfo/systems/WHO_MBHSS_2010_full_web.pdf>; World Health Organization, *Rapid Assessment of National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, WHO, Geneva, 2010, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/70470/WHO_IER_HSL_STM_2010.1_eng.pdf;jsessionid=7EBF4FBB47F030B590381BFC3FCBCA31?sequence=1>.

In addition to these components, the tool incorporates three core outcomes that should be present in an ideal administrative data system:

- Child-focused – system design and operation have children’s best interests at their centre
- Built from the community up – local impact and engagement in high-quality data collection and use are important for development outcomes involving children, as well as for feeding into national planning
- Cross-sectoral – strong foundations across multiple sectors at the national level are necessary to support an administrative data system for children that is effective and durable.²

These principles were also incorporated into the diagnostic elements of the tool. Respondents are asked if staff are trained in child-friendly interviewing techniques and if data protection for children is established and implemented (child-focused); if data are used for decision-making, planning, budgeting and programming improvements at all administrative levels – district, state, regional, national (built from the community up); and if governance and coordination mechanisms for administrative databases on justice for children exist across multiple sectors (cross-sectoral).

Indicators on justice for children

United Nations agencies and partners, as well as national governments, have developed

indicators that reflect standards to track capacity in relation to child justice.³ This three-part toolkit includes a minimum set of indicators on justice for children that were identified through a systematic review and development process. While not the only measure of performance, the ability of an administrative system to produce data on a core set of indicators provides important insights into the strength of that system. The indicators included in the toolkit address children’s access to justice in a broad sense; however, they all share important guiding principles that uphold children’s rights. These principles are mentioned to some degree in all international instruments and should guide any interventions related to justice for children – from policy development to interaction with and services for children – ultimately measuring the extent to which countries incorporate child rights into their justice systems.

The principles are as follows:

- Children’s access to justice is improved, including the ability to participate fully in proceedings, equitable access no matter what region, and the ability to appeal court/tribunal rulings
- Children’s equality before and under the law is assured, including the right to nondiscrimination
- Effective assistance, remedies and reparations are available and provided to children who are victims
- Crimes against and by children are prevented
- Specialized and child-friendly procedures for all children in contact with the law are applied

- Sentencing and restorative justice, reliance on noncustodial options, and specialized sentencing guidelines and standards for children are instituted
- Juvenile offender accountability, rehabilitation, reintegration, and prevention of recidivism become the norm.

In the Sectoral Questionnaire, Part 2 of the toolkit, indicators relevant to individual sectors have been included. Some overlap may occur when several different sector stakeholders collect the same data. For example, family courts may identify cases involving children (custody and access, for example), while social welfare will also collect data on individual children for routine assessment in such cases. Alternatively, more than one sector may be charged with collecting data for a particular indicator, although it is possible that only one of the sources actually does so. For example, both the police and the prosecution may collect data on criminal proceedings initiated against children. It will be up to each country team to decide which sector’s data will be used for joint reporting on justice for children.

It is helpful for countries to distinguish between indicators that are used for data collection and those that are included in reports. This assessment exercise should reveal when data are available, though not currently used, and when data are not captured in records at all. It will also help countries understand which sectors require more strengthening in relation to data collection if it is revealed that, for example, the judiciary could not report easily, if at all, on the indicators assigned to its sector.

² United Nations Children’s Fund, ADaMM: Admin Data Maturity Model v 1.5, unpublished draft.

³ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Achieving Justice for Children: A review of innovative data initiatives around the world*, UNICEF, New York, 2021.

Sources of information

The main sources of information for the assessment are the ministries of justice, interior/public safety, attorney-general’s office/prosecution and social welfare along with the judiciary and civil society organizations providing services related to child justice. These are the sectors that are usually responsible for the generation, synthesis, analysis and use of data on justice for children. The diagram below provides a breakdown of the main data sources, organized by a child’s contact with the justice system, whether through conflict with the law, as child victims or witnesses, or as participants or interested parties in civil and administrative processes. It provides a starting point for countries seeking to organize a national process to assess its administrative data on justice for children.



