

The Child Friendly Cities Research Program

Summary and Update

**Prepared by the *Children's Environments Research Group (CERG)*
and the *Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)***



December 2008

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This paper provides a summary and an update on the Child Friendly Cities Research Program including outcomes of the first meeting of the research consultative group that took place in The Hague on November 6th and 7th, 2008

Introduction

Child Friendly Cities are cities that are committed, at community and municipal levels, to the fulfilment of children's rights. The Child Friendly Cities Initiative was launched by UNICEF and UN-Habitat in 1996 with the recognition that while much progress was being made in many countries to develop national level policies, strategies and programs of awareness to achieve children's rights, there was a need to bring the children's rights agenda down to the local level in order to have broad fulfilment of children's rights and to reach pockets of the most marginalised children and families. The number of cities identifying themselves as child friendly cities has grown dramatically in recent years but there has been a fundamental weakness in the application of the CFC approach in most cities due to a limited degree of critical reflection on the various dimensions of the initiative and the absence of tools for the participatory assessment and monitoring of child friendliness. To address these weaknesses this research program has been developed through a partnership between *Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)* and The *Childwatch International* network of research institutions.

The CFCI promotes: (1) a broad awareness of children's rights by the public and all government sectors and non-government agents as the basis of advocacy and action for children, and (2) the development of systems of governance where children and the larger community have a direct voice in the development of policies, laws, regulations, programmes and budgets.

There is a continued growth in the number of self-identified child friendly cities around the world and a renewed interest in the approach of child friendly cities, both within and beyond UNICEF. A new momentum for the development of child friendly cities to have emerged from a combination of different sources:

- A call to promote participatory civic engagement for children's rights in an integrated, more local, manner - in homes, schools, communities and cities.
- Increasing recognition that poverty, which has commonly been perceived as a predominantly rural phenomenon, needs to be addressed in ways that more fully consider the rapidly increasing numbers of poor and deprived families and children living in urban areas.
- The trend of decentralization, whereby local governments are faced with greater fiscal responsibilities and for providing social services that were previously the role of national governments.
- Growing recognition of the values of the kind of integrated community approach that is characterized by the child friendly cities initiative for making progress toward the Millennium Development Goals.

Specifically within UNICEF the mid-term review of the Medium Term Strategic Plan calls for a renewed priority for action in urban contexts. There is recognition of the need for a multi-faceted approach to address the needs and rights of children in their communities. A key focus in the

adjusted UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan which has been extended to 2011, is the need for a systematic response to issues faced by children, young people and families in poor and underserved urban areas through strengthening partnerships with local authorities and municipalities. Furthermore, the UN Study on Violence against Children has recommended a strengthening of local commitment and action to respond to violence against children and a focus on policies that address poverty, income gaps, urban overcrowding and other factors that undermine society. The importance of children's participation in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them was also stressed.

In its past and current programme, the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) has contributed to this important area by documenting and analyzing systems of local governance for promoting and protecting children's rights in line with commitments made at the UN Special Session on Children to place children at the centre of development agendas. In consultation with UNICEF offices, United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners and international experts, the Centre developed a CFC Framework for Action for a child-friendly city that has been translated in a multitude of languages and is helping to inform action by local authorities worldwide (www.childfriendlycities.org). The CFCI Secretariat, based at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre represents a common point of reference and interaction and has played a central role in knowledge development that has served to promote child friendly cities. The CFCI database initiated by the Secretariat and available to the public has been a useful instrument for knowledge development and dissemination. The IRC has also undertaken research on children's participation and supported the development of general comments by the committee on the Rights of the Child on article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) focusing on children's participation.

The CFCI needs to be seen alongside other human rights-based initiatives to improve children's lives cities such as the UNESCO "Growing Up in Cities" initiative, which engages young people in participatory research on the conditions of their local environment and the UN Habitat "Safe Cities" Programme which promotes the role of local partnerships to initiate and co-ordinate action to address violence and crime in cities. The CFC Framework for Action and the human-rights based approaches used by related initiatives, have proven to be of particular interest in both developing and industrialized countries with significant urban populations where large numbers of children are faced with chronic poverty and exclusion. With communities and cities making effort to become more children friendly there has been an increased need for assessment instruments that allow them to systematically assess themselves and to monitor improvements.

