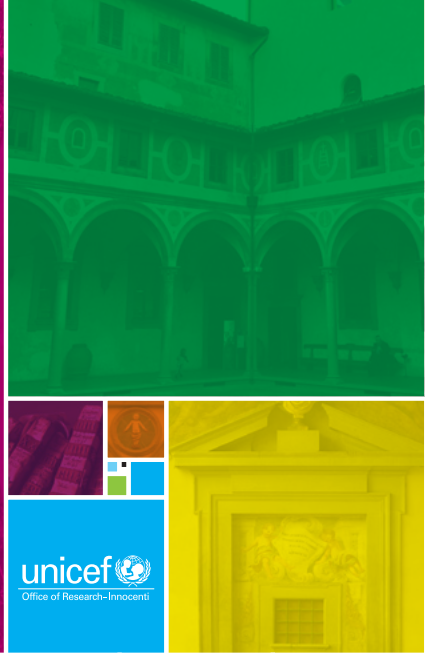
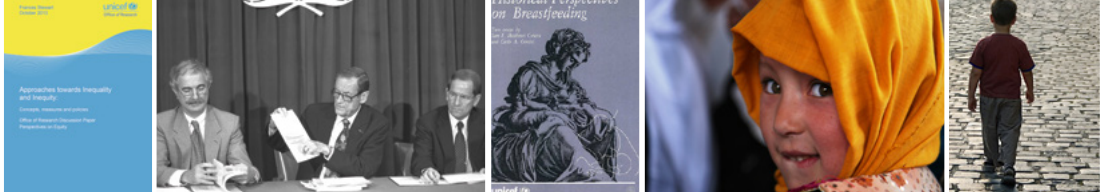
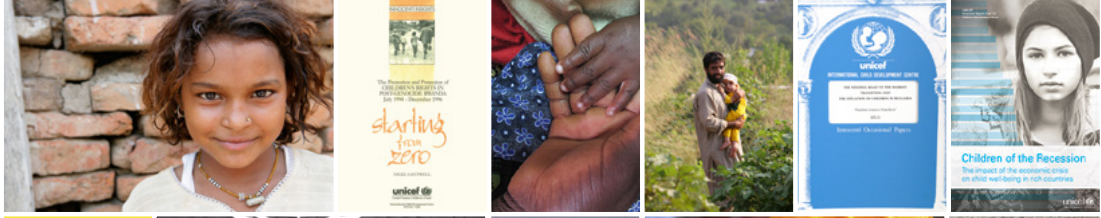
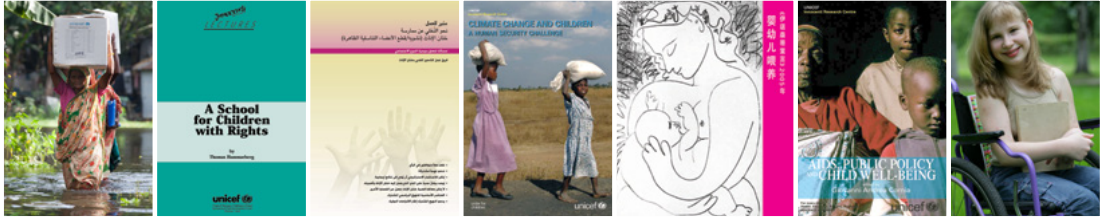
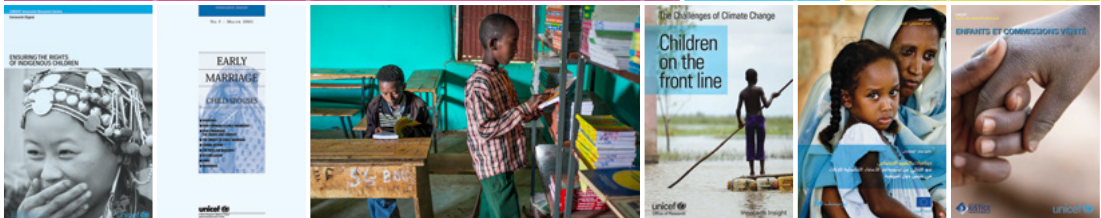


Children and Research at Innocenti

25 Years of UNICEF Commitment



unicef
Office of Research-Innocenti



The UNICEF Office of Research

The UNICEF Office of Research works to improve international understanding of issues relating to children's rights and to help facilitate full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in developing, middle-income and industrialized countries.

Publications produced by the Office are contributions to a global debate on children and may not necessarily reflect UNICEF policies or approaches on some topics. The views expressed are those of the authors and/or editors.

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In 1987 the Italian Government and the Executive Board of UNICEF reached an innovative and far-sighted decision – to open a centre to conduct research and studies around the issues affecting the lives of children, and to open it in Florence. The 500 year-old Ospedale degli Innocenti agreed to host this unusual partner and a new culture began to take root – the ‘culture of caring for children’ mentioned by the then Executive Director of UNICEF, James Grant, in his inaugural speech.

It is salutary to read again both that speech and the remarks made by the ‘International Child Development Centre’s’ first Director, James Himes, both reproduced here, and after 25 years to reflect on what has been achieved, what has been less successful and, as we look to the future, to see where we can work harder to achieve those original goals and tackle issues unforeseen in 1988.

We felt it was a good occasion to listen to the voices of those who have contributed in various ways to the life of the Centre, not only as a historic exercise, but to help contextualise our present, to avoid the same mistakes and to help in solving recurring issues. In these interesting brief articles, internal struggles and issues are recounted with the voice of experience and benefit of hindsight, offering meaningful suggestions and insights for younger generations of researchers and managers.

Jim Himes, for example, casts a fresh, knowledgeable and self-critical eye on the early work, achievements and some unexpected evolutions as he recounts the energy and enthusiasm in the creation of the new Centre. His comments are all the more valid from the thoughtful perspective of time and distance.

Giovanni Andrea Cornia, one of the authors of ‘Adjustment with a Human Face’, guided the socio-economic section and established an extensive and rigorous programme analysing data drawn from across the ex-Soviet block and revealing unexpected consequences for parents and children alike following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Organizational and administrative problems beset most institutions and Mehr Khan Williams provides frank insight into those that dogged what became the Innocenti Research Centre, and their resolution with the support of the Italian Government. Her innate wisdom clarifies the essential modus vivendi for research within an organization like UNICEF.

Nigel Cantwell, who participated in drafting the Convention of the Rights of the Child, places a sharp focus on the issues surrounding child protection, and reinforces the need for intellectual independence and freedom from unwarranted influence to achieve the best outcomes and policies for children. Trond Waage, a former Norwegian children’s ombudsman, writes of the Centre’s role in contributing to and implementing international standards.

Overseeing the evolution of the centre into the UNICEF Office of Research, former Director Gordon Alexander now looks to the future anticipating an extended role for UNICEF at Innocenti as increasingly decision makers are driven by evidence.

On re-reading the inaugural speech and the thoughts of subsequent researchers and directors, it is plain to see that the original hopes and enthusiasm are still present. We must thank the Italian Government for their generous support and faith, the Istituto degli Innocenti for their continuing hospitality, and James Grant for his vision.



Goran Holmqvist, Director a.i. – UNICEF Office of Research

570 Years of Caring for Children

L' Ospedale degli Innocenti

The Spedale di Santa Maria degli Innocenti, the building in which the UNICEF Office of Research and its host organization, the Istituto degli Innocenti, are located, is arguably the oldest continuously operating children's hospital in the world.

The building was commissioned by the wealthy Silkworkers Guild of Florence specifically to house and care for the city's orphans and abandoned children. Work began in 1419. It was designed by Filippo Brunelleschi, considered by many the most important architect of the Renaissance. Brunelleschi is perhaps best known for the innovative and influential design of the dome of the city's cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore, the church of Santo Spirito and many other important public and private buildings in Florence.

The Spedale is one of the great architectural creations of the Renaissance. It represented a completely new concept in hospital design. Based on the architecture of a Renaissance residential palace, with a distinctive façade, a loggia with porticos, numerous courtyards and galleries, roomy arched passageways below ground, huge terraces, a church, a pharmacy, an infirmary, and several halls for eating and sleeping, the hospital recalls a great walled princely residence rather than a public institution for the care of abandoned infants and children. The putti in the coloured terracotta medallions by Andrea della Robbia, decorating the colonnade facing the piazza, portray infants in swaddling clothes.

The Spedale was opened on 25 January 1445, and the first infant, Agata Smeralda, was taken in on 5 February. Before the end of the 1400s, the Spedale was accepting hundreds of children annually, for the most part illegitimate offspring of noble or wealthy citizens or the children of families too poor to care for them adequately. To ensure that people would not hesitate to bring children to the hospital for care and lodging, a practice of anonymity was instituted from the very beginning. Thus, initially, infants could be left in the *pila*, a basin near the main entrance. In 1660, this was replaced by the *rota*, a circular, revolving container positioned in an opening in the wall near the entrance in such a way that an abandoned infant could be placed in it outside the building. A custodian inside could then turn the *rota*, or wheel, and receive the child in the hospital. About 90 per cent of the abandoned infants were between a few hours and a few weeks old upon admission. The number of girls abandoned was far greater than the number of boys, as at the time it was thought that boys could eventually be more economically useful to families. The *rota* was closed in 1875.

Children were immediately baptized and then breastfed by resident wet nurses; many were later sent to wet nurses in the countryside and then placed in foster care until about 7 years of age, when they would be returned to the Spedale. The boys were



taught to read and write and, after two more years, were put up for adoption, usually as apprentices to craftsmen. The girls were placed as household servants or set to work in silk or wool production, washing and weaving cloth.

A child in care at the Spedale in the 1400s might have spent as few as two years actually on the premises as the hospital officials attempted from the moment of admission, to provide children with a family setting. Adoption and apprenticeship contracts, drawn up when children were older, stipulated that the children must be treated as if they had been the adoptive parents' own sons or daughters. The Spedale participated in the city's dowry fund, acting as the legitimate father for the female orphans, who could never aspire to marriage without a dowry, however small. In their record-keeping, the personnel often referred to the institution as the 'famiglia' (family) or the 'casa' (home). In addition to its role as a foundling hospital, the Spedale provided temporary care for children whose families were in difficulty and functioned unofficially as a maternity ward for unwed mothers. At the height of its activity, the Spedale had more than 3,000 children in its care. A total of 3,467 children, for example, were recorded for the year 1681.

The Spedale continued to take in orphans during the first half of the 1900s. It was particularly active during both World Wars, offering shelter not only to orphaned children, but also to refugee families.

Now funded by municipal and provincial authorities and by various endowments, the Spedale has residential facilities for only a dozen or so infants at risk of abuse or serious neglect at home. Periods of residence are brief, leading to reintegration with the birth families or to adoption.

The Istituto degli Innocenti also hosts a nursery school, a children's crèche and prenatal service. The Istituto is developing new approaches to the provision of day care, basic education and assistance for children and families in distress. It serves the Regional Government of Tuscany in an advisory capacity on these subjects. A vast archive contains records for all children cared for from the arrival of Agata Smeralda in 1445.

UNICEF is proud to be hosted in an institution which so completely corresponds to its own mandate of care for all children and which has protected their well-being for almost 600 years.



UNICEF is proud to be hosted in an institution which so completely corresponds to its own mandate... and...has protected children's well-being for almost 600 years.



Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant

Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) at the Press Conference Preceding the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the UNICEF International Child Development Centre

SPEDALE DEGLI INNOCENTI

FLORENCE, 12 OCTOBER 1988

This beautiful autumn in Florence marks the initiation of the work of UNICEF’s new International Child Development Centre, housed in this remarkable Spedale degli Innocenti. Today we also begin the inaugural meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the Centre, for which I am delighted to be here to chair. It is of course rather presumptuous to speak of historic occasions in the birthplace of the Renaissance, but I should certainly mention in these brief opening remarks the fact that our new UNICEF Centre brings a permanent presence of the United Nations to Florence for the first time in this city’s extraordinary history. We are delighted to be here and very grateful to the Government of Italy, as well as to the provincial and municipal authorities, who have made it possible for us to establish this important Centre in Florence. Our special thanks to Elvira Pajetta and her colleagues of the Istituto degli Innocenti, who have made us feel very much at home and with whom we look forward to continuing co-operation in the years to come.

Florence has welcomed the United Nations at a time we feel may be viewed by future historians as something of a Renaissance of our own. Promising developments in several troubled regions of the world together with improving superpower relations suggest that we may be approaching a period of greater peace and reduced international tensions, and also a strengthened role for the United Nations in promoting and maintaining world peace. Even our press coverage is improving. The Washington Press corps, for example, not always the most favourably disposed to the United Nations, applauded us recently in the form of an editorial in the Washington Post stating: “More than ever before in its history, the world body is now doing the sort of peacemaking and peacekeeping that constituted its founders’ driving dream.”

And of course, the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize is being awarded to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces. It is particularly appropriate that the thousands of soldiers from around the world who have helped contain hostilities in so many troubled areas should be honoured this year – the 40th anniversary of the first United Nations Peacekeeping operation in the Middle East.

In addition to the Nobel Peace Prizes awarded to Ralph Bunche and Dag Hammarskjöld for their work at the United Nations, this body’s work for peace has been recognized four



***The mandate of UNICEF might be described as striving
for peace at the level of the child and the family.***



times already for its institutions: the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 1954 and 1981; the International Labour Office in 1969 and UNICEF, the Organization which I am proud to represent, in 1965.

Just as the United Nations as a whole is fundamentally committed to promoting peace among nations, the mandate of UNICEF might be described as striving for peace at the level of the child and the family.

UNICEF, of course, began its existence here in Europe to provide emergency aid to the victims, especially the child victims, of one of the most brutal wars the world has ever suffered. We continue to stand ready, when needed, to assist the victims of armed conflicts. But the most relevant violence destroying the lives and the aspirations of children today is not accompanied by the horrifying sounds of bombardment and gunfire. Most of the 40,000 children still dying every day – 14 million a year – die today from a now-preventable combination of malnutrition and infectious diseases which results in silent deaths. Their small bodies are simply too weak to produce the cries of agony they and their families feel. Since the end of World War II, dehydration alone, caused by diarrhoeal diseases, has claimed the lives of almost 150 million people, nearly all children and nearly all in developing countries. This tragic figure far exceeds the combined civilian and military deaths of both World Wars.

Other more hidden forms of violence wreck the lives of millions of children throughout the world. The gross neglect and abuse of children is of increasing concern everywhere. This problem may be growing faster in industrialized countries than elsewhere in the world. In the United States, for example, there has been a 200 per cent increase in reported cases of child abuse during the last decade. In Italy, a recent study prepared for the Istituto degli Innocenti cites a figure of 35,000 children involved in exploitative labour conditions in Naples alone. At the last meeting of UNICEF's Executive Board, the delegate of the Soviet Union reported that there is growing concern in his country for what the Soviets refer to as their "New Orphans", typically the children of working parents, occasionally alcoholic parents, other times children exposed to impersonal and uncaring day-care systems.

Fortunately, to help in the war being waged against the realities lying behind all these grim statistics of child death, disease, abuse and neglect, we have increasingly effective weapons at our disposal – if we choose to use them. Some of them are technological breakthroughs such as low-cost techniques of oral rehydration therapy for combatting dehydration, or the remarkable advances in mass communications which have greatly facilitated social communications and the mobilization of leaders and the public around the world for what UNICEF has called the child survival and development revolution.

As a dramatic demonstration of this new potential in the 1980s, for which the United Nations is providing leadership, the lives of millions of children – reaching 2 ½ millions in



UNICEF, of course, began its existence here in Europe to provide emergency aid to the victims, especially the child victims, of one of the most brutal wars the world has ever suffered. We continue to stand ready...



1988 alone – have been saved, and the crippling of millions more prevented, by nations, including Italy in the forefront, which have mobilized to put today's low-cost solutions at the disposal of the majority of families. While the means are now proven, hundreds of millions of families still remain unreached by this potential for a virtual revolution in child survival and development – a breakthrough which, by the year 2000, could reduce 1980s child death rates by half, save more than 100 million children from death and disablement, improve the health and nutrition of many hundreds of millions more, and slow population growth as well. It was for earlier such contributions to peace for children against their traditional enemies of disease, neglect and disasters, that UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965.