FIGURE 1

Common sources of administrative data on children in contact with the justice system

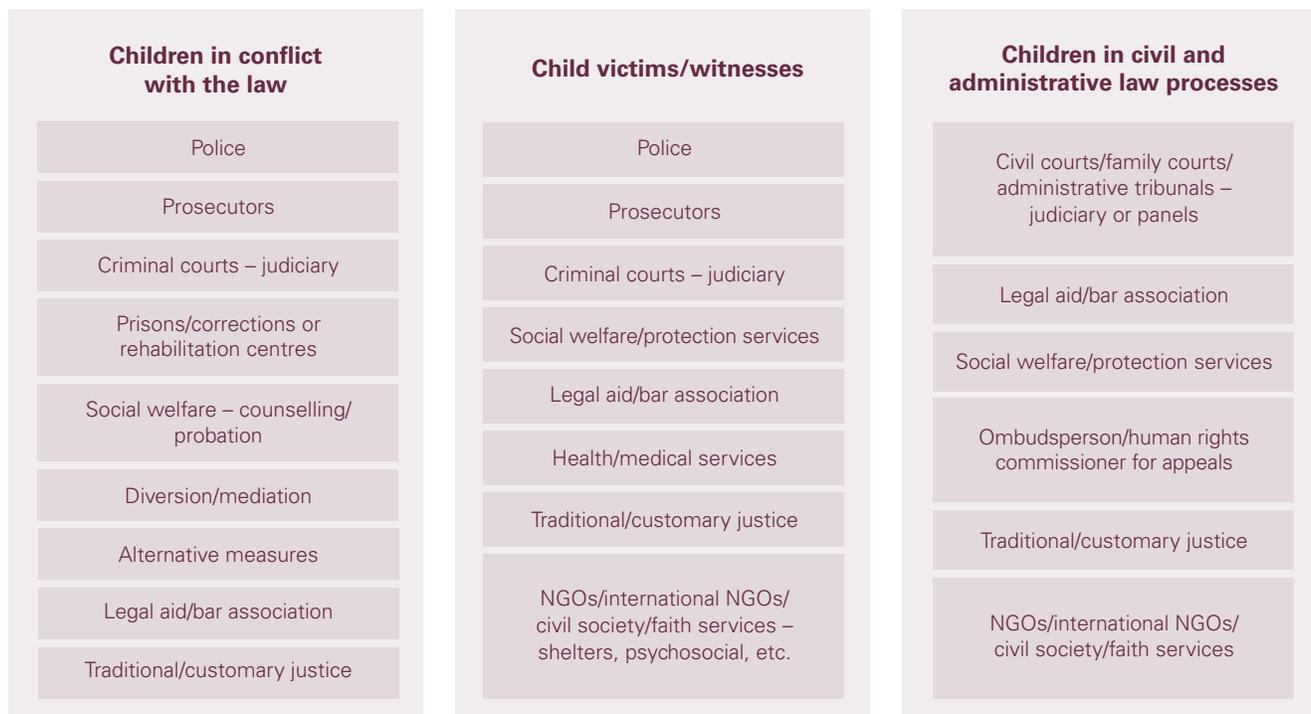


TABLE 1
Gauging the maturity of an administrative data system on justice for children: Three stages of development