In January 2008, UNICEF Geneva convened an expert and practitioner consultation on Child Friendly Cities, organized with the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit and the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC). The consultation brought together 30 participants from Country Offices, National Committees and partner institution to share experiences on the promotion of child rights at the local level in both industrialized and developing countries. A key conclusion of the meeting was the need for a systematic effort to strengthen the capacity of cities committed to becoming child friendly to collect and analyse data to enable them to assess their progress with respect to fulfilment of the full range of children's rights, including among the children most excluded from care and services. It was noted that this would require research on methods of assessment and monitoring of "child friendliness" in communities and cities and the development of tools to centrally involve children and youth. The Child in the City conference organized by the European Network on Child Friendly Cities held in Rotterdam in November 2008 also concluded that the development of participatory assessment and monitoring tools was a necessary step for the successful further development of the movement. While this proposal originates in a

concern for cities of developing countries, it is clear that the same need exists in the child friendly cities of the industrialized countries.

Goal and objectives of the research

The Child Friendly Cities Research Initiative is designed to improve the capacity of child friendly communities and cities to raise the quality of their programs and policies by improving how they gather and use evidence on the conditions of children. This is being done through an international critical review of existing systems of assessment, monitoring and evaluation of child friendliness and through the development and testing of new methods. Both the degree of child friendliness and the quality of the structures and processes of governance for children's rights are being addressed. The practical products from the initiative will be a package of assessment and monitoring tools and an associated set of child right indicators that can be used and modified for use in any community by the full range of actors, from the general public, including children, to government agency officials. The research will also generate data on the conditions of children in the participating cities for use in policy development and planning. The benefits to communities and cities will be greatly improved data on the conditions of children, including the identification of the most vulnerable families and children, and the effectiveness of the child friendly initiatives for improving the fulfilment of children's rights and for promoting good governance.

Partners

A partnership with child friendly communities and cities is being developed to improve the means of assessment, reflection and monitoring of children's rights. As a first step, Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) of UNICEF partnered with Childwatch International, an international network of research institutions involved with children's rights, to design and implement the research. This has been done in consultation with the CFC Reference group that includes the Adolescent Participation and Development unit of UNICEF headquarters in New York and the UNICEF Private Fundraising & Partnerships Division (PFP) in Geneva. While Childwatch has children's rights in the developing world countries as its focus, it also works with a select number of research centres in the developing world that have a commitment to building the research capacity of centres in the industrialized world. The research initiative is being coordinated jointly by IRC and the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG) of the City University of New York, a member of Childwatch International. Another key partner is the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, which hosted the first researchers' meeting in November 2008. The Bernard Van Leer Foundation will also be supporting the planned piloting phase of the research methodology and tools in Brazil and the Philippines in early 2009.

A broader dynamic partnership will be consolidated by mid 2009 when research centres and local government agency partners from eleven countries will come together to participate in the research. These countries¹ were selected based on existing experience in supporting child friendly communities and cities in addition to the geographical location and socio-economic context. The research program will simultaneously enhance South/South and North/South collaboration. Furthermore, coordination will be strengthened with international organizations and other UN organizations, such as UNESCO and UN-Habitat to exchange experiences, consolidate efforts and avoid duplication of work.

¹ Sudan, South Africa, Jordan, India, The Philippines, Brazil, The Dominican Republic, Russia, Italy, France and Spain

DevInfo, established by the United Nations and widely used by member states to monitor progress of the MDGs will be adapted to map child friendly city data. Devinfo staff will assist in establishing and testing an interactive database a web user interface for the research.

