THE FIRST THREE YEARS. ACTIVITIES OF CHILDWATCH INTERNATIONAL FROM 1993 TO 1995

Index:

Foreword

By Ferran Casas, President of the Preliminary Board

The process of establishing Childwatch International has been an exciting venture into a new landscape. Networking is a process of seeking out opportunities, acting when possibilities appear and being pragmatic in the positive sense of the word. To be successful, the networking process requires creativity and flexibility as well as sharing and generosity.

Childwatch is still a young child, not a baby or a toddler any more, but an independent being, actively exploring the world, reaching beyond the secure home base. It has learned the basic skills for relating to the world, but still has a lot to learn. We wanted to compile the experience from the first three years of Childwatch in one report, to present a comprehensive overview of the wide variety of activities that our young network has already initiated or been involved in. We have analysed our experience and described our network philosophy. This is described in more detail in another document. [1] The document you now have in front of you focuses on the substantive activities and the patterns they form.

As the President of the first Board of Childwatch, I am proud to say that we have already achieved a lot and initiated many interesting activities. We have also been able to create a process whereby the network is rapidly growing, with the Key Institutions representing its core. Childwatch has also embarked upon exciting partnerships with various organisations involved in programmes and policies for children. With them we have, among other things, been involved in a dialogue on how the research needs of these organisations can be met, and how they can influence the international research agenda.

I look forward to following and participating in the further development of Childwatch and hope that you will find this presentation interesting and useful. If you have any comments or suggestions, we would be pleased to hear from you.

1. Introduction

This report presents the experience from the three first years of existence of Childwatch International, from 1993 to 1995. It describes the process of setting up the network, especially focusing on the various activities in which Childwatch

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[1]Regularising Childwatch. Where do we go from here? Childwatch Basic Documents No. 2, May 1996.

has been involved. We are doing this for two reasons: to report back to our donors and supporters about what has been achieved in the initial phase and to present an extensive document on which to continue the process of establishing Childwatch International on a long-term basis.

We want to refer back to the ideas with which we started and describe where they have taken us so far and what direction we see for the next three years and beyond. Childwatch was started as a response to an expressed need from researchers interested in or involved in children's issues. They called for a more coherent approach to children within the area of research: by combining the best from various disciplines one can provide a better understanding of children, their environments and how to improve their living conditions. Childwatch was also based on a wish to develop and strengthen the capacity for child research, and to attract the attention of researchers and disciplines normally not associated with such issues to child related issues.

This report is written with many warm thanks to our donors and supporters, particularly the members of the Preliminary Board, [2] whose wise and generous guidance has been invaluable, the Norwegian Minister for Children and Family Affairs and her staff, the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, the University of Oslo, and - not least - the Key Institutions, who have encouraged and contributed to the process in a multitude of ways.

This report is based on and refers to several other Childwatch documents that are available from the Secretariat. References are given when relevant. Most of them are also available on the Childwatch WorldWideWeb home page on the Internet. [3]

2. The process

The networking philosophy of Childwatch is based on the assumption that child research needs international cooperation, with a holistic approach combining creativity, innovation and vitality that is carried out through a continuous networking process. Being a network and not an organisation, Childwatch can work flexibly and efficiently in its efforts to make a difference to children world-wide.

The child research community is not a constant and homogeneous entity. As in other academic sectors, research projects on children's issues are defined by space and funds and are usually limited in time. Consequently, Childwatch is working with a constituency that changes to some degree. Institutions engaged in child research and active in the network one year might be inactive the next year since the child-related project(s) has (have) ended. Furthermore, since

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[2] See Annex 1 for names and affiliations.

[3] http://childhouse.uio.no/childwatch/

political and economic changes influence a country's priorities concerning children, such changes not only affect individual researchers, but also the research institutions involved in children's issues. Consequently, the research priorities change. Similarly funding sources will give higher or lower priority to child research.

Networking can be a slow process, and the development of working relationships with other groups requires the establishment of trust, definitions of mutual benefit and clear boundaries of operation. Networking is part of a process and is not an end in itself. A network that aims to operate in a dynamic and changing environment often needs to review and modify strategies when the course of events changes.

A well-functioning network builds upon the common interests of individuals and institutions to exchange information on their activities and research interests. Such common interests could be met by sharing information and joining forces to develop various activities of cooperation in a climate of trust and sharing to promote and improve research that can benefit children. A network needs clear but flexible rules. Childwatch has developed its terms of reference based on its experience from the first three years; these are presented in a separate document. [4]

Childwatch has identified a number of key institutions within the field of child research. They are acting as main regional focal points of the network and are invited to join forces in developing new activities based on common interests. The main criteria for defining an institution or organisation (or a network for that matter) as a Key Institution, are its long-term involvement in and commitment to children's issues. Thus, the Key Institutions largely represent the continuity within the field of child research. This process, called the Key Institution Initiative, started with the first meeting of Key Institutions in September 1994 and is described further below. [5]

3. Activities

The Preliminary Board developed a set of objectives for Childwatch International that can be summarised in five groups:

·   to promote an interdisciplinary approach to child research and a holistic understanding of children;
·   to promote more effective dissemination of the results from child research;
·   to encourage and support the dialogue between researchers and decision-makers on development of strategies to improve the situation of children;

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[4]*Childwatch International. Terms of Reference.* Childwatch Basic Documents No. 1, May 1996.

