

## **ANNUAL REPORT 1994**

### **1. Introduction**

1994 represented a process of consolidation and expansion of activities for Childwatch International, both in terms of establishing the secretariat, and in terms of including new participants in the network. Childwatch continued to receive a positive response from potential participants and partners. Long-term partnerships have been established, and some of the planned projects are already well on track.

### **2. Organisational matters**

During the course of 1994 the agreement with the University of Oslo was fully implemented. The Childwatch Secretariat is established at the University of Oslo until the end of 1996, with free office space and access the relevant infrastructures provided by the University. Childwatch enjoys the status of an independent partner of the University, but can count on the arrangements for personnel handling, budget handling and accounting of the University. This saves the secretariat for a substantial amount of work, and serves as a guarantee of accountability towards the collaborating partners and donors. The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has committed itself to provide the core budget for Childwatch until the end of 1996.

### **3. Funding**

In 1994 Childwatch received contributions to its core funding from the Norwegian Ministries of Children and Family Affairs, and Foreign Affairs, and from the Norwegian Centre for Child Research. The support of the University of Oslo must be seen as a substantial indirect contribution to the core funding. The Government of Costa Rica, Fundación Paniamor, the Children's Rights Centre at the University of Gent and El Centro de Estudios del Menor in Madrid contributed with support to meetings and publications.

The Norwegian Centre for Child Research, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, SIDA and Plan International contributed to specific ReAcTs with direct or indirect support.

### **4. Childwatch Research and Activity Teams (ReAcTs)**

In 1994, the following activities have been given priority:

#### **4.1 Key Institutions meeting**

In collaboration with the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, (NOSEB) Childwatch International invited leading institutions within the field of child research to discuss closer cooperation under the Childwatch umbrella. Directors and other representatives from 15 institutions world-wide participated in the meeting, which took place 1-4 September 1994 at Ranten Hotel, Nesbyen, Norway.

The meeting explored and defined issues of common concern to be pursued through joint activities. The issues were clustered as shown below, for further elaboration and to be addressed through an inter-institutional approach. In cooperation with relevant institutions, Childwatch will act as a facilitator for the planned task forces to address these issues. The mandates of the various task force groups will be to develop a strategy for each of the clusters and suggest concrete action. In most cases

it will be necessary to assess the funding needs for the proposed actions, and how that funding could be secured, either through contributions from participating institutions, from external sources (e.g. research foundations) or through a combination.

Issues to be pursued include:

- a) The need to *improve the flow of information* among institutions involved in child research, and to increase each individual institution's knowledge of what is going on in the others;
- b) The need to establish a *global overview of the capacities of existing child research institutions* and their ongoing projects as well as published material on their activities. This is necessary to facilitate better cooperation and to avoid unnecessary duplication of research efforts;
- c) Overviews as mentioned above should be available on *data bases* with easy access. As far as possible, data bases should be established according to the actual needs of Key Institutions and others. The questions of who the data base(s) should serve, and what the actual needs are, must be clarified. Also, the issues of costs, overlap and compatibility between existing and planned data bases must be addressed;
- d) *Capacity building* in countries with weak or lacking infrastructures and capacity for child research is considered important for several reasons: Firstly, because research is most needed in the least developed countries to increase knowledge about the situation of children and how to improve their living conditions. Researchers in these countries should have the same opportunities to conduct research and participate in a dialogue on research outcomes as their colleagues in developed countries, as well as access to and take advantage of developments in research and dissemination methodologies. Secondly, there is a strong realisation that researchers in developed countries could profit substantially from learning about research that is going on in developing countries;
- e) All institutions are constantly searching for *funding*, both for their general budgets and for specific projects. In order to facilitate and support fundraising, joint strategies could be developed;
- f) The need for strategies concerning *outreach* to target groups outside the circles of child research. This applies both to dissemination of information from child research and to partnerships with groups outside the research community;
- g) A joint approach to (i) developing strategies for *identifying and prioritising among areas that need research*; and (ii) developing strategies for division of labour and effective use of resources to avoid unnecessary overlap and replication.

#### **4.2 Data base and survey of academic institutions in Europe**

In cooperation with the International Network for Child Rights Information, UNICEF and UNESCO, Childwatch International has carried out a survey of academic institutions in Europe to map their research interests and information collections with respect to children's rights. A questionnaire was sent to some 700

institutions in Europe asking them to report if they were involved in research relating to children's rights or if they had information collections. Just under 240 responses were returned, which is considered a very good response. After the period of data collection from June to August 1994, the data was computerised and analysed using the UNESCO-developed software Microsis. In cooperation with the IT department of the University of Oslo and Oslonett a presentation in the WorldWideWeb format for Internet has been developed. The results of the survey will be available in a printed directory, for on-line access at the Internet, and in a diskette version for use by personal computers not linked up to Internet.

