

SECTION 2: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Roundtable discussions were held throughout the conference. Participants divided into different groups and discussed issues led by a moderator. Described below is the background information for each roundtable and the concluding recommendations from each session. The recommendations were used to develop the final Call for Action.

THEMATIC ROUNDTABLES

i. Child Health and Nutrition Roundtable

Moderator:

Usha Nayar Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

Presenters:

Urban Jonsson Owls, Tanzania
Anil Kumar Tata Institute Mumbai, India

Agnes Zenaida V. Camacho Psychosocial Support and Children's Rights Resource Center, Philippines

Helia Molina Milman Ministry of Health, Chile

Background:

The roundtable discussions focused on the following questions:

- How could/should research assist in reducing inequities in health/nutrition?
- What needs to be researched?
- What are the key questions?
- How to link research to fundamental determinants of inequities in
- Child health?
- How might research influence the key agencies that determine inequity?

Child health and nutrition are inextricably linked to other rights and influenced by many other determinants outside of the health sector:

- How does research on these two sectors inter-link with, and influence policy in, other sectors?
- What kinds of research, conceptually, methodologically best inform and shape inter-sectoral policies/interventions that impact on health?
- Why has the vast body of research on child health and nutrition not significantly changed child health and nutrition outcomes for children yet? MDGs still pie in sky?

Are there missing areas in current research and what are these?

- Is it the research-policy link that is not working or is it the inter-sectoral nature of the issues that make it so difficult?

Recommendations:

1. To get maximum realisation of child rights to health, mental health and nutrition, there is need to get political commitment of all sectors in integrated manner and at all level. Research is required to translate into appropriate policies and programmes through effective communication strategies to ensure political commitment.
2. Conceptualisation of a framework is needed, developed from various available paradigms for child health, mental health and nutrition. Further it is recommended to disaggregate data for a nuanced context based analysis
3. Review and reflect upon methodologies used in research on child health, mental health and nutrition. Attempt should be made to ensure active child participation. Include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies
4. There is a deficit of service providers and there is a need to invest in building

capacities of service providers in health, mental health and nutrition. It is recommended that periodic research should be done to assess the availability, accessibility and impact to make the development of a human resource scheme possible.

5. Enhance research on appropriate community knowledge and practices on health, mental health and nutrition. And develop effective communication strategies to strengthen utilisation by service providers.

ii. Child Migration and Dislocation Roundtable

Moderator:

Stuart Aitken San Diego State University

Presenters:

Norma Alicia Del Río Lugo Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico

Tatek Abebe Norwegian Centre for Child Research

Nicola Ansell Brunel University, United Kingdom

Helen Seifu The African Child Policy Forum

Nitsuh Mekonnen Save the Children Sweden

Kidest Belayneh Norwegian Church Aid

Sophia Chanyalew Child Fund Ethiopia

Berihun Mebratie Addis Ababa University

Background:

This theme built on the transitional and transformational contexts of child migrants and dislocated children. The group considered recent research on young people and their places in the global arena and changes in the way trans-nationalism and citizenship is considered, and how those changes relate to

larger issues of globalisation and economic restructuring. The intent was to raise questions worth asking about young people's political identity, autonomy and rights. The discussion focused on ethical practices and 'child-friendly' methods. Some of the questions raised in the first day's roundtable discussion were considered from an ethical, practical and methodological perspective. The group engaged with young people from Addis Ababa as part of their deliberations.

Recommendations:

1. National legislators are encouraged to recognise that migration is a legitimate livelihood strategy and to support children, families and communities in making informed migration decisions through:

- Research on categories of migration that do not obfuscate the complexities of child mobility (e.g. street children are also often migrants) and dependencies (all children are connected to some form of kinship and/or peer network).
- Knowledge of how families and children make decisions to migrate with an understanding of the full cycle of migration (When does a child cease to be a migrant? How do daily and seasonal movements relate to migration patterns?).
- Research on impacts of global economic crisis and climate change on child migration and dislocation.

2. Encourage national legislators to recognise that immigration and naturalisation policies often compromise the implementation and exercise of children's rights, and:

- Extend the rights of citizen-children to undocumented child-migrants and their families.
- Grant national citizenship to any child born in a national territory.

- Ensure that the rights of children are the same as those of adults, and that deportation policies are sensitive to the specific wellbeing of children.
 - Liberalize border and immigration policies and laws to facilitate seasonal and circulatory migration, and create a legal framework that reduces periods of separation between children and their parents (while creating programmes to assess possible contexts of abuse).
3. Encourage researchers, governments and their partners to recognise the complex dependencies of children with parents, communities and peer-groups, and to:
- Recognise that family separation may impact negatively children’s wellbeing.
 - Develop and maintain where possible young people’s social, place-based and virtual networks
 - Support mobile children’s physical health and psycho-social wellbeing.
 - Monitor child rights and protection when in foster and institutional care.
4. National governments should support children dislocated by international conflicts and civil war, by:
- Reviewing the impact of asylum and refugee policies on the welfare of children.
5. The international community should ensure that national governments support children dislocated by natural disasters, climate change and displacement due to larger economic crises , by:
- Focusing on knowledge based on migration origins and destinations.
 - Establishing mechanisms for supporting the physical and psycho-social wellbeing of children.
6. Approaches to understanding child migrants must be integrated, ethically grounded and sensitive to their dependencies, using child-friendly, age-appropriate, multi-dimensional and mixed methods, and:
- Child-centered research should be questioned for its essentialist assumptions.
 - Policies and research findings should be translated into culture specific perspectives.

iii. Poverty and Inequality Roundtable

Modertor:

Leif Jensen The Pennsylvania State University, USA

Presenters:

Michael Bourdillon University of Zimbabwe

Jo Boyden Young Lives, United Kingdom

Tassew Woldehanna Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Irene Rizzini The Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Kebede Kassa AU Commission, Ethiopia

Francis Dodoo The Pennsylvania State University, USA

Background:

While the words poverty and inequality never appear in the CRC, both are implicated in the problems that children’s rights address. This roundtable sought to identify and advance needed rights-oriented research on child poverty and inequality. To accomplish this, presentations and discussion were structured around (1) the centrality of poverty to children’s rights, (2) child poverty amidst extreme inequality and other contexts, and (3) intra- and inter-generational transmission of poverty. A motivating principle was to challenge prevailing theoretical and methodological approaches with the hope of breaking new ground.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend a call for new research and a deeper appraisal of existing research that interrogates the centrality of child poverty as a barrier to the achievement of children's rights. We recommend new research that would:

- Involve a close collaboration between researchers, the policy community, children themselves and others, to achieve much needed clarity and consensus over key concepts and measures
- Explore how orthodox income/consumption-based ("dollar a day") measures of absolute poverty relate to the components of multi-dimensional measures, to poverty of place and other non-household dimensions and, in recognition of the fact that child poverty qualitatively different, to child-centric measures
- Document the empirical links between the array of child poverty indicators and the satisfaction of *each* of the rights of the child so as to advance our understanding of the complex causal links between the two
- Be sensitive to the nature and consequences of social, cultural, political, and economic across space, and
- Celebrate the value of qualitative and quantitative research techniques and the heightened validity that is achieved by well executed mixed-methods research designs.

2. We recommend a call for new research and a deeper appraisal of existing research on the roots of child poverty that would throw a needed spotlight on political economy (including governance) and social structure as causal factors. The point is, if child poverty thwarts the attainment of children's rights, and if (as is often true) economic growth fails to realise commensurate, if *any*, reductions

in child poverty, then more systemic causes of child poverty need to be acknowledged and explored.

3. We recommend that the research and policy communities pay greater attention to **inequality** in its various forms and between children, families and households, communities, and nations, as a factor implicated in the inability to adequately achieve the rights of the child. Apart from levels of poverty or affluence, more attention needs to be paid to the negative psychological and social impacts of growing up in starkly unequal environments and of increasing inequality, especially as they relate to satisfaction of children's rights. We owe it to future generations of children to summon the political courage to seriously, responsibly and peacefully confront the brutal inequalities that prevail today.

4. We recommend a call for new research and a deeper appraisal of existing research that explores the intra- and inter-generational transmission of poverty. This work should focus on the interplay between the attainment of children's rights and efforts to break the cycle of poverty. This research should be attentive to lessons that can be learned from success stories – of children and families moving out of poverty, to the ability of children's rights to break the near axiomatic link between poverty in childhood and subsequent poverty in adulthood, and to circumstances where rigid adherence to particular interpretations of children's rights (e.g., with regard to work) can block opportunities for upward mobility.

iv. Social Welfare Services Roundtable

Moderator:

Leila Patel University of Johannesburg,
South Africa

Presenters:

Jeanette Schmid Switzerland

Robbie Gilligan Trinity College, Ireland

Rose September	University of the Western Cape, South Africa
Roger Pearson	UNICEF, Ethiopia
Abye Tassew	University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Background:

A few broad areas for future research to inform social policies and social welfare services for children were discussed. (1) research to address the current global realities and its impact on social policies and social welfare services in general and for children in particular is limited. (2) a critical need to learn from countries in the Global South about what their realities and challenges are in giving effect to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and to identifying appropriate welfare service modalities suited to these contexts. This is important as the world's poorest and most vulnerable children live in the developing world. (3) the gendered nature of welfare services and the gender dynamics that underlie social welfare service provision remains under-researched. (4) what works and what does not work in the delivery of welfare services for children. For instance, there is scope for evaluation studies of large high impact social protection programmes that are beginning to play a vital role in the reduction of child poverty. Finally, discussions were held on how governments could work collaboratively with civil society, communities, family/ households and the private sector to structure institutional arrangements that could harness the potential of all the partners whilst mitigating the risks that may flow from such arrangements?

Recommendations:

1. A wider approach to research (addressed to all stakeholder)

That research in the field of social welfare services for children is under developed and underfunded despite having a vital role to play. Furthermore, the donor community, governments, academic institutions and international agencies

need to recognise the importance of (a) funding research; (b) reappraise their powerful role in determining the research agenda and process; and (c) harness the value of existing research.

- It is therefore recommended that space be opened up for the wider community of stakeholders in influencing research priorities and approaches.

2. Social Protection (SP) & Child Wellbeing (addressed to governments, donors, NGOs, researchers)

That there is growing evidence demonstrating that social protection including cash transfers contribute to improved outcomes in child wellbeing e.g. reduction of poverty and inequality, nutrition, health and education. Governments and donors need to engage in dialogue with all stakeholders to set priorities, national spending levels and in the design of appropriate and sustainable SP programmes (SPPs). Country programmes need to respect the human rights and the right to privacy of beneficiaries. SPPs should be included in country Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSP).

- It is therefore recommended that research be conducted:
 - To map social protection strategies, sources of funding, programme design features, delivery mechanisms and capacity of SPPs.
 - To assess and monitor the impacts of social protection measures on child wellbeing outcomes over time. Such monitoring will need to be based on an agreed set of social welfare indicators to facilitate cross country comparisons and learning.
 - Track the impact of innovative social protection measures over time (panel and longitudinal studies).