Component	Current status of country in relation to the component		
	System strengthening needed	System moving towards maturity	System is mature
A. Legal and normative framework for data and statistics on justice for children	The country lacks protective legislation for children, including laws providing special provisions for children in criminal procedures, court processes and in relation to privacy and confidentiality.	Some legislation exists to protect children involved in criminal procedures, court processes and in relation to privacy and confidentiality, but comprehensive laws are required or existing laws need updating.	The country has adequate protective legislation for children (such as a Children's Act, Juvenile Justice Law) and special provisions exist for children in criminal procedures, court processes and in relation to privacy and confidentiality.
	Legislation is incomplete in terms of child rights and protections, juvenile justice, data privacy and access restrictions or, if already developed, has not been consistently implemented or enforced.	Legislation covers some aspects of child rights and protections, juvenile justice, data privacy and access restrictions, and it is enforced, but not consistently.	Legislation related to child rights and protections, juvenile justice, data privacy and access restrictions is fully implemented and enforced.
	Obligatory data capture and reporting on children in contact with the law are weak and need to be developed and enforced through legislation, policies and regulations.	Some legislation, policies and regulations for data capture and reporting on children in contact with the law exist, but they require updating or amendments to make them more comprehensive. Enforcement is inconsistent.	National legislation, policies and regulations for data capture and reporting on children in contact with the law exist and are enforced.
	There is no central reporting facility or national statistics office with a clear mandate, including roles and responsibilities to ensure regular collating, reviewing and publishing of data on the achievement of justice for children.	Some legislation, policies and regulations exist that compel a central reporting facility or national statistics office to regularly report on the achievement of justice for children, but they require amendments/ updating or must be implemented/ enforced.	A national statistics office or central reporting facility, with a clear mandate and role, is responsible for collating, reviewing and publishing data on the achievement of justice for children.
	Data privacy and data protection are weak and require that a regulatory framework be adopted and implemented among justice actors.	There is a comprehensive data privacy and regulatory framework that is not well known or enforced at some subnational levels or among some justice for children sectors.	Data privacy and access to information are strictly regulated through legislation and all justice actors comply, with strict penalties for noncompliance.
B. Governance and planning	A data governance framework does not exist and must be developed for justice for children data among stakeholder institutions. Alternatively, an existing data governance framework, such as that used in criminal justice, for example, may be used to guide data collection and reporting on justice for children.	Either a formal or informal data governance framework exists to guide data responsibilities, definitions, coding instructions, data storage and security, data collection, management and reporting, but it does not cover the entire justice for children sector (for example, it is limited to violence against children and does not cover juvenile justice).	A formal data governance framework on justice for children exists, including well-defined institutional responsibilities, definitions, coding instructions, data storage and security, data collection, management and reporting.
	Reporting is weak to non-existent in the area of justice for children. Regulations/ policies should be established to specify which institutions are responsible for capturing and reporting on data and the frequency and form of such reporting.	Legislation and/or regulations and policies delineating which institutions must capture and report on data, including frequency and form, exist and may be adequate, but not all responsible institutions report as expected.	Legislation and/or regulations and policies delineate which institutions are responsible for capturing which data, as well as the frequency and form of reporting on those data.
	There is no emergency or natural disaster response plan in place in relation to specific data requirements on justice for children.	No formal planning mechanism exists. In this case, either a child justice working group or one of the institutions in the justice sector could coordinate a response in an emergency or natural disaster situation.	In emergency or natural disaster response, there is a planning mechanism under the data governance framework on justice for children to capture specific and/or additional data required.