The research process

The research process will have multiple results. It will provide data on local authority experiences in promoting and assessing children's rights, promote awareness on the importance of monitoring and assessment and critical reflection on children's rights and child friendliness among a wide range of stakeholders and policy makers, generate data on the situation of children in the participating communities and enhance the sharing of experiences between communities and cities. It is also intended to yield a set of indicators and robust tools and instruments that can be used globally to promote the realization of children's rights at the local authority level.

The following presents the key steps of the research initiative:

Formation of a network of researchers and practitioners with experience in child friendly communities and cities:

The objective of this network is to serve as a consultative group for the research initiative in critiquing all stages of the research process. The network was established in November 2008 when the first network meeting took place in The Hague.

Design of the research methodology and tools (September 2008 -January 2009):

To ensure that the research builds on existing experiences and avoids duplication of work, existing assessment tools and instruments from different parts of the world were identified and collected by IRC, CERG and the research network members. The collected tools and instruments were compiled by CERG into an inventory that was then used as a reference by the research network.

The network of researchers and practitioners met for the first time in The Hague on 5-7 November 2008. The 15 participants conducted a critical review of existing, and potential, approaches and instruments for assessing and monitoring the fulfilment of children's rights. The network identified areas of assessment that need to be included in the research toolkit, format and approach. Key recommendations of the meeting include the need to focus on the assessment of both the fulfilment of children's rights and governance structures and processes for supporting children's rights. Participants of the meeting emphasized that assessment and monitoring tools should serve to mobilize and empower community members to take action to promote children's rights. They emphasized the need for a comprehensive toolkit for assessing the full range of children's rights for protection, development and participation in a community or city. The toolkit should be designed in a sufficiently simple way to enable the participation of all groups in the assessment, activities, including children and those who are not fully literate.

Based on the recommendations of the Hague meeting as well as feedback that will be received from the UNICEF country offices and National Committees on the proposed content and format of the research toolkit, CERG will develop the preliminary version of the core tools for assessment and monitoring to be tested in two pilot countries.

Pilot testing and modification of the core research tools (February- May 2009)

A key recommendation that came out of the Hague meeting was that the research methodology and toolkit be piloted and refined before being taken up by all of the countries participating in the

research. The piloting is planned to take place in Brazil and the Philippines during the first half of 2009 in cooperation with UNICEF Country offices and one research partner in each location. This will ensure that the development of the tool kit is guided by concrete experiences, realities and concerns in three major cities (Rio, Sao Paulo and Manila) that are already engaged in CFC activities and focusing on reaching children in poorer communities. Following the pilot, CERG will integrate the evaluations from Brazil and The Philippines in order to further refine the proposed core assessments and monitoring tools, and how they can best be used by different groups of citizens and professionals.

Consultation workshop to review and agree on the research methodology including the research toolkit (May/June 2009)

This workshop, planned for the second quarter of 2009, will involve municipalities and partner research centres in the eleven countries participating in the research. They will share their experiences of effective strategies for building public and professional awareness of children rights, for establishing governance structures and processes for the achievement of children's rights and for assessing and monitoring the fulfilment of children's rights. Having representatives of communities and cities from both developing and industrialized countries will greatly enhance the exchange of knowledge. A key objective of the consultation workshop is to develop a common understanding among the countries participating in the research of the goals, process and expected outcome of the research. Modalities for research implementation, generating data, compilation of data and analysis will also be discussed.

Research implementation and country level analysis (July-November 2009):

The participating municipalities in the eleven countries will conduct the research, in partnership with local research organizations. They will use the tools so far developed to assess the situation of children and the systems of governance that support children and their families. The research process will be highly participatory and so will contribute greatly to the enhancement of awareness on children's rights in the communities participating in the research, while also sensitising municipal professionals and policy makers. The local research process in each community/municipality will be networked the other municipal partners in the spirit of a large-scale action research program. Following the implementation of the research process by the various stakeholders, the local research partners with their respective municipalities will continue working together to synthesize the outcome of their research. IRC and the City University of New York will provide technical support throughout the process and will facilitate comparative analysis among the countries participating in the research. During the research implementation, the research tools and instruments will be made available on line by IRC, ensuring access by communities or cities that are not involved in the project.

