

9<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
CHILD INDICATORS

“GLOBAL CHILDHOODS: CRITICAL  
PERSPECTIVES PROMOTING THEORETICAL,  
EMPIRICAL AND POLICY UNDERSTANDINGS”

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Abstract Book

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## Theme 1: Essence of Childhoods



- Universalism of Values vis-à-vis Cultural Relativism
- Childhoods in Countries with Varying Economic Status
- Socio-Cultural Understandings of Childhoods
- Legal Understandings of Childhoods
- Psychological Understandings of Childhoods
- Gendered Childhoods
- Childhoods in Marginalised Communities



ID: 130

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 1: Essence of Childhood

*Keywords:* family composition, children's views

**Who are the family? Children's views on family composition in Estonia****Dagmar Kutsar, Kelly Nurmik**

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Family structures are changing and very often children stay in the middle of these changes. By the age of twelve, too many children have witnessed separation of parents, creation of new family units of fathers' and mothers'; too many children are put in a situation to commute between two family nuclei or losing contact with the distant parent. Who are my family could the child ask. Besides personal, this is also a family policy issue.

Attitudes of children concerning diverse family composition has rarely been in the researchers' agenda even when policymakers are struggling with new measures to support children in their families of diverse and changing structures. The aim of the presentation is to highlight children's views about different types of family composition. The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. It draws data from a small-scale survey with 12-13 years old children (225 respondents in 2023) and compares with data from 2010. The study searches answer to the research questions, which combinations of people do children think are a family; what are children's personal attitudes towards forming a family in the future; and what are the changes in children's views compared to a similar study in 2010?

The study revealed that in children's views being a family does not depend on whether the parents are married or just cohabitating. Having a child and living in the same household are the main arguments that make a family. Concerning the biological father, who had left his family, and the stepfather, ethical, emotional and biological aspects, came to the surface. The attitudes towards the biological father who had left his family were often negative, but there were other children, to whom biological connection was the most important to regard



a person as a family member. In case of a stepfather the deciding factor of inclusion was sharing the same household, having good relationships and having a half-brother or a sister.

In thirteen years, children's views about the family composition have become more liberal, especially in case of girls. However, children's perceptions also retain a relatively high degree of traditionalism: marriage is still valued, with parents who love each other in a formal union still seen as the safest family model, and marriage is the most popular choice for children's personal attitudes compared to cohabitation and remaining single.

**ID: 156****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 1: Essence of Childhood

*Keywords:* legitimization; children's agency; peer relations; Chinese Left-behind Children;

**Understanding legitimization as children's relational agency in peers: exemplifying Chinese Left-behind Children**

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Discourses in Children's Geographies in different social contexts (Holloway and Valentine, 2004; Holt, 2010; Mayall, 2013) have shown the understanding of diverse childhoods globally, which aligns with the socio-cultural understanding of childhoods. In line with that, I gaze on understanding the Chinese Left-behind children's (hereinafter: LBC) peer relations in the Chinese socio-cultural context. The Chinese LBC are children who have migrant parents and live with them less than 3 months in a year (Zhang et al., 2018). LBC are also regarded as vulnerable children who suffer from mental illness, social loneliness, and in need of essential child care and social concerns (Chang et al., 2019).

Within the realm of children's agency, one of the prevailing paradigms is understanding children's agency as their ability to make use of their social network (Abebe, 2019). Based on this concept and the epistemology of children's perspectives and children's voices



(James, 2007), I argue that there is a lack of focus on LBC's relational agency in peer relations in prior research area regarding the dominant passive outcomes of being left-behind that made by researchers (Ge et al., 2019). Hence, this study aims to construct (James and Prout, 2015) Chinese LBC's relational agency in peer relations in response to two research questions: 1) how do Chinese LBC practice their relational agency when with peers; 2) what is important when they exercise their relational agency with peers?