Component	Current status of country in relation to the component		
	System strengthening needed	System moving towards maturity	System is mature
C. Data infrastructure and resources	Stationery supplies are not always available and phones, computers, printers and copiers are very limited. Institutions responsible for administrative data on justice for children require adequate supplies and equipment at national and subnational levels.	Stationery supplies are generally available everywhere, but there are widespread shortages of phones, computers, printers and copiers outside of urban areas.	Necessary supplies such as forms, paper and pens are adequate, and equipment such as phones, computers, printers and copiers are widely available.
	ICT infrastructure is only found at national levels, if at all. Subnational levels are not reliably connected to an ICT infrastructure, and intranet or web-/cloud-based platforms have not been established.	ICT infrastructure may be available at subnational and national levels (or only in urban areas), but data are not transferred through intranet or web-/cloud-based platforms. Data are transmitted through email or manually.	All stakeholder institutions have ICT infrastructure at subnational and national levels and use electronic databases to collect and compile data that are connected via intranet or web-/cloud-based platforms.
	There is either no connection to an intranet or web-/cloud-based platform anywhere or this is only available at the national level. The result is that the central reporting facility must go through a process of data input, coding and organization before reporting, a time-consuming endeavour that makes it untenable to report more frequently than annually.	No business intelligence tool is used to generate automatic summaries, although there may be intranet or web-/cloud-based platforms used to connect database systems, either in urban capitals or throughout the country.	With an intranet or web-/cloud-based platform, all subnational data can be retrieved at a central reporting facility. The use of business intelligence software enabling automated summaries of key performance indicators is commonplace.
	Staff may receive only on-the-job training, if at all, and the lack of training is an impediment to the quality of administrative data on justice for children.	Training is either provided outside or on the job, but it is frequently not enough.	All staff are provided with adequate training to carry out their jobs in relation to administrative data on justice for children.
	Staff turnover is higher than 30% and it is difficult to retain skilled and experienced data workers.	Staff turnover rate is between 11% and 30%. Improvements could be made to retain skilled staff.	Staff turnover rate is 10% or below, resulting in the retention of experienced data workers.
	Currently, no national budget line exists for ICT in the area of justice for children, either at subnational or national levels.	While a national budget may be provided for ICT, it is not adequate to provide a functioning system at subnational and national levels.	National budgets provide for a functioning information system as well as ICT upgrades and maintenance as needed, both at national and subnational levels.
D. Coordination of data on justice for children	There is no formal inter-agency committee and little cooperation exists among stakeholder institutions, resulting in duplication of data collection and reporting, inconsistencies in statistical reports and incomplete analysis.	No formal inter-agency committee exists, but personal relationships are used to share and exchange information and resolve problems, although these are not always effective.	A formal inter-agency committee exists to ensure that there are protocols in place for sharing and exchanging information among stakeholder institutions. Information systems can interact, and committee members are comfortable contacting one another when in need of data.
	Information-sharing protocols do not currently exist and data are not exchanged across institutions. Protocols need to be developed, and stable electronic systems for data exchange should be established.	While there are information-sharing protocols among some or even all justice institutions, data are not easily exchanged due to inadequate ICT systems.	Information-sharing protocols among involved institutions exist, and data are shared securely and electronically across these institutions.
	None of the ICT systems are linked and data may be exchanged manually, but not electronically. Electronic data linkages need to be established among stakeholder institutions.	Among justice institutions, ICT systems were developed independently of one another, making integration impossible. Data are exchanged either manually or by programmed software interface to recognize different codes.	ICT systems were developed to ensure the full integration of the police, prosecution, court and social welfare database systems.