- That identify the synergies between different social protection measures to increase the multiplier effect of these strategies (e.g. cash transfers, community development strategies, support for livelihood initiatives, employment and public works programmes, credit, support for small farmers, social work and welfare services for children)
- To improve our understanding of the mechanics of and capacities required for the effective implementation and delivery of SPPs at the local level in order to better harmonise provision.

3. Transferring Learning (addressed to researchers, governments, donors, NGOs, educators, practitioners)

That experiences in the South in promoting child wellbeing are relevant in both the North and the South as they search for solutions to contemporary socio-economic realities and impacts.

- It is recommended:
 - That research on local best practise modalities and innovation be documented and critically evaluated in collaboration with young people, service users and community members.
 - That learning from practise should inform the development of more appropriate, contextually relevant and integrated approaches to child welfare systems and policies.

4. Local validation of 'imported' models (all stakeholders)

That while country and local level strategies should draw on global experience, it is essential that models chosen are responsive to the local context and the lived realities of children and families

- It is therefore recommended any models borrowed are subject to critical

validation by a full range of local stakeholders including young people and their families

5. Gender and Care (all stakeholders)

That the implications of the gendered nature of care work and welfare services for children remains unacknowledged by governments, donors and NGOs. Thus, reinforcing gender divisions in care and the burden of care on women especially poor women. There is need for more gender sensitive care policies and strategies.

- It is recommended that:
 - Regional and country studies on gender and care be conducted (especially in the South) with reference to the broader economic structures & social policies that shape the care sector; how the sector is structured and organised; remuneration, incentives (stipends), recruitment and perceptions of careers.
 - Research be conducted on masculinities to inform our understanding of how to shift the gender binary in the care of children and of the role of fathers and other men in children's lives.

6. Customised approaches to child protection (international stakeholders)

Given very wide differences in contexts and the difficulties associated with dominant models, that the international community should avoid imposing a "one size fits all" approach to child protection.

- It is recommended that the research community can play a role in helping to adapt and validate locally tailored approaches and in the critique child models generally

v. Policy and Legislation Roundtable

Moderator:

Per Engebak Regional Director of East and Southern Africa, (UNICEF)

Presenters:

Jaap Doek Vrije Universiteit, Netherlands

Nicola Taylor University of Otago Auckland Centre, New Zealand

Islay MacTaggart Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development

Akila Agoune Belembaogo Head, UNICEF Liaison Office, Special Representative to the African Union (AU) and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Background:

Building upon the areas of expertise and working contexts of the four participating experts, this roundtable addressed and promoted the participation of the audience in debating key dimensions of interaction between research, legislation and/or public policy drafting and implementation. All of the issues were analysed in the light of the CRC provisions and principles. Dimensions addressed, per session, were:

- Research and public policy: the right of children to a Human Rights-Based Approach to Programmemeing (HRBAP) by the States.
- Research and legislation: the right of children to law and justice.
- Research, legislation and public policy: major global advances and pending challenges.
- Research and public policies: the right of disable children to equal opportunities and services.

Participants were asked to illustrate their interventions with their own experiences in linking research, legislation and public policy drafting or implementation. The final part of each session was devoted to have the panelists and the audience, draw conclusions and

recommendations on the issues reviewed, in the light of the greater questions to be addressed by the conference: a) How are global political trends challenging the present relationship between policy making and academic institutions, with a focus on child rights and child research?; b) What is the relationship between the Research-Policy-Practice nexus in the area of children rights?; and c) How does the Research-Policy-Practice interface functions in other relevant sectors, and what lessons can be learned for child rights epistemic communities?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

DISABILITIES

1. We recommend actions to improve child relevance of data collection with special attention to children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities to ensure that their special needs are guaranteed and institutional capabilities are available to address their needs.

VIOLENCE

2. We recommend a global study on legislative measures taken to prohibit all forms of violence against children. In addition in depths study of a representative number of countries per region of the law of the prohibition.
3. We recommend initiating comparative studies on the implementation of the CRC in every region using the *The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2008: How child-friendly are African governments?* as an example.

PARENTS

4. We recommend international comparative studies on the de facto role of parents in promoting respect for and implementation of rights for their children.

RESEARCH ON CRC COMMITTEE GENERAL COMMENTS

5. We recommend research in a representative number of countries per region on follow up of process and result,

given to General Comments of the CRC committee, in particular and as a matter of priority GC No. 9 (rights of children with disabilities) and No. 10 (on Juvenile Justice)

PROCESS TOWARDS LEGISLATION

6. We recommend that the process towards enactment of any new legislation includes:
 - The building of supporting constituency for change.
 - The need for institutional reforms for the implementation of the new legislation.
 - The need for costing of the requirements for the implementation of new legislation.
 - Carry out an assessment of skills, competencies and capacities needed for realisation of the new law.
 - Consideration of by laws and cultural factors that may prevail in the society that influence the interpretation or may be in conflict with the principles of international conventions for example the attitude towards trafficking in Africa as compared to the European countries.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

7. We recommend that all legal instruments should be adequately and appropriately resourced. Research is need on how countries have adhered to their commitment to international legal instruments and national legislation.

DOMESTICATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

8. We recommend a study on how international standards and norms contained in the different conventions have been domesticated in national legislation and whether the same has created room and /or are not explicit enough to prevent harmfully interpretations (example corporal punishment in schools).
9. We recommend a comparative research across countries on court procedures and child related jurisprudence to understand and develop child friendly practices in

getting testimonies of child witnesses, victims and children in conflict with the law and their rights.

AN ALL INCLUSIVE DATA SYSTEM

10. We recommend that in any data base should give special provisions for children dwelling outside the traditional or convention settings. This include children in the streets, child headed households and migrating children.