The research has been designed to use multiple qualitative methods through online interviews and instant messages, combined with the researcher's observation of 13 participants' posts on the main stream social media named WeChat in China. Other than the triangulation design (Neuman, 2013) of the data collection methods, three different concepts in child agency: 1) viewing agency as active participation (Wyness, 2018); 2) viewing agency as criteria making and choosing (Valentine, 2011); 3) viewing agency as continuum and interdependence (Abebe, 2019); and the notion of 4) legitimization in youth's social networks (Allen, 2003; Sweeting and Seaman, 2005; Elley, 2011; Manning, 2013) have been adopted to form as the theoretical framework of data analysis in answering the research questions. One-year longitudinal design of data collection showed that data were saturated (Bazeley, 2013) to answering research questions by employing the theoretical framework. The ethical approval has been granted in March 2022.

Findings have shown that some participants actively participate in implementing and legitimizing (Manning, 2013; Wyness, 2018) the rules made by the headteacher tackling snack-bring and snack-eating in classroom. It has been revealed that LBC can use their peer social network to avoid being confiscated mobile phones by teachers. They have shown their relational agency (Abebe, 2019) by asking friends from school to keep their mobile phones in a safe place. They were also legitimating (Allen, 2003; Elley, 2011) that mobile phones should not be banned in classroom without directly subverting the rules set by the teacher. Findings also proved that LBC have the competence to use and legitimize certain criteria (Valentine, 2011) and compare with their peers in the family context while encountering different treatment in rearranged childrearing. In conclusion, Chinese LBC practise their relational agency in peer interactions by actively participating in the decision-making and -implementing process, using certain criteria to judge and using their social



network. They have shown a sense of legitimating their thoughts and actions while practising their relational agency with peers in school and family contexts.

Future research could be conducted considering family constraints and its impact on LBC's peer relations. Guardians, policy makers, social workers and educators should take LBC's agency into consideration and provide them with appropriate aids when they encounter social constraints.

**ID: 229**

### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 1: Essence of Childhood

*Keywords:* Child well-being, Marginalized arid and semi-arid communities, community participation

### **BEYOND BARRIERS: A COMPREHENSIVE INQUIRY INTO CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA'S MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

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#### **Abstract**

Children in Marginalized Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) communities in Kenya face multiple challenges which jeopardise their fundamental development and well-being. This paper analyses their challenges, including poverty, limited access to healthcare and education, and cultural dynamics that impact child development and well-being. To highlight the impact of socio-economic, health, educational, and cultural dynamics on child well-being, we employ granular analysis and evidence-based data to examine the challenges faced by children in marginalised communities. The method involves gathering and analysing health statistics, nutrition data, educational access barriers, and evidenced malnutrition to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers undermining child wellbeing in this region.



Additionally, the paper incorporates community-centred perspectives and children's testimonies to inform the policy recommendations aligning with the conference's emphasis on amplifying children's voices in decisions shaping their lives. The paper also utilises a comparative analysis of educational testing and teacher quality in ASAL schools relative to counterparts nationally, highlighting disparities in core competencies and the crucial role of teachers in the learning outcomes of students in these marginalised communities.

Based on our findings, we propose region-specific reforms to address the systematic challenges children face in ASAL communities, prioritising children's well-being in policymaking. We also emphasise the need for locally anchored, evidence-based policy reforms and community participation, which can address the barriers undermining children's well-being in a way that reflects community priorities. Furthermore, we highlight the importance of partnerships and community participation in enacting policies that address the barriers created by marginalisation in the areas of nutrition, education, health and child safety. The study also identifies the necessity of inclusive education policy, specialised training programs for local recruits, and language inclusion and sensitivity to uplift marginalised children.

Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of policy reforms targeting early marriage activities and support for boys engaged in livestock herding within pastoralist societies. Additionally, it recommends further investigating the strengthening of positive community groups, such as the involvement of grandmothers in childcare and the impact of these associations on children's welfare. It should also assess the outcome of holistic policy frameworks that invest in county infrastructure, train community midwives and leaders, and customise school feeding through pastoral diet to improve children's well-being.