Component	Current status of country in relation to the component		
	System strengthening needed	System moving towards maturity	System is mature
E. Completeness of data on justice for children	Statistics for none to some of the key indicators can be reported on annually, but there is no consistent reporting of disaggregated data and there is no supporting ICT infrastructure to allow for both subnational- and national-level figures.	The database systems can generate reports on some of the indicators, but not all, and reports may be generated nationally or only at local levels.	Disaggregated statistics on all the recommended indicators on justice for children can be reported on annually at national and subnational levels.
	Reporting forms/registers are not standardized and significant narrative reporting exists. Forced data fields and skip logic (not allowing for blank responses) will need to be incorporated into electronic registers for recording data.	Standardized forms exist at national and subnational levels, and use of forced data fields and skip logic to ensure data collection completeness is limited.	A mandatory, single standardized form/register is completed online, at the national and subnational levels, to capture data. It relies on forced choice data fields and does not allow for skipping of data.
	Neither common definitions nor record identifiers exist across stakeholder institutions, and records cannot be easily shared or exchanged.	There is limited use of common record identifiers in databases, and improvement can be made in common definitions of variables and codes to enable seamless data transfers.	Data are compatible among all stakeholders through the use of common record identifiers in databases and common definitions of variables and codes used by each institution, making data transfer to the central reporting facility seamless.
F. Data transmission	A paper-based system requires manual collation of data from local to regional to national offices and does not permit real-time data availability.	Local systems still use paper copies of records that need to be scanned or electronically input at regional or national levels. Regions may or may not have intranet or web-/cloud-based systems.	All data are collected through an intranet or web-/cloud-based system that allows for centralized database updates each time a record is entered, with real-time viewing of local data from the national offices. Local records can be accessed from regional and national offices easily.
	Reporting from subnational levels is intermittent, and little effort is made by the national offices to encourage more timely, regular reporting.	A schedule for reporting exists and delays may occur in timely report submission. These may or may not be communicated to the central reporting facility.	There is an agreed schedule for when statistics and reports are due, and reporting deadlines are taken seriously and closely monitored.
	None of the national offices of each institutional sector can evaluate and respond to external requests for information in a timely manner that respects the confidentiality and privacy of children.	While the ability to critically evaluate requests for information exists, as does the capacity to provide anonymized data, a timely response to external requests is unlikely.	Each institutional sector has the capacity, at national levels, to critically evaluate requests for information in line with legislation/policies/procedures and to provide anonymized data in a timely fashion.
G. Standardized data and practices in relation to justice for children	Not all of the key indicators are collected by stakeholder institutions, requiring that these be incorporated into data collection forms/ registers at national and subnational levels.	Some of the key indicators are collected by stakeholder institutions at the national level, but this varies at subnational levels.	All stakeholder institutions collect data on the key indicators and have the capacity to do so at national and subnational levels.
	There is no systematic or complete disaggregation of data possible for children who come into contact with the justice system.	Some, but not all, stratifiers are found in administrative databases. However, it may be very difficult to extract and report on disaggregated data when records are paper-based at local levels, for example.	All data are disaggregated as proposed in each institution's administrative database at all levels of data capture. Since they are electronically input, stratified data reports can be easily extracted and produced.
	Written or informal procedures/guidelines do not exist and must be developed for managing data collection, storage, cleaning, coding, quality control and security for data on justice for children in all institutions and at subnational and national levels.	Either written procedures or informal guidelines exist for collection, storage, cleaning, coding, quality control and security, but they are not consistently implemented and adhered to.	There is a set of written procedures for managing administrative data on justice for children, including guidelines for collection, storage, cleaning, coding, quality control and security, in all institutions and at subnational and national levels. These procedures are strictly adhered to.
	If written codebooks do exist, they are not in use.	Written codebooks exist, although they may be out of date, and they may not be found at all subnational levels. Adherence is inconsistent.	Written codebooks exist to provide a single definition for each data variable and specifications for data collection methods, transmission and use, which are aligned with national legislation and international standards. All institutions at subnational and national levels strictly adhere to these codebooks.