The experiences of this exercise will be analysed before the next steps towards a global mapping are taken in cooperation with interested Key Institutions.

### **4.3 Indicators for children's rights**

The project "Indicators for Children's Rights" was launched with a pilot study in Senegal during August - November 1994 in cooperation with Plan International and UNICEF. The Pilot study had as its purpose to gain experience of (a) focusing on a limited number of articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (b) country case study team development; (c) the establishment of a draft protocol to serve as an initial framework for developing baseline indicators; and (d) an exploration of the quality and accessibility of secondary data. The Pilot study was conducted under the guidance of a local management committee with representation from the Government and relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations in Senegal.

Outcomes of the pilot study were presented at an expert consultation in connection with the European Conference on Monitoring Children's Rights organised by the Children's Rights Centre at the University of Gent, Belgium, 11-14 December. Dr. Judith Ennew, the global project coordinator, and the four members of the Senegal research team presented the project to a group of invited experts from the fields of human rights law, social indicators, development assistance for children, including representatives from various academic institutions, UN human rights monitoring committees, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations;

The report on the pilot study emphasised the following aspects:

- (i) A considerable body of data that can be used for developing baseline children's rights indicators exists within Senegal. However, this is scattered among different agencies, which gather and report data according to their own needs rather than basing them on categories appropriate to either child development or children's rights;
- (ii) Nevertheless information about children is in a poor state of availability, analysis, quality, presentation and conservation;
- (iii) Western assumptions about children and the family have an undue influence on current indicators and data collection procedures. Local cultural norms relating to childhood need to be taken into consideration in the development of children's rights indicators, and compared to the global conceptions of childhood incorporated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A framework through which this can take place in each country should be developed through comparison between country case studies;

- (iv) Existing data can be used for developing children's rights indicators in a number of ways: recomputation of raw data to produce child-centred statistics; disaggregation of raw data to show specific populations of children whose rights are being violated or not achieved; recomputation and reorganisation of existing data sets according to age groupings based on children's needs rather than the reporting requirements of agencies; reconciliation of disparate data sets.

The feedback from invited discussants touched both on the theoretical underpinnings of the project and on practical issues. It proved useful in providing a sharper focus for various aspects of the project. In particular, the Senegal Team was grateful for the opportunity to reflect on ways of making results match the specific requirements of governments in the process of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, reflections were made on how to present reports in ways that are appropriate to the time constraints under which the Committee operates while still providing meaningful information about children's rights. The discussants approved some of the innovations introduced in the pilot study, including the distinction made between universal and local indicators and the use of a typology of provision, utilisation and need to develop indicators of children's rights on the base of traditional childhood indicators.

The project management will be based at the Family Research Centre at the University of Cambridge for the two year period of the project. The full study in Senegal started in January 1995 with funding from Plan International. Other country case studies are planned in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Thailand, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Armenia and Belgium.

The Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) has given a general grant to the project, and applications for additional funding are pending with the European Commission, UNICEF, Plan International, the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) and the University of Oslo.

#### **4.4 Childwatch TV**

Childwatch information strategy - as previously developed by the Executive Board - has been aimed at developing an information service that does not compete with the information activities undertaken by the institutions in the network. Thus, Childwatch' information strategy should have a coordinating, supplementing and supporting nature, and in accordance with its Constitution, (i) provide channels for exchange of information and knowledge between researchers, and (ii) promote more effective dissemination of the results from child research to the general public.

In operationalising these objectives, Childwatch has focused on (i) Electronic networking by setting up electronic conferences, databases and discussion groups, and (ii) Childwatch-TV, an annual global TV-report to be offered to the world's broadcast institutions containing an updated status quo on the children of the world based on reliable research undertaken by the research community and programming activities from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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 is planned to become one instrument for dissemination of knowledge on children's situation. In the network of researchers and practitioners developed by

Childwatch International, there are institutions and individuals that can be mobilized to this end.

Television is a powerful instrument that can bring children's concerns into the living-rooms of the world and mobilize public awareness and support for international cooperation. Childwatch-TV should reach people beyond media's ready-made constituencies, to put news in perspective and to stimulate reflection and discussion based on facts and reliable data. The main criteria should not be the degree of violence, conflict, failure and disaster encompassing children, but an effort to visualize the success and optimism that shape or change children's situations in the world.