Other progress lies in the legal and political arena, including the work by the United Nations and by many outstanding non-governmental organizations on the drafting and promotion of a Convention on the Rights of the Child. With continued hard work and rising political and popular support, it is possible that this Convention can be completed and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. For the Convention thereafter to come into effect, it must be ratified by at least 20 countries, hopefully within ten years of the action by the United Nations General Assembly. It will help immensely in this process if all countries can work as hard as Italy in promoting public understanding and demand for the Convention and the greater protection for children its eventual implementation will afford.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Italian National Committee for UNICEF, whose president Aldo Farina is with us today, for its outstanding work in promoting the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Of particular importance in Italy – and an excellent example for other countries – is the effort to get the Convention and the subject of the rights and protection of children into the curricula of schools throughout this country. We are proud indeed of the role the Italian UNICEF Committee has played in this campaign.

The challenges that lie ahead of all of us concerned with the well-being of children and families, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, are formidable to be sure. We must constantly be seeking innovative and feasible ways to overcome the many obstacles to progress which face us as we approach the 21st century.

Thanks to the generous support of Italy, one of UNICEF's major partners and most effective advocates, and whose financial support has increased over the last ten years from less than \$1 million to more than \$60 million annually, we are delighted to be strengthening our ability to develop innovative and effective new approaches through the creation of our International Child Development Centre in Florence as well as through major support of innovative field programmes already saving the lives of thousands of children each day. This is the first time UNICEF has had such a facility to strengthen our



1445



1994

own capacity and that of our co-operating institutions to achieve much higher priority for children and their families on the political and economic agendas of all nations.

We sometimes refer to UNICEF's mission, which now also becomes the mission of our Centre in Florence, as striving to create a worldwide culture of caring for children by their society – a new ethos of "Children First." Where better to establish a centre dedicated to this mission than here in this inspiring city of Florence – and in this magnificent institution dedicated to the well-being of abandoned and needy children for over five centuries of uninterrupted commitment to caring.

The materials we have distributed provide additional information about the plans and proposed activities of our new centre, and there are also available background materials relating to the work of UNICEF throughout the world. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have either about UNICEF or about the International Child Development Centre.

Thank you for coming and many thanks again to our hosts and new partners in Florence.

[EXTRACT FROM "REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, FLORENCE, 12-13 OCTOBER 1988" ANNEX III]



We sometimes refer to UNICEF's mission, which now also becomes the mission of our Centre in Florence, as striving to create a worldwide culture of caring for children by their society.



OPENING STATEMENT BY JAMES R. HIMES

DIRECTOR OF THE UNICEF INTERNATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPEDALE DEGLI INNOCENTI

FLORENCE, 12 OCTOBER 1988

Let me begin, if I may Mr. Chairman, on a somewhat personal note. Before joining UNICEF seven years ago, I had spent most of the prior 19 years concerned with research and training for development, including 10 years of work in Latin America involved in what we in UNICEF have recently been calling “capacity building”. UNICEF’s principle concerns in this regard involve enhancing capacities for child survival and development. Back in the heady days of the 1960s, the capacity-building objectives I was associated with were far more ambitious: many of us in those times were concerned with nothing short of nation building – the economic, social and political development of newly emerging, and often newly independent, nation states.

In retrospect, many of those early efforts, springing from the optimism of the “First Development Decade”, seem naïve; and some appear unduly interventionist. Certainly we have all learned a lot about the process of development in the ensuing two decades. One thing we have learned is that there is still an unacceptable gap between good development theory and good development practice, and, perhaps more importantly, between the best practices in development and the common or average practices. (And we too often settle for the average.) Reducing these disparities, these glaring gaps between what we know can be achieved and what has actually been achieved, is one of the major challenges facing all of us concerned with human development.

There is also a growing international consensus that the notion of “development” is virtually meaningless unless it includes the critical element of sustainability. Sustainable development, defined in terms of ecological, socio-political, managerial and financial sustainability, is really what it’s all about – regardless of how many debates may continue to rage about how self-reliant, how capitalist or socialist, or how religiously fundamentalist or secular, a nation’s “development” should be.

Sustainability inevitably brings us back, at least in the UNICEF-Florence context, to capacity building. There is a saying in English that “charity begins at home”, conveying the message that just as we are, or should be, generous and charitable with our neighbours, we should not in the process neglect our own fellow countrymen or our own family members. Part of the idea behind UNICEF’s new centre in Florence might be described as “capacity-building begins at home”. Our Centre here is an explicit recognition of UNICEF’s need to continue – and indeed to accelerate – the strengthening



Our objective is...based on the proposition that we all have a great deal to learn and to share about how to increase the life chances of severely deprived or high-risk children.



of our own capacity to face the formidable challenges which lie ahead of us as we approach the 1990s: the “Fourth Development Decade” – following a Third Decade which can only be described, for a majority of developing countries, as disastrous.

One need only look at the titles of the four major programme areas of initial concern to UNICEF-Florence – only a small part of UNICEF – to appreciate the magnitude of the tasks which lie before us:

- Capacity-building for Child Survival and Development, focussed on sub-Saharan Africa;
- Economic policies and mobilizing resources for children;
- Needs of the Urban Child;
- Rights and Protection of the Child – a subject linked to the important work underway in and outside the United Nations on a draft Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF’s work in these areas, of course, is in addition to the major tasks which still are highest on our collective agenda: the promotion and support of highly effective and low-cost measures to reduce infant and child mortality, such as breast-feeding and adequate weaning foods, oral rehydration therapy, and immunization against the major childhood diseases. Child survival and development, in the context of continued demographic pressure and the economic and other crises facing many low-income countries, is a mission of enormous magnitude and complexity for an international agency the size of UNICEF.

To meet this challenge, within the constraints of a staff size which cannot – or at least probably should not – continue to grow much beyond our current size, we must find ways to improve our abilities to be creative, to be highly effective professionals, and to be good managers and mobilizers: to get “more for less” as our Executive Director, Mr. Grant, often encourages us to achieve.

One response to the challenge of capacity-building in UNICEF could have been to establish in Florence a sort of “Staff College” for UNICEF aimed primarily or exclusively at training and improving the skills of our staff. Fortunately, in my view, UNICEF’s senior management, supported by our Executive Board, discarded that “UNICEF-centric” idea in favour of a broader and more outreaching approach which seeks to strengthen capacities in our major co-operating institutions, governmental and non-governmental, as we also strive to enhance our own capacities.

The idea behind this Centre in Florence also moves away from any suggestion that somehow we in UNICEF are the principal generators or guardians of knowledge about child survival, protection and development and that we need a new branch, based in an important cultural centre such as Florence, to help disseminate our wisdom to others.



We use the word “research”... as short-hand for a full range of learning and knowledge-generating activities.



Our objective is rather based on the proposition that we all – North/South/East/West – have a great deal to learn and to share about how to increase the life chances of severely deprived or high-risk children and how to help them realise their full potential. And, most difficult of all, we need to learn how to develop practical ways to achieve these ambitious goals for children and families: ways that are affordable, manageable and sustainable in the context of low-income and often resource-poor countries and communities. Learning together, sharing our experiences, drawing lessons from our successes and our failures: as donors and recipients, as learners and as practitioners, as public agencies and as private entities, as thinkers and doers, working together in a partnership to respond to the needs of children and to help create a culture for caring for children.

There will be ample opportunity, I hope, during the next day and a half to discuss some of the practical implications of the overall strategy of the UNICEF Centre in Florence which Mr. Grant and I have briefly alluded to in our opening remarks and which are spelled out in more detail in the background documents. Without wanting to postpone these working-level discussions, let me close with two final observations about the work strategy or style of operations we plan to adopt in Florence.

First, we have consciously set out to work in each of our four major programme areas in a manner which will bring research, training and advocacy as close together as possible. (We use the word “research”, I should note, as short-hand for a full range of learning and knowledge-generating activities primarily including problem-oriented and operational research, policy analysis, and field experimentation and evaluation). We expect to achieve an effective interaction among these often-separate activities of research, training and advocacy. In the early phases of our work, we will be especially eager to assure that the training activities we organise or support benefit directly from, and contribute to, the more research-oriented and policy work of the Centre. Put differently, we want to discourage the idea that those in Florence with a research-oriented mission, including the Fellows, will pursue their work in isolation from the need for a wide sharing of the knowledge they help generate, for capacity-building or training purposes, and for effective and well-informed advocacy for children.

Secondly, we feel very strongly that our Florence Centre should take full advantage of UNICEF’s decentralised and country programme-oriented organisation to help us stay close to high-priority, real-world problems facing children living in low-income or vulnerable families and communities. This means we need to stay close to our field offices. When we begin to discuss our specific activities, you will hear more about our plans to develop working relationships with UNICEF Country programmes in Brazil, Kenya, the Philippines, Uganda, just to mention a few where consultations with UNICEF Representatives are furthest advanced. You will also hear from our colleagues at the Istituto degli Innocenti about how, in the area of the urban child, we intend to encourage comparative policy analysis and the sharing of experiences between some innovative



James P. Grant

James R. Himes

urban-child work in several Italian cities with the emerging results of urban programme experiences UNICEF has supported in developing countries.

To help facilitate these critical links with UNICEF-supported country programmes, I am very pleased that two of our UNICEF Advisory Committee members, Mary Racelis and Karl-Eric Knutsson, are UNICEF Regional Directors, with years of “hands-on” field experience themselves. It is also important that they now come to us from two areas of the world which are of high priority for UNICEF because of the sheer magnitude of the problems of child health, education and well-being: Africa and South Asia. (For those of you who know the extraordinary careers of James Grant and Dr. Nyi Nyi, I’m sure there is no need to mention the depth and richness of the developing-country experiences they also have!) To return to the essential point, we in Florence pledge to do everything possible to ensure that although our heads may at times be high in the clouds of aspirations to help UNICEF create this “emerging global ethic for caring for children”, we will be sure to keep our feet planted firmly on the ground!

Thank you all for joining us and please be sure that my colleagues and I here at the International Child Development Centre are eagerly awaiting your advice and council as we move into this inaugural meeting of our international Advisory Committee.



UNICEF Research at Innocenti

The International Child Development Centre (ICDC) was founded in 1988 with a mandate “to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF and its cooperating institutions to respond to the evolving needs of children and to promote an emerging new global ethic for children”.

Jim Grant, at the time UNICEF Executive Director, saw that research was fundamental in finding the best responses to resolve the problems of health, education, poverty and violence that affected millions of children the world over. Research was complementary to the field and programmatic activities of UNICEF, and by furnishing hard evidence and data, could accelerate the commitment of governments and politicians.

The “emerging new global ethic for children” was enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) around which grew an international consensus that all children have a right to first call on the world’s resources and to special protection at all times. ICDC’s contribution to this “new ethic” was to investigate all issues affecting children’s lives and channel evidence into policies and approaches to improve them.

The ICDC was established with funding from the Government of Italy, a contribution and commitment that continues today, while funding for specific projects is also supplied by others. Since 2001, the partners and donors have included the governments of Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Other partners with financial cooperation or in joint activities include the European Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, USAID, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and many more.

ICDC’s early work was concentrated in two broad areas: the impact of socio-economic change on children, and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which had recently come into force.

The Centre’s most significant contributions to date have continued to be in these fields, but programmes, projects and plans have grown, developed, evolved and been re-dimensioned over the 25 years of the Centre’s existence, according to global needs and resources. But the main pillars of the activities have remained and been strengthened, seeking new ways to approach old problems while identifying and tackling new ones.

In the first area, research carried out by the Centre has provided evidence and analytical support to UNICEF and its cooperating institutions in their efforts to influence course corrections in adjustment programmes, debt policies and fiscal and economic reforms

**UNICEF
Research at
Innocenti from
1988 to today**

***Independence and expertise enable quick
response to emerging issues and experience
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See full catalogue of publications at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/>

by demonstrating the impact, especially on the poorest children, mothers and families, of measures oriented towards a narrow interpretation of fiscal and economic efficiency. The analysis concentrated initially on child poverty and deprivation in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and industrialized countries, but, for similar purposes, the Centre also began to monitor closely the progress of the economic and social transition undertaken by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States after the collapse and break-up of the Soviet Union.

In the process, the Centre has, in many cases, indicated the distinct social and economic benefits that become available when adjustment and reform take account of the poorest and most vulnerable in society, particularly children and mothers.

In the area of the promotion of children's rights, the Centre has helped UNICEF and its partners respond to the evolving needs of children and promote a new global ethic based on greater international awareness of the fundamental human rights of children. A major approach adopted by the Centre has been to encourage and facilitate the full, effective implementation of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by governments and other important actors.

UNICEF at Innocenti hosted a steering committee which met regularly to guide UNICEF on the implications of the Convention. It also documented the experience of the world's first ombudsperson for children and conducted research on basic principles and articles of the Convention. Work continues to facilitate implementation and respect of the CRC in national and international contexts.

In all of these areas, the Centre has undertaken original research and hosted seminars to highlight gaps in data and analytical knowledge, to support and expand efforts to fill these gaps and to influence policy in favour of children. Over its history there has been broad and profitable collaboration with many other research institutes and universities, including among others UNU-WIDER, UNRISD, and more recently Harvard University, London School of Economics, Royal Holloway, University of London, the University of Otago, University College London, Southern Cross University, University of Oxford, The Berkman Center, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Save the Children.

In 2011 with the consolidation of UNICEF's research function, the Centre became the Office of Research. A complete listing of the research areas from 1989 to 2017 can be accessed here. <<http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/project/>>

Some Milestones

Decentralization: This was one of the earliest areas of investigation and stemmed from the World Summit for Children held in 1990 which called for countries to create National Programmes of Action, later known as NPA decentralization. In order to better



Children in industrialized countries



Structural adjustment in developing countries

Early Child Development

1988–1990

understand the phenomenon of decentralization – where and how it was occurring, the roles of the major actors, and the results that were being achieved – the Centre initiated a project entailing the collection and analysis of relevant data. A series of papers was produced including detailed reviews of the process in [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Egypt](#), [Mongolia](#), [Namibia](#), the [Philippines](#), [Spain](#), [Sudan](#) and [Vietnam](#) among others. As a result, action for children at a local level was greatly facilitated.

The Urban Child: Since the 1980s, population growth and the movement of families into cities to seek work and services has resulted in severe pressures on already-strained urban environments. A clear symptom of this deterioration are the increasing numbers of “working children, street children, abused, neglected and abandoned children” in cities throughout the world. In response to this the Centre carried out a comparative research project on the conditions of urban children in [Brazil](#), [India](#), [Italy](#), [Kenya](#) and the [Philippines](#). Twenty cities were covered and the project provided a comparative analysis of innovative programmes on behalf of children, providing the basis for further policy and programme proposals.

Children and War: The effects of war and genocide came to the forefront in 1997, with the *Innocenti Insight, Starting from Zero*, written by Nigel Cantwell, on the promotion and protection of children’s rights in post-genocide Rwanda, 1994-1996. The same year, UNICEF’s first international Child Protection Officer, [Ben Majekodunmi](#), took up his post in Burundi and the Innocenti Research Centre produced a publication in 1998 summarizing his experience, drawing lessons for future child protection activities in emergency and war situations.

In 2010 the research project on transitional justice to support true healing of war-affected populations, including children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, produced 12 *Working Papers* and culminated in a book co-published with Harvard University entitled *Children and Transitional Justice*. The Papers included work on psychosocial aspects of adjustment and support, case studies of children in Colombia, Peru and Timor Leste, restorative justice after mass violence, the prosecution of international crimes against children, genetic tracing, education and reconciliation, security sector reform, reparations, children’s accountability for war crimes and children as victims of torture.