AGE

11. We recommend a comparative study on the interpretation and application of the different international standards on age on the protection of children (marriage, labour, juvenile justice, sexual consent)

vi. Education and Early Childhood Roundtable

Moderator:

Per Egil Mjaavatn The Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Presenters:

Evan Mbozi Save the Children, Zambia

Jacinta Kwena Kenyatta University, Kenya

Marta Arango CINDE, Colombia

Anne Trine Kjørholt Norwegian Centre for Child Research

Anne Graham Southern Cross University, Australia

Background:

Early Childhood development and education are key factors in the global fight for eradicating poverty and equalization of social inequity. This is also very visible in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This roundtable addressed questions like:

What are the gaps in our knowledge regarding how to realise the millennium goal of education

for all? How can child research contribute to improve early childhood education and early childhood care? How can we make sure that existing relevant knowledge in this area reach practitioners and is used by policymakers and planners? How could young people contribute to design and accomplishment of child focused research? Is it possible through research to identify indicators of successful policies in the area? The questions were addressed globally as well as regionally and also locally linked to specific countries.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations point to a research agenda that will contribute to advancing child rights in the early years.

The group agreed that:

1. The early years of a child’s life are critically important to their wellbeing and development. We encourage the governments to recognise the child’s right to quality care and education through adequate resources and well targeted and locally relevant policies. We also encourage a positive public campaign driven jointly by governments, researchers, practitioners, the media and local agencies to ensure this goal is realised in the best interest of the child.
2. Closer attention has to be given to the status, knowledge and skills of those working in early childhood education and care, including their capacity to teach effectively into the early years of primary school.
3. Parents play a critical role in the realisation of children’s rights in the early years and urges the development of culturally respectful parent education to help and ensure “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”(article 29)

4. Given the links between quality early years education and later outcomes in primary school a priority should be given to vulnerable children currently beyond reach of the basic entitlements as stated in the CRC. We encourage the research community to identify effective locally responsive models (Public as well as private and NGOs)
5. Research in the early years needs to be collaborative and reflect the priorities of researchers from different disciplines together with policymakers, practitioners and children. It is necessary to go beyond the rhetoric of collaboration and to identify partnership initiatives that have resulted in improved outcomes for children and their families.

vii. Governance and Participation Roundtable

Moderator:

Roger Hart City University, New York

Presenters:

Claire O’Kane Save the Children (Sweden), Myanmar

Joachim Theis UNICEF, West and Central Africa, Dakar, Senegal

Richard Mabala TAMASHA, Tanzania
Karen Malone University of Wollongong, Australia

Kerida McDonald “Speak Africa” project, Chief, UNICEF Ethiopia

Background:

The workshop broadly addressed research priorities for the governance of children’s rights. It recognised the special place that children’s participation offers in the processes of governance but it also considered the limits of this. A set of major research questions were

outlined relating to the mainstreaming and integration of children’s rights across all sectors of government and at all levels of government. The participation of young people in local governance processes has been an important development in the movement to fulfill children’s rights, but in most parts of the world cultural attitudes towards children remain unchanged and the majority of children are not recognised as social actors. Research related to the need to expand and deepen awareness on children’s citizenship and the rights of children to information, participation, and association was addressed. Important research questions on governance with children in all of their everyday institutional settings from the family, through schools, children’s organisations, community organisations, to local government agencies and beyond was outlined. A research agenda on the comparison and critical evaluation of structures and processes for children’s participation in formal government settings was discussed. Finally, our challenge was to address the difficulties of working in participatory ways on children’s rights in failed states or regimes.

Recommendations:

Governance is not limited to formal participation in government. It refers more broadly to the everyday collective decision-making that occurs in all of the institutions of children’s everyday lives (the family, children’s organisations, child care settings, schools, community and faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc). To balance the tendency of governments and development agencies to focus on children’s participation in national and international settings this set of recommendations focus primarily on local levels of governance.

1. Develop an improved conceptualisation of the meaning of citizenship in childhood

A recommendation for a broad range of stakeholder groups: government, non-government, civil society, and research institutions:

In order to advance children’s participation beyond the current practice there is a need to

more broadly conceptualise the meaning of children’s citizenship and to identify government responsibilities for children’s civil rights and civic engagement. This is particularly true for Africa, where the participation of children and young people has focused largely on children’s parliaments, children in the media, children’s opinion surveys, young peer educators and children at national consultations and international conferences. For the majority of children in Africa, the CRC and the ACERWC have not yet resulted in tangible improvements in their rights to participate in matters that concern them.

- It is proposed to operationalise children’s civil rights (right to expression, decision making, association, information, etc.) and civic engagement for the African context. This undertaking should be based on the CRC, the ACERWC, and on the cultural, social, economic and political realities of Africa. Such an undertaking would require a participatory process that involves the African Union, the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, African members of the CRC Committee, children’s rights organisations, child-led associations, and research institutions.
2. Investigate public understanding of children as citizens with rights and capacities to participate in governance.