Research findings and presentation (Dec 2009- April 2010)

Findings of the various countries participating in the research will be compared and synthesized by the City University of New York in partnership with the other research institutions around the world. The findings of the research will also be presented in the form of working papers. The products at this stage will include:

- A research protocol including a set of child right indicators for communities and cities at the local governance level to assess their child friendliness and mobilize communities to provide better opportunities for children.
- Description and analysis of the mechanisms used by local authorities to assess the fulfilment of child rights
- Knowledge on the situation of children at the local authority level in various contexts with comparative analysis of factors that enhance the fulfilment of children's rights and promote good governance.

- Data on the value of local participatory assessment and monitoring for the improvement of children's rights and the promotion of democratic community governance.

The documentation process of the research partners in the eleven countries will be used by CERG to revise the tools, and guidelines for their use, in ways that make them flexible for culturally and contextually appropriate use. The revised tool kit and guidelines will be made available for global use in 2010 on an enhanced, and highly interactive Child Friendly City webpage, managed by UNICEF IRC.

The outcomes of the research will also be disseminated and shared through the 20th Anniversary CRC conference in Addis Ababa in November 2009 and the Child in the City Conference organized by the European Network in 2010. Some of the partner countries will be able to come together at these events to directly share their experience in the research process.

Results of The Hague meeting 5-7 November 2008

The objective of the Hague meeting was to review and critique existing assessment and monitoring tools on child friendliness and to comprehensively outline the structure, focus, format and dimensions of the research tool kit that is being developed by the Children's Environments Research Group (Refer to Appendix 2 for agenda).

Participants in the meeting included 15 researchers and practitioners with experience in child friendly communities and cities (refer to Appendix 1 for list of participants including those who were invited but could not participate). The participants reviewed the inventory of tools that was collected and assimilated by CERG and provided a set of recommendations for the research tool kit.

Objectives and nature of the tool kit

Participants of the meeting agreed on the objectives of the research tool kit and emphasized that although this tool kit is being developed for the purpose of the research, it is a key by-product of the research that will be tested through the research and will become available for future use by communities and cities as a programme and advocacy tool. Key objectives of the toolkit were summarized as follows:

- Better assess the degree to which children's rights are being fulfilled for all children in order to improve municipal decisions, policies, laws and regulations related to children's protection, resources and services.
- Assess and analyse the existing governance structures including policies and rules and regulations and identify strengths and weakness of existing systems.
- Provide local data that will enable municipalities to better respond to the needs of children of the most disadvantaged groups.
- Engage children, young people and community members in participatory processes that enhance local awareness, action and advocacy while also providing the needed data for municipal government decision-makers.

- Monitor progress and improvements in the situation of children.

Building on the above, the research toolkit will be a package of **participatory instruments**, and associated guides for communities and municipal authorities to expand the breadth and quality of information available on children. They will be used in highly participatory ways with the various target groups including children, parents, caregivers and city officials. They will also be **adaptable to various contexts** of the communities and cities. The new resource will be a flexible kit of participatory tools that will be suitable for modification and use in any country.

The tool kit will be designed to enable communities to collect **data that is disaggregated** in order to differentiate the distinct needs of girls and boys of different ages and of marginalized sub-groups in the community. Unlike many projects that enable children in middle childhood and adolescence to participate in community research, this project will give particular attention to the early childhood period by including use of methods for working with both young children and the parents of infants and pre-school children.

The tool kit will be structured in a format that can be used by community groups that have no professional training in research or evaluation. The tools will need to be suitable for use by groups and quantifiable in simple ways that are comprehensible to those groups. Furthermore, the intention is to enable these groups to produce data that can be analysed and interpreted by them in simple ways. This is made possible through the use of thoughtfully designed participatory visual tools inspired by the tradition of rapid participatory appraisal methods. This will enable many communities to have base line data that enables them to develop a local action plan and advocacy plan for children and to monitor improvements.