[5]See: *The Key Institution Initiative: Report from the Key Institution meeting , September 1994,*.

· to identify new issues to be included in the global agenda for child research and initiate projects to address them; and
· to contribute to capacity building and capacity strengthening within the field of child research.

Based on discussions between the Board and the Secretariat, and with the Key Institutions that started at the founding meeting in January 1993, and have continued since then Childwatch has initiated and engaged in a variety of activities, at various levels of involvement to implement these objectives.

The following reviews the state of the various activities by the end of 1995, divided in two categories: information activities and research activities.

3.1. Information activities

The Childwatch information philosophy is to improve the flow of information within the international research community as well as from research institutions to policy-makers and decision-makers in language that relates to their mandates. Childwatch further aims to establish a dialogue between the partners involved in children's issues, and especially to strengthen the relations between the producers and the users of the research.

In addition, the Childwatch information strategy should not compete with the information activities undertaken by the institutions in the network. The information strategy should focus on coordinating, supplementing and supporting, and, in accordance with the Childwatch terms of reference, provide channels for the exchange of information and knowledge between researchers and promote more effective dissemination of the results from child research to the general public.

Printed material is needed to distribute by mail, and for use as background material in meetings and as hand-outs. Personal contact or in groups is also important. Nevertheless, the main focus for Childwatch has been to use modern information technology to create channels for information that are alternative to and more effective than printed material. During its first three years, Childwatch wanted in particular to develop a) electronic networking by using the Internet as a communication tool to set up electronic conferences, on-line databases and discussion groups and b) Childwatch-TV, an annual global television report that could be offered to the world's broadcast institutions.

3.1.1. Printed publications
Although the Board gave a clear priority to electronic networking, printed publications have been produced, as mentioned above. However, Childwatch has adopted the principle that they should increasingly be available in electronic form as well. A series of booklets has been produced to give the Key Institutions and others interested in more specific information on individual projects and organisational matters. We have tried to give them a uniform and easily recognisable form by using the same type of cover with the Childwatch logo

prominently placed. [6] Childwatch has never intended to exclude anyone who does not have access to electronic communication tools from information exchange through Childwatch, to ensure more complete outreach. Thus, printed publications are also needed in the near future.

At the meeting of Key Institutions in 1994, the participants stressed the need to keep one another updated on plans and activities. [7] A number of actions were suggested to improve the flow of information among the institutions and to increase each individual institution's knowledge of what is going on in the others. Alongside the more ad hoc use of Childwatch to distribute general information and access information based on specific requests, the participants suggested circulating semiannual updates through Childwatch. The first updates that reached the Childwatch office were comprehensive and broad descriptions of research and conference activities. They were, however, often quite long; by quick calculation, the Secretariat realised that it would be unrealistic to expect the Key Institutions to go on producing a 10-page statement twice a year and even less realistic to think that many people would read a 200-page collection of updates. A briefer format was discussed by the Glasgow Task Force in April 1995 [8] Based on the comments from this meeting, the news sheet **Key News** took its present form. Key News had two issues in 1995: one in June and the other in November. The feedback from the Key Institutions has been positive, although the Secretariat expends effort in collecting the contributions.

3.1.2. Electronic Networking
Childwatch members and partners are increasingly establishing Internet connections, which makes it easy for Childwatch to organise exchange of information through e-mail and m-lists, establishing on-line searchable databases, and lately, develop WorldWideWeb presentations and communication tools. Childwatch is taking advantage of this new development in various aspects of our communication and information strategy.

E-mail has revolutionised informal international networking. The majority of Key Institutions and other associates had started using e-mail by the end of 1995. An advantage of the rapidly growing use of e-mail is the possibility of creating **electronic mailing lists:** one e-mail address for a group of recipients. The m-lists represents an excellent channel for efficient consultation and teamwork in general and as a medium for preparatory or follow-up activities before international meetings and conferences in particular. By the end of 1995, Childwatch administered several different m-lists, involving individuals sharing views on organisational matters as well as research topics.

In 1994 Childwatch launched its first Internet home page. In the beginning, the site gave general information about Childwatch in English, French and Spanish,

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[6]See Annex 2 for a complete list of Childwatch publications.

[7]See: *The Key Institution Initiative: Report from the Key Institution meeting , September 1994,*.

[8]See: *The Key Institution Initiative. Mapping exercise task force.* Report from meeting in Glasgow, 20-30 April 1995.

and this information was supplemented by a Web version of the European Survey of Child Rights Research and Information in 1995, as referred to below. Our Web site has been expanded with reports from Childwatch activities and projects, information about the Key Institution initiative, and the Key News with updates from the Key Institutions, was included in an on-line form as well. Further, information about all the institutions participating in the first meeting of Key Institutions was placed on the Internet. By the end of 1995, several of the Key Institutions (the Family Life Development Center, Cornell University; Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development; the Norwegian Centre for Child Research; and the Children's Rights Centre, University of Gent) had established their own Web sites, and the Childwatch home page consequently created links to these sites continuously.

Childwatch was well aware that not all institutions have the same opportunities to get their own Internet sites in the near future, and therefore offered to assist in establishing basic home pages for Key Institutions who did not have access to a server. In autumn 1995, the Center for Research on Childhood, Universidade Santa Ursula (CESPI); and Fundación Paniamor provided the Secretariat with information for the Web, and their first home pages were developed with the assistance of Childwatch and hosted by our server.