A recommendation for the research community in collaboration with INGOs, NGOs and governments:

- Investigate how the public, including children, understand citizenship and the rights of children to information, participation, and association. This will enable the development of effective educational strategies that can reduce misconceptions regarding children’s civil rights, leading to more authentic governance with children in all of the settings of their lives.
2. Investigate children’s participation in the governance of their everyday settings

A recommendation for the research community:

Typically, development agencies have had a greater interest in promoting children's brief participation in large-scale large events than in fostering opportunities for children's everyday sustained participation. We therefore recommend that we:

- Investigate how children are involved in governance in all of the everyday institutional settings of children's lives and how institutions are structured or constrained to support that (schools, institutions for children in care, children's organisations, community-based structures, etc). This research should be inclusive of settings for all children, including children with disabilities:
3. Develop research on families, and alternative care settings, as primary institutions in the formation of children as citizens

A recommendation for the research community in collaboration with NGOs:

- Develop a research agenda that recognises families, and alternative care settings, as primary settings for children's experience of governance and for learning to participate and share responsibilities. This research is designed to address the tendency to promote the CRC, without recognizing a culture's traditional child rearing practices, often leading to unnecessary resistance from parents and caregivers. Through dialogs with parents and caregivers the research would:
 - Investigate parents' and caregivers' understandings of their own unwritten set of children's rights and how they raise children in relation to these rights.
- Investigate how the CRC has been presented to parents/caregivers and what are their doubts, fears and struggles

to fulfil children's rights within their particular socio-economic-cultural context.

- Based on this research, develop guidance materials on how best to hold dialogs with parents and caregivers regarding children's rights that begins with respect for their understanding of appropriate child rearing.
5. Compare and evaluate alternative structures, processes and mechanisms for involving children's perspectives in local government and community decision-making.

We recommend that local governments collaborate with researchers to:

- Compare and critique different models of children's participation in local government decision-making on policy and follow-through on what happens to these decisions.
 - Develop and compare alternative ways that the diverse agencies of local governments work in everyday settings with children to understand their perspectives. This will not only include the obvious social development agencies but also planning, transportation, water and sanitation agencies, etc.
 - Develop appropriate research methods for community-based data collection with children related to the fulfilment of their rights.
 - Develop training materials based on an understanding of children's capacities to participate and principles of ethical engagement with children. These should be for professionals in all sectors of government, for community-based organisations, and for children.
6. Improve methods for including the perspectives of very young children in governance for children's rights.

A recommendation for the research community in collaboration with NGOs and governments:

- Develop and compare methods appropriate to the competencies and experiences of children in the early years (under 8 years old) to enable professionals and policy makers to systematically understand their perspectives regarding their full range of rights. Produce guidance materials from this research for professionals working with children in governments and NGOs.

viii. Child Labour Research and Policy Roundtable

Moderator:

Frans Röselaers International Research on Working Children, Netherlands

Presenters:

Hugh Hindman Appalachian State University, USA

Anna Kassouf University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Ravi Srivastava Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

Peter Dorman Evergreen State College, Olympia/ILO, Geneva

Background:

The focus question for the roundtable was ‘How can child labour research contribute to scaling up and accelerating the drive to eliminate child labour, by integrating child labour in a framework of broader policy goals, namely poverty reduction, education for all and improved social protection?’ In particular, what does past and present child labour research point to for arriving at a more holistic approach to addressing child labour? How can the issue of child labour be addressed in conjunction with health and/or education initiatives that are also looking for novel and unconventional financing formulas? In addition,

the panel was invited to deal with the challenges to: fill the gaps in covering uncharted areas, especially those relating to the worst forms of child labour; improve data collection and analysis; use research networks, communities of practice and partnerships; strengthen the Research – Policy – Practice interface.

Recommendations:

1. There is an urgent need for more qualitative and quantitative research on child labour
 - in agriculture and rural settings
 - in the informal economy including street trades
 - with special focus on the health risks and related effects on children.
2. We urge the adoption of more collaborative research frameworks reflecting local, regional and cultural dimensions not only in data collection and analysis, but also in setting the goals and conceptual foundations of the research projects themselves. This is particularly relevant to research on child labour, where differences on how the problem is viewed, including by children, may hamper common understanding and joint action.
3. In this connection, it is recommended that research should give priority attention to those children exposed to the worst conditions and the especially vulnerable, including the increasing population of orphans and displaced, disabled and “idle” children, with the goal of reaching those who are hardest to reach and thus least likely to avoid or escape exploitation and abuse.
4. It is recommended that historiographic research be intensified and its findings more widely disseminated in order to inform present-day policy makers and advocates of the lessons that can be learned from history, including (a) the relationship between child labour, poverty, social values, education and social protection; (b) the policy options and their

impact on child labour; and (c) the obstacles and resistance to change. This research should, as much as possible, be extended beyond Western experience to incorporate the experiences of other political and cultural traditions.

5. As a labour problem, child labour has both a supply side and a demand side. While recognizing the crucial role of child labour supply, we see the need for more research on the demand side. We should seek greater knowledge and understanding of the conditions influencing the demand for child, as opposed to adult, workers, including the organisation of labour and product markets, the form and environment of enterprises, the technologies adopted where children are found working, systems of work organisation, and the relative costs and productivity of children and adults.

RESEARCH POLICY ROUNDTABLES

i. Academic Capacity Building Roundtable

Modertor:

Vishanthie Sewpaul University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Presenters:

Lena Dominelli Durham University, United Kingdom

Ingrid Osthus University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Sven Trygged University of Stockholm, Sweden

Background:

The key issues that this session focused on were: “Access to research data and publishing”; “Career building for young researchers”; “Child research methodologies”; “Ethical Standards in doing research concerning children” and “Academic partnerships and mentoring”. While there is a place for the quantitative method in child research especially in relation to its power to influence policy and programmeme

formulation, planning and implementation, questions are raised about the logical-positivist paradigm that generally underscores the method. Based on a case study, the incorporation of participatory approaches within the quantitative method is demonstrated. Recognition of the relative disadvantages of the quantitative method allows for a greater appreciation of the value of triangulation, incorporating a range of qualitative methods. Within this framework, critical social research designed for emancipatory and transformational purposes is a preferred option in doing research with children. This is consistent with ethical imperatives in doing research involving children. While not eschewing conventional ethical research requirements, the need for heightened reflexivity and a possible review of some of the conventional ethical requirements might be necessary in relation to research with children in oppressed, excluded and vulnerable positions.