Eastern European Transition: In 1991, shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall, the Centre produced *Children and the Transition to the Market Economy: Safety nets and social policies in Central and Eastern Europe*, an analysis of the situation of children in the Soviet Union and the implications

PUBLICATIONS

1989

[Economic Decline and Child Survival: The plight of Latin America in the eighties](#)

1990

[Measuring the Psychosocial Development of Young Children. Innocenti Technical Workshop Summary Report, 7-10 May 1990](#)

[Early Child Development: Summary Report, Innocenti Global Seminar](#)

[Causes and Consequences of Child Poverty in the United States](#)

[Working for the Rights of Children](#)

[Toward Structural Transformation with a Human Focus: The economic programmes and policies of Zambia in the 1980s](#)

[Education, Skills and Industrial Development in the Structural Transformation of Africa](#)

[The Fiscal System, Adjustment and the Poor](#)

[Pobreza y privaciones de la infancia en los países industrializados: tendencias recientes y alternativas de política](#)



Basic education

Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child

for them of the transition to a market economy. The project drew on earlier work on adjustment in developing countries, warned of the risks of transition for children and contributed to future policies that took the needs of children into account. One of the Centre's most important early areas of research, this developed into the MONEE project and the *Regional Monitoring Reports* (below) and placed children firmly on the agenda in transitional economies, safeguarding rights, services and inclusion.

Convention on the Rights of the Child: Many principles and aspects of the CRC have been investigated since the earliest years of the Centre, including child participation, evolving capacities of the child, independent human rights institutions for children, law reform and resources and their implications for implementation, and the Optional Protocols. One of the most important yet widely debated principles of the CRC is article 3, the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration and the Centre has undertaken in-depth research to explain and promote understanding of this particular concept. In 1994, analysis of the best interest of the child principle by Philip Alston was published entitled *The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling Culture and Human Rights*. This was followed by an *Innocenti Study* on the same subject in 1996. In addition, a case study was carried out on the best interest principle, looking at relevant laws in Zimbabwe. In 2014 an important and exhaustive study on this issue by Nigel Cantwell was released with specific reference to the situation of intercountry adoption.

Early Childhood Development: The Centre was in the avant-garde of raising awareness concerning the importance of early childhood development (ECD). From 1990 to 1999, training meetings co-organised by the Innocenti Research Centre and UNICEF New York were held on various child rights topics including ECD, psychosocial issues, and participatory development. The results and recommendations of each of these training sessions were recorded in separate reports and published by the Centre. Research was also carried out on children in institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and the effects this phenomena has on early child development. Early childhood care, policies and implementation, data collection, monitoring and good governance have all been the subject of study and publications and underlie many aspects of research such as cash transfers, governance and family support.

Equity, Deprivation and Poverty: In 2012 the Social and Economic Policy Unit developed the **Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA)**, a tool developed with support from the Division of Policy and Strategy to enhance the equity focus of child poverty and deprivation analyses around the world. MODA adopts a holistic approach and recognizes that a child's experience of deprivations is multi-faceted. Selecting the child as the unit of analysis (rather than the household) it adopts a life-cycle approach that reflects the different needs of early childhood, primary childhood and adolescence. The database generates profiles in terms of the geographic and socio-economic

1991–1993



Children in industrialized countries

Decentralization and community participation



characteristics of the (multiply) deprived, thereby pointing towards mechanisms for effective policy design. The web portal developed by the Office of Research offers cross-country comparative analyses of deprivation in children as well as overviews of national situations utilizing richer information available from national datasets.

Gender Issues: Research began on gender issues in 1995 and covered a wide range of aspects. Among the outputs was the fifth *Innocenti Digest* on Domestic Violence against Women and Girls in 2000, and in 2001 the seventh *Innocenti Digest* on Early Marriage. By 2005, the project on harmful social conventions produced the *Digest: Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, which was followed by the development of a common framework by the Donors Working Group on FGM/C. In 2008, a platform for action towards abandonment of FGM/C was launched, providing a common programmatic approach worldwide. Case studies from Sudan and Ethiopia were published in 2009 along with a paper proposing a new look at theories of social norms. In 2010, the Centre produced an *Innocenti Insight* entitled The Dynamics of Social Change: Towards the abandonment of FGM/C in five African countries.

Innocenti Global Seminars: From 1989 to 1998 the Centre hosted global seminars on a range of critical issues. The seminars drew on UNICEF field staff, NGO expertise, universities and research institutes to analyse, train, inform and build the capacity of professional staff, national counterparts, UNICEF National Committees and other key allies. The Centre regarded the training process as a catalyst for ongoing initiatives and follow-up activities. The issues covered included Early Childhood Development, child participation, women, work and childcare, street and working children, monitoring children's rights, children of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples, achieving gender equality in families, and basic education.

The **Regional Monitoring Reports (Social Monitor)** greatly enhanced the profile of UNICEF throughout the 27 countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltics. The Reports helped to put children whose needs were often overlooked amid socio-economic change back on the transition agenda. The Centre developed a project and database (MONEE Project) which has been monitoring the impact of the social and economic changes in the CEE/CIS

PUBLICATIONS

1991

The Convention: Child rights and UNICEF experience at the country level

Historical Perspectives on Breastfeeding: Two essays

Children in Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe

Children and the Transition to the Market Economy: Safety nets and social policies in Central and Eastern Europe

Children of the Runaway Cities: The impact of urban poverty on childhood and family life in the Philippines

Brazil: The fight for childhood in the city

Participatory Development: Global Seminar Report, 1990

A Voice for Children: Speaking out as their Ombudsman

Fiscal Shock, Wage Compression and Structural Reform: Mexican adjustment and educational policy in the 1980s

Transizione economica e costi sociali: la condizione dell'infanzia nei paesi dell'Est

1991–1993



Structural adjustment in developing countries

Early Child Development



Monitoring in the CEE/CIS and Baltics: the MONEE project

Children of minorities

Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child

region since 1992, making a major contribution to the debate on public policies on children's issues in the region. Eight *Regional Monitoring Reports* and five *Social Monitor* reports were produced between 1993 and 2009. Published for a non-specialist audience, they were widely distributed in both English and Russian versions to policymakers, international organizations, interest groups and the international media.

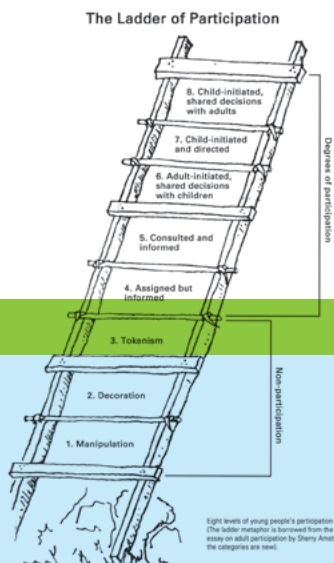
The **Innocenti Digests** first appeared in 1997 and were intended to provide clear summaries of current knowledge and debate on specific child rights issues. Written in an accessible style for use by a wide range of audiences, including policymakers, researchers, UNICEF staff, journalists and members of the public, the *Digests* tackled complex, multi-faceted issues affecting millions of children. Each *Digest* included a Links Section, guiding the reader to relevant organizations and information sources. The topics covered included Juvenile Justice, Child Domestic Workers, Birth Registration, the Rights of Indigenous Children. The *Innocenti Digests* created new constituencies for the Centre with each *Digest* promoted as a working tool within UNICEF and beyond. The *Digest* on Early Marriage gained unprecedented publicity for UNICEF as a whole and was seen as the key resource on this issue at field level.

Two **Innocenti Lectures** were held in 1995 and 1998. These were delivered by two distinguished scholars and discussed crucial welfare problems affecting children and families. Amartya Sen, the Nobel economist, explained why mortality should, or could, be an indicator of economic success. And Nobel Peace prize-winner and human rights defender, Thomas Hammarberg, affirmed that the purpose of education is to enable the child to develop to his or her fullest possible potential and to learn respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Innocenti **Report Card** series presents a League Table indicating how economically advanced countries score with regard to their children. The first issue drew attention to child poverty and the success or failure of nations to protect children from lack of basic requirements. Subsequent issues covered teenage pregnancy,

1991–1993

Promoting children's participation



PUBLICATIONS

1992

Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource mobilization and the obligations of the States Parties

Social Policy and Child Poverty: Hungary since 1945

Poverty Measurement in Central and Eastern Europe before the Transition to the Market Economy

Italy: Too little time and space for childhood

India: The forgotten children of the cities

Kenya: Child newcomers in the urban jungle

Urban Children in Distress: An introduction to the issues

Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship

Children of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities: An overview and conceptual framework

Women, Work and Child Care. Global Seminar Report, 1991

L'Afrique vers la reprise économique - Résumé

child deaths by injury, educational disadvantage, child maltreatment deaths, early childhood education and care, and child well-being. In keeping with UNICEF's mandate to advocate for children in every country, the *Report Card* series focuses on data to inform policy and advocate for children in industrialized countries. They are designed to appeal to a wide audience while maintaining academic rigour and are widely used for evidence-based advocacy in high income countries.

The Role of Research for Children

The need for relevant and good quality research has become greater as the world in which children live becomes more complex: global warming and natural disasters, food security issues, pandemics and major migrations, globalization and its interaction with national and local societies.

New technologies have led to an explosion of information but are making it harder to distinguish the good from the bad. Disadvantage is taking new forms, or in some settings is stubbornly resistant to policy and programme interventions. New threats to children's well-being are poorly understood. In this challenging context, UNICEF must pursue and innovate in the gathering and use of knowledge to guarantee the right choices for children. We need to know whether we are investing our resources wisely and well. Research is fundamental to filtering and interpreting information rigorously and scientifically to generate knowledge that will translate into evidence, advocacy and action for children. It underpins all effective action and enables decision-makers – at global, regional and country levels – to base their actions on reliable sources and on the best knowledge and experiences available.

Within the context of UNICEF, strengthening research will help to answer the practical, locally relevant questions faced by country offices and partners. The powerful advocacy skills, convening power and resources of UNICEF can be used to promote and support research on neglected issues relative to child survival, protection, development, well-being, and rights. Whether in understanding and combating abuses in rich countries or assisting children in situations of conflict or disaster, research helps us to act effectively instead of reacting as best we can. Looking to the future, a strong research capacity will better place us to track emerging threats and find ways of addressing them proactively, through cutting-edge research.

More broadly, UNICEF can also play an important role in setting the global agenda for research on children and help identify areas where research is needed to meet critical

PUBLICATIONS

1993

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Three essays on the challenge of implementation](#)

[Street and Working Children: Global Seminar Report, 1993](#)

[Public Policy and Social Conditions](#)

[Urban Stress and its Effects on Children's Lifestyles and Health in Industrialized Countries](#)

[Children of Minorities: Gypsies](#)
[Crescere zingaro](#)



Urban child

Street and working children



policy and practice needs. Over 25 years, UNICEF at Innocenti has developed strong and productive links with many stakeholders working to improve the lives of children, including governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, parliamentarians, the media, academic and research institutions, donors, foundation and development partners. By convening these partners around a shared agenda, the Office can help ensure that research is relevant to the needs of decision-makers and has an impact improving children's lives. It is also in a position to ensure that research crosses sectoral and programmatic boundaries, addressing the realities of children's lives in a comprehensive way.

The fundamental purpose of research as carried out and maintained by the Office of Research – Innocenti is to ensure that policy and practice are informed by trustworthy evidence. And in a changing world the Office will continue to explore new, emerging and difficult issues, stimulating dialogue on cross-cutting and contextual issues that underpin inequities, whether social, economic or humanitarian.

PUBLICATIONS

1994

[The Relationship between Education and Child Work](#)

[Death in Transition: The rise in the death rate in Russia since 1992](#)

[Family Support Policies in Transitional Economies: Challenges and constraints](#)

[The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling culture and human rights](#)

[Monitoring the Rights of Children. Global Seminar Report, 1994](#)

[Education Rights and Minorities](#)

[Double Jeopardy: The children of ethnic minorities](#)

[From Adjustment to Development in Africa: Conflict, controversy, convergence, consensus?](#)

[The Decentralization of the National Programme of Action in Favour of Children in Chile](#)



1994–1996

Child welfare

Decentralization
and community
participation

THE UNICEF INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE

THE EARLY YEARS

JAMES HIMES, DIRECTOR 1988–1996

The Innocenti Centre’s birth, in 1987–88, was by no means an easy one. Given the complexities of Italian politics, not to mention UN policies and procedures, combined with a major transformation underway within UNICEF, it is hardly surprising that uncertainties and controversies were part of the context for the creation of what was initially called the UNICEF International Child Development Centre (ICDC).

From the proud city of Florence to the Executive Board of UNICEF, the idea of establishing what was initially described as a centre “promoting a culture for caring for children” generated considerable opposition. On the one hand, several institutions in Florence with centuries of distinguished traditions could not help but covet the available space in the historic Spedale degli Innocenti, designed by Brunelleschi and often considered the first expression of Italian Renaissance architecture. Politics in Florence were decidedly left-leaning whereas the idea of inviting UNICEF to the venerable Florentine foundling home was largely a Christian Democratic initiative, spearheaded by none other than Giulio Andreotti, Foreign Minister at the time, as well as a frequent and controversial Prime Minister.

At the UNICEF Board, a number of delegations, especially from the Nordic countries, were wary of Italian Government motivations in establishing the Centre, including whether its projected and generous financial support would be sustained over time. A number of delegations were concerned about vague references to “research” in early proposed activities while others paused at the increasing emphasis, also evident in the early Innocenti proposals, of advocacy and “social mobilization” for child survival and development, as opposed to the more traditional focus of UNICEF on service delivery and emergency relief.

In response to one of these concerns, regarding whether it was appropriate for UNICEF to develop a research capacity, it is noteworthy that the initial recommendation to the Executive Board, in February 1987, listed ten specific objectives of the Centre with no mention of the word “research” – extraordinary for a facility later renamed the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC). Those ten objectives were heavily weighted towards strengthening strategic alliances, promoting programme communication and social mobilization, refining advocacy and supporting development education and journalism. The objective most closely aligned with the Centre’s eventual focus was described as increasing “professionalism among groups in the less developed as well as industrialized countries, concerned directly with children’s needs, growth and development, children’s



...it is noteworthy that the initial recommendation to the Executive Board listed ten specific objectives of the Centre with no mention of the word “research”.



policy and analysis". There was but a passing reference to children's rights, with the corresponding UN Convention still in the drafting stage and some reluctance on the part of a number of senior UNICEF staff and several Board delegations to shift UNICEF into the contentious realm of human rights.

This early focus on advocacy and social mobilization (and cautiousness about promoting a research function) presumably explains why Jim Grant, UNICEF's dynamic Executive Director, turned first to his Deputy for External Relations, Tarzie Vittachi, to become the Centre's first Director. Vittachi was a distinguished journalist from Sri Lanka and, with Grant, a principal architect of the transformation of UNICEF from an organization widely viewed as a relief or basic services organization to a more development-oriented and advocacy agency with a mission "to create a worldwide culture of caring for children – a new ethos of 'Children First'".

This initial focus on advocacy and outreach also appealed to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as our host institution in Florence, the Istituto degli Innocenti, both of which were concerned with gaining increased "visibility" for their own programmes and their contributions to UNICEF. Some concern, however, was expressed by the dynamic founder and President of the Italian UNICEF National Committee, Aldo Farina, who was not used to having another UNICEF presence in Italy and feared overlapping responsibilities.

When, for personal reasons, it became difficult for Vittachi to move to Florence, Grant asked me to take on the task of making the Centre operational as well as considerably more focused, and to become its first Director. My background, in development economics and years of work at The Ford Foundation, concerned largely with social science research and national capacity building in Latin America, but without significant professional experience in communications or 'external relations,' was quite different from Vittachi's. I suppose one might conclude, as the saying goes, 'the rest is history'.