Based on the requirements of improved outreach and communication on the one hand and on positive Internet experiences on the other, Childwatch developed an initiative called **Children's House in Cyberspace**. [9]

Researchers, journalists, planners and non-governmental organisations are increasingly using the Internet to collect information. In a rapidly growing Cyberspace, children's issues can easily become invisible and difficult to find. Thus, Children's House aims to become an "easy-to-find" focal point with information on children's issues. The Internet project aims not to compete with already existing home pages. On the contrary, one of its functions is to facilitate the access to information for all those involved or interested in the well-being of children.

Several organisations involved with children's issues have established Web sites; by creating a virtual meeting place for all of these, we hope to take advantage of the opportunities for information, communication and cooperation that the new media offer today, as well as the unknown opportunities that will be offered in the future.

Children's House will contain a range of easily accessible on-line services through the WorldWideWeb, providing reliable information on ongoing activities within research, programmes and policies for children, international events, electronic conferences and interactive databases. Children's House is becoming an instrument for dialogue, discussion and dissemination of knowledge on the situation of children.

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[9] http://childhouse.uio.no

Children's House represents a network of groups, and is guided by an editorial board, or a House Committee, whose job it is to create guidelines for information providers on ways to format and organize information so it is readily available to users. Each Floor, or section of the House is moderated by representatives of the partners involved. The first prototype of Children's House was developed by graphic artists related to the Information Technology Department at the University of Oslo. The Department has a also committed itself to assist in the development of the first interactive scripts. A meeting of the international partners of Children's House was held in April 1996, and the positive feedback already received implies that the support and interest for the project is already broad.

3.1.3. Childwatch TV
An important task for Childwatch is to ensure the flow of information on the outcomes of relevant and reliable child research to policy-makers, decision-makers and the general public and to establish a dialogue between the groups. Childwatch TV was meant to be an annual global television report to be offered to the world's broadcast institutions containing an updated status on the children of the world based on reliable research undertaken by the research community and the programming activities of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Childwatch Secretariat has deliberated the various aspects of the project and some of the basic funding needed has also been found. However, Childwatch TV has not been launched according to the original plans. Priority has been given to developing other parts of the Childwatch information strategy first. Plans are on hold until the timing becomes favourable for a renewed effort to launch the project.

3.2. Research activities

3.2.1. Indicators for children's rights
Ensuring the effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child so that children really benefit from its protection requires practical indicators based on reliable statistical or other data-gathering methods. These must be easy to collect, interpret and use, not only for the Committee on the Rights of the Child, but also for UNICEF and specialised agencies of the United Nations as well as national governments and non-governmental organisations. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has called for indicators related to the various articles of the Convention that could meet such basic requirements as validity, objectivity, sensitivity, comparability, accuracy and disaggregation, and has appealed to the UN system, non-governmental organisations and the research community for assistance to develop these indicators.

In response to this need, Childwatch International designed a project [10] that analyses further specific needs for indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and suggests how the status of the

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[10]Childwatch International: *Project proposal. Indicators for children's rights.* 29 November 1993.

various rights could be expressed through objective data. Through a series of country case studies, the project is developing a strategy for identifying and developing of appropriate indicators.

Through the involvement of national research teams in the case studies as well as in its overall development, the project is contributing to capacity building within child research and child welfare in the participating countries. It is characteristic of the project that it does not impose a set of universal guidelines but has established a framework and a process through which country case study teams are able to develop protocols for data collection and indicator development that are relevant to regional, national and local situations. Nevertheless, based on the accumulated experience of the country case studies, it is hoped that a core set of universal indicators could be developed. The results of the country case studies are being presented in a series of reports, to be published in collaboration with the Centre for Family Research at the University of Cambridge (UK), where the project is based, together with two companion volumes: an introductory volume (*The state of the world's data on the state of the world's children*) and a final summary report (*The anthropology of child statistics*) that will combine the results and experiences of the study as a whole, with recommendations for future actions and activities. However, the main outputs from the project are the monitoring processes that are being established in the case study countries and, more importantly, the establishment of a process by which all States parties to the Convention could improve their monitoring of children's rights.

One innovative component of the project came about through the consultative process to which the pilot study in Senegal was subjected. During an international consultation at the University of Gent, members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child asked for condensed versions of the country case study reports to be produced so that the Committee could see at a glance the situation of children's rights in any country. This has given rise to the progressive development of a method for producing a digest of information that will not only give a general overview but also pinpoint areas of concern in which children's rights are being violated or not met, and the specific groups of children who are most affected or at risk. Manuals and other appropriate training materials on the process of developing and using indicators based on easily available quantitative and qualitative data in the monitoring of the Convention for use by governments, communities, non-governmental organisations and child rights advocates will also be produced.

The project has generated widespread interest, both internationally and in the countries identified for case studies. The process of fundraising and search for partners has brought Childwatch into close contact with many organisations and groups that have declared interests in cooperating beyond the time frame and the scope of the project. Likewise, the actual country case studies have generated local and regional interest for further Childwatch activities. Thus, the project represents a considerable opportunity for promoting Childwatch, and for networking and establishing long-term working relationships with universities, international and national non-governmental organisations as well as inter-governmental organisations. Further, the project can strengthen national,

regional and international networks and provide an excellent opportunity to link decision-makers, researchers, inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations. In this sense, the actual conduct of the project as well as the preparations for country case studies require Childwatch to be constantly aware of taking advantage of the opportunities this process represents. In addition, the project generates new activities, creates new research opportunities and identifies research needs related to children's rights and theories connected to the study of children's rights.