At the same time, the methods will be designed to produce data that can be quantified and combined in useful ways for use by planners and decision-makers at the level of municipal government where the **community assessment** data can be assimilated by city agencies into their **city-level assessment**, monitoring and planning processes for children.

Following the development and testing of the tool kit it will be converted into a virtual (web-based) interactive resource for free accessibility and use globally.

Core tools of the tool kit

The research toolkit will assess a set of child rights indicators for communities and cities at the local governance level. These indicators will be based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and will explore existing structures and mechanisms that support the fulfilment of children's rights. The set of indicators will be examined through two main core tools that assess the following:

1. ***The nature and degree of cities' and communities' child-friendliness*** where communities and cities comprehensively assess the degree to which the full range of children's rights are satisfied from the perspective of parents, professionals, and children themselves.
2. ***The local government structures and processes that support the fulfilment of children's rights*** where communities and cities assess and evaluate the structures and processes that exist in their locality to fulfil children's rights for protection, development and participation. This will also involve the design of participatory tools for use by city officials, parents, and children.

These two core tools will be supported by additional modules and tools for the in-depth assessment and analysis of communities and cities.

Characteristics of the core assessment tools

The following criteria will be taken into consideration in the development of the core assessment tools:

- Comprehensive in terms of children's rights
- The assessment tools will have core CRC based dimensions that need to be assessed; however, flexibility will be provided to add new culturally relevant dimensions/indicators
- Includes both assessment for child friendliness as well guidance for action
- Combines "conventional" objective measures with qualitative and participatory ones
- Provides disaggregated data to a fine level within the community – age/gender/special needs/ spatial – individual household level.
- Understandable for the children of a wide age range (from 8 years up) and abilities and yet still useful for all other stakeholders
- Suitable for use in different cultures and in low-income or low literacy as well as high income or high literacy communities/cities
- Simply scored and analysed by local community without professional researchers (or with limited professional support)
- Immediacy of use i.e. Participatory Rapid Appraisal
- Contains clear guidelines for the utilization of the tools
- Provides guidelines on defining "community"

Range of dimensions to include in the toolkit

The toolkit will be based on the CRC which will be the guiding framework for assessment, as is already reflected in the CFC Framework for Action (2004).

A set of indicators will be identified to assess the status of fulfilment of the full range of rights of children under the CRC. While local governments normally have access to some quantitative indicators of the fulfilment of certain rights, such as sanitation, water access and vaccination rates, only a limited range of indicators are available for the majority of children's rights in any city. This will be addressed in the research tool kit that unlike the conventional city level data, the tool kit will explore both subjective as well as objective indicators.

Participants of the Hague workshop identified the different domains of children's well being/rights that need to be taken into consideration in the design of the tool kit. The domains identified in the workshop included the following, although grouping of the domains may vary once the toolkit is developed:

- Housing and residential physical environment
- Child care services
- Health and social services
- Play and recreation resources
- Educational resources
- Physical Safety in the environment
- Cultural identity and social inclusion
- Child protection
- Ambient Environment
- Economic Livelihood
- Governance structures for children's rights

- Children's participation in community governance

The uses of the tool kit

As mentioned above the toolkit will be used for both community and city level assessment and monitoring.

The local research process will promote both public awareness of children's rights and sensitise municipal decision-makers to the needs and capacities of communities while simultaneously generating data on the situation of children. The uses of the tool kit can be summarized as follows:

Community-level awareness

- Identify level of awareness of children's rights
- Raise awareness of children's rights and local ownership of rights
- Make patterns of positive fulfilments of rights as well as rights infringements visible to whole community

Community-level advocacy

- Influence policies and legislation of the local authorities
- Influence allocation of resources
- Promote sustainability of children's rights when government is in transition

Community-level action

- Assess children's rights at the local level
- Monitor change
- Stimulate dialogue and facilitate consensus leading to plans for action