Working closely with Grant's Deputy for Programmes, Richard Jolly, who of course was and remains a distinguished economist and former Director of the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex, England, we began to shift the focus towards applied research and policy analysis, with a related concern for capacity building and training. An important step in that process was the appointment to the Centre's International Advisory Committee of UNICEF members who had distinguished careers in research or national policy development: Karl Eric Knutsson of Sweden, Nyi Nyi of Myanmar and Mary Racelis of the Philippines. Together with Jolly (who generally stood in for Grant

PUBLICATIONS

1996

[Better Schools, Less Child Work. Child work and education in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru](#)

[Child Labour in Historical Perspective 1800-1985: Case Studies from Europe, Japan and Colombia](#)

[Early Childhood Development Revisited: From policy formulation to programme implementation](#)

[The Best Interests of the Child: Towards a synthesis of children's rights and cultural values](#)

1994–1996

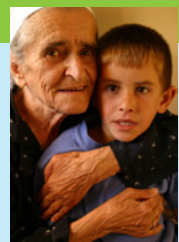


Fiscal policy, poverty alleviation and equity

Early Child Development

Monitoring in the CEE/CIS and Baltics: the MONEE project

Children of minorities



as Chairman of the Committee), this contingent represented, in my view, the best UNICEF had to offer in terms of guiding ICDC along a path towards becoming a centre of excellence in studies relating to disadvantaged children, north and south, and what Grant described in his inaugural speech at the Centre as “the first time UNICEF has had such a facility to strengthen our own capacity and that of our co-operating institutions to achieve much higher priority for children and their families on the political and economic agendas of all nations.”

Priorities for research were quick to follow and very closely related to several of the emerging and innovative programme priorities at UNICEF. Building on UNICEF’s widely respected policy analyses under the title of “Adjustment with a Human Face”, led by Jolly, work on economic and social policies affecting children became (and remains to this day) a major activity. We were fortunate that Andrea Cornia, an Italian who was working on ‘adjustment’ issues, was enthusiastic about returning to his country to lead this important initiative.

Among other outstanding accomplishments, this programme initiated a series of studies concerned with child poverty and deprivation in industrialized countries, East and West, which eventually evolved into an important new focus for UNICEF as the conventional distinctions between ‘developed’ and ‘less developed’ countries became more blurred and globalization forced the needs of disadvantaged and abused children into complex new patterns, dramatically evident with issues such as migrant children, child labour in export industries, and international trafficking.

With strong support from Vittachi and other colleagues in External Relations, as well as several National Committees, it was agreed that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), about to be approved by the General Assembly, should be another major priority. It ‘fit’ well at Innocenti, we argued, for several reasons: (1) UNICEF would need to strengthen its own capacity significantly to meet its expanded responsibilities under this new treaty; (2) the sensitivity particularly of the protection and participation principles of the CRC suggested that ICDC’s Board-approved intellectual freedom to pursue controversial topics would be important; and (3) the presence of the Centre in Europe would help assure a close working relationship with the Geneva-based UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as many other relevant human rights organizations.

As Maggie Black concluded in her 1996 book “Children First”,¹ the Centre was instrumental from the early years in changing the perception of the CRC simply as an advocacy tool or instrument primarily of relevance for protecting “children in especially difficult circumstances” to a broader understanding of how the basic concepts of human rights and human development need to be brought much closer to UNICEF thinking

1 Black, M. (1996). *Children First: The Story of UNICEF, Past and Present*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: 294.

Implementation of
the Convention on the
Rights of the Child

The relationship
between child work
and education



in all programme areas. Of particular relevance for UNICEF programming, in my view, were the Innocenti studies on several of the CRC general principles, especially those concerning resources and affordability (Art. 4), children's participation (Art.12) and best interests of the child (Art. 3).

The two other priority programme areas, as agreed at the first meeting of the International Advisory Committee, were: (1) National Capacity Building for Child Survival and Development; and (2) Needs of the Urban Child. The capacity building initiative was both a response to special needs in sub-Saharan Africa, beginning in Kenya and Uganda, and an effort to maintain a link at ICDC to UNICEF's major focus on child survival, keying on critical interventions in primary health care to reduce infant and child mortality. Sustaining gains in child survival by strengthening capacities at local universities and other institutions was the objective. The leader of this initiative was Aklilu Lemma, an Ethiopian biologist, who had been the first African dean of the sciences faculty at the University of Addis Ababa. He provided ICDC with important contacts with medical professionals in Africa as well as leading international schools of public health. Among other advantages, this programme was supported by the Government of Finland, and represented the first of many ongoing efforts to diversify the sources of financial support for the Centre, a high priority for UNICEF and its Executive Board.

The Centre's concern with the urban child evolved from a number of sources. Urban poverty, with major implications for children, was clearly becoming an increasing problem throughout the world, particularly with the waves of migrants pouring into the slums and shantytowns of most cities in developing countries. UNICEF, led by experts such as Bill Cousins, John Donohue and Mary Racelis, was helping to support an impressive network of urban basic services programmes in many countries, with promising results, ranging from improved health and sanitation to efforts to deal with the burgeoning problem of working and 'street children'. It was recognized that this complex area was far too big for the Centre to enter without a tight focus. The decision was taken to support a series of country case studies chosen to illustrate a broad range of policy lessons, including economic, social and psychological dimensions. This area was also one of priority concern for the Italian bilateral assistance programme and represented an opportunity for collaboration with the Istituto degli Innocenti, which assumed responsibility for an Italian case study.

Although I have not been close to the Centre since 1999 (an important caveat!), my impression is that these two programmes (capacity building and, less clearly, the urban child) have not had the enduring success of the initiatives concerned with economic policies and child rights. UNICEF, in my view, was not well positioned to support long-term institutional capacity development in Africa, perhaps due partly to the heavy demands of grave emergencies and the day-to-day challenges of service delivery in that region. Factors such as the 'brain drain' from national universities and ministries and



[...it is not] easy for UNICEF to develop the 'research culture' that recent reviews have found decidedly lacking.



minimal national and local budgetary support for child-related institutions and systems remain major problems in much of that region.

I leave to others an assessment of the longer-term impact of the programme on the urban child. I do have the impression that the initial country case studies and later work on decentralization were generally of high quality. At least in the early years, however, we might not have had in Florence the right mix of staff and outside consultants, with insufficient attention to the challenge of drawing policy conclusions from those and other field-based studies. Nevertheless, Racelis, still active on issues of urban poverty, argues that IRC “kept the urban flame alive when UNICEF Headquarters let it flicker and then move into an inactive smoldering ember stage.” [personal communication]

One important lesson learned from the urban child programme, as well as several other research initiatives, is that country studies tended to be more effective if they built on expressed interest and involvement by the corresponding UNICEF field office. The prospects for influencing UNICEF and counterpart institution policies and programmes were certainly enhanced in these cases. Links to local co-operating research institutions were also more likely to be viable and sustained. The urban child studies in Brazil, India, Kenya and the Philippines demonstrated both successes and failures in this regard.

Regarding staffing in those early years, one of my conclusions would be that our strongest track records were with professionals with experience in applied research and policy analysis, generally outside UNICEF, combined with some knowledge of UNICEF operations, including in the field. Especially in the area of economic policies, there were notable exceptions, such as the work of John Mickelwright, Gaspar Fajth and Eva Jespersen (in a later period), only one of whom had worked with UNICEF before joining ICDC, but not in ‘the field’. Their substantial contributions, however, were especially significant, in my view, in the relatively new region (for UNICEF) of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as in other industrialized countries, where we had little or no field presence in the traditional sense. They also were able to build on the earlier work firmly established by Jolly, Cornia and others.

As an aside in this regard, a veteran UNICEF Regional Director once expressed to me (in a manner I assume intended to be critical of my being chosen as the Centre’s first Director) that unless you had worked in the field for UNICEF, you hadn’t worked in the field. Whatever one feels about that attitude for most of UNICEF’s traditional work, that sort of approach does not make it easy for UNICEF to develop the ‘research culture’ that recent reviews have found decidedly lacking, I gather, in the broader organization.



PUBLICATIONS

1995

[Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource mobilization in low-income countries](#)

[Learning or Labouring? A compilation of key texts on child work and basic education](#)

[Poverty, Children and Policy: Responses for a brighter future](#)

[Child Institutionalization and Child Protection in Central and Eastern Europe](#)

[Ugly Facts and Fancy Theories: Children and youth during the transition](#)

[Achieving Gender Equality in Families: The role of males. Global Seminar Report, 1995](#)

[The Children Here: Current trends in the decentralization of National Programmes of Action](#)

Looking for other 'lessons' from these early years of the Centre's 25 years of history, I would stress how important I believe it was to have the high-level consultative groups we appointed for each of the four main programme areas. These groups represented a mixture of external and in-house expertise and were charged especially with the task of bringing the best of 'outside' thinking, including from the academic world, to the Centre's evolving priorities and choices of approaches to the research and training. Avoiding duplications with the work of other research centres and policy institutes was another expectation.

The work of the consultative group on child rights was of particular importance to the Centre and to UNICEF more broadly. The CRC covered a great deal of uncharted territory for UNICEF, and it was important that this terrain be carefully mapped and opportunities for UNICEF to be thoroughly explored before policies and programmes were too far advanced. The consultative group in this area was ideally suited for this task, with a good geo-political balance in its membership and also including several outstanding practitioners in the field of human rights and implications for children, such as Thomas Hammarberg of Sweden, and eventually several other outstanding members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, including Marta Santos Pais, of Portugal (and later Director of IRC). Since this work at the Centre was decidedly different from the challenges in other areas, we approached it initially not so much as an area of research but one of capacity building for UNICEF, in the broadest sense, including analysis of implications for UNICEF of the general principles of the CRC. Accordingly, to manage this early work at the Centre, we selected a seasoned former UNICEF representative for Rwanda and Burundi, who also had relevant experience with Save the Children and demonstrated skills at working well with other organizations: Bilge Ogun of Turkey.

One of a number of regrets I have regarding the ten years of my association with the Centre was the limited progress we made during that initial decade in convincing other parts of UNICEF of the importance of serious research and policy analysis, as well as related aspects of capacity building and staff training. Those functions in the organization were, and may remain, underfunded and may have suffered from waning attention after what might be referred to as the Grant/Jolly years. ICDC was affected in a number of ways, ranging from staff appointments to the ongoing issue of a failure to allow significant UNICEF core funding (general resources) to be used to support the work of the Centre. It has been remarkably successful, sometimes virtually 'on its own', raising supplementary funds from donors, public and private, impressed with the Centre's achievements.

The sustained World Bank funding for the excellent economic and social monitoring programme for Central and Eastern Europe was a virtually unprecedented vote of confidence from that major actor in development assistance circles. Support from the Government of Sweden and other Nordic sources represented a sharp change



[The Centre] has been remarkably successful, sometimes virtually 'on its own', raising supplementary funds from donors, public and private, impressed with the Centre's achievements.



in attitudes towards the Centre in that important corner of the donor community. A number of UNICEF National Committees have provided strategic support. One wonders, however, if several of the early initiatives might have been more sustained and new opportunities much more fully realized if general resources had been made available to support all of the regular UNICEF staff at the Centre and supplemental funds used largely for research support and capacity building.

One early dream for Innocenti was that it might eventually become a research and training centre for UNICEF and its partners which would represent a high-level 'staff college' for the lead agency of the United Nations for children. In that regard, an initial Board-approved objective left largely unrealized was to grant study leaves to selected professional staff of UNICEF to enable them to come to the Centre to analyze their field experience and prepare policy papers or training materials to be used by other UNICEF colleagues and those in co-operating institutions, especially in the 'South'.

In my view, much of UNICEF has tended to view research vs. action as a dichotomy. Perhaps there is a misperception that research rarely leads to effective action, and undoubtedly some of IRC's work and other UNICEF studies are guilty as charged. But action uninformed by the results of research and other sources of knowledge is equally unacceptable. UNICEF – including IRC – neither will nor should become a major development research institution such as those based in outstanding universities and publically funded research institutes around the world. At its best, however, IRC has demonstrated that UNICEF can become both a more professional user of research results and also serve as an effective bridge between UNICEF-supported work for children in the field and the outside research communities concerned with rights, protection and well-being of children.



PUBLICATIONS

1997

[School-related Economic Incentives in Latin America: Reducing drop-out and repetition and combating child labour](#)

[Starting from Zero: The promotion and protection of children's rights in post-genocide Rwanda, July 1994-December 1996](#)

[Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe: Perils and promises](#)

[Child Poverty and Deprivation in the Industrialized Countries 1945-1995](#)

[Children: Noble causes or worthy citizens?](#)

[Children, Law and Justice: A South Asian Perspective](#)

[Children and Violence](#)

[Ombudswork for Children](#)

[Children and Families of Ethnic Minorities, Immigrants and Indigenous Peoples: Global Seminar Report, 1995](#)

1997–1999

Child poverty in industrialized countries

Towards a New Agenda for Children in the Southern Mediterranean Countries

Monitoring in the CEE/CIS and Baltics: the MONEE project

PUBLICATIONS

1998

A School for Children with Rights: The significance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for modern education policy

Education for All?

Juvenile Justice

EMU, Macroeconomics and Children

1999

Protection in Practice: The protection of children's rights in situations of armed conflict. UNICEF experience in Burundi

After the Fall: The human impact of ten years of transition

Women in Transition

Intercountry Adoption

Child Poverty across Industrialized Nations

Child Domestic Work

Excellent work has been done by IRC over a quarter of a century (a modest span of time by Florentine standards!) and undoubtedly many important achievements lie ahead. But the larger dream, built on the notion of UNICEF as a strong knowledge-based learning and teaching organization, based on a culture of caring for children – but also on a culture of caring for research, knowledge-generation and learning about children – remains unfinished business. A challenge for the next quarter century!

“

Urban poverty, with major implications for children, was clearly becoming an increasing problem throughout the world.

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1997–1999

Determinants, Social Norms, and Violence

Children's participation

Improving UNICEF staff capacity

Innocenti Digests

THE HISTORY OF A FAR-SIGHTED PROJECT ICDC'S TRANSMONEE

(Monitoring Transition in Central and Eastern Europe)

GIOVANNI ANDREA CORNIA, CHIEF OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY 1989–1995

The International Child Development Centre* (ICDC) started operating gradually in the late summer of 1988 and reached a normal working situation by mid-1989, i.e. right at the beginning of the transition to the market economy of the countries of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (EE-FSU) following growing social tensions and the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 – an event often used to date the beginning of the transition. While the transition began in 1992 in the Russian Federation and in 1994 in Central Asia, 1989 is still considered a turning point in the post World War II period dominated until then by the 'Cold War' and the 'Balance of Terror' between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

1989 also represented the end of the 'Lost Decade', i.e. the decade of the debt crisis and first years of structural adjustment in many developing countries affected by the sudden rise in US interest rates on their dollar-denominated loans, and the ensuing recession in the industrialized countries. These changes caused a sharp fall in the international terms of trade of developing countries, sudden stops in voluntary lending to them, mounting balance of payments deficits and sharp recessions in many of them. UNICEF was acutely concerned about the impact of these changes on the well-being of children and produced two major research volumes on *The Impact of the World Recession on Children* (1984) and *Adjustment with a Human Face* (1987). These volumes affected the debate on the social impact of the crisis and the policy measures which needed to be adopted to minimize the impact of crises and adjustment – particularly the measures recommended by an International Monetary Fund then little concerned about the social implication of crises and economic adjustment.

By the late 1980s, UNICEF had accumulated substantial expertise in these areas – as well as in terms of starting dialogues with governments, NGOs and international organizations on the policy approaches to deal with such epochal crises. Until then, however, also in UNICEF the focus of such work was exclusively on the developing countries, leaving out the industrial market economies and planned economies of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union which – because of their institutional differences and higher levels of incomes per capita – were thought to have been spared by the crisis of the 1980s.

With the beginning of the transition in 1989 and the related upheaval, several UNICEF staff became concerned about



The rights of minority,
indigenous and
migrant children

Child work and
education

the impact on children of such unprecedented social transformation. As the director of the Economic and Social Policy Research Programme of the newly created International Child Development Centre (ICDC) I proposed to Richard Jolly and Dr. Nyi-Nyi (my 'bosses' during my years at UNICEF's UNHQ) to start a research programme at ICDC on the "Impact of the Transition on Children". The idea was accepted enthusiastically, as the top management of UNICEF feared a repeat of the unfavourable impact of the adjustment crisis on children.

