

# CWI

## Annual report 2003

### 1. Introduction

All live organisms change. So do networks that are alive and developing. When Childwatch was founded in 1993, the founders created the acronym ReAcTs as a common name for the working units in the network, short for *Research and Activity Teams*. As the scope of activities broadened, some of these groups developed cooperative and comparative research projects, other groups focused on organizing meetings and research seminars addressing pressing issues while others worked on strategies for addressing policymakers. Later, the question of capacity building and strengthening the vulnerable centers and institutions through exchange also became a priority for the Network's Key Institutions. The references to the working units changed accordingly and the Childwatch Network has presented its activities over the past ten years as projects, meetings, seminars, regional networking, capacity building, consultancies and partnerships.

This kind of flexibility is not only necessary to keep the network alive, but also a quality which makes the network valuable for the members. Childwatch International strives to fit to the needs of local contexts and tries to meet the challenges each region face in order to provide good child research and knowledge.

For the last two years, Childwatch International has divided its activities into three main categories: Projects, Consultancies and Partnerships. As Partnerships have developed into Regional Networks or into Projects, Seminars into Study Groups and Consultancies into Partnerships, there has been a need to add to the existing scheme of activities of the Network. In order to give priority to the activities that aim at participation in the "Childhoods 2005 Oslo" conference, quite a few of the existing, and almost all of the new activities of Childwatch International, are gathered under the common name Study Groups.

Regional Networks is another unit of activity which has proven to be necessary to increase the activity level. To work regionally does not replace the global or cross-continental work, but gives researchers an opportunity to develop concepts and define problem areas on local and regional terms. These discussions are valuable assets to bring into the global and cross-continental discussions and comparisons.

Childwatch took active part in initiating the conference "Childhoods 2005 Oslo: Children and Youth in Emerging and Transforming Societies". Together with the University of Oslo, and the Norwegian research community, CWI has developed the scope of the conference and played a part in both the organization committee and the scientific development. Most of the new Study Groups will function as coordinators for sessions at the conference, both large and small. Even if Study Groups have plans that go beyond the

conference in June 2005, one could say that being co-host of such a large event has spurred a lot of new activities in the network, and revitalized other groups. 2003 has thus been a busy year for Childwatch International where partners follow up on-going activities and several new initiatives have been taken. It takes flexibility, creativity and good working relations to keep such a network going and growing for ten years.

## **2. CWI ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1 Projects**

#### **2.1.1 Children and the Media**

Full title of this project is “The influence of information and communication audio-visual technologies (ICATs) on children's and adolescents' life and cultures - and on the relationship between adults and young people”.

In 1999, Ferran Casas of the Catalan Network of Child Researchers (X.C.I.I.I.) initiated collaboration with the Child Research Net in Tokyo to develop a framework for international collaboration on a study of the interaction between children and media. The project has later extended to Brazil, Norway, India, South Africa which together with Spain are the countries today involved in the project.

The research project arises from the interest in developing broader understanding about children's conditions of living in the contemporary media environment (the new media ecology). Knowledge is needed about how media positively and negatively affect children's learning and socialization, children's rights and children's future quality of life. Such knowledge could be applied to eliminate or reduce the negative effects and to increase or support the positive ones.

The respective country teams have throughout the project period met to collaborate, learn from each other and guide each other through the different stages of the research process. Through exchange of knowledge and skills in research methods, this project is regarded as closely related to a capacity-building project for CWI.

The period 2003–2004 has been conceived as a period for developing studies and debates in depth to identify the key aspects of better understanding how to implement quality programs to effectively support parents and teachers, and also children themselves – and then to make such products a reality, which will be tested and evaluated.

The group has in 2003 actively sought external funding to continue the project and expand to more countries. They have held one project meeting in Girona, Spain, and also received some CWI funding for a student to coordinate the international comparative dataset.

### **2.1.2 Measuring and monitoring children's well-being**

Over the last decade there has been a growing interest in measuring the well being of children. This recent widespread interest in children's well being indicators has been partly due to a movement toward accountability-based public policy that requires increasing amounts of data to provide more accurate measures of the conditions children face and the outcomes various programs achieve. At the same time, the rapid changes in family life also have prompted an increased demand from child development professionals, social scientists and the public for a better picture of children's well being.

