

ANNUAL REPORT 1997

1. Introduction

In 1997 the collaboration in the research network took on a very functional dimension when a great number of Key Institutions and individual researchers were involved in the Urban Childhood conference. The conference was hosted by the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, one of the Key Institutions, and Childwatch was one of the main coorganisers. Researchers from the network participated in developing the scientific objectives and the frameworks for the thematic sections. Throughout the conference and the follow-up much enthusiasm and commitment has been shown for the continued collaboration.

The Advisory Board of Childwatch International started a process to develop guidelines for global research initiatives that would create synergies between the competencies of institutions in the network and address issues of global nature relating to children and their living conditions. Childwatch worked to develop opportunities for interaction that the WorldWideWeb represents into effective research tools.

2. Working with the Key Institutions

The core of the Childwatch network now consists of 30 institutions or organizations world-wide involved with child research (see Annex 1 for a complete list). The Key Institutions are central actors within child research and represent major forces within their countries, regions or thematic networks. An important task of the Advisory Board and the Secretariat has been to work with the Key Institutions in developing ways to serve their information needs and to define research areas of common interests. Bringing together the experience and various areas of expertise of the Key Institutions is an effective way of facilitating inspiration and promoting cooperation. Childwatch International is seen as and used as a vehicle for further international collaboration.

The Key Institutions are doing research at different levels, different topics, with various methods and a variety of target groups. Characteristic for all Key Institutions though, is the inspiration taken from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and interest in participating in discussions and research on global issues with an impact on children. This collaboration within the Childwatch network enhances the individual institutions' own capacity and research agenda in the process and gives opportunities to play leading roles in the development of child research.

2.1. New Key Institutions

The Programme on International Rights of the Child, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Faculty of Law, University of London has been accepted as a new Key Institution. Its director is Geraldine Van Bueren. The programme carries out research on children's rights from a legal perspective, provides extensive training at various academic levels, including an international doctoral programme. It has a publishing programme, and is also the home of the editor of the International Journal of Children's Rights.

Also the Caribbean Child Development Centre, CCDC, at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica was accepted as a new Key Institution. The centre is headed by

Lecturer Ms Janet Brown. CCDC has engaged in important research and programming on the role of fathers and single parent families, and is instrumental in establishing a research and programming network in the Caribbean.

The two French Key Institutions, Centre International de l'Enfance and Institut de l'Enfance et de la Famille have been merged into one research institute as of 1 January 1997: Centre International de l'Enfance et de la Famille.

2.2. Key Institution Profiles

The Childwatch secretariat has prepared a compilation of Key Institution profiles. An institution profile is a brief information sheet that gives a quick overview and describes the main fields of research, the professional disciplines and staff and the network of each one of the Childwatch Key institutions.

The Key Institution profiles meet the demands for information about the research institutions, and are important promotional tools in the network for Childwatch International. The institution profiles are available in hard copy and can also be accessed on the Internet at <http://childhouse.uio.no/childwatch/profiles/>

3. Advisory Board

On 8 June 1997 the Advisory Board of Childwatch International met prior to the Urban Childhood Conference, in Trondheim, Norway. This was the first meeting of the Advisory Board since the election of the new Board in September 1996. (Please see Annex 2 for details about the Advisory Board.)

The Board reviewed the latest development in the research field and decided to develop new research initiatives that could take place within the framework of the network. The projects are based on the comparative advantage of such a network in initiating and undertaking research efforts with a global scope.

The Advisory Board agreed on addressing the following issues:

- (i) The significance of political and economic transformation on the lives of children;
- (ii) The application of child research in international organizations; and
- (iii) The significance of technological change for children.

The Advisory Board has started a process to develop guidelines for such global research initiatives. For each of the above-mentioned issues small preparatory groups develop position papers and research plans and invite Key institutions and other relevant partners to collaborate in the carrying out of the research. The guidelines advance and integrate the competencies of institutions in the network on issues of global nature relating to children and their living conditions.

On behalf of her Director, Fanie Sonn of the Institute for Child and Family Development, University of the Western Cape, Rose September invited the Advisory Board to hold its next meeting in Cape Town, October 1998. It was proposed that the Advisory Board meeting be combined with a seminar with local researchers. Such a seminar could be part of a process to establish a South African network of child researchers and could focus on research themes of special interest among them.