Component	Current status of country in relation to the component		
	System strengthening needed	System moving towards maturity	System is mature
H. Administrative data quality assurance	Staff training and guidance are not sufficient for data quality assurance, nor are there system measures in place, such as drop-down menus/forced choice data fields and skip logic to prevent data omissions. Data recording and extraction errors need to be systematically addressed.	On-the-job as well as external training in data recording and extraction are in place. System quality assurance, such as through drop-down menus/forced choice data fields and skip logic, are not in standard use. Random sampling of data may take place at the central reporting facility, but it is not systematic. Local supervisors may provide oversight of staff inputting data.	Staff working in data recording and extraction are trained and formally tested on their knowledge. There is a written guide for quality control and system measures, such as drop-down menus/forced choice data fields and skip logic, requiring that a field be entered before moving on. These are in place to ensure consistency and prevent errors. Managers provide regular oversight.
I. Data use, demand and dissemination	Administrative data on justice for children are not seen as having strategic value and their use is limited. Awareness-raising as to the benefit of administrative data for monitoring, evaluating, budgeting, planning, policymaking and research may yield improvement, as could a champion in this area.	Administrative data are used to compile crime statistics on juvenile offenders and child victims annually. They may be used to monitor programming and track trends in child victimization and juvenile offending, but not for other purposes. Anonymized data are shared with researchers upon request.	Administrative data on justice for children provide citizens with information on government accountability to deliver justice for children. Government demands administrative data for programme monitoring, development of policies and programming to respond to identified issues, budgeting and strategic planning. Managers demand these data to measure whether targets and goals have been achieved. Researchers request anonymized data to carry out different analyses on justice trends and to evaluate programming in this area. Demand is regular and continuous.
	There is no training of staff to analyse data on children's involvement in the justice system.	Staff have been trained to analyse data on children's involvement in the justice system, but only at the central reporting facility.	Staff at both national and subnational levels who analyse data on children's involvement in the justice system have been adequately trained.
	Reports from the central reporting facility that use administrative data on justice for children are rarely or never produced.	At a minimum, annual reports are produced from the central reporting facility and reports may also come out biannually and quarterly.	Weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannual and annual reports are produced from administrative data on justice for children by the central reporting facility.
	Governments may use administrative data on justice for children to produce crime statistics involving children, but there is limited use otherwise. The data are not considered to be of good quality.	Administrative data on justice for children are used by governments to inform planning and decision-making at national and regional levels, but not locally. They are used to produce annual crime statistics involving children. Data quality is considered average.	Governments use administrative data on justice for children to evaluate department performance, plan and allocate resources, respond to periodic monitoring requests from international and regional intergovernmental organizations, and to set policies in order to improve the experience of children involved in the justice system. Data are perceived to be of high quality by these users.
	Data are not used nationally or subnationally by government to inform planning or strategic decision-making. Reporting on justice for children needs to add value to government activities.	Reports generated from the central reporting facility on justice for children are used for national planning and strategic decision-making, but not at subnational levels.	The reports coming from the central reporting facility on justice for children are used by all levels of government (subnational and national) to inform planning and strategic decision-making.
	Little awareness-raising and limited reporting have resulted in an absence of knowledge about key indicators on justice for children.	Key indicators are not generally well known except among specialists, such as judicial educators, researchers/academics and juvenile police.	Key indicators on justice for children are well known among political leaders, government ministers, senior managers, academic researchers and the media.

How to use the tool

The Tool to Assess Administrative Data Systems on Justice for Children is designed for stakeholders working on administrative data in sectors/institutions involved in delivering justice for children. It is intended to help people working in these sectors to understand the strengths and gaps in their administrative data systems. With knowledge of their needs, the various institutions can make decisions and prioritize investments in their respective administrative data systems and the national system of data reporting, including examining the need for a central reporting facility.

The Sectoral Questionnaire is organized by institutional sector, including the police, prosecution services, the courts (criminal/juvenile, civil, family, religious) and social welfare/corrections. It is expected that each sector (for example, civil courts) will fill out its own questionnaire.

How the process is conducted is left to the discretion of countries. For example, selected staff within a sector could fill out the questionnaire jointly. Or, selected staff could fill it out individually, and then come together as group to discuss and jointly fill out the questionnaire that is to be submitted for that sector. Respondents should indicate which sector is filling out the tool by checking the appropriate box at the front of the questionnaire.

Also included in the tool is an additional questionnaire intended for all stakeholders, including the central reporting facility for data on justice for children, if it exists, to fill out together at the national level. The Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders, Part 3 of the toolkit, examines the intricacies of the administrative data system, as well as how data are captured, collated, analysed and reported on in the area of justice for children.

Each sector agency or institution is expected to complete both its own self-assessment and to participate in the national-level self-assessment, by completing the following questionnaires:

- Sectoral Questionnaire for the police (24 questions/72 points), prosecution/attorney-general's office (24 questions/72 points), courts⁴ (24 questions/72 points), and social welfare/corrections⁵ (24 questions/72 points).
- Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders (34 questions/102 points).

Questions have been grouped into nine areas:

- Legal and normative framework for data and statistics on justice for children*
- Governance and planning*
- Data infrastructure and resources
- Coordination of data on justice for children*
- Completeness of data on justice for children
- Data transmission
- Standardized data and practices in relation to justice for children
- Administrative data quality assurance
- Data use, demand and dissemination.