**Keywords:** Child well-being, Marginalized arid and semi-arid communities, community participation,



**ID: 209**

**Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 1: Essence of Childhood, Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

*Keywords:* children's rights, participation, Convention on the Rights of the Child

**A Multi-disciplinary Look at The Right to Participation in the Convention on the Rights of the Child after 35 years.**

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was established 1989 and represents a historical global milestone in the promotion of children's rights. For child advocates, the CRC is the origin of efforts by governments, national human rights organizations, and NGOs to oversee the wellbeing of children. Within the CRC, the right to participation has received relatively little scholarly attention compared to articles related to rights to protection from harm and rights to provision of services. With the 35-year anniversary of the CRC approaching, a review of progress is necessary. This panel presents an international and multi-disciplinary perspective on the history, current state, and likely future direction of research and policy efforts related to the right to participation. Panelists from Albania, Italy, and the United States representing law, psychology, international family and community studies, social work and social policy provide different perspectives.



## Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness



- From Children's Welfare to Children's Wellbeing
- Understanding Wellbeing and Happiness
- Wellbeing Indicators: Children vis-à-vis Adults
- Happiness Indicators: Children vis-à-vis Adults
- Role of Child Rights in Promoting Wellbeing and Happiness
- Best Practices for Promoting Children's Wellbeing and Happiness
- Role of Child Indicators Research in Influencing Public Policy
- Methodologies for Understanding Children's Wellbeing and Happiness



ID: 106

**Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

**Keywords:** COVID-19, disaster, vulnerable children, child development, effect of environmental changes

**The Effects of Environmental Contexts on Changes in Child Development Patterns  
During COVID-19 in South Korea**

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The purpose of this study is to examine the developmental trend of children in long-term disasters caused by the COVID-19. The study aims to examine the effect of environmental contexts of children and parents on changes of children's development during the COVID-19.

The data were collected from 1,367 children and their parents in 2020 and 2021, during the period of COVID-19 in South Korea. We used multivariate OLS regression method to examine the effects of environmental changes on development level in 2021 while controlling for the developmental level in 2020 using the matched dataset of two time points.

The analysis results show that negative changes in the areas of children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. The changes of children's development pattern were observed as the COVID-19 situation was prolonged. In addition, the results show that children's eating habits, online game time, parents' difficulties and anxiety at home, parenting stress, household income reduction, and care gap factors had different effects on changes of children's development during the COVID-19. Based on the analysis results, we suggest policy responses to protect children and support healthy growth and development in the event of a long-term disaster, such as COVID-19.



ID: 109

**Abstract Submissions****Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness**Keywords:** self-concept, adolescence, online social networks, subjective well-being.**The use of online social networks, self-concept and subjective well-being of adolescents during the covid-19 pandemic****Gabriela Gehlen, Lívia Maria Bedin, Jorge Castellá Sarriera**Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS, Brazil; [liviabedin@gmail.com](mailto:liviabedin@gmail.com)

The objective of this paper was to understand the adolescents' perception of the use of online social networks, self-concept and subjective well-being of adolescents during the covid-19 pandemic. This study, of a qualitative nature, carried out a focus group with nine adolescents aged 12-14 years old from a city in southern Brazil, who participated in a discussion about self-concept, social networks, and the crossings of the pandemic in the forms of use, and the perception of its subjective well-being. The focus group was conducted following a semi-structured script and was later transcribed and analyzed using the MAXQDA tool. Using thematic analysis, four major categories of analysis were identified: a) physical self-concept, b) the impact of online social networks on well-being, c) academic self-concept and d) the form of use of networks. The results were discussed in accordance with the Brazilian context, considering the social environment, gender and cultural differences of this phenomenon, aiming to support guidance practices on the safe use of online social networks, and on the prevention of illnesses arising from their impact on the subjective well-being of adolescents, especially during the pandemic. The results indicated that the use of networks is associated with negative outcomes when the adolescent lacks a face-to-face support network, especially during the pandemic, with great difficulties in studying alone. Also, the use of networks has a greater impact on girls, especially in relation to social comparison and the development of self-esteem. Furthermore, it was possible in this study to map what networks are most used among adolescents, and what are the particularities and degree of harmfulness of each one, according to its use.