4. Children's House in Cyberspace

To make use of opportunities represented by the Internet, Childwatch launched the idea of establishing Children's House in Cyberspace in 1996 <http://childhouse.uio.no/>. The idea was to create an electronic meeting place for those working for and with children at the professional level, whether within research, programming, planning, advocacy, legislation or policy-making. This initiative has been met with very positive response from organizations and institutions who want to place their information in Children's House, or who want to establish links to their own home pages or databases.

Children's House is managed by a House Committee, that prepares and decides on the entry points or themes in the House. The main entry points are called floors in line with the house metaphor. Members of the House Committee are representatives from Childwatch Key Institutions and partner organizations. Newly established floors are the News floor managed by Rädde Barnen (Swedish Save the Children), and the Child Health floor, which is managed by the World Health Organization. In order to serve a wider audience, work is started to create a parallel Spanish House and a French House.

Children's House keeps developing and has proven to be an efficient channel for promoting children's issues of importance to a large audience. The number of visits average almost 1100 visits per day. The number of user countries has increased from 49 to 64 in the period.

The research floor is the responsibility of Childwatch International. It is important in the future to develop this to the maximum extent possible with references to ongoing research and links to relevant data bases, in addition to other relevant information. We are also facilitating the use of the research floor for active interchange of research ideas and thematic discussions.

5. Activities

5.1. WorldWideWeb workshop

Since its inception, one of the main objectives of Childwatch has been to develop overviews of the activities of central research institutions within child research and to facilitate the flow of information between the institutions. Particularly, the flow of information between the North and the South has been an important issue since many institutions in the South do not have sufficient access to information from other parts of the world and few opportunities to publish and disseminate information about their own research activities.

The increased use of e-mail and the Internet helps fill this information gap. However, the benefits of the technological development is not equally distributed. Several Key Institutions have the need for expert advice and concrete experience in order to gain expertise. Childwatch is particularly concerned with integrating new institutions from Asia, Africa and Latin America in the electronic networking, and will assist Key Institutions in overcoming obstacles in utilizing the electronic opportunities. The Key Institutions are encouraged to engage in regional technical cooperation about the opportunities presented by the Internet.

To implement this strategy, Childwatch held a workshop aimed at reducing the gap in electronic communication North-South and facilitating South-South collaboration in Oslo in October 1997. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the University of Oslo and made possible with a special grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The workshop discussed strategies for using the WorldWideWeb as a tool for research institutions in developing countries among representatives from 6 Key Institutions in the south. The workshop reviewed techniques on how to use the Internet, where to find important Internet resources for research purposes, how to use preference functions of the software and advanced search methods for accurate information location on the Internet. The Internet tag-language, html, hypertext mark-up language, was demonstrated along with principles for presentation of information on the Internet.

The participants in the workshop expressed a wish for continuing to work together as a web-network to exchange experience and to involve colleagues at their respective institutions to prepare relevant information to be made available on the Internet.

People with the responsibility for information - and web-design from the following institutions participated:

- Instituto Interamericano del Niño, Montevideo, Uruguay;
- Center for Research on Childhood, Universidade Santa Ursula, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;
- Institute for Child and Family Development, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa;
- Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal;
- Unit for Child and Youth Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India; and
- National Institute for Child & Family Development, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

The Latin American Council of Social Research Institutions, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), and Centro Internacional de Estudios Avanzados en Niños y Desarrollo Social (CINDE), were also represented in the workshop.

5.2. Urban Childhood conference

The Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) arranged the Urban Childhood conference that took place in Trondheim on 9-12 June 1997. Childwatch international was the main co-sponsor and member of the planning committee. Childwatch coordinated the scientific programme for three of the conference's 5 sections. Many representatives of the Childwatch Key Institutions were members of scientific committees, presenters, moderators and active participants in discussions in the various sections.

The conference represented a unique opportunity to present and assess the contributions from child research in a dialogue with the users of such research. Childwatch International used the conference preparations to mobilize members of the research network and individuals and to include new partners in developing the conference programme.

The conference attracted more than 500 participants from the international research community, from programme and policy environments. The conference represented a major opportunity to promote the Childwatch network, and several networking activities were initiated at the conference.

Childwatch staff and individuals from thematic research networks worked in the scientific committees for the child labour section, the urban environment and healthy development of children section, and in the children out of place section. Also the Growing up in Cities project took the advantage of the Trondheim conference as a meeting place for the site teams. The conference provided an opportunity to review the development of the action-research project and for preparing valuable presentations to the Urban life quality section.