The aim of Childwatch-TV is to address these concerns, by producing annual global reports on children's living conditions based on reliable data from research and programming activities, by

- promoting international understanding and solidarity;
- mobilising caring and commitment;
- reporting on successful programming activities;
- emphasising a holistic approach to children's development, looking at all aspects of a child's life;
- creating awareness that to invest in a child is an investment in the future.

In addition, Childwatch-TV aims to describe trends of development, to spot the predictable while also being alert for the unexpected. The report is planned to be translated into the six official UN languages and delivered free of charge to broadcasters.

Due to the complexity of the project, implementation was planned to evolve by means of a period in which partners were identified to commit themselves to support the project financially on five years terms. However, Childwatch was approached early in 1994 by C21C , a TV-production company in the UK, that was planning "24 Hours for Tomorrow", a world-wide celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations in June 1995. The celebration was planned to unite the nations of the world through the medium of broadcasting, in pursuit of the common goal of bringing about a better future for children.

C21C asked Childwatch to produce the info-facts-spots on children's situation and child rights to be broadcasted on 24 Hours. This provided a good opportunity to launch the first Childwatch TV report worldwide, but made it necessary to reorganize the time table for the project and intensify fundraising activities. Childwatch decided to approach a few, solid companies and NGOs as partners in the project, and received preliminary commitments from Plan International, Bernard von Leer Foundation and Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK), adding up to USD 300.000 of a total budget of USD 700.000.

"24 Hours for Tomorrow" was an ambitious project and the organisers did not manage to achieve the necessary support from the large broadcasting companies to launch the project in time. In October 1994 it was decided to redefine the concept to a smaller scale, that did not include Childwatch-TV.

This brings Childwatch back to the original time frame for the project in which the first issue of the report would be finalized for broadcasting in 1997. The Childwatch

Board Meeting in Costa Rica decided to continue developing the concept and intensify the work of finding relevant partners.

#### **4.5 Children and environment**

In cooperation with the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Childwatch is working on a follow-up to the international study "Growing Up in Cities". 1997 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the publication of a landmark research study in the field of children's urban experience: **Growing Up in Cities**, edited by Kevin Lynch (M.I.T. Press, 1977). This UNESCO-sponsored project was the first major international effort to document the quality of urban children's lives in First, Second, and Third Worlds. 1997 will also be the date of a major international conference on Urban Childhood that will be sponsored by the Norwegian Centre for Child Research in Trondheim, Norway. This conference will provide an excellent occasion for the presentation and publication of a follow-up to the original Growing Up in Cities project.

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." It was Lynch's plan 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 original sites to monitor changes over time, establish baseline evaluations at new sites, and in light of results, make recommendations for responsive policies and programs in urban planning and child and family services.

The follow-up will maintain the project's original focus on the experience of young adolescents from lower income groups in regions of low resources and rapid change under the impact of planned or uncontrolled development. 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.

#### **4.6 Capacity building**

Childwatch has started consultations with Conseil pour le Developpement de la Recherche Economique et Social en Afrique (CODESRIA) and the African Network for the Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) on a training course for child researchers during 1996. The seminar on "Children in a Period of Transition: Childhood Research and Policies in Central and Eastern Europe" in Vienna in November raised the issue of the need for closer cooperation between researchers in Eastern/Central Europe and former Soviet Union countries, to strengthen their capacities and infrastructures for child research during the period of reorientation and restructuring. Childwatch will follow this up in cooperation with the European Centre in Vienna.

#### **4.7 Children, media and the new screen /Raising the child in an environment of violence**

Childwatch has received several requests from NGOs and research institutions to initiate an international project on children, media and violence. In 1993, the

Executive Board defined this area as one of Childwatch's priority areas. Instead of having several projects running, it seems sensible to combine these different areas and to allocate resources in one international research approach on children, media and the peace process. The Common Security Forum was identified as a potential partner in coordinating the different initiatives and developing an international comparative research project on children, media and peace making. Common Security Forum is an independent international group of public leaders and scholars with the purpose of advancing understanding and formulating approaches for encouraging common security world wide. The administrative responsibility for the Forum is undertaken by a management group based at the three founding institutions - Harvard University, King's College, Cambridge, and FAFO (Institute for Applied Social Science) Norway.