The first step of this new initiative consisted of a visit (in February 1990) by Richard Jolly, Reinhart Freiberg (Deputy Director of UNICEF-Geneva), the late Lal Jajawardena (then director of WIDER) and myself to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia where we discussed with top ministry officials the likely impact of the transition on families and children. Except for Poland, the general mood was rather euphoric as the transition from authoritarianism and the planned economy to 'democracy and the market' was not expected to generate too many problems, just the contrary. After this initial contact, in October 1990 Sandor Sipos (a Hungarian economist now at the World Bank) and myself organized a conference in Warsaw attended by ministers of finance and social affairs of the above three countries plus Bulgaria and Romania. The intent was to stimulate a debate between the Ministries of Finance (worried about GDP and inflation) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (in charge of minimizing the impact on children) and to have them propose solutions in line with the difficult circumstances of those years. Our hope was that everybody would have become more aware of the emerging problems and possible solutions.

After returning to Florence and circulating widely the report of the Warsaw conference, the question 'what's next?' arose. The question was justified by the problems experienced by several adjusting countries (where the infant mortality rate and malnutrition rose and school enrolments dropped) and the still anaemic debate about the social impact of the transition. Several reports had in fact focused on privatization, the GDP recession and political democracy, but social welfare issues had on the whole remained peripheral to the debate on the transition.

Conscious of the earlier suggestions of several UNICEF colleagues, Richard Jolly *in primis*, concerning the importance of systematically monitoring the well-being of children, we then set up the project 'Transition Monitoring in Eastern Europe' or TRANSMONEE which consisted of monitoring, recording and analyzing regularly a long list of inputs, outputs and outcomes indicators for all main areas of child well-being (health, nutrition, early child development, education and social protection) as well as their economic and social determinants. In doing so I worked closely with Gaspar Fajth (a Hungarian economist-statistician, previously at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (CSO), and now Regional Adviser - Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF EAPRO, Thailand) and Renato Paniccià (now at the economics research institute of



Rising orphanhood, parental migration and poverty rendered the problems of social protection and institutionalization of children intractable.



PUBLICATIONS

2000

[Child Poverty Dynamics in Seven Nations](#)

[Young People in Changing Societies](#)

[The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children](#)

[No Ordinary Decade for Children's Rights 1989-1999](#)

[A League Table of Child Poverty in Rich Nations](#)

[Basic Services for All?](#)

[Domestic Violence against Women and Girls](#)

[Children's Rights Glossary](#)

[Children's Rights Bibliography](#)

[International Children's Rights Thesaurus](#)

[Education, Inequality and Transition](#)

[Child Well-Being in the EU and Enlargement to the East](#)

Tuscany – IRPET and adjunct professor for 'Causes and Measurement of Poverty' at the University of Florence). Gaspar was instrumental in ensuring that the list of variables I had drawn up was actually being collected by the CSOs of the region while suggesting the inclusion of other indicators which were particularly relevant in the region. In turn, Renato set up the electronic database where all this information would be stored and analyzed in a systematic and comparative way and began exploring the econometric hypotheses which were later tested formally. At a later stage the team was strengthened by the arrival of Mary Anne Burke (an expert on child protection from the Canadian CSO) and Albert Motivans (a Latvian-American specialized in education problems). Meanwhile, invaluable help was provided by Cinzia Iusco Bruschi (now assistant to the Director of the Office of Research) who organized our visits to the first nine EE-FSU countries and helped to keep in touch with the growing network of TRANSMONEE statisticians and economists. In each country a member of our team visited the CSOs and a Social Policy Centre to present the logic of TRANSMONEE, its electronic database, and the suggested structure of the social reports these institutions were expected to submit every six months. Little by little, the number of countries was expanded so that by 1998 TRANSMONEE covered all 27 economies in transition of EE-FSU. I still remember with professional nostalgia the trips I undertook to Hungary, the

Baltic and Caucasus countries, and Ukraine – as do, I believe, my colleagues who visited the rest of the region.

As part of the project we organized annual meetings in Florence attended by one or two experts (mainly from CSOs) for each country covered. During such meetings the emerging trends, impacts and policies were discussed in a comparative and systematic way.

At a time when UN agencies in general had not yet established any firm country presence in the TRANSMONEE-targeted countries, UNICEF's research team in Florence had thus mobilized funds to provide small grants to statistical offices in order to stimulate them to collect and provide us with data on a wide number of indicators, seen as relevant for monitoring the social impact of the transition. Collecting the data in a common template enabled inter-country comparisons.



2000–2002

Basic social services

Child poverty in industrialized countries

European monetary union and children

In 1993 this allowed UNICEF to publish Regional Monitoring Report No. 1 which documented widespread poverty, birth rate reduction, escalation of death rates and decline in school enrolments. The Report was the first international source to highlight the alarming mortality trend among males in the 40-59 age-group that was occurring, and it received considerable international attention. Regional Monitoring Reports were published annually thereafter. These were widely circulated and frequently cited by operational agencies, researchers and policy-makers. The Reports consisted of three parts: a general overview, the analysis of a specific topic, and a statistical annex (with a link to the complete electronic version of the TRANSMONEE database). Successive Reports covered: an overall assessment of the social impact, the transition mortality crisis, child poverty and inequality, social protection, women, education, adolescents, nutrition, welfare changes, and HIV/AIDS.

After the 8th Regional Monitoring Report reviewing *A Decade of Transition*, the Social Monitor Reports were launched in 2002, featuring shorter pieces of analysis of recent trends in selected data. The shift was made in view of the greatly enhanced capacity and attention in the region to major trends affecting the social situation.

TRANSMONEE turned out to be an effective advocacy, information, and technical assistance tool to the countries of the region and to the UNICEF Offices which were gradually established in the region. The research community also benefited from the analyses and data generated by the project, from several working papers issued on these topics and from the book *Children and the Transition to the Market Economy* which emerged from the related research and studies (1994, Avebury).

More than anything else, and contrary to the initial fears about the impact of the transition on child health and nutrition, TRANSMONEE identified several counter-intuitive impacts on children, starting with a massive increase in the mortality of female and – especially – male adults (the excess mortality for the 27 countries of the region between 1990 and 2000 amounted to a staggering 10 million people, mainly due to stress-related causes). As a result, the proportion of orphans rose sharply, especially in most FSU states. A second finding was the stratospheric increase in child poverty due to the steep economic recession experienced by most countries between 1989 and 2000 and to the

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More than anything else, and contrary to the initial fears about the impact of the transition on child health and nutrition, TRANSMONEE identified several counter-intuitive impacts on children.

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2000–2002



erosion of social safety nets. Thirdly, rising orphanhood, parental migration and poverty rendered the problems of social protection and institutionalization of children intractable. Likewise, a major fall in fertility and rise in divorce (and, as noted, parental mortality) increased the number of single children or of children living alone or in incomplete families. Next, while school enrolment up to 14 years of age was scarcely affected, there was a collapse in the number of children in kindergarten and in enrolments in secondary education, especially in the poorest parts of the region. Finally, women, and through them children, were affected by a deterioration in gender equity, as the role of women returned to that of traditional pre-socialist societies.

In mid 1995 I was appointed Director of WIDER and moved to Helsinki. Renato Paniccia also moved to WIDER at the same time. In Helsinki, inspired by the findings of TRANSMONEE, we started a major analytical study into the causes of the sudden increase in adult death rates which was published as *The Mortality Crises of Transitional Economies* (OUP 2001). Without the findings of TRANSMONEE this analysis – and other WIDER research into income inequality – would never have been undertaken. When I left, my position at ICDC was taken by John Micklewright, an English economist at the European University Institute, who further enlarged and refined our initial efforts. The TRANSMONEE project remained in Florence until 2009 when it was transferred to the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe in Geneva which also covers the countries in transition. Over the last few years I have lost contact with the project and, to be honest, I no longer see much trace of it in the literature, not least because some of the problems identified above have lessened. But, for sure, TRANSMONEE is an example of how monitoring, research, and advocacy on behalf of children may generate an impact on real life and public policies over a considerable span of years. I am very thankful to UNICEF and ICDC (its dedicated research centre) for having given me the opportunity to set up and run such a project for six years.

*Subsequently Innocenti Research Centre and now Office of Research



Social progress over the last 20 years: have all children benefited?



The new plague: HIV/AIDS, development and child welfare

Children in institutions

Monitoring in the CEE/CIS and Baltics: the MONEE project

The impact of economic crisis on children

PUBLICATIONS

2001

- [Jim Grant - UNICEF Visionary](#)
- [A League Table of Teenage Births in Rich Nations](#)
- [A Decade of Transition](#)
- [The Dynamics of Child Poverty in Industrialised Countries](#)
- [Single Parents and Child Welfare in the New Russia](#)
- [Independent Institutions Protecting Children's Rights](#)
- [Matrimonios prematuros](#)
- [Early Marriage: Child Spouses](#)
- [Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-Making](#)
- [A League Table of Child Deaths by Injury in Rich Nations](#)
- [Beyond Krismon: The social legacy of Indonesia's financial crisis](#)

REFLECTIONS ON THE INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE

THE CHALLENGES IN THE LATE 1990s

MEHR KHAN WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR 1998–2000

The main challenges facing the International Child Development Centre (ICDC), later the Innocenti Research Centre, when I took over as Director in late 1998 were existential. The Centre had produced some very good work but it was largely being funded by one single donor: the Government of Italy. Our counterparts in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed me in my first meeting with them (together with outgoing Director, Paolo Basurto) that they were considering discontinuing their contribution to the Florence centre for several reasons.

They summarized these as the Centre's isolation not only from UNICEF, but also from its policies and programmes and its major donors. This, they felt, represented a lack of appreciation and credibility within UNICEF for the work of the Centre; lack of public visibility or recognition for the Centre globally but especially in Italy; and a lack of financial commitment from UNICEF and from other donors leading to almost total dependence on the Government of Italy. They asked that these concerns be brought to the attention of UNICEF's leadership and addressed as soon as possible.

Thus, the main challenges were to clearly define the role of the Centre; align it more closely with UNICEF while maintaining its editorial independence; and to develop appropriate structures and finances to support the expansion of its work.

ICDC's work (defined as research and capacity building) was then being carried out in two streams, social and economic policy and an exploration of the implications of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) particularly on the work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. In both these areas, ICDC had made remarkable contributions.

The economic and social policy area had made a singular contribution to researching the impact of the collapse of social safety nets on children in the former Soviet Union and its affiliated countries in Eastern Europe through its MONEE (Monitoring Eastern Europe) Reports. It had shaped policy for strengthening safety nets for children both of the governments concerned and of the international institutions, including UNICEF, who worked with them. For example, the World Bank had taken advantage of ICDC's work and later began to contribute financially to the Centre. Very importantly, ICDC had worked intensely with research centres in the former Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries to build the capacity of these institutions to better analyze the data collected on children.

2000–2002



Child Friendly
Cities Initiative

Child participation
and evolving
capacities

Improving UNICEF
staff capacity



Innocenti Digests

The research on the CRC had produced excellent insights into such areas as child participation, and child labour. In addition to developing new insights into these areas, the Centre was also producing “Digests” of information on key topics such as violence against women and children, intercountry adoption and children and judicial systems.

While this work had made remarkable contributions to increasing the body of knowledge on children’s issues, UNICEF’s own programme at that time was focused on child survival. Within UNICEF the Centre was perceived as being narrowly and overwhelmingly focused on one region (Central and Eastern Europe through the MONEE reports), and on a set of issues relating to the CRC which were not yet relevant to UNICEF’s programmes.

Since ICDC relied almost exclusively on the limited financial support of the Government of Italy, it was also resource strapped. There was very little money from any other source and no money from UNICEF’s support budget. Most of what came from UNICEF was through the Eastern Europe Regional Office in Geneva for the work on MONEE.

A very small communication section had been established but it was focused on production and distribution of the Centre’s publications and outreach to other research insititutions. There was little public outreach and almost no media work. The Centre was producing good work but it was largely and best known to those involved in and concerned with the work being generated.

Addressing the challenges

In the two years that I served as director, I began to directly address the challenges so clearly identified by the major donor, the Government of Italy. Critical tasks included bringing the Centre into the policy making process in UNICEF; making its research agenda relevant to UNICEF’s current programmes; including the concerns of children globally; building its international public profile through strengthening its communication capacity, and extending its funding base.

It was important to work closely with UNICEF’s Front Office and to start by retaining the areas of work that the Centre had excelled in while at the same time aligning it more closely to UNICEF’s programmes to reach the objectives identified above.

The Executive Director (at the time Carol Bellamy) responded by including the director of the Centre in the policy formulation process through the Global Management Team and through greater interaction with the Executive Board. She also authorized funding for a few core posts in the Centre from UNICEF’s support budget. All this allowed the Centre to be more active and visible within the wider UNICEF, including with government donors and with National Committees. And it also contributed to a diversification and increase in the financial base of the Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

2002

[A League Table of Educational Disadvantage in Rich Nations](#)

[Birth Registration: Right from the start](#)

[Poverty in the Transition: Social expenditures and the working-age poor](#)

[Child Trafficking in West Africa - Policy Responses](#)



Developing new strategies for Understanding Children’s Work and its impact

The task was made easier because UNICEF's own programme work was expanding beyond child survival to a fuller embrace of the CRC. The Centre was the only part of UNICEF which had a knowledge base on the CRC. So the research produced by the Centre proved to be an excellent resource for the development of these broader UNICEF programmes. And with the CRC, UNICEF's mandate had expanded to the concerns of children globally. The UNICEF Board agreed that UNICEF's advocacy should encompass children everywhere and also insisted that its programme work should continue to focus on developing countries. But advocating for policy changes for children in donor countries was complex because of the political sensitivity of some. UNICEF had been able to walk this difficult path briefly when it produced Progress of Nations from its Division of Communication in New York but it was largely not a comfortable situation to be in. The Centre because of its distance from UNICEF and its perceived independent status could be the best place in UNICEF from where this could be done relatively easily.

Thus, we initiated the *Report Card* series on Children in Rich Countries and it became instantly successful. The National Committees for UNICEF gave it major public visibility and in many cases pushed for policy changes for children in their own countries based on the research put together by the Centre. Strong working relationships were built with the National Committees and they also began to provide funding thus expanding the funding bases of the Centre. The donor base also expanded with the Nordic countries, among others, providing more financial support for the Centre's work.

An overall communication strategy was put in place and the communication section revamped and strengthened with a much greater focus on seeking visibility for all the research produced by the Centre. The Centre's name was changed from the International Child Development Centre to Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) to better communicate its primary work.

The international advisory committee of IRC was expanded to include independent experts who could influence the agenda of the institution and provide a measure of independence.

Two other challenges remained. How to expand IRC's work to programme countries? And how to retain its editorial independence at the same time as its work becomes more visible and draws closer to UNICEF? These were major challenges.

A UNICEF research centre needs to identify and explore new areas of emerging concerns for children on which UNICEF has little knowledge or experience, or policies and programmes. It is uniquely placed to do so because it can draw on the vast field experiences of UNICEF offices working in vastly different situations. Sometimes these experiences are not consistent with existing policies.

2000–2002

Home-based work
research project

Research on child
trafficking



Working with UNICEF Offices and institutions in programme countries

ICDC had worked with individual regional offices and sometimes with staff in country offices who have documented their experience. This work with field offices was expanded. And the Director's presence in the GMT helped in allowing greater interaction with field staff and emerging issues.

A critical area is increased collaboration with research institutions in developing countries. This will not only strengthen the partner institutions; it will also be more credible with government and nongovernmental partners. But not enough work was done, then or since, with research centres in the South. It is easier to continue to work with well-established and well-funded research centres in the industrialized world. However, there are now more universities and research centres in the developing countries focusing on children's issues, many of them with financial support from UNICEF's own country offices. The results of their research are being channelled into the development of UNICEF's country programmes and global policies.

In the research review of 2009/2010 it was clear that country offices wanted the support and involvement of IRC in research projects being developed in their countries. They also asked for more guidance on methodologies and capacity building for staff engaged in working with partner institutions. This is a critical need which I understand is now being more systematically addressed since the centre also houses the organization's knowledge management section.