The session spoke on how young researchers might be supported, but also demonstrated this by the inclusion of a young researcher - an undergraduate student - as a key presenter in this session. The relationship between mentors/supervisors and young researchers is critical to career building, as are considerations of access to information and resources, and ensuring inclusivity of minority groups especially women, people of colour, and those from the global South. Academic partnerships and mentoring are invaluable strategies to build research capacity; they provide fertile spaces for across contexts research and opportunities to access wider data sources and to broaden networks and possibilities to get published. This is especially so where lack of communication networks might preclude some researchers from developing countries from accessing research data.

Recommendations:

1. Participatory approaches in working with children have intrinsic value and help to achieve desired outcomes, but these are not the only research methods to be used in child research.

2. No research should compromise children's rights

- How do we design pedagogy for participatory approaches and what should such pedagogy constitute?

3. To recognise the importance of regional and global networking in research capacity building and to take account of local historical, socio-political, economic, and cultural realities, and to develop a dialectical relationship between the global and the local.

- How do we challenge dominant constructions of what constitutes valid knowledge, and how do we validate locally-specific knowledge systems?
- How do we use an organic process to develop knowledge and how can we allow this to evolve into knowledge that is universally embraced and respected?

4. There is demonstrated value in peer support, mentoring and networks across institutions and countries. However, the relationships across institutions and countries tend to remain asymmetrical.

- How can we actively explore the establishment of Communities of Practices (CoPs)? What might be the obstacles, for example, language barriers and lack of access to communication?
- How do we create balance or symmetry across research networks and institutions, with special attention to what is conventionally defined as asymmetry between the Global North and the Global South?

5. The concerns around the politics and economics of research and exploitation of research assistants from the Global South and the need for education of senior

researchers (generally from the Global North) around the ethics of research and publishing.

6. Lack of access to opportunities to publish.

- How can the possibilities offered by peer support networks and CoPs be maximised to support young researchers and to facilitate access to publishing and to dissemination of information in various forms?

ii. Child Participatory Research Roundtable

Moderator:

Natalie Bolzan University of Western Sydney, Australia

Presenters:

Lance Emerson ARACY, Australia

Rose September University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Jan Falloon University of Western Sydney, Australia

Alice Mapenzi Kubo Child Helpline International

Background:

The presentation and discussions focused on the following questions:

1. What are the tensions between policy makers, practitioners and researchers around child participatory research and recommendations following from it?
2. What are some ways of resolving these tensions between policy makers, practitioners and researchers?
3. To what extent is the promoting of child participatory research consistent with various value frames and the agendas of agencies implementing research and its findings?

4. If we are to involve children and young people in the research and policy process, how do we do this in a way which takes account of the adult-child power imbalance built into all policymaking?

Comments:

Child Participatory Research is children contributing to knowledge, understanding or solutions to the issues that are of concern to them.

Principles underpinning Child Participatory Research

- Researchers must be explicit about why they are engaged in Child Participatory Research.

For example:

- Is it in compliance with the CRC
- Is it a commitment to learning from children
- Is it a requirement for funding
- It must be ethically informed:
 - This includes an undertaking for transparency and honesty
 - That informed consent is truly informed and allows for dissent
 - Confidentiality is explained
 - The purpose and impact of the research is truthfully explained.
- It is based on respect for personhood of children and young people irrespective of age, gender, capacity or social position

Child Participatory Research must be appropriate to the socio-political and cultural context in which it is undertaken.

- Child Participatory Research should not undermine other rights.
For example the right to safety should not be compromised by participating in Child Participatory Research.

Recommendations:

1. A project should be commissioned which brings together best practice ethical guidelines and makes them accessible to all researchers engaged in Child Participatory Research.

2. A project should be commissioned which brings together best practice Child Participatory Research methods and tools and makes them accessible to all researchers engaged in Child Participatory Research.
3. Training should be offered to researchers in Child Participatory Research. It should include training in when and how to conduct the research; skills in researching with children; and how to prepare children for Child Participatory Research. It should cover working collaboratively with children as well as equipping children to work as researchers.

iii. Global Economic Policies Roundtable

Moderator:

Stefan van der Swaluw

International Child Support

Presenter:

Arowolo

David Parker

Deputy Director, UNICEF Innocenti Center

Background:

UNICEF has formulated the importance of discussing economic policies in a child rights context in the following way: “The current global economic crisis threatens to undo many of the world’s recent gains in child survival and wellbeing. Countries on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals could fall behind, while those that were struggling to advance could be left even worse off. The crisis threatens both the resources of families as well as national budgets, creating serious challenges to the fulfillment of children’s and women’s rights. This creates not only an immediate emergency for today’s children, but also presents a risk of impoverishing future generations. Past crises have shown the degree to which children are vulnerable to economic

recessions, as they can be removed from school to work or care for family or suffer under-nutrition as food becomes more scarce. These situations, even if only temporary, can often have a permanent impact on a child's development and future potential."

Recommendations:

The participants in the meeting reviewed perspectives, frameworks and research findings on the impacts of global economic developments and policies on children's wellbeing, with particular focus on the global economic crisis, and the situation of children in Africa. A child rights framework and perspective for research on global economic policies was first presented by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). A review was made of the discussion and outcomes of the conference on The Global Economic Crisis – Including Children in the policy response, UNICEF-ODI, held in London 9-10 November 2009. The participants endorsed the recommendations for further research presented at that conference.