ID: 133

**Abstract Submissions****Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness**Keywords:** mental well-being, mental health, children's perceptions, close environments**Where does the joy in children's hearts disappear? Schoolchildren's assessments of their mental well-being****Kadri Soo, Judit Strömpl**University of Tartu, Estonia; [kadri.soo@ut.ee](mailto:kadri.soo@ut.ee)

Internationally, growing mental health problems and decline in subjective well-being among children have received increasing attention, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Emotional disturbance can undermine children's bodies, minds and lives. According to the WHO, children's mental health is an issue of public health and human rights, so investing in it can improve their well-being now and in the future. In order to prevent the emergence or deepening of emotional "scars", it is important to explore the strengths and weaknesses of different life spheres in shaping children's mental well-being from the children's perspective.

This paper sheds light on schoolchildren's self-reported assessments of their mental well-being and its change with age. Based on the multilevel approach to child well-being, the paper seeks an answer to the question of what life domains, people and activities children with various level of mental well-being describe as sources of positive or negative emotions.

Data are drawn from a longitudinal study "Mental Health Monitoring and Promotion for Students" carried out by the Clanbeat Education in cooperation with the Accelerate Estonia and University of Tartu in Estonia in 2022–2023. Data of this paper include the responses of 2670 students aged 11–16 who filled in the online questionnaire in the classroom at the beginning of the academic year (wave I). Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) was used to measure children's current mental well-being. In addition, children were asked to describe what made them happy and sad in the last two weeks. The quantitative (e.g., ANOVA) and qualitative analysis methods is applied.

One in five 11- to 16-year-olds reported high mental well-being, it means they are cheerful and calm and have an interesting life most of the time. There is about the same share of children



whose mental well-being is very low. The ratings of mental well-being decline noticeably with age, particularly among girls. Children mostly considered friends and hobbies to be sources of positive feelings. School-related aspects prevailed among the negative ones. Children's descriptions of circumstances that increase or decrease their well-being vary according to their level of mental well-being.

The happy and sad experiences of children are mostly related to their immediate living environments and relationships within them, reflecting the relational nature of well-being. The sharp decline in mental well-being in the last grades of basic school, and perception of school as an unpleasant place and a source of stress raises the need to critically review the school system, curricula and academic assessment methods. Children with low well-being are at risk of psychological health problems and deserve special attention and support of adults/specialists.

**ID: 138**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* child-caregiver relationships, material hardship, cumulative disadvantage

**Cumulative material hardship and children's relationships with caregivers**

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**Thematic importance:** This study adds to the growing body of literature on children's wellbeing from the child's perspective. Further we offer new insights into the importance of viewing children's wellbeing from a cumulative versus point-in-time perspective.

**Introduction and Objectives**

The relationship between a child and his or her caregiver is strongly associated with child wellbeing. These relationships guide a family's interactions with their environment. Most studies have focused on caregivers' perceptions of these relationships, arguing that environmental stressors primarily affect caregivers (Driscoll & Pianta, 2011). However, recent research argues



that economic stressors directly impact both children and parents. Children engage in a wide range of activities when managing stressors and employ protective strategies (Chzhen et al., 2022). Thus, it is important to recognize children as social actors whose perspectives directly impact relationships with caregivers.

Material hardship (MH) is a multidimensional construct measuring inability to meet specific needs (e.g., food, housing) and has been found to be more prevalent than income poverty (Rodems and Shaefer, 2020). Emerging research suggests duration (cumulative) and timing (recency) of MH impact wellbeing (Thomas, 2023), yet most interventions assess material hardship at present or within a circumscribed time period, e.g., past year. The accumulation of disadvantage is a process with structural and temporal roots (Dannefer, 2018). The objectives of this study are to (1) describe child-caregiver relationships, (2) describe contemporaneous and cumulative MH among children, and (3) estimate the relationship between contemporaneous and cumulative MH and child-parent relationships.

### Method

We used 6 waves of data from The Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) with a focus on child-caregiver relationships according to children who were around 15 years old at Wave 6. The FFCWS is a birth-cohort study of 5,000 children and families born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000. We operationalized child-caregiver relations based on summary scores from two items from the child survey: (1) feeling close to parent, and (2) sharing ideas and talking with parent. Both items were scored on a four-point scale with higher scores indicating better relationships. Scores were summed across biological mother and father. MH was measured with five items (food, housing, utilities, medical, bills). Contemporaneous MH was calculated at Wave 6 as one or more of the hardship indicators; cumulative MH was calculated as MH experienced at any given wave and summed across the 5 waves of the survey. We controlled for maternal poverty, education, race/ethnicity, immigration, age, and child gender. We estimated a series of OLS regressions predicting child-caregiver relations at Wave 6.