Retaining editorial independence?

Despite these positive steps, preserving the Centre's ability to determine its own agenda and to exercise editorial independence of the research findings without interference from UNICEF headquarters remains a major challenge.

Research results do sometimes conflict with ongoing policy and programme approaches, or they may be seen to pose potential challenges to UNICEF's relationships with its donors or Board members.

During my time at IRC, we struggled to address this dichotomy of being within UNICEF while at the same time producing research results without influence from UNICEF. Tackling agenda setting was easier than ensuring independent publication of results. In principle everyone agreed that ensuring the independence of results was essential. But how to make it work in practice? One simple first step was to introduce a clearly worded

PUBLICATIONS

2003

[Changing Minds, Policies and Lives: Improving protection of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Gatekeeping services for vulnerable children and families](#)

[A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations](#)

[Innocenti Social Monitor 2003](#)

[Children in Institutions: The beginning of the end?](#)



2003–2005

Report Cards
on children in
industrialized
countries

European network
for a research
agenda on children
in armed conflict

Innocenti Social
Monitor

statement disclaiming UNICEF from the views and findings expressed in each IRC publication. Disclaimers do not provide foolproof protection but they can be helpful in distancing UNICEF from the research results of the Centre.

No research results were sent to New York for clearance. It was understood that the Centre was not publishing policy. And publishing potentially “sensitive” research without involvement of senior staff would help to better protect the credibility of the results as well as the organization. All this was managed more by greater interaction and discussion between IRC’s Director and UNICEF’s leadership rather than through formal procedures and agreements.

As UNICEF’s research centre, IRC, now the Office of Research, has the potential to be the premier global research institution for children. Given the centre’s meager financial resources, insufficient links with country offices and periodic tensions with UNICEF headquarters on its editorial independence, realizing this potential is a challenging task.

A clear understanding and respect for the distinct roles of a research institution and an organization such as UNICEF are critical first steps.



A UNICEF research centre needs to identify and explore new areas of emerging concerns for children on which UNICEF has little knowledge or experience, or policies and programmes.



PUBLICATIONS

2004

Ensuring the rights of indigenous children

Building Child Friendly Cities: A framework for action

2005

Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Children and Disability in Transition in CEE/CIS and Baltic States

The Evolving Capacities of the Child

Children of International Migrants in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines: A review of evidence and policies

Child Poverty in Rich Countries 2005

The Impact of Tax and Transfer Systems on Children in the European Union

2003–2005

Child Friendly Cities Initiative

Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: documenting and learning from the process of social change set in motion by the CRC

Innocenti Digests

Developing new strategies for Understanding Children’s Work and its impact

Research on child trafficking

PROMOTING PROTECTION

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

NIGEL CANTWELL, CHIEF, IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS 1998–2003

In contrast to its main research focus in other spheres, Innocenti’s nascent work on “protection” issues as of the mid-Nineties was to a large extent instigated by the need to develop capacity-building in this domain, not least within UNICEF itself.

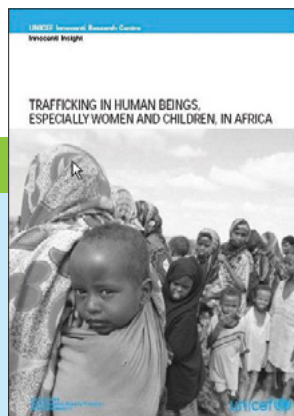
Corporately, UNICEF had always concentrated its efforts on what it used to term as “meeting basic needs”, in other words child survival and development. Even in emergency situations, it never saw itself primarily as a child protection organisation. Indeed, it was fully four decades after its establishment that – not least in response to some sustained lobbying by NGOs following the International Year of the Child (1979) – UNICEF tentatively proposed a programme in 1986 to address “children in exceptionally difficult circumstances” (CEDC). This constituted essentially its first formal recognition of protection issues as a grouping, limited at the time to “children in areas of armed conflict and those affected by natural disasters, children in exploitative work situations, street children and children subject to abuse and neglect”.¹ Immediately following the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), this listing was widened to include, notably, orphans, children affected by AIDS, children with disabilities and victims of sexual exploitation.²

A review of the CEDC programme ten years on³ referred to two additional protection issues requiring UNICEF attention: children who had temporarily or permanently lost family and/or primary caregivers; and deficient laws and/or abusive legal and judicial processes. Significantly, the review also emphasised the need to “protect children who are subjected to or are at risk of serious breaches of their rights”. UNICEF’s overall protection role had thus at last been formally recognised, and this “within the framework of the rights of children”. At the same time, this created confusion as to what “protection” actually meant for the organisation and for responsibilities within it: “protecting children” is not the same as “protecting children’s rights”, but both were perceived as falling under “child protection”. The review also cautioned that “UNICEF programming and advocacy in the area of child protection are still in a stage of development”, highlighting *inter alia* the need for enhanced knowledge and technical capacity on these questions throughout the organisation.

- 1 UNICEF Executive Board decision 1986/12
- 2 UNICEF Executive Board decision 1990/6
- 3 A Review of UNICEF Policies and Strategies on Child Protection, E/ICEF/1996/14



UN Study on Violence
against Children



Protection in the aftermath of emergencies

It was against this background that, less than three months after the Executive Board's approval of that key 1996 review, I began my first assignment for Innocenti – at that time, as a consultant, tasked with assessing the impact of the CRC on responses to the situation of children following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. While this exercise covered rights and issues both inside and outside the “protection” sphere as such, its timing just after the 1996 review could not have been better, for two reasons in particular:

- While the country was in a “post-disaster” situation, and therefore undeniably within UNICEF's traditional remit, the review had established that we could and should be looking at problems relating to, for example, legal reform, juvenile justice and alternative care in addition to those previously enumerated as CEDC concerns.
- The review gave ample justification for the study to look at the overall question of the “protection of children's rights”.⁴ This constituted probably the first opportunity following the review to examine what the term “protection” might imply in a UNICEF (and indeed wider) context in the light of field experience.

In the ensuing years at Innocenti – by which time I had been brought on staff – we pursued work in the area of protection in emergency situations. In 1999 we invited Ben Majekodunmi, who had just completed a 2-year assignment in Burundi as UNICEF's very first internationally-recruited Child Protection Officer in a country office, to draw wider lessons from his experience. Again, a key issue that emerged from his considerations revolved around UNICEF's role in “protecting rights” as opposed to simply “protecting children”.⁵ He called very strongly for more emphasis to be placed on the first of these.⁶

This publication was followed up, in 2000, by a workshop bringing together a number of senior UNICEF staff returning from tours of duty in disaster and post-disaster situations (mainly armed conflict), so that they in turn could identify obstacles to carrying

PUBLICATIONS

2006

Protégeons les enfants touchés par le VIH et le SIDA

Reinvesting in Children? Policies for the very young in South Eastern Europe and the CIS

Cities with Children: Child friendly cities in Italy

Making Philippine Cities Child Friendly: Voices of children in poor communities

4 The assessment was published in 1997 as an Innocenti Insight: *Starting from Zero – the promotion and protection of children's rights in post-genocide Rwanda, July 1994–December 1996*.

5 See Ben Majekodunmi, *Protection in Practice: The protection of children's rights in situations of armed conflict – UNICEF experience in Burundi*, published by Innocenti in 1999.

6 With hindsight, this is perhaps unsurprising in that, on leaving Innocenti, Ben Majekodunmi also left UNICEF itself in order to specialise in human rights monitoring with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, where he is now Chief of the Inter-Governmental and Outreach Section in New York.



2006–2009

Household responses to poverty

Understanding child poverty and wellbeing

Children affected by armed conflict

through a protection role and make recommendations for future operations in similar circumstances. It had been hoped that this would prompt the setting up of a systematic debriefing exercise of this nature at corporate level for senior staff ending their missions in “emergency” countries. Despite the capacity-building potential of the wealth of knowledge compiled as a result of the pilot workshop, however, we did not manage to persuade UNICEF HQ to take the idea on board, so that workshop unfortunately proved to be a one-off initiative.

Sensitive issues

In the late Nineties, Innocenti was seen, to all intents and purposes, as a virtually autonomous “academic outpost” of UNICEF, far removed from its current status as an integrated research office. As such, it largely set its own agenda, and this in turn was substantially a function of the interests and fields of expertise of its director and senior staff-members. In the sphere of “protection”, one major aim was to make available – to UNICEF staff in particular, though by no means exclusively – materials that would provide a robust basis for efforts to tackle areas that had only recently begun to figure among UNICEF fields of intervention. Innocenti sought to be “at the cutting edge” of UNICEF policy as well as critically analysing approaches that had come to be seen as virtually sacred, rather than simply digging deeper in fields that had already been determined as priorities at corporate level. This often meant taking up issues that, at the time, were looked on as peripheral to UNICEF’s core work, and especially those perceived as “sensitive”: indeed, in cooperation with the Child Protection Section at HQ, we hosted a workshop for UNICEF staff and National Committees (2001) to look more closely at the reasons why so many protection issues were deemed “sensitive” at UNICEF and how that perception might be changed, so that the organisation felt better placed to address them.

Two such issues were intercountry adoption and juvenile justice.

Intercountry adoption

The first time that a UNICEF country office had been confronted with severe and large-scale violations of children’s rights in intercountry adoption was towards the end of 1990 in Romania, during the now notorious period which saw

PUBLICATIONS

2007

[Child Trafficking in Europe: A broad vision to put children first](#)

[Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries](#)

[Child Mortality and Injury in Asia: An overview](#)

[Материалы базы данных TransMONEE 2007 года: данные и анализ, касающиеся жизни детей в страна ЦВЕ/СНГ и государствах Балтии](#)

[Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities](#)

[Innocenti Declaration 2005 on Infant and Young Child Feeding](#)

[Dichiarazione degli Innocenti 2005 sull'alimentazione dei neonati e dei bambini](#)

[Birth Registration and Armed Conflict](#)

[Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries](#)

[Проблема детской бедности в перспективе: Обзор благополучия детей в богатых странах](#)

نع نيل` عتشلک لدرتشم راطل وحن
شان إا ناتخ



Children and transitional justice



The situation of children in transition countries (CEE/ CIS region)

Climate change and children

Child Friendly Cities

thousands of children taken abroad without, in most cases, even minimal procedural safeguards. Shortly afterwards, the then President of Albania, Sali Berisha, personally requested Executive Director Jim Grant in 1992 to provide UNICEF assistance to halt the sudden and rapidly-increasing exodus of children from his country for adoption abroad. Other countries, including several more in the Central and Eastern European region, experienced similar problems in the ensuing years. Although responding, UNICEF itself had no knowledge base – let alone policy – on this question, and relied heavily on NGO partners and the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference to carry out assessments and recommend action.

At Innocenti, we felt that UNICEF offices were likely to be faced with increasing demands regarding intercountry adoption, including for technical assistance as a result of the entry into force, in 1995, of the 1993 Hague Convention on the question. The reference to children without family or primary caregivers in the 1996 CEDC review, moreover, gave UNICEF a clear mandate to become involved. In consequence, we published an *Innocenti Digest* in early 1999 setting out the essentials of the legal framework and analysing the problems to be faced when trying to ensure that children’s rights are respected in the intercountry adoption process, as well as trying to dispel some of the myths surrounding the subject. The *Digest* underscored the fact that, while intercountry adoption is a child protection measure recognised by international law, it is particularly vulnerable to abuse and therefore must take place only under certain conditions and with strict procedural and other safeguards to protect children’s rights – before, during and including after the adoption process.

We allied the publication of the *Digest* with hosting a capacity-building seminar for UNICEF staff – and then, in close cooperation with the Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, we went on to compile the first Guidance Note on intercountry adoption for UNICEF country offices, in 2003.

PUBLICATIONS

2008

Plataforma de Acção Para a Eliminação da Mutilação Genital Feminina/Excisão (MGF/E)

Young People’s Voices on Child Trafficking: Experiences from South Eastern Europe

The Child Care Transition: A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries

Climate Change and Children: A human security challenge. Policy review paper

Реформа законодательства и осуществление Конвенции о правах ребенка

South Asia in Action: Preventing and responding to child trafficking. Child rights-based programme practices

Law Reform and the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

2006–2009

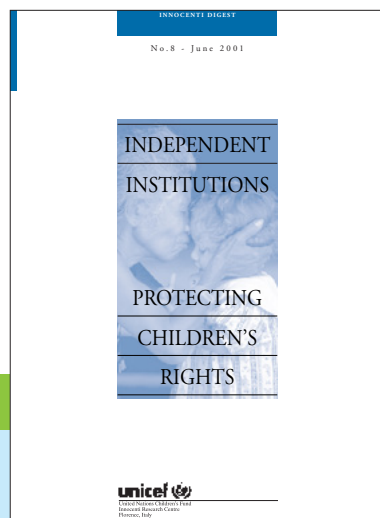


Children and disabilities

Independent human rights institutions for children

Other international standards for children

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols



Subsequent events have proved that our “intuition” about the future significance of intercountry adoption as a protection issue for UNICEF was correct – country offices in every region have since been called upon to take initiatives in this sphere, in response to requests for technical assistance or to systemic violations of children’s rights. In many cases, the results of their initiatives have been substantial, and in some instances even decisive. Despite this, and undoubtedly for the wrong reasons, intercountry adoption still seems to figure on the dwindling list of issues that are still looked on as “sensitive” for UNICEF...

Juvenile justice

UNICEF’s first major exposure to juvenile justice issues was similarly unplanned. It came with the incarceration of thousands of children and young people accused of involvement in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. As Innocenti’s *Starting from Zero* documented, the Rwanda country office was bound to respond but the then-CEDC team had to rely more on instinct than on information, guidance or experience from within UNICEF. In the event, they did remarkably well, both as regards legal process and conditions of detention, but the lacunae in the organisation’s knowledge base on this issue had been clearly exposed. In 1998, and again backed up by the terms of the 1996 review, Innocenti therefore published a *Digest* to provide succinct, state-of-the-arts information on the legal framework and key issues to be taken into account in the juvenile justice sphere. And again, it organised a seminar for UNICEF staff to become more familiar with this “new” subject.

One of the most hotly-debated issues in juvenile justice still concerns the minimum age that can validly be set for “criminal responsibility”. It is a complex subject and one that has too often been tackled from ideological and doctrinal standpoints rather than evidence-based facts. We broached it in the *Digest* but then decided it deserved far deeper explanation and analysis. In 2001, we therefore launched what was the first-ever major study on this topic, seeking to provide, among other things, guidance for responding when initiatives to lower or raise that age were mooted. The study’s conclusions, however, contradicted much of the “received wisdom” in this sphere, which sees children’s rights as being



Resources and policies for children

Child injury

Child trafficking (Palermo Protocol)

Harmful practices and social norms

Research on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism

PUBLICATIONS

2009

[Child Well-being in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: A multidimensional approach](#)

[Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries: Their family, national and international context](#)

[The Situation of Children in Immigrant Families in Italy: Changes and challenges](#)

[Innocenti Social Monitor 2009. Child Well-being at a Crossroads: Evolving challenges in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States](#)

[Intersectional Discrimination against Children: Discrimination against Romani children and anti-discrimination measures to address child trafficking](#)

[Independent Child Migrants in Developing Countries: Unexplored links in migration and development](#)

[Social Dynamics of Abandonment of Harmful Practices: A new look at the theory](#)

[Handbook for the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography](#)

[Riforma legislativa e attuazione della Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia](#)

[Child Migrants with and without Parents: Census-based estimates of scale and characteristics in Argentina, Chile and South Africa](#)

automatically best protected by setting the highest possible age and tends to equate, willy-nilly, a low age with a repressive approach incompatible with the rights of the child. Its findings therefore did not correspond to what – in the minds of some – they “should” have been, so the publication was shelved. Happily, the intensive research involved later formed the basis of a widely-acclaimed book – reaching those very same conclusions – by the researcher concerned.⁷

Juvenile justice – not to mention the wider concept of “justice for children” – has become an integral part of the child protection programme of most country offices. In this case too, Innocenti had anticipated the need for a solid knowledge-base, at a time when some at the highest levels of UNICEF were still expressing severe doubts as to the relevance of this question to the organisation’s work. And in contrast to intercountry adoption, juvenile justice is no longer on the “sensitive issues” list...