The starred (*) categories are found only in the Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders, since these questions relate to national-level criteria and centralized coordination and are less relevant to individual sectors.

Each country will have a different context, with different department and ministry names, different administrative levels (not all countries have states or districts, for example), and are at different stages of development in terms of their administrative data systems. The tool uses generic labels, and it is expected that those completing the self-assessment will adapt to their own country context, for example, using 'juvenile education

centres' instead of 'corrections institutions', as relevant.

This assessment exercise would ideally be repeated at an appropriate interval, as determined by a country's circumstances, preferably with the same stakeholders, in order to monitor progress and inform future plans to continuously improve the country's administrative data system on justice for children.



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⁴ Each of the different courts – criminal/juvenile, civil, family and religious, if relevant – should complete a separate questionnaire.

⁵ If these are two separate ministries or departments, it may make sense to have each institution complete the questionnaire separately. Corrections departments and social welfare have different names in different countries. The stakeholders here are the ones who provide social and protective services support to children (social welfare) and those who operate the institutions (corrections, remand, educational centres) and programmes (pre-trial and post-trial diversion, community service, reintegration programming) for child offenders (corrections).



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Who should complete the questionnaires?

The self-assessment examines many areas, including database systems, tools and software for systems, data categories and coding, data input, practices and procedures, and legislation/policy that shapes and limits the administrative data system. Therefore, it requires input from those who are knowledgeable about these issues. It is expected that each sectoral self-assessment process will involve ICT experts, database designers (if available), database administrators, data analysts, monitoring and evaluation experts, a person responsible for intersectoral coordination, and a representative who interacts with children and uses the database to record the interaction. Some representation from district, state, regional and national hubs receiving data is also beneficial. All participants completing the assessment should have knowledge and experience in justice for children related to the specific sector (juvenile police, for example). The courts – including criminal (juvenile-focused, if available), civil, family and religious courts, if relevant in the country context – should each complete a separate

questionnaire. Likewise, social welfare and corrections should conduct separate assessments. Any other subsector agency/institution should feel free to complete a separate questionnaire if it makes sense due to the existence of different database systems.

When filling out the Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders, those who completed the questionnaire for each sector should ideally be present. 'Central reporting facility' refers to a separate institution, if it exists, responsible for collecting data on justice for children from all relevant sectors and producing comprehensive reports on justice for children indicators. In some countries, the central reporting facility is a unit attached to the national statistics office. If such a facility does not exist, the national self-assessment exercise may help determine if a particular sector can take on a centralized role to report on behalf of others, or if investments should be made to create a separate facility to collect and report on child justice data at the national level.

At least one member of the national statistics office should also be present for the national-level self-assessment since legislation may grant exclusive permission to this office to use and report on data. This representative should be knowledgeable about justice for children, trained as a statistician or demographer, and be comfortable discussing electronic databases.

Database administrators and a representative working directly with children from administrative tribunals, the national human rights institution and/or the ombudsperson's office should also participate in the national-level assessment with the goal to improve their data capture in the area of justice for children. If administrative tribunals already collect data specific to children and can report on the minimum set of indicators, it is recommended that these stakeholders conduct a separate sectoral assessment of administrative tribunal data on children and that these representatives join the national-level assessment.

Scoring the tool

A score sheet is provided at the beginning of the sectoral and the national-level questionnaires. For each question in the assessment tool, stakeholders select one of four response scenarios (labelled A, B, C and D), which describe a range of hypothetical scenarios allowing for an objective and numbered rating. The numeric value attached to each scenario permits a total score to be obtained within each section, as well as a total score for all sections. The highest score (3) is given for a scenario considered 'highly adequate' when compared to the minimum score of zero (0), which is regarded as 'not functional'. If the situation in a country is not precisely defined by any of the four options, the response scenario that most closely aligns with current practice, systems and structures should be selected. The comments section in the response options table allows those responding to provide additional clarification or detail for future reference. The scoring is expected to provide an indication of the functionality and quality of the administrative data system and the data it produces.

