

Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group MERG Newsletter, Issue 4, June 2012

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Child Protection MERG Background

Established in July 2010, the Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CP MERG) aims at strengthening the quality of monitoring and evaluation, research and data collection in child protection, through the development of standards, tools and recommendations which are relevant for the sector. It will also help to facilitate coordination and communication across organizations on monitoring and evaluation of child protection.

For further information, please visit www.cpmerg.org.

Latest Updates in Child Protection M&E

CP MERG Technical Working Group on Violence Against Children: Finalization of Two Reports on Data Collection

The CP MERG has finalised two reports commissioned by the Technical Working Group (TWG) on violence against children. The reports are currently being edited with the intention of publishing them as working papers. Each report provides background material to guide the TWG in developing and establishing international guidelines for the collection of data on violence against children. The first report is a literature review of issues related to research ethics in collecting data on violence against children. The second is a mapping/inventory of existing quantitative surveys on violence against children as well as in-depth assessment of the methodological elements and ethical procedures of a selection of nine studies. Contact: Claudia Cappa, UNICEF Statistics and Monitoring Specialist, Child Protection (ccappa@unicef.org)

Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): Accelerating Change Launched

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the Joint Programme on FGM/C has accelerated the abandonment of FGM/C in programme countries over the last four years (2008-2011). The evaluation provides an opportunity to ensure accountability to donors and other stakeholders, and is also a useful learning exercise. The evaluation will measure the achievements of the holistic and multi-sectoral approach to accelerate FGM/C abandonment. Furthermore, the evaluation will provide recommendations for the future direction of FGM/C programmes, as well as insights into conducting joint programming. The ongoing evaluation is conducted jointly by UNFPA and UNICEF. Website: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/about/Evaluation/EBIER/TE/pid/10103>

Global Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies

The UNICEF Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the UNICEF Child Protection Section, is pleased to announce the launch of the Evaluation of UNICEF Child Protection Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies. The evaluation aims at strengthening child protection programming in the context of emergencies by assessing UNICEF's performance in recent years and drawing lessons and recommendations that will influence on-going and future programmes. The evaluation will examine the performance of child protection strategies and interventions along a continuum of pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis (recovery) phases of transition and therefore incorporates both preventive and responsive perspectives. For further details regarding this evaluation or related queries please contact Krishna Belbase, UNICEF Senior Evaluation Specialist (kbelbase@unicef.org).

Bond: Draft papers on assessing effectiveness

Established in 1993, Bond is the UK membership body for NGOs working in international development. As of 31 March 2011, Bond has 358 members ranging from large bodies with a world-wide presence to smaller, specialist organizations working in certain regions or with specific groups of people.

After 13 consultation workshops with over 200 staff from more than 100 organisations, the Bond Effectiveness Programme is excited to present the final drafts of six papers on assessing effectiveness in child protection, education, empowerment, governance and accountability, capacity development for organisations and institutions and influencing power holders (papers can be found at <http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/improveit.html>).

The papers include a comprehensive mapping of common domains of change and outcomes, indicators, data collection tools and means of verification. All of the content of the papers is based on indicators and tools currently being used by NGOs. Papers on the other thematic areas (health and HIV/AIDS, infrastructure, environmental sustainability and markets and livelihoods) and ways of working (community mobilisation, building public support and service delivery) will be produced in the second half of 2012.

The “Improve It Framework,” to be launched in autumn 2012, will allow organizations to locate the indicators they need in a few easy clicks, download data collection tools and print out diagrams, indicators and means of verification in a workshop-friendly format.

If you have any feedback to provide on the content of the papers, please contact Mischa Foxell, Effectiveness Programme Assistant (mfoxell@bond.org.uk). For more information, please visit www.bond.org.uk.

New Minimum Child Protection Standards in Humanitarian Settings

In 2010, following a number of consecutive humanitarian responses, the global level Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) agreed on the need for minimum child protection standards in humanitarian settings, to address what was seen as a critical gap and subsequently as a means to strengthen the protection of children in emergencies. Child protection practitioners, other humanitarians, academics and policy makers worked together to ensure that the standards were built on existing evidence from within and outside of the child protection sector. The Minimum Standards follow the structure of the Sphere standards (<http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/>); each standard is accompanied by key actions, indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the standard and guidance notes.