Reviewing the “protective impact”

Innocenti of course addressed a range of other protection issues around the turn of the century – including child trafficking, domestic work, early marriage and institutional care – and has tackled many more since then. As regards the impact of its work in the three spheres of concern specifically highlighted here, however, my thoughts ten years on are inevitably mixed.

There has been progress in making the distinction between “child protection” and “protection of children’s human rights”. That said, it is still too frequent that any mention of the term “protection” is equated by default with the former – and this even if the issue at hand concerns rights in the education, health or other “non-protective” spheres. In addition, misunderstandings – not to say deliberate manipulations – of “child protection” still abound in emergency situations in particular, where innumerable, and seemingly uncontrollable, actors manage to intervene with their own conceptions of “child protection” and scant regard for children’s rights. As the UN’s lead agency on children’s issues, UNICEF must therefore build further on its efforts to date to get this right and must then play that lead role to the full, acting as an effective watchdog to prevent and react forcefully to violations. Majekodunmi’s *Protection in Practice* might still be one useful source of inspiration.

When Innocenti took up the question of intercountry adoption at the turn of the century, the annual number of such adoptions was rising steadily. The main objective then was simply to ensure that any such expansion was taking place in ways and under conditions that would safeguard the rights of the children concerned, and the concerns

⁷ Don Cipriani, *Children’s Rights and the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility: A Global Perspective*, Ashgate Publishers, 2009.



Social norms, harmful practices and behavioural change

Child well-being, poverty and overlapping deprivation analysis in rich countries (Report Card 10)



Equitable economic growth and growth incidence curves

2010–2012

and thrusts of the *Innocenti Digest* fifteen years ago are still valid. In recent years, however, a combination of various factors has led to a complete reversal of that trend, with numbers for 2013 well under half those of the 2004 peak year. One consequence of this unexpected development has been a vociferous attempt, more especially in some quarters in the USA, to attribute much of that decline to negative advocacy, in particular by international bodies, including UNICEF. Although this argument is simplistically and erroneously framed in terms of “promoting” or “opposing” intercountry adoption, it has irrationally impacted on UNICEF’s public approach to the question. Despite its well-acknowledged work on this issue at country level, corporate UNICEF has persisted in devoting much of its energy to trying to position itself as uncontroversially as possible in this enforced and artificial “pro-” and “anti-” climate, unsurprisingly to little or no avail. Only now are there signs that, at last, corporate priority may be moving towards the systematic reaffirmation of its adherence to the protection of children’s rights, both in and through intercountry adoption.

As far as juvenile justice is concerned, very clear advances in programming have been achieved but certain myths pinpointed in the 1998 *Digest* have yet to be fully debunked. It is true that, in practice, juvenile justice systems often fall woefully short of international standards, which are encouragingly numerous and detailed in this sphere. Nonetheless, it is unhelpful to approach the question as though the main concern should be protecting children from a juvenile justice system as such. The sole justification for separating such systems from those for adults was and is to provide enhanced protection and constructive responses for children in conflict with the law. The failed experiment of the welfare-oriented “*situación irregular*” doctrine – which denied any “criminal responsibility” for children and young people, and so replaced due process in a court of law with administrative decisions on “protective care” placements – is a clear indication of the need to align the system with international standards, not to circumvent it. And as Innocenti’s overall work on juvenile justice has also pointed out in particular, the question of minimum age of criminal responsibility – however unfortunate that term might appear – is invariably simply a red herring: what is fundamental is that responses to offending are appropriate and rights-compliant for all children and young people, whether they are above or below whatever age is set, and that their access to due process is never compromised.



MICS data collection and analysis on poverty, wealth and deprivation

Multiple overlapping deprivation analysis in low and middle income countries

Research on the impact of economic crisis on child poverty and well-being and policy responses in low income countries

PUBLICATIONS

2010

[The Children Left Behind: A league table of inequality in child well-being in the world’s rich countries](#)

[The Dynamics of Social Change: Towards the abandonment of FGM/C in five African countries](#)

[Children and Truth Commissions](#)

[Children and Reparation: Past lessons and new directions](#)

[Children, Education and Reconciliation](#)

[Good Governance of Early Childhood Development Programmes in Developing Countries: The need for a comprehensive monitoring system](#)

[Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia. A review of research findings, legislation, policy and programme responses](#)

[Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-telling, accountability and reconciliation](#)

By way of conclusion...

Child protection within UNICEF has obviously developed tremendously since its first incarnation as CEDC in 1986 – when it was deemed that no more than one staffer was required to deal with the entire question at New York HQ! Tellingly, the post I held at Innocenti (from 1998 to 2003) now carries the title “Chief of Child Protection”, whereas at the time, I was not allowed to use the “protection” term, and had to settle for “Implementation of International Standards”.

Nonetheless, child protection remains the “poor relation” among UNICEF programmes in terms of both in-house interest and the allocation of human and other resources, despite the fact that UNICEF is the sole or key UN agency covering many of the issues involved. In addition, child protection work does not always fit well with the short-term “measurable” mind-set that increasingly underpins results-oriented programming choices: it can take many years to achieve positive outcomes in spheres like juvenile justice and alternative care for children, with no discernable progress for quite a while. Trying to make “protection” fit into that schema is, in many cases, neither easy nor fruitful: the added value of UNICEF’s crucial work in this sphere often lies elsewhere.

Much of what Innocenti produced ten or fifteen years ago, in its effort to foster and facilitate UNICEF’s protection activities, seems to remain highly relevant today. While this no doubt demonstrates a degree of lasting value, it may also indicate that UNICEF needs to give even more priority to its protection agenda.



Child protection work does not always fit well with the short-term “measurable” mind-set that increasingly underpins results-oriented programming choices.



2010–2012



Governance and
Child Rights

Implementation of
CRC at the local level:
Child Friendly Cities

PUBLICATIONS

2011

Child Safety Online: Global challenges and strategies

Защита уязвимых семей в Центральной Азии: бедность, уязвимость и воздействие экономического кризиса

Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children

Child Participation and Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children in Europe

25 YEARS OF UNICEF INNOCENTI

25 YEARS OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 33 YEARS OF OMBUDS FOR CHILDREN

TROND WAAGE, SENIOR FELLOW 2007-2009, AND FORMER OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN, NORWAY

An efficient partnership

UNICEF Innocenti and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have both been crucial in bringing children more into the centre of policymaking. The Convention and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as a monitoring body, guide this progress by issuing recommendations for legal and policy change to governments, while UNICEF Innocenti, through research, is generating informed knowledge to support governments in the implementation of these changes: together a fruitful and efficient partnership.

What has this partnership resulted in? Children's rights have gained increasing attention at the international, regional and national levels. These 25 years have been marked by a significant process of improvement with extensive changes in national laws and policies; the establishment of independent institutions to voice and serve the best interests of the child; more and better data on children, helping to grant visibility to hidden and neglected areas, giving a face to vulnerable children; international and regional initiatives have been promoted to consolidate standards on the protection of the rights of the child and to enhance cross-border cooperation for the safeguard of children's rights.

UNICEF Innocenti has made an important contribution to this process by carrying out applied research, by identifying the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Convention, and by promoting and facilitating dialogue between research and policymaking. UNICEF Innocenti has established efficient platforms of dialogue with and within countries and regions and has encouraged UNICEF Country Offices and their counterparts to contribute actively to them.

A successful partnership

Upon the establishment of UNICEF Innocenti, the first Ombudsperson for Children in the world, Målfried Grude Flekkøy from Norway, was invited to the Centre to reflect on and document her eight years of experience as an Ombudsman for children,¹ and consider how these independent institutions could play an important role in the implementation of the Convention, especially by bringing children's experiences and voices into the process.

1 Flekkøy, Målfried Grude (1991). A Voice for Children: Speaking out as their Ombudsman, London: Jessica Kingsley.



Independent human rights institutions for children



Forced migration, children and land grabbing

Decentralized implementation of social protection in Asia

Global social protection monitor

The invitation initiated a long-standing relationship as UNICEF Innocenti provided support to ombuds offices globally. In cooperation with these offices, governments and parliaments, and in partnership with the international research community and NGOs as well as UNICEF Country Offices, UNICEF Innocenti supported the establishment of ombuds offices by generating data and synthesizing experiences from their work. Besides serving as a focal point providing mutual inspiration for the ombuds offices, UNICEF Innocenti also supported the establishment of regional and global networks for Ombudsmen for Children.

This important commitment and research on ombuds for children has continued at Innocenti resulting in 2013 in the publication of a global and comprehensive study on independent human rights institutions for children.² This extensive study describes the different models and conditions of these institutions around the world and intends to support, inform and inspire governments and parliaments to establish such offices as independent monitoring mechanisms that will benefit the best interests of the child. In dialogue with these offices, UNICEF Innocenti received important information that has proved useful to the organization in discussions with governments and parliaments, to support policymaking and implement strategies.

UNICEF Innocenti has also promoted the development of support structures to the ombuds offices, by encouraging the establishment of cross-party child rights committees in parliaments and inter-ministerial or inter-departmental child rights units in governments, to complement the monitoring and implementation processes.

Children as nation builders

Looking back on the 25 years of activities, the Convention has been increasingly perceived and interpreted as relevant to legal rights and protection of children. The consequences of such a perception have turned the implementation of the Convention into a technical legal exercise, with the implication that the law is a regulating instrument for the protection of children. As a result, governments have been seeking child rights indicators that can be used by monitoring mechanisms, in toolkits, guidelines, national plans, reporting forms, and box ticking. While recognising, of course, the importance of legal reform, this development may have

2 United Nations Children's Fund (2013). *Championing Children's Rights: A global study of independent human rights institutions for children*. UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

PUBLICATIONS

2012

[The Structural Determinants of Child Well-being: An expert consultation hosted by the UNICEF Office of Research 22-23 June 2012](#)

[Championing Children's Rights: A global study of independent human rights institutions for children](#)

[Governance and the Rights of Children: Policy, implementation and monitoring](#)

[Measuring Child Poverty: New league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries](#)

[Child Deprivation, Multidimensional Poverty and Monetary Poverty in Europe](#)

[Child Drowning: Evidence for a newly recognized cause of child mortality in low and middle income countries in Asia](#)



***Rather than vulnerable human beings
...children are gaining a new status as
citizens and social innovators.***



led too many governments into reactive accounting and turning the child into an object divided into sectors.

Considered from the perspective of socio-political investment, the Convention clearly offers far more than child rights legal standards. The Convention has helped to formulate a new perception of the child. Rather than vulnerable human beings, passive recipients of assistance and protection, children are gaining a new status as citizens and social innovators. They are increasingly being acknowledged as a resource, with their ideas, creativity, expectations, demands and their inspiring ability to influence decisions and enrich our vision of the world.

It is timely to address the limitations of traditional approaches in child policy and to initiate a practice of innovation and proactive processes of change, all with a view to generating more concrete results for children and society. In achieving this, we need a strong research community to guide us into the next phase of implementation by lifting the ethos of the Convention into the policymaking process. UNICEF Innocenti's long standing multi-disciplinary commitment within the sphere of child rights ensures it a leading role as an innovative entrepreneur, responding to the need to evolve, progress and strengthen the momentum of the Convention for the next 25 years.

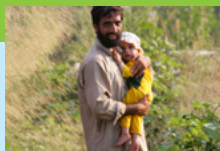
A key partner in this process will be the ombuds for children. The ombuds offices for children are one of the few structures in a society that can work strategically and proactively in policymaking. In becoming an agent for change, it is vital for the ombuds offices to ally with UNICEF Innocenti in a dialectical partnership of innovative applied research and entrepreneurship in implementation.

In the years to come, there will be a need for ombuds offices to:

- provide added value to the establishment and the protectors of children's rights
- challenge the charity approach, and encourage the investment approach in policymaking and practice
- perform in an innovative, creative, flexible and non-bureaucratic way
- be a knowledge entrepreneur who acts as a catalyst for change in governance, organizational structures and cultures
- take a cross-sectoral and holistic approach.

As a team, UNICEF Innocenti and the Ombudspersons for children, guided by the ethos of the Convention, can initiate a new social and political era in which children are social innovators, and adults, policymakers and reformers recognize that investment in children represents peace building, democracy building and nation building.

2010–2012



Social Protection
Capacity-Building
Programme in Africa

Social protection
snapshots and trends
for selected countries



The impact of social
protection on the
lives of children

TransMONEE and
the Social Monitor
of social protection
in CEE/CIS

Decentralization
of the delivery
of education
interventions in
South Asia

THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN AND UNICEF'S CONTRIBUTION

A VIEW FROM THE SIDELINES

GORDON ALEXANDER, DIRECTOR 2010–2013

UNICEF is not, and most likely never will be, a research organisation.

UNICEF is, however, a major user and driver of research for children. Across the years, as it became the world's foremost development organisation for children, research was always part of that story. UNICEF was often at the cutting edge of applying research findings that others had pioneered. This was especially true where UNICEF broke new ground in taking global knowledge and adapting it to local contexts and realities. In its greatest days, UNICEF together with partners helped to set research agendas around critical dimensions of children's lives. Research has played a central part in shaping the programmes it currently supports and inform the advocacy it takes a stand on. UNICEF has a cadre of professional staff who are increasingly able and motivated to carry out research targeted to support partners in their commitments to children. UNICEF has also reaped the benefits of its decision in the mid 1980s to create its own independent research capacity, centred in Florence at Innocenti, able to work on more challenging areas of research, alone or with academic partners, that other parts of the organisation are not able or so well resourced to undertake. As the UN's children's organisation, UNICEF has a remarkable capacity to convene researchers, policymakers and thinkers around research for children. Many believe that research is one of the critical fields of knowledge that will be needed to inform and support UNICEF's future roles as an international organisation.

And yet, notwithstanding this long and rich engagement, UNICEF has often faced difficulty in defining clearly its own relationship with research. Individual research initiatives have caught the imagination of the organisation but these have tended to be exceptions. Organisationally, at least until recently, UNICEF has chosen not to invest in a systematic approach to research, and as a function it has been hard to establish, buffeted by frequent changes in leadership thinking. There is a deep vein in UNICEF's organisational culture that sees money spent on research to be, at some level, at the cost of actions that could have more direct impact on children.

As we look to the future of research on children, and what UNICEF's future contribution is going to be, UNICEF finds itself at a crossroads. The configurations that have emerged from the first generation of UNICEF's engagement with research have generated extraordinary opportunity but also blocks and limitations. What is the research model that best suits such a striking hybrid of functions and demands that UNICEF needs as a force



2010–2012

Decentralization of the delivery of HIV/AIDS interventions in South Asia

Adoption and alternative care

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children through the Internet and other information and communication technologies

Study on child trafficking in the Nordic countries

for children in the field? What organisational structures and partnerships are needed to fulfil UNICEF's emerging mandate as a knowledge organisation for children?

As part of establishing the Office of Research in response to the Executive Board's request to bring an effective research function into being, a fresh look was taken at how research needs to be supported systematically across the organisation. That experience informs this brief look into the future. An anniversary of 25 years of research at Innocenti is a good moment to take stock!

Lessons from the last 25 years – a quiet revolution

In order to look at the future, it is vital to take a true measure of (and understand) the present. As noted above, UNICEF has always been a major user of and catalyst for research on children. Indeed much of its best work and achievements have been informed by or driven by research findings whether in pioneering safe drinking water in arid zones, in applying new child survival technologies at scale, in conceptualising new approaches to nutrition or child protection, in analysing the impact of development policy on children, or in bringing a new lens to social and economic policy at times of global or regional crisis. These were often the contributions of outstanding teams or individuals, and have become a celebrated part of the identity of UNICEF as a development organisation.

Over the last 25 years, something much more systemic and organisation-wide has also been taking place, not so much in the public eye, but arguably just as important.