### Results

Children's rating of closeness and ability to share and talk were moderately high ( $M = 3.35$  and  $3.05$ , respectively). Multivariate regressions showed that cumulative MH was statistically



significantly related to children's rating talking and sharing with parents. Children who experienced continuous MH had .10 lower predicted relationship scores with parents compared to those without MH ( $p < .05$ ), controlling for demographic and economic conditions.

### Conclusion

This study provides new insights into how MH shapes children's wellbeing. Specifically, we find that cumulative MH explains more variation in child-caregiver relationships than contemporaneous MH. Broader adoption of cumulative measures of MH may be a cost-effective and accurate way to appraise child wellbeing, and adjust policies and interventions to better address, not only current, but historic disadvantage.

**ID: 141**

#### Abstract Submissions

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Care leavers, Orphanage, Foster care, Resilience, Wellbeing.

**Long term outcomes of care leavers in Australia: What the research tells us about their trauma and resilience.**

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**Thematic importance:** This presentation aligns with the intent of the conference to critically analyse the extent to which Government policies and programs enhance or inhibit the wellbeing outcomes of those exposed to them.

**Introduction:** The paper draws on research into the long-term outcomes of care leavers (Australian Aboriginal children, non-Indigenous Australian children and British Child Migrants) who were separated from their families, communities, and culture to be placed in government, non-government and religious institutions, and in foster families. Those who lived in care are known to have suffered maltreatment and considerable inequities, injustices and disadvantages



in their life course. The presentation will focus on factors that enabled care leavers to achieve positive educational, socioeconomic and psychological wellbeing outcomes.

**Objectives of the research:** Explore patterns of care leavers' experiences and life trajectories in out of home care and post care. Identify their current unmet needs and services for them.

**Methods:** The study sample includes 669 care leavers from across Australia. This study utilised a cross-sectional design with mixed methods, using surveys, interviews, and focus groups eliciting the voices of careleavers. In a convergent parallel design quantitative and qualitative components were run concurrently exploring experiences in care and leaving care, life outcomes after care and current service needs. Careleavers' personal accounts of experiences of maltreatment and effects of maltreatment on their adult outcomes will be reported. To identify more resilient and less resilient participants, two-step cluster analysis in SPSS was performed with income, financial hardships, education level, K-10 psychological distress scores, and mental illness. The analysis compared more resilient and less resilient care leavers on in-care, transition, and post-care experiences to understand the relationships between resilience in adulthood and these experiences. Using bivariate and multivariate analysis techniques, it examined various factors that might have contributed to different wellbeing outcomes between them.

**Results:** Emotional, physical and sexual abuse occurred frequently and concurrently. 96% experienced some form of maltreatment; 41% experienced all forms of maltreatment in care. Schooling was neglected. Children were involved in hard physical labour from a very young age. While in care, compared to less resilient care leavers, more resilient care leavers had better educational experiences, experienced lower levels of maltreatment, had someone helpful, and had fewer placements. During the transition out of care, compared to care leavers with low resilience, care leavers with high resilience were better prepared for leaving care, had fewer difficulties, had someone to call on for help, had some assistance from the care institution, and had a job. Post-care experiences also differ significantly between more resilient and less resilient groups. Compared to less resilient care leavers, more resilient care leavers reported better relationships with and support from partners, family, and friends while less resilient care leavers were more likely to receive help from support groups, social workers, counsellors, or care leaver organisations.



**Conclusion and Implications:** Although the current care systems are different from the care systems in the past, these care leavers' perspectives point to factors leading to positive long-term outcomes. Findings of the current study suggested that child safety, placement stability, good education, and support received are important factors in generating long-term positive socioeconomic and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes of children in care. That careleavers are recognised as a special needs group to facilitate swift access to health, education and social services in recognition of the significant trauma endured will be discussed, as will directions for further research.

