

## **Childwatch International revised Work Plan and Budget 2011**

### ***Introduction***

The Childwatch International Research Network is a global, non-profit, nongovernmental network of institutions that collaborate in child research for the purpose of promoting child rights and improving children's well-being around the world. It seeks to build bridges between organizations, researchers and practitioners. Childwatch gives special emphasis to research about children experiencing extreme adversity.

Childwatch works to build capacity in the field of child research by nurturing the emerging capacity for child research where little exists. Childwatch supports efforts to communicate the realities of children's lives to policy makers, to professionals working on children's issues, other researchers, and to the public. It argues that sound strategic research can help to improve the condition of children in their homes, communities and countries in a globalizing world.

Childwatch is hosted and supported by the University of Oslo, with facilities for the secretariat as well as financially. Norad/The Research Council of Norway has provided core funding of the network. The Childwatch Key Institutions are funding the child research that is the basis for the networking. They are also supporting meetings and conferences organised by the network. Most events are co-organised with UN-agencies, governments and NGOs and co-funded from the same agencies.

Childwatch has three prioritized working areas in which we seek to advance the overall mission of Childwatch – promoting child rights through child research, especially in the South:

- Participation and Governance
- Protective Environments
- Violence against Children

Within all these three working areas we are facing challenges related to our other more cross cutting objectives:

- Further developing research methodologies that helps to build a knowledge base that is better rooted in the experiences of children. A major challenge in this area is in appropriate approaches to the experience of younger children.
- Building Child Research Capacity among aspiring academics
- Placing a special focus on the Child Research Capacity in Sub Saharan Africa
- Promote dialogue and sharing in the Practice – Research – Policy Making triangle.

## ***Core Activities 2011***

### **Participation and Governance:**

Prioritising this theme reflects the profound implications, and enormous challenges, of the UNCRC for achieving the recognition of children as citizens with a full range of civil rights, including the right to receive information, to express their views, to participate in decision-making processes, and to freedom of association.

#### **Building Capacity for Ethical Research with Children & Young People**

*“Cross-cultural child research: ethical challenges”*

The National Committee for Research Ethics for the Social Sciences and Humanities (NESH), Childwatch International Research Network, and The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO will organize a meeting on key ethical issues that researchers and students face in conducting cross-cultural research with children. When children and young people participate in research, they are entitled to special protection. Globalized research creates both new possibilities and new ethical challenges for the engagement of children as competent research participants.

Central issues include how researchers should prepare for the ethical challenges of field work, whether students should conduct ethically complex child research, and whether researchers and institutions need better guidelines.

A publication with all presentations will be produced and used by The National Committee for Research Ethics for the Social Sciences and Humanities in their effort to secure ethical standards in child research organized by Norwegian academic institutions.

*“Childwatch Study Group on the Ethics of Child Research.”*

In April 2010, the Childwatch Board approved the establishment of a new Thematic Study Group on The Ethics of Child Research.

**Phase 1:** To undertake an international scoping project entitled Building Capacity for Ethical Research with Children and Young People. This project aimed to identify the ethical issues and challenges in undertaking research with and for children and young people in different majority and minority world contexts; and to identify and collate existing ethics guidelines and resources. It was anticipated that the findings would extend existing knowledge and provide information and resources that could usefully contribute to promoting the conduct of ethical, respectful research in different cultural and social contexts. To the best of our knowledge it is the first international project of its kind to identify and explore the ethical issues facing researchers, in a range of contexts, when undertaking research with children, particularly in relation to participatory research with children.

The report to be published in March 2011

**Phase 2:** To review the current literature regarding ethical issues in research with children and young people.

The Report to be published in July 2011

**Phase 3:** An international meeting to discuss initiatives to promote ethical standards in child research.

Participants: Academics related to Childwatch, The Director of Research in UNICEF, Academics working on Research Ethics in United Kingdom, Tanzania, New Zealand, Norway, etc.

The meeting will be organized in London, end July 2011. A report will be published towards the end of 2011.