Based on the discussions, the roundtable participants additionally recommend:

1. Developing frameworks, suitably attuned to the reality of specific regions, that link global economic conditions and policy measures to the wellbeing of children and their families.
2. Making effective use of modern technology, to urgently set up real-time monitoring systems to track and document the situation of children and their families, including on the impacts of the unfolding global economic crisis.
3. (Reference Roundtable on social protection) Mapping the range of different country policy and programme responses to economic crisis, as a basis for more detailed examination of the impacts and generalisability of these actions for other countries. In particular, to include innovative social protection programmes, with the

objective of providing policy makers with strategic choices in developing comprehensive child protection strategies

4. Monitor, document and examine the effectiveness of policy decisions, including the use of innovative mechanisms, to finance social sector responses to global economic crisis — including the management of tradeoffs in national budgets, alternative means to generate new fiscal space, and international initiatives for revenue generation.
5. Recognizing the sensitivity of households, including those that may not already be poor, to changes in economic conditions, it will be essential to include the variable of vulnerability and resilience in analyses of child and household wellbeing, and in analyses of the realisation of child rights.
6. Promoting new research, as well as incorporating including through incorporation into existing research initiatives, that examines the experience and impacts of household employment and local labour market considerations as a key factor affecting child wellbeing, particularly in the context of economic decline.

The participants endorsed the principle of treating the economic crisis as an opportunity to promote social investment, institutional development (including of social welfare ministries) and child-focused social protection.

iv. Research and Policy Nexus Roundtable

Modertor:

Bettina Silbernagl Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Presenters:

Betty Akuffo-Amoabeng Consultant,
Ghana

Britt Kalla Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Lothar Krappmann UN CRC Committee,
Germany

Tanja Betz German Youth Institute

Background:

To successfully develop and implement child rights policies in a given country, a high-quality national data base on children is required. However, often data bases are non-existent or inadequate. Consequently, a better collaboration between those gathering the data and those developing the policies is needed. Through expert inputs from Europe (Sozialberichterstattung) and the South (Ghana, Uganda), the Roundtable provided insights into current good practices whilst exploring the needs in countries where data bases on children are insufficient. In doing so, the group jointly and in a participatory manner identified main impediments but also opportunities for linking research to policy and practice.

Recommendations:

1. Enhancing cooperation and partnerships
 - To improve the nexus between research and policy, stakeholders from both sides and from different sectors and disciplines must be brought closer together. Only through interaction and cooperation can both sides understand each other's needs and restrictions and find realistic solutions to shared problems in the realm of children's rights.
 - The building of partnerships or alliances between some or many is an additional way to collaborate more closely and systematically.
 - In particular, participants pointed to the need to improve the connection between research institutions and grassroots NGOs.
 - In terms of advisory bodies, it was suggested that not only researchers should be part of these bodies but also other stakeholders.
2. Searching for and strengthening of brokers
 - In cases where cooperation is difficult to achieve due to the complete lack of connections or a research and policy-making environment that is too fragmented, it is helpful to identify "brokers". Brokers can be specific actors or organizations/institutions who are tasked with bringing both sides closer together. They are predestined for this task because of certain qualities they have such as knowing both sides very well, being a neutral third party etc.
3. Understanding and institutionalising personal connections
 - Although many times researchers and policy makers have differing interests, often enough personal connections are established. These are too frequently seen as 'not legitimate'. The panel understands that personal linkages can play an important role in identifying individual champions/supporters for the cause of child rights. Consequently, it is recommended that existing personal connections should be valued more, and, if possible, utilised strategically.
 - Ideally, personal connections can be institutionalised/utilised to ensure sustainability of the relationship between the institutions and help to improve the inadequate link between research and policy on a longer-term basis.
4. Enhancing the understanding and the accessibility of data
 - It is recommended that research findings in the area of children's rights should be both, understandable and widely available. Understandable means that the findings should be formulated in a way that all relevant stakeholders can comprehend and

utilise them within their work. Widely available implies that findings should be disseminated widely but also be freely and easily accessible to all relevant stakeholders.

- One way to make research findings easily and widely accessible is to develop a centralised data base, which covers all findings and other information on children’s rights in a given country, on a given subject etc.
5. Utilising existing international processes
 - There exist a number of international processes, like the PRSPs or the reporting on the CRC, where data on children is collected and summarised at regular intervals. Both processes already generate a certain amount of information on children’s rights. It is proposed that the already existing information should be better utilised by researchers and policy makers alike.
 - Further, such processes can be utilised to institutionalise an even stronger focus on children and young people’s rights (more thorough research and disaggregated data sets), which will have a tangible impact on the realisation of children’s rights in policies and programmes stipulated by these processes (e.g. Sector-Wide Approaches, Poverty Action Funds).
 - This could also lead to a better appreciation of challenges linked to the realisation of child rights in development processes, where young people’s issues are too often sidelined (through very low budget allocation to the sector) or simplified (i.e. the understanding that investing in health-care and education is sufficient to realise child rights).
 6. Capacity development within government
 - Government ministries at times find it difficult to acknowledge the

importance of child rights research for the creation of respective policies. To be able to do so, they need to be equipped with the necessary resources. Moreover, training could enhance the staffs’ appreciation of the added value of a functioning link between data collection and the utilisation of the same.

