

**Childwatch International  
Research Network  
Annual Report 2005**



## 1. Introduction

Childwatch International Research Network (Childwatch International) is a global network of research institutions with a strong focus on inter-disciplinary child research. The Key Institutions collaborate to strengthen child research and promote the use of researched based knowledge in development of policy and practice, for the purpose of improving children's well-being around the world.

The large international research conference "Childhoods 2005 Oslo: Children in Emerging and Transforming Societies" was a major event for the network in 2005. The conference gathered over 1000 researchers and practitioners in thematic sessions and plenary presentations over a period of five summer days in the capital city of Norway. Childwatch International was co-organizer of this big event. The secretariat was to a great extent involved in the organizing of the conference, both through participation in the scientific committee and in the central working group. But the network was first and foremost involved through the intensive volunteer work done by many of the network's Key Institutions in planning and organizing thematic sessions, presenting papers and organizing network meetings during the conference.

The Childwatch International Key Institutions Assembly was held for two days before the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference, in Hurdal, Norway, 25 – 27 June. The Assembly gathered representatives of 37 of the network's 45 Key Institutions for discussions on issues of interest for the development of the network and international research on and with children. The revised basic documents of the network were approved by the Assembly, network projects were discussed and initiatives were taken for new activities.

Both the conference and the Assembly sparked new energy into cooperation between existing and new contacts. All the work put into the planning process and the follow up have given the network a strong basis for continuing our effort to promote the use of child research based knowledge in policy making. Existing and new thematic study groups and regional networks play an important role in this effort. They also open important arenas for building child research capacity, specifically in the majority world.

The following report gives an overview of Childwatch supported and initiated activities in 2005.

## 2. Network Activities 2005

### 2.1 Childhoods 2005 Oslo: Children in Emerging and Transforming Societies

#### 2.1.1 *The conference*

The University of Oslo, in collaboration with Childwatch International and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) organized a five day conference to celebrate the centennial for Norway's independence with a large international research conference on children in a globalised world. From 29 June – 3 July 2005 1200 child- and youth researchers, practitioners and policy makers from 95 different countries met to present research, debate and exchange knowledge about modern childhood and youth. The conference had well over 700 presentations and a full program of social, artistic and not least, child- and youth focused events. Childwatch International contributed to the conference in several ways, particularly through promoting the conference to a truly international audience. For more information on the conference, see: <http://childhoods2005.uio.no/>

#### 2.1.2 *Childwatch involvement in the organizing of the conference*

The conference has been the centre of attention for all Childwatch related activities during 2005. Most of the Childwatch Key Institutions were in various ways involved in the planning and organizing of the conference, either through the organizing of thematic sessions, through preparing scientific presentations or through organizing network meetings within the conference program. 40 out of 45 of the network's Key Institutions were represented by one or more staff at the conference.

13 of the 28 thematic sessions at the conference were organized with support from Childwatch International. Some sessions were organized by active Childwatch International network study groups. Other sessions were organized by external study groups supported by Childwatch International, all including participation by staff of Childwatch International Key Institutions.

The Childwatch secretariat was a part of the both the scientific committee and the central working group planning and organizing the event. Board member Per Egil Mjaavatn was also a member of the scientific committee.

#### 2.1.3 *Results from the conference for the Childwatch network*

##### *Dissemination*

The thematic study groups and regional networks of Childwatch International was given the opportunity to disseminate research results and to discuss ongoing projects with child researchers from all over the world during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. All groups are currently involved in following up the conference

sessions, both through planning publications and organizing further workshops, seminars and conferences for 2006.

*Establishment of new study groups and networks*

In preparing for the conference, an initiative was taken to strengthen the network's efforts to promote communication and collaboration between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. A session was organized on the issue of "Bridging the Gap between Research, Policy and Practice". A study group was later established, and will be supported through the 2006 Childwatch International budget.

The study group on Caring for Separated Children established new contacts and expanded its network to new continents. The group has decided to continue its work within the framework of the Childwatch International network.

*Regional meetings*

All the regional networks within Childwatch International took the opportunity to hold meeting during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. This gave them the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise and to establish new regional contacts. Representatives from the Key Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa established their steering committee in preparation for the regional child research conference to be held in November 2006, and plans were made for future meetings and preparations.