**ID: 146**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* adolescence, smartphone use, life satisfaction, mental health, depression

**Smartphone use and adolescent well-being: Longitudinal evidence from South Korea**

**Robert Rudolf**

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Smartphones play a key role in adolescent media use and are thus considered 'metamedia' (Humphreys et al., 2018). Modern adolescents often spend many hours per day using their phones to access video platforms and social media (social networking sites and instant messengers). Recently, a growing number of studies have investigated the well-being effects of smartphone use among adolescents (Park & Lee, 2012; Ellis, 2019; Jensen et al., 2019; Coyne et al., 2020; Keresteš & Štulhofer, 2020; Dienlen & Johannes, 2022). Existing research suggests that both low and excessive use are related to decreased well-being, whereas moderate use is related to increased well-being. However, the existing literature still lacks sufficient high-quality studies with large samples (Dienlen & Johannes, 2022). In particular, more longitudinal studies are needed to account for personality differences across adolescents.



Using four waves of the Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey 2018 (KCYPS 2018) from 2018 to 2021, this study investigates the relationship between smartphone use and adolescent well-being. It tracks 2,588 students from middle school grade 1 (median age 13) to high school grade 1 (median age 16). We employ fixed effects regression techniques and conduct age- and gender-specific analyses. Multivariate regression models control for health, relations with friends, academic performance, after-school study hours, exercise hours, household income, level of urbanization, region, and year. Our findings indicate that longer daily smartphone use is associated with decreased life satisfaction, increased depressive symptoms, and increased suicidal ideation. Gender-specific estimates show that these effects are significantly stronger for girls than for boys.

Parents and policy makers should regulate the use of smartphones during adolescence to improve adolescent well-being. Future research should disentangle various smartphone uses (video platforms, news, social networking, instant messengers) and their respective effects on adolescent well-being.

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**ID: 147**

### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 3: Health of Children

*Keywords:* Natural disasters, children's wellbeing, mental health, resilience

### **Children's perspectives on natural disasters – building resilience and supporting mental wellbeing**

**Grace Spencer<sup>1</sup>, Jill Thompson<sup>2</sup>, Gade Waqa<sup>3</sup>, Susana Lolohea<sup>3</sup>**

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Natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and flooding can have devastating impacts on children's lives and wellbeing (UNICEF, 2023). Evidence to date highlights significant mental health outcomes for children and young people exposed to such catastrophic events, with long-lasting impacts on their health and wellbeing including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety (Sharpe & Davison, 2022). Despite such concerns, very little research has been conducted directly with children to explore and understand better their own perspectives and experiences on natural disasters, including how their experiences and anxieties about disasters shape their social and emotional wellbeing. Indeed, much of the available evidence to date is drawn from studies with adults such as parents – thereby neglecting the unique experiences of children.



In light of this omission, this paper shares findings from a scoping review of the international evidence base on children's perspectives, alongside findings drawn from a qualitative study with children and young people aged 6-17 years and their parents living in community settings in Fiji. The study aimed to explore children and young people's thoughts and experiences on natural disasters, specifically storm surges and cyclones, in order to identify opportunities to develop disaster resilience programmes that align with children's perspectives. Data were collected in village locations in Fiji and via a range of participatory methods including focus groups, draw and write technique, storybooks, videos and images. Interviews with parents were also conducted to ascertain their perspectives on the impacts natural disasters have on children. Our findings highlight children's knowledge of disasters, including the actions to be taken in the event of a disaster, such as flooding. Children shared the ways they actively contributed to community efforts during and after the disaster by, for example, helping with the clear up and regeneration of community activities and livelihoods. Despite offering insights into children's agency and tenacity in response to disasters, participants also highlighted their feelings of fear and described feeling scared during such events. To alleviate their fears, children described how they prayed to God or spoke to parents and other family members. These findings offer novel insights into how children actively respond to natural disasters to support their own wellbeing and that of others. We conclude by discussing some of the implications for developing community-based disaster resilience programmes that are informed directly by children and young people's perspectives.