In 1994 Childwatch had initial meetings with FAFO and agreed on the following progression of the project in 1995:

- (i) Mapping international research activities and events on the subject, i.e. The World Summit on Children and Television, plans and activities in the Council of Europe, UN Agencies, NGOs, etc.;
- (ii) Establishing an international interdisciplinary research team (ReAcT) to design an international comparative research project;
- (iii) Arranging a workshop in 1996 at which politicians, representatives of the media and researchers will meet to discuss the research project and to agree upon the implementation of the project;
- (iv) Presenting the first results of the country studies at the Urban Childhood Conference in Trondheim, 1997.

#### **5. Meeting of the Executive Board, San José 26-27 October**

Thanks to the invitation from the Second Vice-President of Costa Rica, Rebeca Grynspan, Childwatch International was able to hold its annual Executive Board meeting at the Latin-American Centre for Democratic Studies (CEDAL) in San José. The Second Vice-President's office gave substantial assistance in the logistical arrangements for our meeting. Both the First Lady and Ms Grynspan, the Second Vice-President came to address the opening session of our meeting, and the President of Costa Rica gave a reception for Childwatch and central people in Costa Rican society involved in children's policies (including representatives from Government offices, inter-governmental organisations and national and international non-governmental organisations). In connection with the Board meeting, Fundación Paniamor organised a meeting with national child researchers as well as an open meeting that gave Childwatch the opportunity to establish contacts with researchers and organisations working on children's issues.

The main themes on the agenda of the Board meeting were the follow-up to the Key Institutions Meeting in September and work-planning for the 1995-96 two year period.

The Board members gave support to the proposals of the Key Institutions meeting to establish task force groups on areas of special need for international cooperation, particularly those related to ongoing or prioritised activities of the network, such as electronic communication, development of a global institutional data base, and

capacity building activities. (See Section 4.1) The Key Institutions meeting was considered to be a major step in the further development of the Childwatch International network. There was agreement that this group together with other key institutions will become the main participants in the network. They will also serve as gateways to local and regional networks.

Another theme of the Board Meeting was the name recognition of Childwatch and the increasing flow of requests for Childwatch activities from research institutes, international organisations and governments. Childwatch has acquired a place in the international community as the focal point for child research and is frequently contacted for reference to information and competence on various questions relating to child research. As a consequence, Childwatch is increasingly invited to participate in, and contribute to, international conferences with papers or presentations. (For further details, see Section 8.)

The Board also discussed main features of the workplan for 1995-96. It was decided that consolidation and expansion of the network should be given priority, together with improving the quality of services. The Board agreed to prioritise the activities indicated above: to develop the cooperation between key institutions and to further develop a strong and effective infrastructure for cooperation, such as data bases and channels for exchange of information. The two remaining years of the initiating period for Childwatch should be used efficiently to establish the network as a major tool for inter-disciplinary research to the benefit of children.

Concerning ongoing and planned ReAcTs, the Board agreed that priority should be given to finalising the Indicators for Children's Rights project, to making a thrust to establish the necessary funding and institutional support for the Childwatch TV project, and to continuing the Children and Environment activities to produce input to the Urban Child conference in 1997, organised by the Norwegian Centre for Child Research.

Another main feature in the workplan for 1995-96 will be to secure permanent funding for Childwatch. Here, the advice from Board members on foundations and other potential funding sources in other countries would serve as an invaluable basis for further strategies.

Following the two day Board Meeting, Fundación Paniamor staged a day of contacts with local institutions: (1) a seminar with local researchers and organisations for mutual exchange of information and ideas for cooperation, and (2) a conference at which the speakers were the Second Vice-President, Rebeca Grynspan, Milena Grillo, Director of Fundación Paniamor, and Judith Ennew of Childwatch International. The theme was implementation of children's rights and the need for indicators to monitor the implementation. Judith Ennew presented the Childwatch Indicators for Children's Rights project. Both meetings were extremely well prepared by Fundación Paniamor, and well attended. The meeting with local researchers resulted in a decision by local researchers to create a national forum for child research that could serve as a focal point for cooperation with Childwatch.

This format, of a Board meeting combined with meetings and contacts with local researchers and others involved in work for children, turned out to be very fruitful and inspiring, and could serve as a model for future Board meetings.

## **6. Further development of the network - the Key Institutions Initiative**



As described above, the **Key Institutions Meeting** established a core group of child research **institutions** that have committed themselves to address issues of common concern and to develop strategies for further cooperation within the framework of Childwatch International. It is envisaged that this group will expand both through the efforts of individuals and from being able to build on existing networking activities of Key Institutions. Thus, the Childwatch network will expand by being based on international cooperation that addresses specific priority issues. Childwatch activities have moved to develop means of facilitating cooperation and joint projects. The synergism between Childwatch ongoing and planned projects and those of the Key Institutions will provide an ideal basis for further development of the network.