The aims of the meeting are to:

- Prepare for joint publications
- Initiate the development of an ethics module for research training manuals
- Explore opportunities for funding of continued research

### **“Building Child Research Capacity in Sub Saharan Africa”**

Childwatch has over years promoted networking among Child rights researchers in Africa. At all these engagements the urgency to collaborate more strategically and more effectively around relevant and useful child research in Africa has been emphasized. In addition there is broad recognition that presently there are a number of small scale researches with little impact being made across the continent. While this is good for individual researchers and the host academic institutions – this substantive resource is contributing very scarcely to the bigger need for deepening understandings of and with children living in Africa. The annual capacity building taking place during the CODESRIA child Institute is highly regarded and revered, with potentials for expanding the number of participants.

In 2011:

Childwatch will provide technical and financial support for the training taking place in September.

### **The Latin America Young Researchers program**

The Latin American Childwatch Network is conducting a Young Researchers program for 24 participants from six countries under the coordination of CINDE, Colombia.

This is a one year program conducted in three phases:

1. A preparatory diagnostic phase.
2. 10 days of a face to face event that with four inter-institutional, inter-country teams are organized, several research projects are defined as follow up work for all participants.
3. A six months phase with distant online supervision. Six theoretical practical modules will be covered. The research project will be refined and developed in this period. Each project will have an adviser from the Childwatch Latin American Network.

In 2011:

Articles synthesizing the projects will be published in Indexed journals.

An evaluation of the process will be organized. Based on the conclusions an online program for a bigger group with participants from more countries will be launched in 2011.

### **“International Conference on Promoting Social Change through Youth Participation”**

This conference aims at contrasting the devastating effects of a criminalized look at youth that leads to increased social control and intervention measures vs. a positive approach of youth as citizens and social actors who may mobilize innovative resources and project a fresh and alternative view towards a more sustainable world.

Experts will analyze the diversity of contexts of development that may be encountered in various Latin American cities and metropolis such as Río de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Caracas and Chicago, that configure diverse and multiple youth cultures in which social alternatives of action in the public space are built and the possibilities of exercising their citizenship are explored.

Another feature of the Conference will center on youth testimonies of their own organization of social and civic actions that took place in these cities. Products of their creative work in the media will be shown (photography, film, radio programs, writings, art, paintings, etc.).

Youth will discuss, reflect and evaluate their experiences and views in a workshop with participatory techniques.

To be organized in Mexico City mid October 2011 in collaboration with Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and the Government of Mexico.

### **"The impact of the Globalized Crisis on Children and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean Region"**

A report based on a conference organized in 2010 will be published in October 2011

### **“Documenting Experiences with Child Involvement in Research in the Arab World”.**

A regional conference organized in the Middle East North Africa region late 2010 concluded that there is a need to enhance the documentation and exchange of child inclusive research experiences in the Arab World. The conference was supported by civil society representatives on the national, regional and international level.

Plan 2011: Publication of a book in Arabic and English dedicated to this topic.

## **Protective environments**

While formal child protection processes, where they are available, address issues of serious risk in the child’s circumstances, it has also become increasingly clear that for most children, their best hope of sustainable care, nurturing and protection lies in resources in the household, the school, the neighbourhood and the village. Understanding better the dynamics of such protective environments is of considerable importance at many levels.

### **Child Friendly Communities**

This research collaboration is under the leadership of the Children’s Environments Research Group in New York and the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence. The purpose of the collaboration is to improve the quality of the CFC international initiative through the development of assessment and monitoring tools.