The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Response intend to a) establish common principles amongst all actors who play a role in child protection (including those from other sectors) and strengthen coordination among them; b) improve the quality and access of child protection programming to achieve greater impact for children; c) improve accountability within the child protection in emergencies sector; d) define the professional field of child protection in emergencies; e) synthesize and make available good practice and learning in the sector to date; and f) enable humanitarian workers and others to better advocate and communicate on child protection needs and responses. The Standards are in final draft form and are expected to be launched at the end of 2012.

Contact: Katy Barnett, Coordinator Child Protection Working Group, UNICEF (cbarnett@unicef.org) and Pernille Ironside, UNICEF Child Protection in Emergencies Specialist (pironside@unicef.org). For questions related to indicators for the Minimum Standards, please contact Hani Mansourian (hmansourian@unicef.org).

Family for Every Child

Family for Every Child (<http://www.everychild.org.uk/coalition/>) is a new international alliance of national civil society organizations working together to mobilise knowledge, skills and resources so that more children can grow up in safe and caring families or in appropriate permanent alternative care.

Since early 2012, Family for Every Child has been working to develop a framework of outcome indicators for children in relation to care. Four main purposes are to: measure changing trends and progress on care related outcomes for children for planning and evaluation; inform advocacy and fundraising; identify data gaps and issues with data methods and provide comparative information across members' countries to facilitate planning and learning.

The work has reviewed current available indicators related to the care of children (those developed by the Better Care Network or available in Demographic Health Surveys), and relied on coalition members to gain their opinions on what is important and possible to measure.

The result is a set of indicators with three sub-groups: macro level country context indicators related to underlying causes of separation (poverty) and trends (child labour); policy indicators related to the legislation/policy indicators seen as necessary to prevent separation and provide alternative care; and quantitative outcome indicators that give information on the situation of children without parental care.

Information for the macro level indicators is available to a reasonable level giving a useful overview and suggestions of possible areas for further detailed research. Findings also suggest that most policies and national legislation refer to prioritisation of families but are not fully explicit if they prefer institutional or foster care as an alternative care option. The findings for the quantitative outcome indicators indicate that there is limited information collected on the number of children leaving residential care and that there is rarely differentiation in the data between different types of residential care (large scale, small group homes etc.).

The framework will be finalised in June 2012. Family for Every Child will then identify next steps and also hope to identify collaborations with other actors in the sector.

Contact: Richard Ponsford, Effective Programmes Officer, Family for Every Child
(Richard.ponsford@everychild.org.uk)

Events

Child Indicators in a Globalized World: Implications for Research, Practice and Policy. International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) Conference 2013 (29-31 May 2013, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea)

The conference will explore how child indicators can be used to improve the well-being of children in a globalized world.

Topics to be addressed in the conference include:

- Theory and conceptual frameworks of child indicators
- Measurement, data and methods on child indicators
- Dissemination of child indicators
- Advocacy using child indicators
- Policy and program development using child indicators
- Children's subjective well-being
- Information technology and child indicators
- Child indicators across cultures and borders
- 'Glocalization' of child indicators

Applied Research Methods with Hidden, Marginal and Excluded Populations (30 July - 3 August 2012, School in Social Science Data Analysis, University of Essex, UK)

The course (8th Edition) provides an introduction to research methods in conducting research, both qualitative and quantitative, with marginal, hidden and excluded populations, with a specific focus on equity related research. The course introduces the main theories and research approaches on hard-to-reach populations using different frameworks and techniques.

This intensive course will provide tools to address key issues such as the lack of known sampling frame; the difficulties in reaching the target group; the concepts of impact, attribution and contribution; and the political dimension of research findings. The course explores topics such as: estimation and sampling techniques; participatory research; evidence-based policy versus policy-based evidence; innovation, crowdsourcing and the use of technology; the art of combining qualitative and quantitative methods; and ethical considerations arising when conducting research with hidden and marginalized populations.