## **7. Cooperation with other organisations**

The Secretariat has continued its efforts to establish close working relationships with 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, Defence for Children International, the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, the Child Development Centre of China, and the Institute for Applied Social Science (FAFO) to facilitate such a dialogue on research needs relating to children.

Childwatch also cooperated with Erasmus, the European programme of student exchange, on a training course on children's rights that was held at the University of Gent in December 1994.

## **8. Childwatch participation at conferences and meetings**

- **ECO - UNICEF Technical Consultation Workshop on the Convention on the Rights of the Child**, Tehran, I.R. Iran, 15-16 January, with government delegations from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member states. (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.) Per Miljeteig presented paper on "The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations and Institutes of Higher Learning in Supporting the Implementation and Monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child"
- **Meeting of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development**, in Paris 21-22 April. Trond Waage represented Childwatch International.
- **International symposium on "The Right to a Family Environment"** organised by the **Consortium on Children, Families and the Law** in Charleston, South Carolina 14-18 May. Per Miljeteig gave presentations on "Progress in the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child" and "The role of Researchers in the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child"
- **Global seminar on "Monitoring the Protection of Children's Rights"** at the **UNICEF International Child Development Centre** in Florence 23-31 May. Per Miljeteig organised and moderated sessions on "Indicators to monitor participation rights" and "Monitoring by NGOs and academic institutions".

- **Nordic Conference on Children and Play**, Tønsberg, Norway 1-3 June. Trond Waage and Ivar Frønes gave a presentation on “Batteries not Included. Children and the Electronic Media”, and Trond Waage spoke on “The Impact of TV on Children’s Learning Abilities”.
- **13th Biennial Meetings of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development** in Amsterdam, 29 June - 2 July. Gertrud Lenzer organised a Childwatch panel on “ The Social and Psychological Implications of the Global Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”. Gertrud Lenzer, Ferran Casas, Philista Onyango and Per Miljeteig were on the panel.
- **XIIIth World Congress of Sociology** in Bielefeld, Germany 18-23 July. Thematic Group “Sociology of Childhood” with Gertrud Lenzer and Helmut Wintersberger among organisers, held five sessions during the conference with Ferran Casas, Judith Ennew, and Helmut Wintersberger presenting papers. Helmut Wintersberger chaired a business meeting of the new Working Group on “Sociology of Childhood”.
- **23rd International Congress of Applied Psychology** in Madrid 17-22 July. Ferran Casas organised and coordinated symposium on “Psychosocial perspectives on childhood”. Judith Ennew presented a paper on the use of psychometric tests in developing monitoring systems for child labour
- Trond Waage participated in meeting of **Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development**, Washington DC, 17-19 October on “Monitoring the Status of Children and of Learning Environments at the Point of Entry into School”.
- Per Miljeteig presented the paper “How Could Research Support the Implementation and Monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child” at seminar on “Children in a Period of Transition: Childhood Research and Policies in Central and Eastern Europe” organised by the **European Centre**, in Vienna, 25-27 November 1994
- **European Conference on Monitoring Children's Rights** at the Children's Rights Centre of the University of Gent, Belgium, 11-14 December. Ferran Casas, Judith Ennew and Helmut Wintersberger appeared on the programme. Judith Ennew and Per Miljeteig organised a consultation on the Indicators for Children’s Rights project (for further details, see above, section 4.3).
- Trond Waage represented Childwatch at a conference on “Evolution of the Role of Children in Family Life: Participation and Negotiation”, organised by the **Council of Europe and the Spanish Ministry of Social Affairs** in Madrid 2-5 December 1994. Ferran Casas was a member of the organising committee.

## 9. Contacts

The Childwatch Secretariat has received several guests during the year, most notably:

- Mme Thanh Thanh, Minister of Children and Family Affairs in Vietnam, together with Ms Grete Berget, the Norwegian Minister of Children and Family Affairs.

- **Representatives from the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), including the person responsible for children's issues.**
- **Ms Regina de Assis, Minister of Education in the State of Rio, Brazil**
- **Representatives from UNICEF South-Africa and the University of Western Cape.**

**In addition, the Secretariat has received individual researchers and representatives from organisations concerned with child research. The Secretariat regularly receives large numbers of requests from researchers and organisations for information on the Network and its activities.**