### **Plans for 2011:**

- Prepare Community Assessment Toolkit for Publishing (by March 2011) – funded by UNICEF/IRC
- Develop a digital version of the toolkit (with Devinfo or with MIT) – funded by UNICEF/IRC
- Complete the “Mapping Children’s Rights” handbook (including digital mapping tools, in collaboration of MIT Media Center) – funded by Bernard van Leer
- Develop guidance material for the community-based planning of child friendly communities – funding being sought for this.
- Develop curricula for the use of the CFC toolkit in schools – for each grade level. (with Education section of UNICEF) – funding promised from UNICEF Education Section. Develop a comparative research program on different models of municipal and community governance for children’s rights - dependent on new funding.
- Establish a follow-up program for following how the communities in the nine countries use the assessment process in the their communities for subsequent planning and advocacy for children - funding required
- Further develop the potentials of the community assessment process for child protection (planned dialogs with UNICEF on this)
- Broadening dissemination of the tools:
  - international conferences.
  - CFC website strengthened

### **Children in Care**

The Central and Eastern Europe regional network has identified the care of children in institutionalized settings as their priority area.

### **Plans for 2011:**

- The concluding outcomes from the regional network’s meeting in Prague in September 2010 will be published in the Special issue of Social Work Forum (a peer reviewed academic journal published by Charles University, Czech Republic) in June 2011.
- During the fall, a regional meeting on Specific group of Children in Foster Care such as Roma children and children with special needs will be organized in Zagreb.
- Priority will be given to efforts aiming at extending the network by involving participants from additional countries in the region such as Ukraine, Moldova and Slovenia.

## **Violence against Children:**

The first step to combating violence in childhood is to understand its nature and dynamics. Childwatch is committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendations of United Nations Study on Violence against Children.

### **The Asia and Pacific Study on Violence against Children**

The Special UN report on violence highlighted that lack of research on the socio-cultural aspects of violence, our proposal to focus on this aspect in our child to child research requires an interdisciplinary approach. A team has been assembled that will facilitate an interdisciplinary approach, informed by knowledge from a range of disciplines, eg social policy, psychology, sociology

and law. Additionally the team also includes persons with specific academic qualifications in sociology, psychology and international development.

The composition of the team is predominantly that of researchers, but also includes practitioners. The team members conduct their research in partnership with both practitioners and policymakers.

Plan 2011:

A three day workshop focusing on research into child to child bullying will be carried out in Mumbai in February 2011. The workshop will bring together representatives from around 5 countries from the Asia Pacific region, and following the workshop each country will commence research on the topic.

The main focus of the workshop is to develop a joint project with the following objectives:

1. To study children's constructions/perspectives of violence
2. To explore the strategies children use to negotiate/cope with violence in their everyday lives
3. To explore children's ideas on what can be done to respond to violence
4. To explore responses of experts and policy makers to children's constructions/perspectives of violence and children's ideas on how to deal with/respond to violence

As a follow up to the meeting in February 2011 the following activities will take place during 2011:

- Review of literature
- Pilot Study
- Completion of data

The group will meet again towards the end of 2011 to plan for the next phase of the study and prepare for the final publication.

## **Organizational Management and Support**

### **The Board**

The Childwatch Board of ten members oversees the implementation of policies and strategic direction between General Assembly meetings. The Board will meet in March 2011.

### **Web-site**

The new web site of Childwatch launched in October 2008 has been very successful in gathering and disseminating information about child research - activities and events. An increasing number of UN agencies, NGOs and research centres are using the website to access information and to publish information about their work, publications and conferences. It is fair to say that the web site is now considered to be a key resource for information about international child research with a rights perspective. It has given our network and the network Key Institutions increased visibility and gained interest for the network among the network partners.

Please see: [www.childwatch.uio.no](http://www.childwatch.uio.no)

### **The Secretariat**

Because of the limited funding the secretariat has been reduced to one person.

## Plan 2011

- Support the implementation of the annual work plan in accordance with the strategic priorities and within available resources.
- Facilitate dialogue among member institutions
- Promote and encourage collaboration between members and initiate collaborative projects
- Disseminate information about current developments and opportunities in child research to members of the network
- Maintain the network and external contacts updated on major news posted on the web-site.
- Develop the Childwatch International Website to provide easier access to relevant information and good access to child research through Internet.
- Promote awareness regarding child research and its application to promotion of child rights to decision makers and society at large
- Develop relations with relevant public authorities and other agencies
- Actively raise funds for Childwatch initiated activities
- Provide funding agencies with the required reports and other information.