

## General information

Title of project	<b>CWI AFRICA REGIONAL SEMINAR: On Child-focused Research Methods and Ethics in Africa Kaleb Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 22nd-24th November, 2010</b>
Activities covered by this report:	CWI CODESRIA ACPF and participating institutions, individuals.
Project Co-ordinators	ROSE SEPTEMBER; CARLOS CARDOSO TATEK ABEBE

## Narrative reporting:

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### **Description of the main activities carried out (if relevant, please comment on any major deviations from the plans approved by CWI).**

The seminar included a group of 12 Child rights Researchers who also constitutes primarily the core group of researchers who attended the CWI African regional working group meeting held in Addis 2009 during the Children at a Cross Roads Conference.

While the seminar was initially proposed as a “Training of the Trainers” workshop on Ethics and Methods of Child Rights Research, the focus was amended to broaden the purpose and scope of the working meeting. This was imperative in line with (i) the urgency of formalizing the network and its relationships with key role players in the region (ii) to move towards the formulation of a realistic, practical and achievable strategy and plan of action for CWI Africa (iii) provide a platform for young researchers (&not so young ones’!) to share their current research projects and to stimulate mutual learning and collaboration.

The meeting was therefore arranged into a business part and a more academic learning/ sharing part. This report will focus on the outcomes of both of these.

## **Outcomes of the activities**

Please give an overview over the outcomes of the activities carried out (e.g. conference proceedings, a research proposal or a publication). How have the outcomes been made available to others?

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November:**

### **PART 1: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AGENDA**

#### **1. Introduction, key questions and working methodology**

After the participants introduced themselves, CWI network and CODESRIA was introduced and the opportunity for a closer and more structured relationship was explored.

This session was followed by an interactive and participatory workshop focusing on:

- What are the key research questions of our time?
- Who are the other key partners/networks to link up with?
- Towards an action plan for next year: CWI and CODESRIA: A possible joint agenda for 2011: The Child Training Institute.
- How can the African Network of Child Researchers organize itself to build further capacity, empower child and youth focused research and researchers in the region?

After an initial working session to identify priority research areas, the participants were divided into three main groups to facilitate maximum discussion.

To benefit from the richness of the discussions and also to appreciate the extensive convergence of ideas and proposed strategies the outcome reports of the three groups are attached as annexure. The following represents a summarised version of the views of the participants on the key questions posed.

#### **2. Key Child-Research Themes for the African Region**

Notwithstanding the fact that the groups worked separately it was astounding that their ideas of priorities were the same. The three key focus areas are: Children's participation, Protection and the livelihoods. After interesting debate and further discussion these broad topics were sub-divided to provide greater detail and therefore enhanced understanding to facilitate actual researchable topics.

It was further most interesting to note that the research themes that emerged as the main areas of interest and concern was very similar to the CWI strategic foci as discussed during the meeting of the board in April this year.

Each of the broad themes included possible research topics.

### **2.1 Perspectives of Childhood**

- African society and the constructions of childhood
- Transitions – specificity of transitions (age, gender, geography, livelihood opportunities)
- Friendships – peer relationships, social capital, social networks
- How do children construct peer relationships?
- Changing contexts of friendship formations?

### **2.2 Children's participation**

- Participation of children in matter pertaining to their everyday lives (social, political, cultural and economic)
- Governance: Building citizenship and democratic societies through e.g. child friendly communities/cities)
- Children's rights awareness and education (children, parents, communities, stakeholders)
- How to address/advocate for more political and stakeholder will
- To build children's capacity, self and social identity, and skills to monitor and evaluate progress made on delivery of their rights and well being.
- Special contexts: HIV/AIDS, Streets, displacement, restoration, disability

### **2.3 Children's protection from violence, abuse and exploitation**

- Protection from all forms of exploitation and abuse (labour, trafficking)
- Protection from all forms of violence: Review progress made since violence study.
- Types: verbal, physical, emotional, structural;
- Sites: home, school, community
- Actors: Families, teachers and peers
- Prevention and early intervention

### **2.4. Livelihoods pathways/strategies**

- Children's contributions to family livelihoods
- More and better strategies to combat child poverty (Social protection)
- Special relief measures to provide in basic needs and hunger
- Access to adequate, appropriate and accessible services including education social security, psycho-social support, health and others)
- Migration from the perspectives of migrant children
- Children's work
- Marginal livelihoods (aspect of children's work that transgress legal, moral and social

boundaries but are nevertheless useful for them to get by)

- Children living and working on the streets (protection, care and development perspectives/interventions)

**The participants identified the following key partners and role players in the area of child and youth research:**

### **3. STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER NETWORKS**

#### **3.1 International Organizations**

- African RECs
- CWI
- CODESRIA
- UNICEF
- UNESCO
- UNAFRI
- Interpol
- World Bank
- World Vision
- ILO
- ACPF
- PLAN International
- SAVE THE CHILDREN ALLIANCE (AND MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS)
- International Migration Organization

#### **3.2 African Political Institutions**

- The African Union (The Secretariat and the Committee on the Rights of the Child)
- Pan African Parliament
- National and other spheres of Governments (National Ministries and departments)

#### **3.3 NGO's and CSOs**

- Children's/Youth Movements and clubs
- African Wide Movement for Children

### **4. TAKING THE THEMES FORWARD**

**The participants decided that the following could constitute an appropriate plan to activate a collaborative agenda for the CWI Africa- child research network:**

- Identify key areas/themes of common interest: Establish working groups within the network
- Identify other relevant partners and scholars that can add value to the specific focus area.
- Write concept papers and proposals as appropriate
- Develop funding proposal to identified donors/partners

- Pilot/and or conduct the research in different regions of the continent
- Capture main stream lessons from the pilot/research report.
- Communication/dissemination strategies: Flyers, bulletins, publications; media
- Develop research capacity building tools/framework for mutual learning
- Ongoing collaboration and networking with the strategic partners
  - Organizing workshops, training and seminars
  - Joint authorships and publications
- Seek and use advocacy opportunities with AU; nation states and civil society.