5.3 International Conference on Child Labour

Childwatch participated in the planning committee for the International Conference on Child Labour, organized by the Government of Norway in October 1997. Childwatch also assisted in identifying resource persons from the research community and in producing some of the background material for the Conference in collaboration with relevant Key Institutions. Two out of four background documentsⁱ for the conference was prepared by Childwatch International. As part of the planning process, Childwatch was among the institutions consulted when the Agenda for Action was drafted

5.4. Indicators for children's rights

The project on indicators for children's rights started in 1994 and is conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Family Research of the University of Cambridge, one of the Childwatch Key Institutions.ⁱⁱ The main objective of the project is to contribute to the development of strategies for monitoring children's rights at the national and global levels. The project takes place as a series of country case studies, with local research teams, and conducted in collaboration with a large number of partners from government, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academia. The project will be finished by the end of 1998.

The project continues to draw attention and to create new opportunities for collaboration with academic institutions and relevant organizations. In Nicaragua, Senegal, Thailand and Vietnam the experiences from the project have been used as the basis for establishing national monitoring mechanisms.

Important developments in 1997 were:

- (i) An agreement with UNICEF that includes a programme of capacity building in monitoring children's rights for UNICEF staff as an integral part of the project. Remaining country case studies will be conducted with UNICEF staff as co-coordinators, and include special training workshops. UNICEF provides additional funding for this add-on to the project.
- (ii) Additional funding from SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) that have made some additional activities possible, particularly a round of evaluation visits to all country case sites.
- (iii) Generous funding from Redd Barna (Norwegian Save the Children) has made the Zimbabwe country case study more extended than the others, as it has included a follow-up period, for the institutionalization of the use of experiences from the project. In addition, Redd Barna decided to sponsor a pan-African academic workshop on "The African Contexts for Children's Rights" held in January 1998. The purpose of the workshop is to focus on issues of particular importance to

African countries in connection with implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

5.5. Growing Up in Cities

The Growing Up in Cities project is a replication of the original study by urban planner Kevin Lynch in 1977. The growing up in Cities project aims at involving children and young people and governments in evaluating and improving local urban environments. Multiple methods and specific themes are applied and explored in the process of carrying out the project. The project intends to document some of the human costs and benefits of economic development by showing how the child's use and perception of the resulting microenvironment affect his or her life and personal development.

Louise Chawla, who was a Fullbright Scholar in 1995 at the Children and Environment programme at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, developed the plans for replicating the study. As the coordinator of the global project, she identified research contacts at the original sites and involved some new sites in the project.

The Growing Up in Cities project comprises teams at sites in eight countries:

- Salta and Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Melbourne, Australia
- Bangalore, India
- Warsaw, Poland
- Trondheim, Norway
- Johannesburg, South Africa
- Northampton, United Kingdom
- Oakland, California, USA

During 1997 the project manual was developed and the main environmental observations, field works and the interviews started at all sites. The research teams are connected through the active use of e-mails and continuing dialogues and adjustments goes on about the development of the project.

Prior to the Urban Childhood conference the research teams met in Trondheim for one week to discuss and adjust questions and opportunities emerging in the projects, to prepare for the presentations and workshops at the Urban Childhood conference and in order to discuss the main outlines of a book about the project. Each site research team contributed to the dialogue

The research manual will be updated and edited according to the findings and experiences It will become a guide in documenting how the project's findings are assimilated into local, regional and planning initiatives and. After the up-dating it will be published, and an analyses of the site experiences will be produced. Updated programme information is available on the WorldWideWeb at: <http://www.unesco.org/most>

The project is supported by the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Childwatch International, the Management of Social Transformations, MOST, programme of UNESCO, and by UNICEF, in addition to the local support and funding of the site studies.

5.6. Programme on Child Research in Africa

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) has developed a Programme on Child Research in Africa ⁱⁱⁱ with the assistance of Childwatch. The programme includes elements of training, networking and publishing and will include researchers from all African countries over a three-year period. After the programme proposal was approved by the Executive Board, the fund-raising process was started in 1997. So far, funds have been committed from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA, from 1998 and onwards, which allows for more detailed preparations to start in 1998.

6. Organizational matters

6.1. Funding and support

Funding for the Secretariat and its activities came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Norwegian Research Council) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

6.2. Human resources

Anne Kielland, project officer with responsibility i.a. for Children's House left Childwatch to take up an assignment with the World Bank in Washington, DC, USA. Several assistants are employed by Childwatch on part-time basis to assist in specific tasks, particularly related to our information activities and maintaining the WorldWideWeb.