Childwatch International is coordinating the project in close consultation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF and other UN agencies, the academic community and relevant international non-governmental organisations in the field of child welfare and child-directed development assistance. Since 1995 the project has been based formally at the University of Cambridge, Centre for Family Reserach, one of the Childwatch Key Institutions. This is the academic base for the global project coordinator, Dr. Judith Ennew. After the pilot study in Senegal in September-November 1994 and an expert consultation at the University of Gent in December, the project was launched with a full country case study in Senegal, where Plan International was the main partner and sponsor. This case study was concluded in April 1995 and the outcome presented at a seminar opened by Senegal's Minister for Family Affairs, with participation from various government offices, academic institutions, and international and national organisations. A follow-up committee was appointed at this meeting to implement the recommendations of the project.

The eight planned country case studies (Senegal, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Ukraine, and Belgium) will take place over a period of two years and the project is expected to be finished in mid-1997, with an optional additional six month period to prepare more detailed training material. The country case study in Vietnam began in November 1995 with UNICEF as the main sponsor, in close collaboration with the ministerial-level Committee for the Care and Protection of Children, and the General Office of Statistics. The Nicaragua study began in December 1995 with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) as the main sponsor and with the President's Commission for Children's Rights (Comisión nacional de promoción y defensa de los derechos del niño y la niña) as the main partner. The country case study in Thailand started in February 1996 with UNICEF as the main sponsor. Preparations for the other country case studies have reached varying degrees of completion in terms of identifying and negotiating with potential partners and funders. The project is producing regular updates that can be obtained from the global project coordinator or the Childwatch Secretariat. Most of the basic documents related to the project are also available on the Childwatch Internet home page.

A Global Advisory Committee with representation from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, main donors and partners in addition to international experts within children's rights and childhood indicators has been established to advise the project. The Committee met for the first time in Dakar, Senegal on 9-10 October 1995 and will meet again in Cambridge, UK in October 1996. The

members of the Global Advisory Committee have agreed to serve as an active reference group for the global project coordinator, who consults with individual members, when appropriate, to draw on their particular competencies.

The project plans and the initial development of the project were made possible with contributions from the Childwatch budget line for project initiation. UNICEF headquarters sponsored the pilot study in Senegal and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the European Commission are funding the project coordination. Case studies have been sponsored by Plan International (Senegal), UNICEF (Vietnam) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) (Nicaragua).

3.2.2. European survey of child rights research and information
In cooperation with the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), UNICEF and UNESCO, Childwatch International has carried out a survey of academic institutions in Europe to determine their research interests and their information collections with respect to children's rights. A questionnaire was sent to institutions asking them to report whether they were involved in research relating to children's rights or if they collected information on issues relating to children's rights. 240 responses were received. After the data collection from June to August 1994, the data were computerised and analysed using the UNESCO-developed software MicroIsis. In cooperation with the Information Technology Department of the University of Oslo and Oslonett (a commercial Internet service provider) a presentation in the WorldWideWeb format for Internet was finalised in March 1995. The Web format was chosen because of its user-friendliness. In addition, the results of the survey will be available in a printed directory published by UNESCO. [11]

The database and directory from the survey contains institutional information about academic institutions in Europe working with child rights issues. The main bulk of the information consists of an overview from the respondents about which articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child they relate to in their research activities and interests and/or cover through information collection. The final version of the Internet-searchable database was demonstrated at the founding meeting of the Child Rights's Information Network (CRIN) in Paris on 3-7 July 1995, and Childwatch will continue to work with CRIN with a view to providing information on child rights-related research and facilitating collaboration with the relevant research communities at the global level.

3.2.3. Mapping on-going research world-wide
One of the main motivations for establishing Childwatch was the desire to create better and more comprehensive overviews of child-related research world-wide and to provide easy access to information from research. This need was underlined in the first meeting of the Key Institutions in September 1994. [12] A

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[11]   *Children's rights. Directory of European research and documentation institutions.* UNESCO, Childwatch International, UNICEF. First Edition, 1995.

[12]   See: *The Key Institution Initiative: Report from the Key Institution meeting, September 1994,* pp. 15-21.

task force with representation from the Key Institutions has been set up to develop an **on-line database on ongoing child research**. The task force met for the first time in Glasgow on 28-30 April 1995 under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Society & the Child at the University of Glasgow. [13] Based on the experience from the European Survey of Child Rights Research and Information, the database is planned to become a major feature of the research section of the Children's House in Cyberspace and will be using specially designed registration and search tools. Key Institutions will participate in compiling information from institutions in their own networks that are not currently on line.

3.2.4. Children and environment
Over a period of years, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) has developed a research programme on children and environment with strong international outreach. NOSEB decided that this programme will be conducted within the Childwatch framework. Thus, Childwatch was invited to cosponsor two NOSEB workshops on **Children and Environment** (May 1993) and **Children and Radiation** (June 1993). Both workshops were parts of the same strategy to develop a new multi-disciplinary research programme on children and environment. The two workshops gathered researchers with top competence within their respective disciplines and who are interested in new research on children and the environment. The papers presented at the workshops have been prepared for international publication. The conclusions drawn with regard to new research needs are integrated in NOSEB's programme, which will be carried out in close cooperation with research institutions world-wide. The **Children and Radiation** workshop has also resulted in the establishment of an international network of researchers within this field.