**ID: 153****Abstract Submissions****Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic, subjective well-being, social distancing experience, pandemic-related anxiety, psychological needs fulfillment

## Children's profiles of subjective well-being change during the COVID-19 pandemic and its correlates: a multi-national study

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*Thematic importance:* The paper promotes better understanding of children's subjective well-being and its change during COVID-19 pandemic globally. By using child well-being indicators, the voices of children can be taken into account in developing public policies.

*Introduction and objectives:* COVID—19 pandemic impact on children's well-being, especially on subjective well-being (SWB) are currently not well understood. Previously, it has been mostly explored in single country studies. As the stringency of social—distancing measures varied between countries, it is important to study the change of children's overall SWB multi—nationally.

To our knowledge, there is only one multi—national study (Savahl et al., 2022), briefly describing the change of children's overall SWB during the COVID—19 pandemic based on country means. To understand the impacts of the pandemic on children's overall SWB and its' change more thoroughly, it is important to go further from 'country means' analyses and use children's 'profiles of change' approach. According to this approach, some children may have had predominantly negative or positive experiences, while some had both, and overall, their SWB decreased, increased, or did not change much, respectively.

By taking the 'profiles of change' approach, we aim to explore multi—nationally the change of children's overall SWB during the COVID—19 pandemic, including the role of social distancing experience, pandemic—related anxiety, and psychological needs fulfillment in this. We look answers to the following research questions: (1) How do children's 'profiles of change' vary across countries?; (2) How do children's 'profiles of change' vary by their gender and socio—economic status?; (3) How do SWB decliners, no changers and gainers differ by their social distancing experience, pandemic—related anxiety, and psychological needs fulfillment during pandemic?; (4) Do children's social distancing experience and/or pandemic—related anxiety and/or psychological needs fulfillment during pandemic help to explain children's belonging to SWB decliners compared to no changers profile?



**Method:** International Children's Worlds COVID—19 Supplement Survey data collected in 2021 from up to almost 20,000 children primarily aged 9–13 years from 16 countries (Germany, Turkey, Bangladesh, Italy, Albania, Romania, Chile, Wales, Colombia, Taiwan, Belgium, Algeria, Israel, South Korea, Indonesia, Estonia) across four continents is used. We measure the overall SWB before the COVID-19 pandemic with children's subjective retrospective assessments – 'Thinking about how your life was before the Coronavirus, how happy were you with your life as whole?'; and during the pandemic with 'Thinking about how your life now during the Coronavirus, how happy are you with your life as whole?'. We use descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression analysis.

**Results:** We found that in all countries, most commonly children's overall SWB decreased. The decrease was most notable in Turkey, but also in Germany, and Bangladesh. Among different factors, higher pandemic—related school anxiety helped most consistently, almost in all countries, to explain children's belonging to 'decliners' profile.

**Conclusion and a Way Forward:** This study offered us an opportunity to extend the evidence base of social—distancing measures impacts on children's well—being, especially on overall SWB to different national contexts. Our study seems to confirm the importance of keeping schools open to save children's mental health and well-being. In the future studies, Turkey, Germany, and Bangladesh should be explored more in-depth.

**ID: 155**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

**Keywords:** relational social cohesion, COVID-19 pandemic, quantity of relationships, quality of relationships, change profile

**The change in children's subjective relational social cohesion with family and friends during the COVID-19 pandemic: A multinational analysis**

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*Thematic importance:* The paper promotes better understanding of children's subjective well-being, their relational social cohesion with family and friends more specifically, and its change during COVID-19 pandemic globally. By using child well-being indicators, the voices of children can be taken into account in developing public policies.

*Introduction and objectives:* As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, social-distancing measures have been implemented worldwide, including school closures. Previous studies indicated that children's relational social cohesion with family (RSC-Fa) and friends (RSC-Fr) may have decreased during the pandemic, but some children described that positive experiences were gained from the confinement measures of social distancing. Mostly, these studies are qualitative or capture a single country and have an exploratory character. This study aimed to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected children's RSC-Fa and RSC-Fr and explore the role of relational factors. We look answers to the following research questions: (1) How has children's relational social cohesion with family and friends changed during the COVID- 19 pandemic; (2) What profiles of change in children's relational social cohesion have emerged during the pandemic; (3) How do the profiles of change in relational social cohesion differ by children's quantity and quality of relationships in the family and with friends; (4) What relational factors can help to explain children's belonging to a certain relational social cohesion profile?