City level assessment

- Assess governance structures and processes for children's issues including listening to children
- Review and analyse local authorities' policies, legislation, rules and regulations for children
- Influence social policies and structures within the local authorities

Users of the tool kit

The tool kit will be designed to be used in highly participatory ways with the various target groups including children, parents, caregivers and city official. The following provides a description of the various groups that can use the tool kit:

- Community residents, including children of eight years and up (+ modified versions for younger children)
- Distinct marginalised groups of children and youth e.g.:
 - Children out of home care
 - Incarcerated children youth
 - Children out of home care
 - Children in emergency situations
- School children
- Parents and caregivers (including of pre-school children)
- Teachers (including early childhood teachers)

- Social workers
- Planners and professionals of city agencies – including personnel from agencies not traditionally thought of as child-serving agencies (eg water, sanitation, transportation etc)

Facilitators of the assessment process

Facilitation of the assessment process will vary according to the context. As mentioned above, the toolkit will be developed to be used to assess child friendliness at both the community and city level. The community could vary from a school community, a neighbourhood, childcare centre, etc. Therefore, facilitators of the assessment process may include the following according to the setting:

- Community organisers in community-based associations and non-governmental organizations
- Planning organizations
- School teachers
- Early Childhood practitioners
- City officials and staff when there are no community-based organisers or other local facilitators

The modular design of the tool kit

The tool kit will be modular to allow for different degrees of use by communities and cities according to their time, capacity and resources. The toolkit will contain the following:

1) The core tools:

The two core tools of this kit will be instruments for the assessment and monitoring of child friendliness and for the assessment of governance structures and processes. At this stage the focus is directed towards the development of the two core tools. Following the review of the participants of the workshop of the inventory of tools and instruments prepared by CERG, the group agreed that the draft assessment tool prepared by CERG is a useful starting point for developing the core tool on assessing children’s rights. Appendix 3 summarizes the improvements that can be introduced to the tool.

2) Guidebooks:

To facilitate utilization of the toolkit as a self-explanatory kit that can be used by communities and cities to assess and enhance the realization of children’s rights in their communities and cities, two guidebooks will be included in the kit. Guidance will be provided in both the community facilitator’s guidebook and the city-level guidebook on sampling strategies to create representative data.

- A community guidebook that provides direction and guidance for community groups to assess child friendliness, monitor, reflect, advocate and initiate action. Guidance on sampling will be provided to ensure heterogeneous sampling within the community in order to capture the full diversity of residents, with a strategic targeting of the most vulnerable families with children.
- A municipal government guidebook that provides direction in city settings for city officials and community members on the process of assessment of child friendliness including the compilation of community data for use by municipal agencies and the articulation of local data with existing city quantitative databases. While not all

communities in any municipality can be expected to mount a participatory CFC assessment process, the municipal guidebook will discuss the importance of conducting assessments of child friendliness in the most hard-to-reach families in the municipality – both as a way of sampling the needs of the most needy families and as a means of raising the capacities of these families to advocate for the rights of their children.

3) Additional, optional, Tools

The core tools will be supplemented with a number of optional tools for more in-depth community assessment and monitoring. These tools will be developed and modified by CERG, together with relevant Childwatch partners, and by the partner cities and research institutions. As a start, a number of the additional tools were proposed by workshop participants:

- A participatory mapping tool for assessing conditions for children and creating spatial patterns of rights infringements within the community (for use by children and adults).
- Inter-generational research tools for children working with parents and grandparents on the changed community conditions for children as a means of stimulating further community engagement, reflection and action.