6.3. Office space and infrastructural support

Childwatch continues to have offices at the Blindern Campus of the University of Oslo, as part of the agreement of collaboration between Childwatch and the University. Through this agreement, the University of Oslo provides substantial infrastructural support to Childwatch.

7. Collaboration with other organizations

Childwatch continues to collaborate with UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, Redd Barna, Rädda Barnen, CRIN (Child Rights Information Network) and others. Several of these organizations are also engaged in maintaining Children's House in Cyberspace, together with some of the Key Institutions.

An important part on the follow-up of the section on urban environment and child health at the Urban Childhood conference, was the development of plans for establishing a research and information network on environment and child health. Childwatch International started a collaboration with the Dutch Association of Environmental Medicine about the 1st International Conference on Child Health and Environment, to be held Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 11-13 August 1998.

Together with the Ecological Council, Denmark, and the Children's Council, Childwatch International has been preparing a seminar in March 1998, Environment and child health, in Copenhagen, Denmark. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the European Environment Agency are endorsing the seminar.

These initiatives reflect the growing interest in the relationship between environmental exposure and the special susceptibility of the child. For Childwatch International the conferences and seminars will represent opportunities to promote

research on the rights of the child to health and a clean environment and to promote the plans for international networks on environment and child health.

ANNEX 1

CHILDWATCH INTERNATIONAL Key Institutions and directors

Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Australia

Director: Harry McGurk

Canadian Institute of Child Health, Ottawa, Canada

Executive Director: Dawn Walker

Carribean Center for Child Development

Acting Head: Sian Williams. Director: Janet Brown (on leave until August 1998)

Center for Children and Youth, JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem, Israel

Director: Jack Habib

Center for Independent Ecological Programs, Socio-Ecological Union, Moscow, Russian Federation

Director: Maria Cherkasova

Centre for Child Development, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong

Director: Lau Sing

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 et de la Famille, Paris, France

Director: Olivier Brasseur

Centro de Estudios del Menor, Madrid, Spain

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

Childhood Programme, European Centre, Vienna, Austria

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 the 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, NY, USA

James Garbarino

Fundación Paniamor, San José, Costa Rica

Director: Milena Grillo

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

National Institute for Child & Family Development, Mahidol University, Bangkok,
Thailand

Director: Nittaya D. Kotchabhakdi

Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Trondheim, Norway

Acting Director: Turid Midjo

Programme on International Rights of the Child, Faculty of Law, Queen Mary and
Westfield College, University of London, London, UK

Director: Geraldine Van Bueren

UNICEF - International Child Development Centre, Florence, Italy

Director: Paolo Basurto

Unit for Child and Youth Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

Chief: Usha Nayar

ANNEX 2

CHILDWATCH INTERNATIONAL
Advisory Board 1996-1998

Gary Melton, President

Director, Consortium on Children, Families & the Law, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina, USA

Irene Rizzini, Vice President

Director, Center for Research on Childhood, Universidade Santa Ursula, Brazil

Per Egil Mjaavatn, Vice President

Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norway

Jack Habib

Director, JDC-Brookdale Institute Center for Children and Youth, Israel

Nittaya J. Kotchabhakdi

Director, National Institute for Child & Family Development, Mahidol University, Thailand

Harry McGurk

Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australia

Rodrigo Quintana Meléndez

Director, Instituto Interamericano del Niño, Uruguay

Fanie Sonn

Director, Institute for Child and Family Development, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Sharon Stephens

Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Social Work, University of Michigan, USA

Ferran Casas

Professor, Departament de Psicologia, Universitat Girona, Facultat Ciències Educatives, Girona, Spain

ANNEX 3

NOTES

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- i) *A report on the child labour section. Urban Childhood Conference, Trondheim, 9-12 June 1997. Childwatch International/The Norwegian Centre for Child Research, 1997.*

Ennew, J. (1997) *Measuring and monitoring child work & child labour. Childwatch International/The Norwegian Centre for Child Research*

- ii) **See for instance: Ennew, J. & Miljeteig, P. (1996) *Indicators for Children's Rights: Progress Report on a Project. International Journal of Children's Rights* 4, 213-236.**
- iii) *Child Research Programme. Towards a protection of the rights and interests of children in Africa. Dakar, CODESRIA, January 1997.*