The Childwatch Preliminary Board agreed to make **children and environment** one of the priorities of the network, with NOSEB as the lead agency among the Key Institutions. With some contributions from Childwatch, NOSEB has developed the programme further; one way is by including the new project on the quality of life of urban children, **Growing Up in Cities** (see below).

One outstanding feature of the NOSEB programme is the development of partnerships with research groups in the Russian Federation and countries in central and eastern Europe to address issues related to environment protection. An international workshop on **Children, Democratic Participation and Community-Based Environmental Care** was held in June 1996 in cooperation with the Socio-Ecological Union in Moscow. In addition to focusing on an issue that is very much the concern of researchers in that region, the workshop aims to contribute to establishing a network of researchers with relevant competence and to facilitating capacity strengthening within the field of research related to children and environmental hasards.

Furthermore, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research and Childwatch are cooperating on a follow-up to the international study **Growing Up in Cities**.

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[13] See: *The Key Institution Initiative. Mapping exercise task force.* Report from meeting in Glasgow, 20-30 April 1995.

1997 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the publication of this landmark research study in the field of children's urban experience. [14] This UNESCO-sponsored project was the first major international effort to document the quality of life of urban children in First, Second, and Third Worlds.

The original goal of the project was "to document some of the human costs and benefits of economic development by showing how the child's use and perception of the resulting micro-environment affects his life and his personal development." Kevin Lynch planned to achieve this end by developing "a simple set of indicators of environmental quality, which can be used to evaluate the existing environment, or plans for future development, or changes over time". Provided that sufficient funds are available, the proposed replication will revisit the original sites to monitor changes over time, establish baseline evaluations at new sites, and in light of the results, make recommendations for responsive policies and programmes in urban planning and services for children and families.

The follow-up will maintain the project's original focus on the experience of young adolescents from lower-income groups in regions with fewer resources and rapid change under the impact of planned or uncontrolled development. The 1977 sites covered four countries in four continents: Australia, Poland, Mexico and Argentina. The proposed replication will cover the original sites and add three new sites in South Africa, India, and Norway.

The project is expected to provide substantial input to the Habitat II process of the UN, UNICEF's Child Friendly City Initiative and will be one of the main themes of the **Urban Childhood** conference in Trondheim on 9-12 June 1997, cosponsored by NOSEB and Childwatch International.

3.2.5. Capacity building
The objective of contributing to building and strengthening capacities for child research could be implemented through several lines of action. One is to include a capacity-building or capacity-strengthening component in regular Childwatch activities whenever relevant. This approach has proved effective in the **Indicators for Children's Rights** project and will be applied in the **Growing Up in Cities** project and later projects, whenever appropriate. This should be the main principle, according to Preliminary Board discussions, most recently in connection with the Board meeting in Dakar in October 1995. Childwatch projects should build on local research capacity to the extent possible and contribute to strengthening and maintaining it by linking with experts in the network. Similarly, contributions from local researchers in one part of the world would add to the body of knowledge in other parts of the world and contribute to the further development of child research.

In other cases, individual institutions or networks of institutions would want to consolidate and develop their capacity for child related research through specific measures. Childwatch could contribute to such initiatives by mobilising the Key

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[14] Kevin Lynch, ed. *Growing up in cities*. Cambridge, MA, M.I.T. Press, 1977.

Institutions. One such case is the Child Research Programme of the Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), a Dakar-based network of African universities and research institutions. This programme was developed in cooperation with Childwatch. Through the programme, CODESRIA has committed itself to developing a programme to strengthen the capacity for child research in academic institutions in Africa and to facilitate networking among the institutions and individuals concerned. Childwatch participated in planning this programme and held a formal planning meeting with CODESRIA in Dakar on 17-18 October 1995 in connection with a meeting of the Childwatch Preliminary Board. The meeting was co-chaired by Souleyman Bachir Diagne, a member of the CODESRIA Executive Committee, Ferran Casas, President of the Childwatch Preliminary Board, and Thandinka Mkandawire, Executive Secretary of CODESRIA. [15]

The main feature of the research programme is a two-month training course in methods in and approaches to, child research. The training course will be repeated three times over a three-year period with 15-20 participants each. Altogether 50-60 researchers from all over Africa will participate in the training courses, which represent an important extension of existing networks. In 1996, Childwatch will assist CODESRIA in implementing the programme, particularly in the process of identifying funds, identifying resource persons and planning follow-up network activities for the participants in the training courses.

Childwatch is engaged in preliminary discussions with CODESRIA's sister organisation in Latin America, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) to explore lines of cooperation to strengthen child research capacities in Latin America in cooperation with the Inter-American Children's Institute in Montevideo, Uruguay and its network.

3.2.6. Children and the electronic media
Childwatch has received several requests from non-governmental organisations and research institutions to initiate an international project on children, media and violence. There are many research projects on children and the electronic media, but very often they focus on either the positive or the negative aspects, and only to a limited degree do they study children's impact on the media. The latter is becoming relevant also as a research issue, as the electronic media allow more and more interactivity. Not only can children influence the contents of the media and how it is presented, but even more important, this new interactivitiy can represent the empowerment of children and an opportunity to influence their societies. Childwatch wants this to be an issue to be researched with urgency, as it can change our understanding both of the media and of children's participation. One particularly interesting aspect that is being worked on is the potential role that children can play in the global peace process through active use of the electronic media. As far as we know, this has not been studied before. It seems sensible to combine the various aspects of this process and to focus resources on one international research approach in children, media and the

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[15]   A detailed report is available from the Childwatch Secretariat.

peace process. The approach has started with a survey of international research activities and events relevant to the subject.