How to score response scenarios

Response scenario	A	B	C	D
Score	3	2	1	0

Each question should be discussed by the group members completing both the Sectoral Questionnaire and the Questionnaire for the Central Reporting Facility and All Stakeholders.

To finalize the scoring for each sector, numeric scores are converted into averages/percentages. For a total score, the numeric responses for all questions should be added for a total score (out of either 72 for each sector or 102 for the national level). A perfect score would be 72/72 for sectoral assessments

and 102/102 for the national-level questionnaire. Each question has a maximum point value of 3 and a minimum of 0. Once the sum of all 24 questions for the sectoral assessment is known, that number should be divided by 72 to get the percentage score. For example, a score of 58/72 would result in a score of 81 per cent (58 divided by 72). The national-level assessment is scored out of 102, so a score of 83, for example, would also result in a percentage score of 81 per cent, suggesting that the system is functional, but needs improvement.

Percentage scores and their ratings

Score (%)	Rating	Actions to consider
Below 34	Not functional	Substantial system improvement is required in all areas
35-64	Weak	Multiple issues require attention, with many aspects of the system not functioning well
65-84	Functional, but needs improvement	The system works, but some elements require attention; specific weaknesses might be more comprehensively examined before making changes
85-100	Well-functioning	Minor adjustments might be required in an otherwise well-functioning system

Interpreting the results

This tool is purely diagnostic in that it does not provide recommendations for how the country should proceed in order to improve its administrative data system on justice for children.⁶ Nor is the tool exhaustive. It is not intended to closely evaluate software programmes for data collection, for example, but rather to examine the administrative data system, both as a whole and in selected parts, with the aim of identifying the general areas and sectors of the system that would benefit from targeted intervention and investment. It supports the use of existing data collection and reporting tools first, looking at ways to enhance or strengthen these. It also recognizes that there are no specific stages through which an administrative data system must develop, since emerging technology could ‘leapfrog’ one sector of a low-income country from a paper-based system to a state-of-the-art electronic database. There is no need to move through the more cumbersome and less efficient development that occurred in many high-income countries that took advantage of technologies that were new at the time, but not nearly as efficient as today’s systems.

Since countries develop their administrative data systems at different paces, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to strengthening these systems. Each country will have different requirements to improve its system and each sector will identify its own system gaps and strengths. The stakeholders who conduct the national-level assessment are expected to evaluate these requirements and build consensus, as a first step, on

critical system needs and immediate investment priorities, as well as mid-term and longer-term support and development necessary to improve monitoring and reporting on justice for children.

For example, in most countries, the police have fairly comprehensive data records on accused offenders and their victims. However, these records may be paper-based in some locations and it might be a priority to provide electronic systems and statistical software to this sector. It may also be important that these new systems are able to link with the prosecution service so that data are complete and do not need to be entered into the system more than once. Alternatively, if civil courts are not able to report on the number of cases heard that involve children, and the social welfare system collects information on each child assessed for these cases, it may be a priority to develop a system linkage whereby social welfare uses court file numbers as part of its data codes that can be

accessed by the courts. Another country may be lacking coordination and a governance structure among the justice for children institutions that gather and report on data. In this case, an existing justice for children working group could be called upon to establish a sub-working group or committee devoted to strengthening the administrative data system through better coordination and the development of a governance framework, building on what is already in place.

In conclusion, this assessment tool will identify which sectors have adequate systems and which do not. It will also identify some of the gaps within and among sectors (that is, the need to link or integrate systems). While this information is critical to understanding administrative data system requirements, the country context is just as important to ensure that future plans and investments result in better data on justice for children for decision-makers.



⁶ Some broad considerations for undertaking activities to improve data on justice for children that emerged from the research and country studies undertaken to develop this tool are documented in: United Nations Children’s Fund, *Achieving Justice for Children: A review of innovative data initiatives around the world*, UNICEF, New York, 2021.





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