**APPENDIX 1-A:
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE HAGUE WORKSHOP**

Manuel Buvinich

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Maddy Fox

CERG, City University of New York, USA

Monica Gonzalez

University of Girona, Spain

Jumana Haj-Ahmad

Innocenti Research Centre, UNICEF Italy

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Liz Kerrins

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Francesca Moneti

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Margaret O'Brien

Centre for Research on the Child and Family, University of East Anglia, England

Rose September

UNICEF South Africa

Pernille Skotte

Childwatch International, Oslo, Norway

Pamela Wridt

CYE, University of Colorado, USA

**APPENDIX 1-B:
ADDITIONAL INVITEES TO THE HAGUE MEETING (UNABLE TO ATTEND)**

Christoph Baker
UNICEF Italia, Italy

Marita Castro Guevara
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Ferran Casas
University of Girona, Spain

Sudeshna Chatterjee
Kaimal Chatterjee and Associates, India

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Liisa Horelli
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Mary Racelis
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Joachim Theis
UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office

**APPENDIX 2:
AGENDA FOR THE HAGUE WORKSHOP ON THE CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES
RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

WEDNESDAY

5pm at the Hotel: Round-table informal introductions from each of us and of our past work experiences in relation to the workshop.

7.30pm: Dinner. Walk to a local restaurant

THURSDAY

9am: Meet in Hotel Lobby to walk over to the Bernard van Leer Foundation

9.30am: Welcome and Introduction:

Welcoming remarks from Monique van 't Hek , Executive Director, Bernard van Leer Foundation

Introduction and Background to The Child Friendly City and Community Research Initiative by Francesca Moneti, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence:

Introduction to the Workshop by Selim Iltus, Bernard van Leer Foundation and Roger Hart, Children's Environments Research Group

10am: The workshop

Why child friendly cities?

The child friendly cities initiative was launched to enhance the awareness, understanding and realization of children's rights at the local authorities' level. The approach provides a vision whereby all rights are fulfilled for all children and the framework for action provides guidance regarding steps to make progress toward this vision. We will review how, in practice, the cities that call themselves child friendly typically have adopted a limited view of the comprehensive vision.

Why child friendly communities?

In order to achieve child friendly cities in the participatory manner, with the full engagement of civil society, it is important to speak equally of child friendly "communities". We will review here the implications of this for the development of the CFC initiative and the critical place of assessment and monitoring instruments at the community as well as the city level.

11am – 11.15: Coffee break

Why do we need to develop assessment and monitoring tools?

Discussion of the necessity of assessment and monitoring tools to assess child friendly communities and cities. We will elaborate on the existing gaps in assessment and monitoring in communities and cities and reach a common understanding on the different uses of the planned instruments.

Why participatory tools and who needs to participate in the process?

It is typically assumed that it is city agencies that need CFC assessment and monitoring tools to obtain data for planning purposes. But communities also need them so that residents can use them for both advocacy and to guide their own local actions. We will discuss the implications of this double challenge for the CFC initiative in general and for our specific task of developing the instruments. In order to effectively assess the range of needs of all children we will discuss the challenge of developing highly inclusive participatory processes in communities.

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm: Lunch

What we need to assess and monitor:

We need an open discussion on what needs to be assessed and monitored. We currently see the need for two major categories of assessment and monitoring:

- (a) *The assessment of children's rights:* Which children's rights are being fulfilled at the local level and which are not? We also need to find ways to identify patterns of exclusion for certain children and families. The assessment should facilitate the analysis of underlying factors contributing to the fulfilment or violation of these rights including the surrounding family, home and community environment.
- (b) *The assessment of governance structures and processes for the fulfilment of children's rights:* What are the existing structures and processes serving children and families in pursuit of their rights and which rights any government structures or processes are not addressing at all?

What range of dimensions/indicators do we need to be concerned with?

The CFC approach implies the use of a much broader range of indicators than typically exists in the databases of municipal governments. We will look at the different range of indicators currently being collected by different cities for their CFC initiatives and identify what we feel are the range of dimensions that need to be collected under the two major categories of assessment mentioned above.

3pm – 3.15pm: Coffee break

The multiple sources of data for CFC assessment and monitoring:

In addition to providing guidance to CFC's on how to extract data that has been centrally collected by municipal and national governments we also need to provide guidance to child friendly cities on the collection of local data on the above identified indicators in participatory ways with communities. This is the focus of this workshop but we will pause here to discuss the challenges of integrating formal municipal data with locally collected, participatory, data.