Childwatch has been working to identify an international research team that can design an international comparative research project and aims to present this for discussion at the international conference **Urban Childhood** in Trondheim in June 1997.

3.2.7. The healthy school-aged child initiative: communication and health

The **healthy school-aged child initiative** has been developed jointly by the UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. Good health is particularly important in the school-age years because it contributes to learning capacity and to the long-term empowerment of children so that they can take responsibility for their own health and welfare. Also, the World Bank **World Development Report** suggests that health interventions aimed at school-aged children, using the school as the intervention point, can be a cost-effective means of using scarce public health resources.

Childwatch organised a think tank meeting on the **healthy school-aged child initiative** in Oslo on 9 May 1994 in cooperation with WHO and the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO. The meeting in Oslo: a) reviewed research needs related to communication and health education strategies for school-aged children; b) commissioned a review of the experience in this area or reviews of selected topics; and c) set the terms of reference and the timetable for such a review, including to identify possible reviewers. WHO has been following up on the outcome of the meeting, and integrated the recommendations in its further work to ensure the healthy development of school-aged children.

3.2.8. ECO-UNICEF Technical Consultation on the Convention on the Rights of the Child

This consultation took place in Tehran, Iran, 15-16 January 1994, with government delegations from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member states [16] and with international experts on children's rights as invited resource persons. The consultation was linked to a consultation of the health ministers in the region as an effort from UNICEF to assist in reconstructing services for children and promoting social mobilisation for children's rights. Childwatch was asked to prepare a background paper on the role of non-governmental organisations and academic institutions in this respect [17] and to provide technical expertise at the meeting.

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[16]   Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrghyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[17]   Childwatch International: The role of institutes of higher learning in supplying the information needs for monitoring the Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1st Technical Consultation on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Tehran, 15-16 January 1994. UNICEF - ECO.

4. Organisation

4.1. Secretariat

The Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB), as the representative of the group that initiated Childwatch, was given the initial grant from the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Family Affairs to establish Childwatch International. Although Childwatch started its work out of rented office space at the Department of Sociology at the University of Oslo, NOSEB handled the administrative issues for Childwatch. NOSEB also contributed significantly to the resources of the Secretariat and gave substantial logistical support. Since July 1993 Childwatch has been formally hosted by the University of Oslo through an agreement of understanding with the University and the main sponsor, the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs. The agreement defines Childwatch as an independent unit cooperating with the University that can draw upon the resources of the larger administrative and technical support system of the University. It has become particularly evident that this is to the advantage of Childwatch in terms of information technology support. Without the assistance of the relevant units of the University, Childwatch could not have achieved the sophisticated use of modern information technology in its daily work. Nor would it have been possible to advance so far in the efforts to collect and distribute information on child research and child research institutions, or to develop Children's House in Cyberspace. In addition, the University is absorbing certain Childwatch expenses, such as postage, telecommunications and photocopying.

Childwatch is gradually working with the various departments of the University to involve them in the relevant activities of Childwatch, and to contribute to the general internationalisation process of the University.

The Secretariat has two full-time positions, a Director and a Research Coordinator. Since February 1995 the Secretariat has been strengthened by a person in a half time position, with the specific task of liaising with the Key Institutions and developing a newsletter and other means of information exchange.

4.2. Funding and support

The core funding for the Childwatch International Secretariat comes from the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Family Affairs, and Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In addition, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research made important contributions to the Childwatch budget in the initial phase. The Centro de Estudios del Menor in Spain absorbed the costs of one of the Board meetings (June 1993), including travel, and the Government of Costa Rica and Fundación Paniamor, also in Costa Rica, sponsored another Board meeting (October 1994). The Children's Rights Centre at the University of Gent, the Council for the

Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and Plan International have helped organise important Childwatch meetings.

As the basic funding mentioned above covers the expenses of the Secretariat and some seed money for project initiation, Childwatch has been seeking funding from other sources for specific projects. Thus, the European Commission and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) have made major contributions to the Indicators for Children's Rights project, which cover the general budget of the project. Project funding has also been received from UNICEF (Indicators for Children's Rights project), and UNESCO (European Survey of Child Rights Research and Information). Plan International, UNICEF and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) covered the costs of country case studies of the Indicators project. Funding for other activities has come from UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and the Bernhard van Leer Foundation.

4.3. The Preliminary Board

After continuing informal consultations over a couple of years, a group of distinguished experts working within the field of child welfare and child research was invited to the founding meeting in Oslo on 29-31 January 1993. They were asked, and accepted, to serve as the **Preliminary Board** for the network in the establishing phase 1993-1995. [18]

The Preliminary Board has held meetings in Madrid, Spain (17-18 June 1993) , San José, Costa Rica (26-27 October 1994) and Dakar, Senegal (12-16 October 1995). These meetings have reviewed the activities of Childwatch and developed guidelines and priorities for the work of the Secretariat. All meetings have also given an opportunity for dialogue with local institutions or individuals involved in or interested in child research and the activities of Childwatch. This has contributed positively to the policy discussions of the Board.