The Latin American network established new contacts, also with conference participants representing NGOs working in the region. This was also the case for the Middle East and North Africa network as well as for the network of child researchers in the Central and Eastern European region.

*New network contacts and members*

The conference was a great promotional opportunity for the Childwatch International network. A lot of attention and interest was directed towards the existence of the network and its aims and objectives. The secretariat has received applications for membership from several research institutions in connection to the conference. New contacts was established with researchers and others working in thematic and geographical areas where the network has not until now been involved in activities.

## **2.2 Childwatch International Research Network Key Institutions Assembly**

### *2.2.1 Childwatch Key Institutions Assembly 2005*

The network held its tri-annual Key Institutions Assembly from 25 – 27 June, just before the Childhoods 2005 conference. The Assembly met at the Hurdal conference hotel, just outside of Oslo, Norway. 37 of the 45 Key Institutions were represented by 45 participants. The Key Institutions Assembly is one of the most important events of the network. It gives the network partners an opportunity to meet in person, share ideas, discuss ongoing projects and initiate new

activities and new partnerships. It also creates an opportunity for the Assembly participants to give input to the Secretariat and to monitor the work of the Secretariat and the Board in managing their expectations and wishes for the progress of the network. The program and report from the Assembly are available on the Childwatch International web site:

[http://www.childwatch.uio.no/key\\_institutions/meeting](http://www.childwatch.uio.no/key_institutions/meeting)

#### *2.2.2 Results from the Childwatch International Key Institutions Assembly*

##### *Board election*

The Key Institutions Assembly elected a new board for the period 2005 – 2008. Dr. Irene Rizzini of the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was appointed President for a second three year period by the new Board. The members of the Board represent Key Institutions in China, Colombia, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Norway, Palestine, South Africa and the USA. Details of the Board members can be found on the Childwatch International web site: [http://www.childwatch.uio.no/what\\_is\\_cwi/ab/index.html](http://www.childwatch.uio.no/what_is_cwi/ab/index.html)

##### *Network documents*

The Board and the Secretariat elaborated new background documents for the network in 2004/2005. The Aims and Ethos and Membership and Governance documents were approved by the Assembly. The documents set clear aims for the work of the network and clarifies the role of the Secretariat and the Board in the process of realizing these goals. They set common aims for the individual network activities. The documents can be read on the Childwatch International web site: [http://www.childwatch.uio.no/what\\_is\\_cwi](http://www.childwatch.uio.no/what_is_cwi)

##### *Network development*

The Assembly agreed to strengthen profiling of the network, particularly towards institutions and actors use of child research in their work. It was also agreed that the network should work more actively towards finding new funding sources for the running of the network and its activities. This is particularly important in a period of the network with a growing membership basis and expanding activities.

##### *New study groups*

The Assembly agreed on new thematic areas for the network to become involved in. An initiative was taken to establish a study group on “Rural childhood”. An initiating meeting was held during the Assembly and new meetings are planned.

The Assembly also supported the idea of establishing a study group on the issues of bridging the gap between research, policy and practice, as earlier mentioned. This is also being followed up in 2006.

Issues concerning the ethics of child research and research methodology were issues that the Assembly promoted as issues of

common concern for the work of the Key Institutions. This will be followed up by the Childwatch Secretariat in 2006.

## **2.4 Study groups and regional networks**

### *2.4.1 Regional networks*

Childwatch International has since 2004 been focusing efforts to build and support regional network, with the aim of reaching more researchers and to support research capacity building regionally. The following regional networks have been active with Childwatch support in 2005:

- **Regional Network Sub-Saharan Africa.** 2005: Planning meeting during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Establishing steering committee and planning of meetings towards the 2006 regional conference on the status of child research in Sub-Saharan Africa. Planning meeting in Nairobi in November 2005. The network's activities will be prioritized by Childwatch International in 2006. The conference will take place in Dakar, Senegal, and will focus on issues concerning research funding, research programs and research needs in light of the realization of children's rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Regional Network Asia Pacific. Socio-Cultural Contexts of Child Participation.** 2005: Planning and organising of sub-session on child participation during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Undergoing country specific research projects in 2005. Plan to publish comparative results in 2006.
- **Regional Network Middle East and North Africa (MENA):** Identifying common challenges for child research. 2005: Planning and organising of session at Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Network meeting during conference. Continued cooperation with NUFU funding between Child Research Unit at Al Quds university in Palestine and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) in Oslo, Norway. This cooperation was initiated as a Childwatch International Partnership Programme.
- **Regional network Latin America and the Caribbean: Children growing up in the context of poverty and marginalization.** 2005: Planning and organising session at Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. The group organized two network meetings during the conference, with a lot of interest and many participants. The Key Institution in Mexico organized a regional conference in November.
- **Regional Network East and Central Europe.** 2005: Planning and organizing of sub-session at Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Network meeting during conference. Plan to continue collaborative networking in 2006.