The recent growth of the children's well being indicators field can be seen in the publication of various 'state of the child' reports<sup>1</sup>. These reports have increased the level of interests in statistical descriptions of the well being of children, resulting in the publication of even more such reports around the world. There is evidence that there is a great deal of activity on this topic around the globe. In part, as a result of this increased activity the field is going through major changes and is trying to redefine the concept of children's well being and its measurements.

CWI has since its beginning supported selected meetings by or co-organized events with the Multi-National Project for Monitoring and Measuring Children's Well-Being. This is an ongoing, multi-phase effort to improve our ability to measure and monitor the status of children around the globe. The project has developed a web-site open for public use, where a large sample of measurements are collected. See: <http://multinational-indicators.chapinhall.org> . CWI has also used the expertise of this group in other meetings.

#### **2.1.2.1 Eastern and Central Europe**

Eastern and Central Europe is a region in transition. While the political, economical and sociological changes are affecting everybody that live in the region it is especially affecting children and their well being. Studying the status of children and monitoring their well being can and should serve as a tool for those interested in safe guarding the well being of children, especially in an era of transition.

In November 2002, a meeting between child researchers from 12 different countries, both east and west was held in Bratislava, the Slovak republic. The Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies (BICFS) hosted the meeting. As a follow up on one of the themes from this meeting, CWI decided to host a new regional meeting in conjunction with the Advisory Board meeting of CWI in 2003. This meeting was held in Budapest, in October 2003.

The regional meeting was based on the work of the Multi-national Measuring and Monitoring Children's Well-Being Project. Experts from the region were invited to join project members and members of CWI Advisory Board to discuss how we can better

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<sup>1</sup>The term "state of the child report" is used here to describe any report dealing with the status of children at large and sub-groups within the children population, regardless of the exact name of the report.

measure and monitor the status of children in Eastern and Central Europe and how to adapt indicators to the needs and reality in the region.

### **2.1.2.2 Other support**

CWI has in 2003 also supported one CWI member attending a meeting in Multi-national Measuring and Monitoring Children's Well-Being project, hosted by Deutsche Jugend Institute, Munich Germany.

### 2.1.3 Projects that has spurred new projects or activities

#### 2.1.3.1 Use of Child Research in International Organisations. NOW: Rethinking the Agenda for Childwatch International

The purpose of the project which was initiated in 2000, was to discover what sources of research on children the staff of international organizations actually knows and uses in developing policy and programs. What research and information do they regularly consult and use, and what additional knowledge do they feel would be useful? The findings help identify what research should be undertaken to respond to the perceived needs of international organizations and to describe how to get the results of that research considered by staff within international organizations. (Annual reports 2000 and 2001/2002 gives more details about this project). The initial project is now closed.

However, on the background of the results from this project, the Advisory Board in 2003 decided to revise the terms of reference and develop a new strategic plan for Childwatch International. This process started in 2003 and aim to be finalized by June 2005. The project is now called: Rethinking the Agenda for Childwatch International.

The international sub-committee of the CWI Advisory Board to Review Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan consist of Anne Smith, Irene Rizzini and Robbie Gilligan. The task is to re-draft the goals, priorities and plans of Childwatch International for the next 5 years. The Advisory Board asked the group to review the current Terms of Reference and produce the draft of another document, to clarify and re-think the role of the organization, re-energize the members of CWI, and help in efforts to seek funding.

The sub-committee has developed a plan of progress which includes the participation of Key Institutions in the process. An international reference group will also be used to comment and give advice to the new documents, and the final documents are planned to be adopted in the Key Institution meeting in Oslo, 2005.

#### 2.1.3.2 The significance of political and economic transformations in the lives of children

This project started in 1998, led by a working group consisting of Gary Melton and Natalie Kaufman of the Consortium on Children, Family and the Law, and Irene Rizzini of the former Center for Research on Childhood (CESPI, now CIESPI). The project has had several workshops since it started, and has resulted in several a series of articles in international journals presenting the debate and work on a research agenda , together with a book with specific contributions from several Childwatch International members in

2002 edited by Natalie Kaufman and Irene Rizzini. The book offer guidelines to enable researchers, policy-makers and other child advocates to increase their attention to how global change is affecting children and what knowledge and interventions would be useful in understanding and developing policies likely to further the well-being of children.

As a CWI project, this ended in 2002. The work on these issues is however continuing both in the development of the US-Czech Partnership (2.2.1) and has inspired the thematic development of the conference *Childhoods 2005 Oslo* (2.7) and at least two of the new CWI study-groups working towards the conference.