6. Widening the understanding of what constitutes “good” research
 - The participants suggest that the understanding of “good” research should be widened and, consequently, should also include approaches such as “action research”, which is popular within applied disciplines.

v. Linking Research, Policy, Practice Roundtable

Moderator:

Rob Chaskin Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, USA

Presenters:

Sheila Greene Trinity College, Ireland

Irene Rizzini CIESPI (Brazil)

Nermeen Murad King Hussein Foundation, Jordan

Rukmini Banerji Pratham, India

Caitlin Porter Save the Children, United Kingdom

Dalia Ben Rabi JDC-Meyer-Brookdale Institute Israel

Background:

The purpose of this roundtable was to examine key challenges and successful strategies for engaging in and with research in ways that can lead to positive impacts on policies and practices affecting children. In particular, two major themes were explored. The first concerned issues of *context and capacity* that influence the ways that research can effectively inform policy and practice (and vice versa). The second

concerned *relational strategies, alliance building, and methods of engagement* between researchers, research users, and other key stakeholders. The roundtable was an opportunity for interaction, discussion, and problem-solving among researchers, policymakers, advocates, civil-society actors, and other sponsors and users of research working in very different social, political, and cultural contexts around the world.

Recommendations:

1. Democratising research
 - Data needs to be treated as a public good
 - Commit to increasing access and capacity of others to use data
 - Reciprocity: take back findings to communities
 - Researchers need to be open and transparent about nature of the research, findings, and limitations
 - Provide training on data use and data analysis
 - In order to build the skills, knowledge and confidence of a broad range of actors (from NGOs to community members to children) to understand the purpose of research, to participate in conducting research, to interpreting findings and act on recommendations
 - Promoting education from a relatively early age, incorporating research into secondary school curricula
2. Partnership and collaboration
 - Need to create collaborative arrangements
 - Coalitions: interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research
 - Government partnerships w/NGO and researchers
 - Trusting relationships need to be built
 - Investment of time
 - Define roles and a complementary division of labour
 - Clarity about shared goals, relative responsibility, expectation, benefit

- Recognition of the expertise, priorities, and constraints of partners
- Social and relational skills are needed on the part of researchers
- Capacity needed to managing competing demands, shifting priorities, multiple stakeholders

3. Communication and dissemination

- Simplify provision of information
- Different forms of dissemination (interactive forums; short distillations e.g., report cards)
- Use of media
 - Translating research for professional audiences
- PROCESS of engagement
 - At every level
 - Among multiple actors
 - Time to dialogue

4. Take account of context

- Research design and findings need to be shaped in light of political contexts and exigencies
- Map actors and stakeholders to identify allies, partners, audiences
- Understand structures and processes through which decisions necessarily get made

vi. Research and Monitoring Roundtable

Modertor:

Gerardo Sauri Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México

Presenters:

Elisabeth Backe-Hansen Norwegian Social Research

Katharine Hall University of Cape Town, South Africa

Background:

On the frame of the 20th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is important to take into consideration some of the general comments issued by the Committee to the State Parties. Among the most outstanding observations are those related with the enhancement and promotion of adequate mechanisms for monitoring the status and fulfillment of the rights of the child among the adherent countries to the Convention.

Therefore, the discussion of this roundtable will be focused on how different regions around the world have successfully achieved the implementation of these mechanisms. Each participant will be talking about his own experience with a unique purpose of promoting among the attendants the application of a system that gives a better documentation on the rights of the child. The importance of that system is that it is created with reliable information that will permit policy-makers formulate public policies that better suit the needs of children and that guarantee the full enjoyment of their rights.

Recommendations:

Caveats

The group acknowledges that this roundtable was limited to presentations on, and discussion of, monitoring through statistical (child-centred) indicators. The discussion was not concluded in the available time and these recommendations were finalised by just three participants.

1. A purposive & targeted approach to indicator development

More attention needs to be paid to the purpose or use of indicators when undertaking indicator development and analysis. We need to acknowledge that different (sets of) indicators may be useful at different levels – in other words, the types and array of indicators should be informed by their use, and not just by what is available:

- the international rights framework implies the need for generic /uniform

(sets of) indicators, which can be useful for standardised reporting and cross-country comparisons

- at the same time, it is important to have locally relevant, context-sensitive indicators that articulate with policy and practice within countries and regions. Locally defined indicators are needed to inform and evaluate policy implementation, and to explore inter-relations between various dimensions / domains. The requirement of context-specific indicators in turn means that they should take into account local and qualitative understandings, and remain dynamic and flexible – reflecting changing contexts and needs.

2. An emphasis on monitoring progress towards rights realisation, acknowledging different resources and starting points

The focus of child rights monitoring in the context of the UNCRC should be for countries (and the CRC) to assess the progress of individual countries towards realising children's rights, acknowledging that advancements may be gradual, starting from different bases. Ultimately states parties are responsible for the realisation of rights in their countries; comparisons through universal indicator monitoring systems are not necessarily helpful or meaningful, and can simply highlight inequality rather than progress. Article 4 of the CRC acknowledges the unequal resources of different countries, and the important task is for individual countries to track their progress towards goals.

3. Building research capacity for monitoring
There is a clear monitoring process for child rights through the CRC Committee, but countries have varying capacity to meet the requirements. Countries with relatively poor data and weak research capacity should be supported by the Committee (and the global research community) to develop data collection

and monitoring systems. This implies the need for regional and international networking to enable monitoring of children's rights. A recommendation of this group is that we pledge ourselves to share experience and build capacity across countries, while respecting the need for country-specific indicators.

4. Consider the common limitation of indicators to monitoring socio-economic rights. Monitoring through indicators generally focuses on socio-economic rights, but tends to neglect civil and political rights such as the right to freedom

of expression, religion, association. This is probably because socio-economic rights advancements are more easily measurable. There may be ways to monitor and report on progress towards the realisation of civil/political rights realisation in country reports – for instance, through policy analysis and legislative review, an overview of awareness and school-based programmes, qualitative and participatory work with children, and proxy indicators in some instances. Possibilities for developing monitoring tools (not necessarily statistical) in relation to these provisions should be explored.