Types of tools:

Currently the most typical instrument being used by cities are fixed-choice questionnaires, administered by government agencies. Some cities have also developed rating scales and more open-ended questionnaire designs. Sometimes city officials themselves complete these, sometimes parents and sometimes children. Other cities have developed the use of qualitative participatory research methods with children for community advocacy purposes and these have relevance to us as ways of generating meaningful indicators. We will review the range of materials being used and identify alternatives given our goal of developing tools that can be used at both the community and city levels.

5pm: Close of session

7.30pm: Dinner. Meet in hotel lobby to take a tram to a downtown restaurant

FRIDAY

9am at the Bernard Van Leer Foundation

The design of instruments that can be completed and used by a broad range of citizens:

We need to discuss the challenge of designing methods that encourage the inclusion of a wide range of citizens in assessment and monitoring, including girls and boys of the widest possible age range, youth and women. We need to be particularly concerned with how to involve those who are typically marginalized from any community processes because of illiteracy but who are a priority for us to understand and to reach. In some cities there will also be opportunities for children and families to use their own data for participatory planning; indeed, in many poor communities this is the only planning they can hope for. We will use these principles in discussing what kind of instruments we can design for community use.

11am – 11.15am: Coffee break

The challenge of combining locally produced data with conventional indicators collected by government agencies:

While designing instruments that can be used for community assessment and monitoring of children's rights we need to think how this data can also be assimilated by city agencies into their own their city-level assessment, monitoring and planning processes. This will include a consideration of the degree to which the instruments we design can also produce useful quantitative data for city-wide comparative purposes and how nationally produced data can be disaggregated and used at city level. Clearly not all communities in any city will conduct their own participatory analyses so we need to also discuss alternative city-level strategies for sampling from communities.

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm: Lunch

The need for instruments that can be flexibly adapted for use by different cultures and groups of different levels of economic development

We need to pay attention to the problems of universalising as we develop tools that can be adapted locally by different cultural groups and communities with different degrees of economic development. The use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework for identifying the range of indicators any community might use is one good principle to follow but there are also issues such as culturally different communication styles that we will need to consider.

3pm – 3.15pm: coffee break

Partnerships and networks

Partnerships in this research initiative are key to ensure building on existing efforts and work, to mobilize resources and to avoid duplication of work. We will need to discuss other existing similar research initiatives, if any, and to explore partnerships that need to be developed to enhance utilization of research outcomes. The expected role of research partners at each country level will also be elaborated and clarified in this session.

The Way Ahead:

We will end the workshop with an account of what we see as the next steps in the process and how we would like to continue to work together.

5pm: Closing of the workshop

7.30pm: Dinner. For the few remaining foreign guests, we will again meet in the lobby to visit a restaurant downtown

APPENDIX 3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING CERG TOOL

The Hague group generally felt that the draft tool core tool for assessment from CERG is a useful starting point for developing the core tool and suggested the following improvements:

- Add indicators for objective data (a 4th column)
- Review and amend existing indicators under each domain to include selected but indicative indicators – also add new domains discussed in the workshop
- Revise language of phrases used in the core tool to simplify and maybe use with multiple users. Possibly turning them into statements rather than questions.
- Begin each domain with one or two overall statements to be rated according to the scale (not true, somewhat, mostly, fully true) that are good overall indicators of the domain. Other more specific indicators can follow.
- Add assessment → action (ask for each indicator – is action needed? How? Who? When?)
- Include a learning/educational process prior to assessment
- Need to resolve some confusions for people in the rating scheme- quantity v quality of rights fulfilments
- The instrument will only be used to assess what the individual children, or their parents, themselves feel is true about their own rights and so good sampling strategies will be required to ensure coverage of various parts of the community.
- Guidance needed on how to sample from families within the community and how to synthesize the data into a summary version of the graphic tool that represents the entire community.
- Agreement that there is need for another core tool(s) for assessing governance structures and processes for children’s rights
- Include demographic data