## **2.2 Partnership program**

The Partnership Program supports collaborative research activities among Key Institutions with an aim to support organizational development and capacity building within the institutions. The program was established in 2000. Childwatch International provides economic support for meetings between institutions within Partnership arrangements. The host institutions are encouraged to contribute with personnel costs and other costs within the institution's means.

Partnerships between the following institutions were active in 2003:

- Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University in USA and the Center for Family Environments in the Czech Republic.
- International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood (CIESPI) in Brazil with the International Center for Education and Human Development (CINDE) in Colombia and the Center for Childhood and Family Research (CENDIF) of Venezuela.
- Norwegian Center for Child Research (NOSEB) and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), both in Norway, and the newly established Child Research Unit at the Al Quds University in Palestine.

### **2.3.1 Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (IFNL), Clemson University, USA and Center for Family Environments, Prague, Czech Republic**

The partnership program between the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life and Center for Family Environments has run from 2000 out the year 2003. The formal closing of the Partnership is planned for 2004, when a closing meeting will be held.

Through mutual visits sponsored by Childwatch, both at the Clemson University in South Carolina and at the Center for Family Environments in Prague, substantial outcomes have led the academic work and the building of a child research center in the Czech Republic a significant step further. A concrete outcome is the Center for Family Environments, which is a "virtual" center with researchers from many separate child research centers in the Czech Republic.

In November 2003 a delegation of five junior and senior staff from Czech Center spent one week at Clemson. The visit had several purposes: To develop operational plans for several joint studies that are planned for the Czech Republic in 2004; to immerse the Czech team in research done at Clemson on community-wide prevention of child maltreatment in order to institute an adapted replication in the Czech Republic; to bridge individual visits (Clemson hosted a Charles University medical student in the fall of 2003 and a member of staff from Clemson is going to Prague on a Fulbright scholarship in the spring of 2004) so that team building can result from these experiences.

The meeting at Clemson followed up the recommendation from the Indicators of Child Well-Being meeting held in Bratislava in November in 2002, to respond to the need for nurturance of the next generation of researchers in Central and Eastern Europe.

As according to the guidelines for the Partnership Program, Childwatch International covered the transport expenses for the Czech delegation, whilst lodging and meals were paid for by Clemson University.

### **2.3.2 International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood (CIESPI), Brazil – International Center for Education and Human Development (CINDE), Colombia – Center for Childhood and Family Research (CENDIF), Venezuela**

Three Latin American centers have been collaborating through this Partnership: CIESPI, currently at the Pontificia Universidade Católica in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; CINDE, partly based at the University of Medellín in Colombia; and CENDIF of the Universidad Metropolitana, Caracas, Venezuela. The Partnership has been operating since 2001, and will close in 2004.

Through the Partnership Program the three centers have identified a common research project regarding the effects of poverty and violence on children, their families and communities. They have arranged several meetings and conferences. The centers, and the Venezuelan center in particular, has emphasized the theme of poverty and violence through all their research and activities during this period. A comparative research project has been developed within the Partnership between Venezuela and Colombia.

In 2003 representatives of the involved institutions met in Rio de Janeiro. The progress of the Partnership was discussed and future plans elaborated.

The meeting of the Partnership was held in connection to a larger meeting of Latin American child researchers. Other Latin American Key Institutions were present at this meeting (Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico) which was partly financed through the Childwatch Latin American network (see point 2.5). The main aim of this larger meeting was to facilitate discussion and planning for the upcoming closing conference of the Latin American Partnership and development of a Study Group and to elaborate a joint project for the Childhoods 2005 conference in Oslo in 2005.

During the Partnership the three centers have identified new research partners in Latin America. Two Latin American institutions obtained status as Key Institutions of Childwatch International in 2003 through their connection to the project developed by the Latin American Partnership: CEANIM of Santiago, Chile and Centro de Documentación sobre Infancia at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico.

### **2.3.3 NOSEB and NOVA, Norway – Child Research Unit, Al Quds University, Palestine**

The initiative to support child research in Palestine was first introduced in 2000 and followed up by a workshop in Palestine in May 2001, including participation by members from Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) and Norwegian Center for Child Research. The meetings in Jerusalem and Ramallah provided a valuable basis for future collaboration.

The Child Research Unit is a newly formed unit of which members have professional independence while working under the umbrella of Al-Quds University. It is organized through the Center for Development and Primary Health Care. The Unit became a Key Institution of Childwatch International in 2003. The partnership program is meant to support and strengthening the Palestinians' own research capacity and development of research. The main aims of the program are institution building at Al Quds University and strengthening methodological and theoretical capacity.