## **5. PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CWI-AFRICA RESEARCH NETWORK**

### **Underlying principles:**

- Values of collegially and collaborative engagement in research, publication and advocacy work
- Avoid duplication of energy and resources
- Seek synergy and alignment with existing initiatives rather than formation of new structures
- Interaction, projects, and decision making firmly embedded in the human rights of children (rights-based approach)and democratic principles
- The network is an academic network and not an NGO network

### **Decisions:**

- That the network is a CWI initiative and will function as a CWI research network
- Consensus on the strategic role and capacity of CODESRIA as a key partner
- The network proposes that CODESRIA formally consider the role of convenor of the CWI-Africa child research network.
- The portfolio of research within CODESRIA act as the formal secretariat of the network
- That CODESRIA considers the imperative strategic links between the different initiatives within CODESRIA that could contribute to the strengthening of the network. In particular: the annual Child Training Institute, the national and the multi-national research groups in regard to child and youth research studies.
- A steering group was established to be the operational link with CWI and CODESRIA:
- The members include:  
Carlos, Tesfaye; Rose;Tatek; Maureen; Almon; (Anne) and a representative from ACPF.

## **Future follow-up**

What are the plans for the next phase of the project?

- (i) The network proposed that Carlos and Tesfaye approach the CODESRIA Executive with the proposal to provide this network the opportunity to run the 2011 Child Training Institute in collaboration with the in-house CODESRIA staff team and framework.
- (ii) That the proposed thematic area for the next Child training Institute seems to be very close to the identified research focus areas of the network. It therefore seems possible to work on a theme that would appeal to CODESRIA.
- (iii) That a small representative group of the steering Committee of the network consult/meet with the CODESRIA to discuss the matter in further detail.

## **Wednesday 23 to 24 November**

### **PART 2: LEARNING TOGETHER TO DO BETTER FOR CHILDREN**

The focus of the following two day was on the participant's research presentations and discussions.

The following presentations were made followed by stimulating and challenging discussions.

1. Theories and constructions of childhoods: Implications for child researchers by Rose September and Shazley Savahl
2. Child safety in Uganda's rural schools, by Steven Arjoo
3. Using retrospective approach in child abuse research with children, by Almon Shumba
4. Methodological reflections from research on the livelihood paths of youth in Ethiopia, by Shumete Gizaw
5. Ethics and participation on rights-based research with children in Ethiopia, by Tatek Abebe
6. Young people's experiences of migration: the case of lottery vendors in Addis Ababa, by Teferi Mekonnen
7. Child related ethics in quantitative research: Some reflections, by Anne Kielland
8. Research with children in Kenya: Methods used and challenges faced, by Maureen Mweru
9. Discussion on the boxed set of manuals on the "Right to be Properly Researched: How to do Rights-based Scientific Research with Children". : Are these useful and

how can it be used in the region by scholars and teachers of child research?

**OUTCOMES:**

- (i) Consensus that there exist a need to enhance and broaden our “theorizing of African Children’s Lives” – what does it mean to be an African child?
- (ii) While there is a growing interest and indication of more studies in childhood, there remain a dearth of conceptual analysis and academic rigor.
- (iii) There is a need to analyze what are the topics that students choose and why
- (iv) What impact does it make?
- (v) A possible start could be an analysis of the work done by National and multi-national study groups of CODESRIA.
- (vi) There is definite opportunities to do more collaborative studies that could provide deeper understanding of the key issues that better inform us about childhoods in Africa
- (vii) Our work must be aligned to policy reform, advocacy and change for children in Africa
- (viii) The links with the AU Commissioner, African expert Committee and the African Movement for Children is therefore crucial.

**THE PRESENTATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE PRESENTERS**

## **Information about participants**

If conferences, seminars and/or open meetings were part of the activities: Please specify the number of participants, including the number of participants from academic institutions, NGOs, governmental institution and the UN system.

In connection with the seminar, the Ethiopian Television has approached the seminar participants and documented what is going on in order to make a short presentation for the Youth Program.

**Please comment on lessons learned from the activities carried out. Do you have any recommendations to CWI or to others involved that could enhance future activities?**

The seminar has not only given the chance to meet up and exchange academic and policy related concerns about children in Africa, but has also created a very conducive atmosphere to consolidate what the African Network has initiated over the past years with respect to forming a regional network that is affiliated to CWI. It is the hope of the participants in this seminar that the network has now a clearly defined vision and mandate that will take the important task of collaborative research and networking, advocacy and joint publications. The network will strengthen its effort and ambition to provide sustained framework/platform for meaningful knowledge on and with African children and youth.

## List of Participants

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