As a development organisation, UNICEF's span of engagement has grown with its role, shifting as national capacities have come into place in the very areas UNICEF pioneered in the first development decades. Other partner organisations have emerged in specialised programme areas allowing UNICEF to concentrate on more complex goals. UNICEF has moved up the ladder of comparative advantage as a development partner.

While still strongly focussed on delivering tangible results for children, UNICEF has found itself faced with new sets of challenges. Access to services have increased significantly, even if gaps in coverage of private and public services remain. UNICEF's partnerships are increasingly addressing systemic failures, providing support to the building and reform of systems in which children grow up and the social norms that limit children's full participation. Often, no one has been there before, with partners seeking answers that are not available from global knowledge alone. Context becomes critical. In responding, UNICEF has perforce broadened its relationship with research. UNICEF now engages in roles that cut across all the different stages of the research cycle, from identifying research needs, formulating research questions with partners, carrying out or commissioning research, and as an active user and disseminator of results.



Research requires a special sort of creativity and exploration that rarely follows a clearly marked out or priorly determined schema.



What is less well known is just how extensive that engagement has become. Until very recently, there were relatively few details on what research was being supported by UNICEF or its major themes. Some fascinating answers to these questions began to come in from the launch in 2012 of what has become an annual 'Best of UNICEF Research' exercise¹ and the accompanying mapping of research currently underway in different parts of the the organisation.

What was particularly striking was the overwhelming 'local relevance' of the research findings. Is there evidence that suggest infant feeding patterns need adjustments? How can a high impact health intervention be scaled up from district to national level? What kind of child protection monitoring system is needed to keep policy on track? Who are the children missed out in the roll-out of a bold social protection measure such as a universal child grant? In what ways does the national education system need to evolve so that it addresses rather than reinforces inequalities?

Far from spending its money on theoretical work, UNICEF is supporting research designed to answer very real and specific problems close to programmes and policy. While this exercise was not in any sense a full assessment or evaluation of research carried out by UNICEF, it points to a remarkable responsiveness of research underway to programme issues as they were being encountered in the field. Within a particular field of programmes for children, UNICEF is increasingly the agency on which partners count for their applied research goals.

Almost without noticing it, UNICEF has become a significant actor in research on children. Research is now being carried out at all levels of the organisation, in all regions. UNICEF spending on studies, analytical work and research across country and regional offices, through its programme group at New York HQ and Office of Research – Innocenti is averaging an estimated \$70-100 million dollars each year. A quiet revolution has taken place.

And the challenges are now greater because of some of the very qualities that UNICEF has stood for as it grew as a development agency, in particular being careful about the way its funds are used for children and staying close to the child. Overcoming that almost psychological barrier and 'normalising' research will be a necessary part of success.

The first two years of the Office of Research have been absorbed in testing out different ways forward. The first parameter to get right has to be what was happening on the demand side in understanding where the knowledge gaps lay, what others are doing, and

¹ UNICEF offices at all levels were asked to share examples of research which UNICEF carried out or commissioned 'that they believed to be of high quality, had had an impact in their setting and was completed in the last year'. This request led to the sharing of approximately 80 such research products in 2013. A selection of the 10 'best' was later publicised widely across UNICEF. A similar exercise was carried out in 2014.



ICT4D Research Study



Making the Investment Case for Social Protection

Measuring and Defining Equity for Children

Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Theory (MODA): Methodology and Analysis

2013

where UNICEF can use its strengths to best effect, and draw on its comparative advantage: and then see what would be needed by way of supply.

What direction is research for children taking?

Globally, research on children continues to accelerate. For much of the last half century, the primary aims of development have included the need to ensure adequate food and nutrition, access to safe drinking water, primary education and health, decent jobs and adequate housing, and a social welfare system to protect ordinary people against the hazards of life.

Research on children has played a major role in each of these areas, providing a yardstick for the progress of social and economic change affecting communities and the lives of families. It has also contributed to problem-solving in design of programmes, underlining the need for multi-disciplinary responses and calling for transfer of knowledge across different settings. The recent alert on deepening inequalities and the persistence of poverty in new forms suggest that while these will remain core areas of work for the coming decades, there will be new twists and challenges.

An increasing focus of research on policy issues. Research on programme intervention design will continue as science continues to advance and new vaccines or drugs are made available. Increased focus will however be on programme roll-out and cost, and the structural challenges of how to reach universal access, including marginalised groups, rather than the design of individual services. What appeared to be the right recipe and sufficient knowledge for getting new child initiatives underway and taking them forward is no longer adequate for their scaling up or institutionalisation. With a majority of countries falling into middle income status, policy issues are increasingly those of countries that are moving beyond basic provision, to issues of quality and measurement of impact.

Comparative analysis of effectiveness of policy choice or new ways of thinking about a topic that they are already engaged in are those that policymakers are struggling with at national or sub national level. Public finance, management and coordination, and 'voice' will dominate the equity debate.

PUBLICATIONS

2013

L'analyse du chevauchement des privations multiples (MODA): Directives étape par étape

Ethical Research Involving Children

A Global Agenda for Children's Rights in the Digital Age: Recommendations for developing UNICEF's research strategy

UNICEF Research for Children: From evidence to action

Social Transfers and Child Protection

Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview

Child Well-being in Economically Rich Countries: Changes in the first decade of the 21st century

– لافطالاب فصراغلا ظققتسملجا
لوح ةيملعاص صارد زجوم ريديقت
قوقح ناسنالا قوقح تامظنم
قرصانم لافطالاب



Report Card 11



What Does the Evidence Say about the Impact of Social Transfers on Child Protection Outcomes

Championing Children's Rights: A Global Study of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children

Public Sector Reform for Children: Governmental Structures and Processes

Determinants, Social Norms, and Violence

The management and conducting of research will increasingly be intersectoral. While the main issues that touch the lives of children will continue to be sectoral, limitations of staying within what have been traditional sectoral approaches (health, education, prevention of HIV/AIDS, child protection, and the environment) are becoming increasingly limiting. Each sector is reaching out to draw on the insights available from different disciplines, and realising that outcomes for children are often co-determined. As poverty recedes in absolute terms, attention will shift towards understanding and addressing underlying drivers of child poverty and exclusion, and identify the often necessarily intersectoral and interrelated approaches that foster inclusion or are needed to create space for the voices of children who are left out of (or falling behind from) the benefits of social and economic progress.

The life-course perspective (to which lip service has long been paid but rarely implemented), acquires special relevance. Critical periods of a child's life, including early childhood and adolescence become the lens through which policy and programmes will be viewed. Rather than being add-ons as they often are now, these become explicit frameworks to harness programmes and policy. Some of that work has begun. This needs to go further and create more of a shared framework in approaching children in a holistic way, contributing to knowledge of how to handle multi-dimensionality and what are often the shared, underlying, and 'systemic' drivers of outcomes for children.

There will be a move up the ladder from survival to protection and participation. While we think of child protection as already a major area of UNICEF programme intervention, its relative importance is going to grow even further. The issues that child protection raises, especially in their prevention, may call for a re-think in the way child protection is conceptualised and stronger linkages with social protection and social policy more generally. Family policy – which too often in the past has been hijacked by conservative agendas – can provide an integrating platform that can address these new dimensions in a progressive way. The research agenda that matches these shifts brings fresh attention to the way social systems interact with the family, and how policies and legal standards are shaped by, and can shape, deeply held social norms. Child protection, perhaps more than any other area affecting children, will open up profound issues where current knowledge is just incomplete and new knowledge is required.

Research will combine local and global knowledge. We are already seeing a breakdown of what was always a somewhat artificial classification of countries into low, middle and high income status. There is growing recognition of many shared features across these boundaries. Gender disparities and discrimination cut across these categories. Choices as to actual strategies will continue to be filtered by availability of resources and local context. However, policy frameworks are increasingly convergent, with an emphasis on achieving universal coverage and although not yet as consistently, promoting respect and fulfillment of human rights.

2013



ICTs & Children

Life-Course Analysis

Structural
Determinants of
Child Well-being: A
Framework for Action



Global drivers will become a research area for children. At the same time, globalisation has also effectively modified the power and scope of economic and social action by nation states. The food and pharmaceutical industry, environment, media, and tourism are all already critical actors as influencers or determinants of outcomes for children. Their governance in multinational settings is strikingly weak with little accountability to the constituency of children. How these had an impact on children and young people was the subject of pioneering research at Innocenti led by Andrea Cornia in the early 2000s. Changes in global norms are having a cumulative impact on children and young people in particular. This is a platform that needs to be re-visited and re-calibrated for current times.

And finally research will be concerned as much about affluence as about deprivation. Although most of the world is still to enter into its full enjoyment, the role of affluence, education and life choices is increasingly central as a determinant of child well-being is generating new sets of opportunities, but also new questions and risks for children. Child nutrition beyond absolute hunger, and early child stimulation become concerns of nations at very different stages of development and income levels. The rise of mass education is going to mean that in most countries, basic illiteracy will be confined to a smaller and smaller group. Attention is already shifting away from primary to secondary and tertiary education.

Across all of these areas, the choice of what specific research matters most for children will be a constant dynamic. Over the last 25 years, major shifts in the development context have taken place, many of which would have been difficult to anticipate. The virtual disappearance of centrally planned economies as such, the huge and accelerating progress of globalisation and the spread of wealth creating capacities across the world (reflected in the rapid rise of China, India, and arguably soon sub-Saharan Africa) have dramatically changed the way we look at the world and fundamentally shifted the frameworks through which children experience development. Such change in the development context is likely to continue, and have its own dose of unpredictability, with many upheavals still to come. Such large, almost seismic shifts may seem a long way beyond the kind of immediate research that UNICEF should be doing for children. On the other hand, seen over a decadal timeframe, this is where new threats and opportunities to children's rights are determined, if not always foretold.

Domains of such 'macro' context which are calling for further research as they affect children include climate change, urbanisation and conflict. Each of these has elements that could introduce abrupt shifts in the way children's lives take shape and are framed. At present, these 'big three' do not feature in any way strongly enough in child-related research agendas.

Ethical Research
Involving Children:
International Charter
and Guidance



Monitoring Child
Poverty through
Household
Consumption
Measurement in
Multiple Indicator
Cluster Surveys
(MICS)



Research Watch

And finally further work on thinking through and applying child rights in different programmatic settings cuts across all the above. Here the research needs to be about implementation of children's rights and 'practice' and sharing of experience of institution building for progress in human rights more broadly.

In each of the above areas, UNICEF's global mandate and outreach at country level give it an extraordinary capacity to influence and contribute to this emerging agenda.

What role for the Office of Research – Innocenti in a rapidly changing world?

This reflection is being written as part of celebration of 25 years of research at Innocenti. It would be inappropriate if it were to close without a reflection on the role of Innocenti in support of the above. How can it build on its role as Office of Research? How will it look in 25 years time?

Florence is unique in the UN as a resource for UNICEF. It was quite special that an organisation such as UNICEF created, early on in its evolution, a research structure where ideas are valued and respected and gifted with its own physical location. Its true value is not always well understood.

Florence has in its time been an extraordinary home for research and as a convener of thinkers on a range of subjects vital for children. What makes Florence special – not often seen even in academia – is its commitment to the whole child and its ability to bring together diverse views from different disciplines, from North and South, around pressing problems for children. The very fact that this is the UN children's organisation providing space for creative ideas gives it status and authority.

Research requires a special sort of creativity and exploration that rarely follows a clearly marked out or priorly determined schema: rather it is a path that shapes itself, with ideas tried and then put aside as new intuitions are gathered from grappling with the topic and its special logic. Researchers also need sparring partners. Research for children is not a bureaucratic world. Nor is it one that fits easily with the pressures that come from being part of a highly visible UN organisation that needs to show it is effective on a day-to-day basis. This and similar 'privileged' space needs to be generated across the organisation in different settings. Otherwise research will quickly become second-rate or derivative.

One of the lessons of the recent period (2010s) is that the Office of Research cannot achieve its mandate on its own. Hence the need for new structures that unite and bring different parts of the organisation together and are robust. New communication tools are needed to inform and engage staff on latest findings in fields of their programme interest. Innocenti's knowledge management and dissemination role should become the mirror of capacities in generating fresh research and setting the research agenda.



Multidimensional
Overlapping
Deprivation
Analysis (MODA)

Report Card 12



Children's Rights
in the Digital Age

2014–2017

So what will the Office of Research look like in 25 years time? It will expand, with perhaps long term stays of HQ-based researchers interacting with a core Office of Research team. This step alone would shift mentalities and bring new synergies. The Office would have a bold research programme that covers at least five areas of cross-cutting concern to children. A capacity to share latest research methodologies and breaking news research findings in all areas of UNICEF concern would be in place. Predictable funding. It will be a place where the best minds on children continue to gather. There will still be evidence of mud on the boots of Innocenti's team.

The next 25 years of research for children

Future research on children will have its roots in the present. Such research is accelerating and diversifying. UNICEF is at a turning point as it takes on new roles and where partners increasingly turn to UNICEF for support and advice in research as in other areas. The quiet revolution that has been underway is likely to continue as UNICEF responds to the changing profile of children's rights in the countries in which it works.

As we look at the past, particularly if we go back to the time when the playing field for organisations such as UNICEF was less crowded, and capacities for research distributed very unevenly, UNICEF entered into the field of research in response to demand. That demand-based approach has served it well in ensuring that much of the research UNICEF drew on or carried out itself was well anchored to the real world of children, and relevant to the programmes it supported. Occasionally it was brilliant, winning wide respect from partners, even when they didn't necessarily like the conclusions.

Looking to the future, that demand-based approach will be very important to maintain and renew. As a global organisation, UNICEF will need a professional, significant and responsive research capacity to support its programmes and advocacy – to give answers to very specific questions that others will not be able to provide. It will need

PUBLICATIONS

2014

[CC-MODA - Cross Country Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis: Analysing Child Poverty and Deprivation in sub-Saharan Africa](#)

[Best of UNICEF Research 2014](#)

[Children of the Recession: The impact of the economic crisis on child well-being in rich countries](#)

[Changes in Child Poverty in the OECD/EU during the Great Recession: An initial view](#)

[Child Poverty and the Great Recession in the United States](#)

[Young People \(not\) in the Labour Market in Rich Countries during the Great Recession](#)

[Overview: Strategies for Causal Attribution: Methodological Briefs - Impact Evaluation](#)

[Présentation de l'évaluation d'impact : Note méthodologique - Évaluation d'impact](#)

[The Best Interests of the Child in Intercountry Adoption](#)

[The Challenges of Climate Change: Children on the front line](#)

[Are Cash Transfers a Silver Bullet? Evidence from the Zambian Child Grant](#)

[Child Poverty and Material Deprivation in the European Union during the Great Recession](#)



Family and parenting support: policies, practice and outcomes



Governance and children's rights

An operational structural framework determinants for adolescents



Cohort and Longitudinal Studies

Life course

that much more structured and professional approach to research to ensure that the findings and knowledge shared by UNICEF are indeed of high quality. Due diligence cannot have it otherwise.

The next few years [post 2014] need to continue to be building years, where the research function (the supply rising to meet the demand) is consciously strengthened and supported. The day will come when UNICEF at country level is the hub of the latest thinking and findings of research on children in partnership with the best national thinkers and policymakers. At regional and global levels, UNICEF research will lead and support a new generation of thinking on policy and programmes for children and their rights.

That nagging feeling that money spent on research is a cost and not an investment will be overcome. UNICEF's engagement with research has deep roots. Now is the time for these to flower.

PUBLICATIONS

2015

[How Inequalities Develop through Childhood: Life course evidence from the Young Lives cohort study](#)

[Family and Parenting Support: Policy and provision in a global context](#)

To be continued.....



The quiet revolution that has been underway is likely to continue.



2014–2017

Poverty and the Safe Transition to Adulthood



Cash transfers project



The best interests principle in intercountry adoption

Multi Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children: Italy, Peru, Vietnam and Zimbabwe



ΒΟΥ ΟΣΛΟΒΙΝΑ
Σβ. ΚΑΡΜΕΛΑ Η ΜΕΤΟΔΙΣΤΑ

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