The first meeting within this Partnership was held in Oslo in June 2003. The researchers shared experiences and models for organizing child research in order to develop their collaboration further and to initiate the build-up of a Palestinian child research center.

A plan for the Partnership (2003 – 2006) was developed at this meeting and a formal application was submitted to Childwatch International. The first step of the plan was to develop a centre for applied child research guided by the discussions and consideration made at the meeting in Oslo in June. The Palestinian group continued the work locally, with support and in communication with the Norwegian group. As mentioned above, this was a success and the Child Research Unit was formed during the second half of the year.

The meeting was organized by NOVA and Childwatch International. CWI covered travel and accommodation while most of the meeting costs were covered by NOVA.

- eller hadde dette skjedd før? As a follow-up to the NOVA and the Child Research Unit elaborated and submitted an application to The Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development Research and Education (NUFU) in collaboration with Childwatch International. The application was for the amount of .... To fund the....

What was status at the end of the year?

## 2.3 Study groups

### 2.3.1 Children's Perspectives on Citizenship and Nation-building

This initiative was taken at the CWI Key Institution meeting in Bangkok 2002. In 2003, a group of researchers from the network proposed a cross-cultural and cross-generational study on perceptions of children and adults about what constitutes good citizenship and participation and attitudes and behaviors conducive to nation building. The group will create sample groups in five societies experiencing different challenges to their democracies. Each sample group will consist of 100 children from urban communities, and 100 children from rural communities, as well as adults from these communities. The group will use the venue of the 2005 conference to present results from this study, as well as be coordinators of a conference session on this theme.

The group consist of; Jiri Kovarik, Director of the Department for Family Care Development and Professor at Charles Univesity and also at South Bohemian University in the Czech Republic; Rose September, Director of the Institute on Child and Youth Research and Training and Professor on the Faculty Community, Health, and Sciences at University of the Western Cape, Capetown, South Africa; Anne Smith, Director of the Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; Irene Rizzini is the Director of the International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood at Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Susan Limber, Associate Director of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C., United States and Professor of Psychology there and Natalie Kaufman, Associate Faculty member of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C., United States, and Professor of International Studies, who is also the coordinator of this study group.

They had one meeting in 2003, at the London School of Economics (?), where methodologies and scope of their studies were discussed, and are planning another meeting before the Oslo conference to integrate the country studies, and they plan to work also beyond the conference for publications etc.

### 2.3.2 Socio-Cultural Contexts of Child Participation in the Asia Pacific Region

Sprung form the same debate in Bangkok 2002, and thus related to the group above, a group of Asian researchers met spontaneously in the Bangkok Key Institution meeting to discuss the special challenges of child participation in Asia. CWI encouraged this group to become a regional study-group on this thematic, preparing for participation in Oslo 2005.

Their special focus is on the "Socio-Cultural Context of Child Participation in the Asia Pacific Region". The group has members from Australia , China , India and Thailand and will perform a cross national study in these countries. The group considers that the diversity of traditions and attitudes to childhood presents a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of the concept and status of child participation as it historically and currently exists. This understanding will enable the researchers to move towards the group's second objective of identifying the major factors supporting and limiting child



participation in specific countries. Acknowledging the link between child participation and citizenship the research will explore this relationship between participation and citizenship, as it emerges conceptually and in practice.

The group consist of (LIST NAVN TITTEL STED SOM OVER)

Coordinator : *Anil Kumar* , Associate Professor, Unit for Child and Youth Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

The group has met once in 2003, again in Bangkok, to plan the country studies. They are planning for two more meetings before the conference.

Meetings are hosted at participants host institutions, to fulfill an intention of having a capacity building function. Students, researchers and others form the local institutions are involved in the meetings. The meetings give them a chance to meet and exchange knowledge with experts from other countries.

2.3.3 Religion and Spirituality of Children in Emerging and Transforming Societies

2.3.4 Children growing up in the context of poverty and marginalization

2.3.5 Identifying common challenges for child research in the Arab speaking countries

2.3.6 Identifying common challenges for child research and building a consortium for child and youth research in East-Africa

2.3.7 Other study groups with CWI support

## **2.4 Consultancies and capacity building**

The consultant visits were initiated in 2001. The intention of the consultancy program is to contribute towards capacity building of researchers and assist in strengthening the Key Institutions.