#### 2.4.2 Study groups

Thematic groups have been an important part of the Childwatch International network since its establishment in 1993. These were organized as study groups for the purpose of preparing for the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference.

The following groups have been active with the support of Childwatch International in 2005:

- **Media and Technology: Adolescents and modern media – 2005:** Planning and organizing of a session at the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Planning and preparing for final project publication in 2006.
- **Indicators on Children's Well-Being. 2005:** Coordinating, planning and organizing a session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Established the Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) late 2005. This is an international forum for researchers on development and use of child well-being indicators.
- **Children's Perspectives on Citizenship and Nation-building. 2005:** First phase of comparative research project finalized in seven countries. Coordinating, planning and organizing a session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Study group workshop in Roeros, Norway in December. Planning publication and continuation of project in 2006.
- **Religion and Spirituality of Children in Emerging and Transforming Societies. 2005:** Planning and organising of session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference.
- **Growing up in an era of AIDS.** Initiated and partly financed by Childwatch International. Coordinated by researcher from the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. 2005: Planning and organising of session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. The group is working on a plan for publishing several of the papers.
- **Caring for Separated Children. 2005:** Planning and organising of session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Follow-up workshop for planning publication and continuation of the collaboration within the Childwatch International network in Oslo in November.
- **Children and Trafficking.** Study group coordinated by Norwegian research institute FAFO, initiated and supported by Childwatch International. Participation by UNICEF Innocenti centre in Florence among other international research institution. 2005: Planning and organising of session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Follow-up workshop to be held early 2006 to plan publication.
- **Bridging the Gap between Theory, Policy and Practice. 2005:** Planning and organising of session during the Childhoods 2005 Oslo conference. Study group established.

## **2.5 Study groups and regional networks**

### *2.5.1 Childwatch networking in Norway*

Childwatch International received its core funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), through the Norwegian Research Council (NFR). The agreement commits the network to make an effort to strengthen international networking of Norwegian child researchers and to promote collaboration between researchers, policy makers and NGOs in Norway. In 2005 the Secretariat initiated, in collaboration with Norad and NFR, the establishment of a Forum for Child Research and International Human Rights for the above mentioned audience.

## **3. Organizational Matters**

### **3.1 Key Institutions Assembly**

The Assembly took place in Hurdal, Norway, 25 – 27 June 2005. A description of the Assembly and its results can be found in section 2.2 above.

### **3.2 Board**

A Board meeting was held in New York City, USA in April 2005. The meeting was generously hosted by the Children's Environments Research Group at the City University New York. The meeting prepared the agenda and basic documents to be presented at the Key Institutions Assembly in June.

### **3.3 Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee held several phone meetings during 2005 in preparation and follow up of the Key Institutions Assembly and the Childhoods 2005 Conference.

### **3.4 Secretariat**

In 2005 the Childwatch International secretariat was staffed by Director Jon-Kristian Johnsen and Project Coordinator Pernille Skotte.

### **3.5 Key Institutions**

The Secretariat went through a process of contacting all the network's Key Institutions to discuss their further commitment to the network. All but three institutions showed an interest in continuing their connection to the network with further commitment. The three left out of the list of Key Institutions did not respond to repeated communications. This left us at the end of 2005 with 45 committed Key Institution representing most parts of the world.



### **3.6 Economy**

#### *3.6.1 Funding*

The Childwatch International Research Network is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The funding is administered through the Norwegian Research Council. A contract for a new three-year period was signed in 2004. This secures the network a core funding of 7.2 million Norwegian kroner (NOK) for the period 2004 – 2006.

#### *3.6.2 Budget and accounts*

The accounts for 2005 show a slightly smaller positive result at the end of the year as compared to the result in 2004. The positive balance is a result of activities planned for 2005 which did not take place this year. Most of it stems from the planning of the Sub-Saharan African conference planned for 2005, postponed for 2006.