Topics in this year's course will include: i) innovation and the use of technology: SMS, crowd sourcing and mapping; ii) qualitative methods; iii) quantitative methods.

Website: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/summerschool/courses/session2/2r.html>

For information, please contact: Ms. Melanie Sawers, Administrative Director Essex Summer School In Social Science Data Analysis, University of Essex UK, Email: mels@essex.ac.uk, Tel: +44 (0) 1206 872502.

Publications

Childhood Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches, Young Lives Research on Childhood and Poverty

The Young Lives is a long-term study of childhood poverty in developing countries. International experts follow two groups of children in poor communities across four countries as they grow into young adults. With five survey rounds to interview all the children and their caregivers, interspersed with on-going participatory research with a smaller number of the children, the research is planned to cover a period of 15 years.

The book "Childhood Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches" (<http://www.younglives.org.uk/what-we-do/news-and-events/news-archive/multidimensionality-matters-new-book-from-young-lives>) published in January 2012 and edited by Jo Boyden and Michael Bourdillon, represents the engagement of Young Lives with researchers and debates in the field of children and development, reflecting on the first two rounds of Young Lives data coming from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam, with supporting material from Tanzania and South Africa. Topics include the ethics of research, the long-term causes and consequences of childhood poverty and the resilience and optimism shown by children and their families.

Protecting Children in the Context of Development: Research from Young Lives

Young Lives, the international study of childhood poverty, has been developing research into better understanding how to protect the lives, well-being and development of children. Young Lives involvement in this work has been motivated by emerging evidence that poverty is a key indicator for multiple risks in children (*see previous article for more details*). To explore this further, Young Lives was funded by the Oak Foundation to bring together researchers and practitioners to share findings from their research with children specifically around a range of child protection concerns, including children's work, independent migration, family separation, early marriage and military occupation.

This work will be published in June in the journal *Development in Practice*. The journal special issue concludes with some reflections for policy and practice, and is intended to be the first stage of a conversation between researchers, policymakers and practitioners about the challenges faced in the field of child protection and how to better protect children. If interested, please contact: Kirrily Pells (kirrily.pells@qeh.ox.ac.uk). For more information about Young Lives, please visit www.younglives.org.uk.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs Ireland: National Guidance for Developing Ethical Research Projects Involving Children

Research with, and for, children is necessary because knowing about children and their lives and understanding the child's perspective are key to protecting, promoting and supporting their health and well-being (Department of Health and Children, 2000). There are specific issues arising from children's and young people's legal status, their knowledge and experience of the world, their differing levels of cognition and their relative lack of independence and autonomy, all of which require particular attention in order to ensure appropriate and ethical research practice.

The aim of this guidance paper (http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/Ethics_Guidance.pdf) produced by a working group on behalf of the Irish Department of Children and Youth Affairs, is to advise on good practice principles for undertaking research with children. This guidance, which builds on a report by Felzmann et al (2010), is based on legal or policy precedent and/or best practice principles. It is also driven by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Articles 2, 3, 4 and 6 (UN, 1989). The guidance is intended for all those who carry out research with, and for, children in Ireland.

The CP MERG Secretariat would like to hear from you!

The Secretariat is proposing to organize a **series of webinars** with CP MERG members, external experts (including from academic institutions) and other programme and M&E colleagues, to present advanced and/or completed pieces of work on areas of common interest. This would further stimulate interest and discussion on advances in child protection situation and programme M&E and related areas, facilitate knowledge sharing, and enhance collaboration and avoid duplication of work. The webinar sessions would be recorded and stored on the CP MERG website and could be linked to other relevant websites. If you are interested in this initiative and would like to give a webinar and/or participate, please contact the CP MERG Secretariat (Caroline Bacquet-Walsh cbacquetwalsh@unicef.org).

Some members and agencies have expressed a desire to have child protection M&E products **peer-reviewed** by members and/or experts from other organizations and bodies with an expertise in particular areas. The CP MERG Secretariat would like to know if you are interested in having your work peer-reviewed and/or peer-reviewing others' products. If you are interested, please contact the CP MERG Secretariat (Caroline Bacquet-Walsh cbacquetwalsh@unicef.org).