The last meeting of the Preliminary Board, in Dakar, concentrated primarily on analysing experience from the initial three years in terms of planning the future development and establishment of Childwatch on a long-term basis. The President of the Board had prepared a paper on network philosophy as developed through Childwatch experience and with recommendations for action. A central element in the proposal is to formally establish the Key Institutions as the core of the network and look to them for guidance on directions to take. The Board meeting also identified ambiguities in the Preliminary Constitution and developed strategies to avoid further ambiguities by revising its language to reflect the experience and the features that distinguish Childwatch as a network from traditional organisations or institutions. There was agreement that Childwatch had managed in a short period of time and with limited resources to initiate several successful activities and to create momentum for further promotion of inter-disciplinary child research to benefit children

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[18]   See Annex 1 for names and affiliations.

world-wide. There was also agreement that parts of the **Preliminary Constitution** had been very useful in the development of the network, especially the preamble and the articles describing the terms of reference, the aims and the activities of Childwatch International. However, it was agreed that some descriptions of the special features of a network, such as flexibility, a certain degree of informality, shared interests, a desire for sharing of information as well as trust and confidence should be added in a revised version. It was also deemed necessary to ensure that the formal status of the Secretariat be spelled out in future agreements with the University of Oslo or any other potential host institution, to underline the independence of the Secretariat and to clarify the organisational status of the network.

The Preliminary Board selected a **Transition Team** [19] from among its members to facilitate the process towards the establishment of Childwatch International on a long-term basis from 1997 onwards and to prepare the necessary background documents reflecting the framework and terms of reference of the network based on experience in the initial phase. [20] The Transition Team is serving until the next Key Institutions meeting, in September 1996, where a new **Advisory Board** is being appointed. The Transition team met in London on 7-9 December 1995, and will met again in Barcelona in April 1996, to develop a workplan for the process and prepare the next Key Institutions meeting in September 1996.

The Childwatch Board has developed a practice of holding meetings with local researchers in the country where the Board meetings are held. Thus, both in connection with the Board meeting in San José and Dakar seminars on local child research were held in cooperation with local partners. Although different in their format, both meetings gave Childwatch a good opportunity to present itself and its objectives and activities, and local researchers to present their research needs and current research priorities. Both meetings have had the effect of sensitising the local research communities of international resources within child research and forged local partnerships. And, not least, they have provided instructive and direct inputs to the knowledge of the Childwatch Secretariat and Board of research needs in the respective regions of the world.

5. Working with the Key Institutions

In order to develop the network in a systematic way, the Board adopted a strategy to identify a group of **Key Institutions** to constitute the core of the

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[19]   See Annex 3 for names of members.

[20]   This is reflected through this document together with the *Terms of Reference* document and the *Regularising Childwatch* document referred to previously.

network. [21] Research institutions or research groups were identified based on their known interest and involvement in child research, either as their sole or as their main preoccupation. Additional criteria for selection were a long-term commitment to studies of child-related issues and a requirement that they represent local, regional or thematic networks. An effort was made to identify a group of Key Institutions that could represent a global perspective. It has been more difficult to identify Key Institutions in some parts of the world than in others, especially in central and eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and in Africa. The process of identification is, however, going on constantly, and Childwatch is committed to facilitate the development of new Key Institutions through various capacity-building or -supporting activities.

The Key Institutions met for the first time at Ranten, Norway, on 1-4 September 1994. Directors from 15 institutions world-wide met to discuss closer cooperation under the auspices of Childwatch. [22] The meeting concluded with a series of recommendations for further cooperation including electronic communication, development of a global institutional database, and capacity-building activities. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB).

Through the process that started formally with the first Key Institutions meeting, Childwatch is now working with a core group of child research institutions that have committed themselves to addressing issues of common concern and to developing strategies for further cooperation within the framework of Childwatch International. The original group has already expanded both through the efforts of individuals and by building on the existing networking activities of the Key Institutions.

Work with the Key Institutions has primarily taken place along two lines: a) by developing tools for information exchange and communication among the Key Institutions, including relevant databases (this was one of the requests from the Ranten meeting) and b) developing and initiating research projects with Key Institutions as cooperating partners or taking place with one or more of the Key Institutions as a base.

The Key Institutions are increasingly initiating and participating in Childwatch activities. The synergism between ongoing and planned Childwatch projects and those of the Key Institutions will provide an ideal basis for the further development of the network. A newsletter, **Key News,** has been developed to exchange information. As described above, it is available both in a printed version and electronically through the Childwatch home page on the WorldWideWeb.

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[21]   See Annex 4 for a list of Key Institutions and their directors.

[22]   See: *The Key Institution Initiative: Report from the Key Institution meeting*, September 1994, pp. 15-21.

6. Cooperation with other organisations

Since its inception, Childwatch has been approached by various organisations seeking information about child research and wanting to cooperate on ways to identify and produce knowledge to support their work. The Secretariat has established close working relationships with a number of organisations that see the need for improved and expanded research efforts to provide increased knowledge about children's issues. In particular, Childwatch International has worked with UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, members of the International Save the Children Alliance, Plan International and Defence for Children International.

Childwatch was invited to a Consultative Meeting on Information Systems for Children's Rights in Geneva on 9 October 1993. The meeting was organised by UNICEF and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to review the information needs of the Committee and to identify relevant partners that could assist in providing the relevant information.