According to the intention and guidelines of the program, consultancy visits are offered to Key Institutions of Childwatch International. A Key Institution may ask to receive a consultant to assist in validating and revising ongoing tasks and projects or assist in initiating collaborative projects with international partners. A consultant may also contribute by giving an independent consulting on specific challenges of the Key Institution, such as funding, relationship to external organizations, institutions, administrators or other local interests. A consultant may in addition present and discuss possibilities for collaboration within the network and contribute in open seminars if this is requested by the receiving institution.

The consultants are senior members of the Childwatch network. Childwatch will assign a consultant that best fits the needs and schedules of both Key Institutions and consultants. All consultants are dedicated to sharing and consolidating their experiences to benefit the Childwatch network as a whole, and the individual Key Institutions who are a part of the network.

Childwatch International supports the consultant traveling to a Key Institution for up to one-week stay. The consultant will give feedback on the issues discussed and make a brief written report.

Two consultant visits were undertaken in 2003, both in Africa.

In February Gary Melton from the Institute for Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University, USA, visited the Child and Youth Research and Training Programme, formerly the Institute for Child and Family Development, at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Melton was invited through Childwatch International to assist in determining the best way to develop a new program of child research at UWC. In addition Melton and Robin K. Melton were in contact with the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town, whose Director, Marian Jacobs, is member of the Childwatch International Advisory Board. They also visited Dap Louw at the Center for Psychology and Law, University of the Free State in Bloemfontein to discuss further collaboration with Childwatch International and the possible build-up of a South African network on child research. The Meltons participated in a workshop on Child well-being and poverty indicators in South Africa, hosted by the Children's Institute, the Children's Budget Unit of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Child and Youth Research and Training Programme and the Department of Social Development (DSD).

The second consultancy visit was undertaken in November by Irene Rizzini and Per Egil Mjaavatt, who visited the Department of Educational Psychology at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya.

## **2.5 Building regional networks**

Supporting the build-up of regional partnerships is a strategy initiated by the Network through the experiences of regional partnership and collaboration in Latin-America. As mentioned in point 2.3.2 the Latin American Partnership has spurred collaboration within a larger Latin American network, which supports capacity building and research collaboration. This again strengthens the position of child research in the region, supporting the expansion of collaboration internationally.

In 2003 Childwatch International has supported a regional meeting within the Latin American network, with participants from the Latin American Key Institutions, and other researchers working with child research themes in the region. The participants outlined a common agenda for their collaboration, focusing on the role of the researcher, participatory research and questions of poverty, violence and migration, in line with the collaboration established in the Partnership Program.

A larger conference of child researchers in Latin America is planned for September 2004. The network is forming a study group working towards the Childhoods 2005 conference.

In line with this experience, Childwatch International is focusing its efforts to expand the strategy of regional networks. In 2003 Childwatch International initiated regional

networks in Central and Eastern Europe, in Eastern African and in Asia. The building of networks regionally is done in combination with thematic initiatives or projects.

In Central and Eastern Europe the regional initiative was organized in conjunction with the Measuring and Monitoring Children's Well-Being project. A meeting was held in October 2003 (see point 2.1.3).

In Eastern Africa, the network building was initiated through the consultant visit to the Institute for Development Psychology at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya (see point 2.4). The Institute arranged a conference in connection to the consultancy, with participants from other Kenyan universities as well as child researchers from neighboring countries.

In Asia, the regional network is organized as a study group working on Child Participation in an Asian and Pacific context. It includes participants from Key Institutions in China, Thailand, India and Australia. The group is working towards the Childhoods 2005 conference. A meeting was held in Bangkok in October 2003.

## **2.6 Other activities**

### **2.7 Childhoods 2005 Oslo: Children and Youth in Emerging and Transforming Societies**

The Conference is initiated by a group of researchers from the University of Oslo, Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Childwatch International Research Network (CWI), Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB).

The Scientific Committee hopes that the conference will enable a worldwide network of researchers and policy makers to increase their understanding of how social changes are affecting children and youth, and which interventions would be useful in developing policies that would advance their well-being.

The University of Oslo is suggested as the most suitable venue for the event, and the conference has become a core event in the University of Oslo centennial celebration of state independence. The central organizing units at the University of Oslo are the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education, but the Scientific Committee consists of members from a broader range of disciplines and institutional connections. CWI has been represented in the Scientific Committee as well as in the organizing group since the beginning of the initiative.