Another example is a workshop organised by Childwatch in cooperation with Rädda Barnen and Redd Barna (the Swedish and Norwegian Save the Children organisations) in Stockholm on 23 November 1995. The objectives of the workshop were to extend the dialogue between researchers and people involved in programmes and policies related to children to define the needs for research and to challenge the researchers to respond to these needs. Researchers from the social sciences, medicine and law with a known interest in issues related to development assistance and community work in developing countries were invited to exchange views on how the cooperation between researchers and those involved in programming for children could be further developed to create a body of knowledge that could improve development assistance aimed to benefit children and children's living conditions. In the follow-up to this workshop, Childwatch is discussing a similar workshop with a wider global approach with the International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA).

Childwatch also has worked with the children's rights group of Erasmus, the European programme of student exchange, in developing an inter-disciplinary training course on children's rights for graduate and post-graduate students. Through its cooperation with the University of Oslo and UNESCO, Childwatch has become involved in UNITWIN, a programme of cooperation between universities world-wide. Childwatch has been invited to participate in the developing of child rights curricula for universities within the UNITWIN framework.
ANNEX 1

Members of the Preliminary Executive Board 1993 - 1995

Ferran Casas (President), Department de Psicologia Social, Facultat de Psicologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Lisbet Palme (Vice-President), Swedish Committee for UNICEF, Stockholm, Sweden

Judith Ennew, Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge, UK

Ivar Frønes, Department of Sociology, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

James Garbarino, Family Life Development Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

Noboru Kobayashi, National Children's Hospital, Tokyo, Japan

Gertrud Lenzer, Society for the Advancement of Children's Studies, New York, New York, USA

Per Egil Mjaavatn, Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Trondheim, Norway

Vitit Muntharbhorn, Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Law, Bangkok, Thailand

Philista Onyango, African Network for the Prevention & Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Nairobi, Kenya

Helmut Wintersberger, European Centre, Vienna, Austria

Eugenia Maria Zamora, Instituto Interamericano del Niño, Montevideo, Uruguay

ANNEX 2

Childwatch bibliography

Directory:
UNESCO, Childwatch, UNICEF: *Directory of European Research and Documentation Institutions,* Paris 1995

Booklets:
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Project Proposal: *Growing up in Cities, A follow-up to the International Study*
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Brochures:
Childwatch International: Network for Child Research
Childwatch International: Red para la Investigacion sobre la Infancia
Childwatch International: Réseau de Recherche sur l'Enfance
Children's House in Cyberspace, 1996

Key News:
1st issue, June 1995
2nd issue, November 1995
3rd issue, February 1996
4th issue, September 1996
ANNEX 3

<u>Childwatch International Transition Team 1996</u>

Ferran Casas (Chair), Department de Psicologia Social, Facultat de Psicologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

James Garbarino, Family Life Development Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

Per Egil Mjaavatn, Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Trondheim, Norway

Eugenia Maria Zamora, Instituto Interamericano del Niño, Montevideo, Uruguay

Per Miljeteig, Childwatch International Secretariat

ANNEX 4

<u>**CHILDWATCH INTERNATIONAL Key Institutions and Directors**</u>

Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Australia
Director: Harry McGurk

Canadian Institute of Child Health, Ottawa, Canada
Executive Director: Denise Avard

Centre for Child Development, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong
Director: Lau Sing

Centre for Children and Youth, JDC - Brookdale Institute, Israel,
Director: Jack Habib

Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK
Director: Martin Richards

Center for Research on Childhood, Universidade Santa Ursula, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Director: Irene Rizzini

Centre for the Study of the Child & Society, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK
Director: Stewart Asquith

Centre International de l'Enfance, Paris, France
Director: Michèle Puybasset

Centro de Estudios del Menor, Madrid, Spain
Director: Esperanza Ochaita

Centro de Investigaciones para la Infancia y la Familia (CENDIF), Universidad Metropolitana, Caracas, Venezuela
Director: Maria Angelica Sepulveda

Child Development Centre of China (CDCC), Beijing, People's Republic of China
Director: Niu Xiaomei

Child Development Unit, Department of Pediatrics, Bangkok, Thailand
Director: Nittaya D. Kotchabhakdi

Childhood Programme, European Centre, Vienna, Austria
Diector: Helmut Wintersberger

Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand
Director: Anne B. Smith

Children's Rights Centre
University of Gent, Gent, Belgium
Director: Eugeen Verhellen

Consortium on Children, Families & the Law, Institute for Families in Society
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA
Director: Gary Melton

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Haydenville, MA, USA
Director: Judith Evans

Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal

Executive Secretary: Achille Mbembe

Department of Child Ecology, The National Children's Medical Research Center, Tokyo, Japan
Director: Masako Tanimura

Department of Educational Psychology, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya
President: Frederick Moses Okatcha

Family Life Development Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA
James Garbarino

Fundación Paniamor, San José, Costa Rica
Director: Milena Grillo

Institut de l'Enfance et de la Famille (IDEF), Paris, France
Director: Denise Cacheux

Institute for Child and Family Development, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa
Director: Fanie Sonn

Instituto Interamericano del Niño, Montevideo, Uruguay
Director: Rodrigo Quintana Meléndez

Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Trondheim, Norway
Director: Per Egil Mjaavatn

Socio-Ecological Union, Moscow, Russia
Director: Maria Chercasova

UNICEF - International Child Development Centre, Florence, Italy
Director: Pablo Basurto

Unit for Child and Youth Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India
Chief: Usha Nayar