*Method:* We used data collected in 2021 of more than 20,000 children primarily aged 9–13 years as part of the International Children's Worlds COVID-19 Supplement Survey from 18 countries (Germany, Turkey, Bangladesh, Italy, Albania, Romania, Chile, Wales, Taiwan, Belgium, Algeria, Israel, Russia, South Korea, Indonesia, Estonia, Finland, and Spain). RSC-Fa and RSC-Fr are measured through satisfaction in relationships with family members and friends before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, respectively. We employed descriptive statistics, cluster analysis, and multinomial logistic regression analysis.

*Results:* Our analyses confirmed the decrease in RSC-Fa and RSC-Fr, with a noticeably bigger decrease in RSC-Fr. Five profiles of change in RSC emerged: (1) gainers in both RSC; (2) gainers in RSC-Fa and decliners in RSC-Fr; (3) no change in either RSC; (4) decliners in RSC-Fa and gainers in RSC-Fr; and (5) decliners in both RSC. The quantity and quality of children's relationships differ by their profiles of change in RSC. For example, it was significantly more



likely that “decliners in both RSC” had to be at home all day because of COVID-19 than “gainers in both RSC” or “no changers.” Mainly, the quantity of relationship factors, and among different quality factors, only autonomy perceptions, help to explain the children belonging to the “gainers in both RSC” profile compared to the “no changers.” Meanwhile, almost all the quantity and quality of relationships factors help to explain children’s belonging to the “decliners in both RSC” profile compared to “no changers.”

*Conclusion and a Way Forward:* Our study confirmed the importance of keeping schools open to protect the RSC of children. The decrease in RSC-Fa and RSC-Fr was most notable in Germany, Turkey, and Bangladesh, which require further in-depth analysis.

**ID: 157**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 5: Food and Child Wellbeing

*Keywords:* Food insecurity, subjective well-being, Children's Worlds survey, cross-national

**The association between children's reported access to food and their subjective well-being: A cross-national perspective**

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Food insecurity is a major global concern among both economically developed and developing countries, raising issues around the physical and mental health of adults and children. Several studies have shown an association between childhood food insecurity and poor mental health, but only a limited number of studies have explored the association between indicators of food insecurity and subjective well-being, cross-nationally. The current study tries to fill this gap using data from the third wave of the Children's Worlds survey, focusing mainly on the 10-year-olds sample that included 47,000 children from 35 countries. We found a significant correlation between children's self-reporting on their access to food and the common international measure



of food insecurity—the Global Food Security Index. We compare the subjective well-being of children who reported different levels of food access, showing even occasional limited access is associated with lower subjective well-being. A multi-level analysis explores the nature of this association across countries. Finally, we discuss the implications for children's well-being and countries' policies in the context of food insecurity.

**ID: 159**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Children, subjective well-being, bi-factor model, parcelling approach

**The Structure of Children's Subjective Well-Being: Considering a bifactor model using a multinational sample**

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**Thematic relevance:** The current study provides a consideration of a structural model of children's subjective well-being. It proposes a novel bifactor structural configuration, and offers an innovative methodological approach to measure children's subjective well-being. Ultimately, this model has implications for the measurement of children's subjective well-being and subsequently allows for more accurate decisions as it relates to policy and practice.

**Introduction and Objectives:** Children's subjective well-being (SWB) is a multidimensional construct and generally understood to comprise cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component refers to overall and domain-specific life satisfaction, while the affective component refers to positive and negative affect. Regardless of the general acceptance of the components of SWB, there are still questions regarding the structural configuration – that is, how the various components of the construct fit together. In this presentation, our primary aim is to test the viability of a bifactor structural model of children's SWB by contributing to the



discussion on the dimensionality of children's SWB. Based on the outcomes of the above, our secondary aim is to test the functionality of parcelled structural model of the various components of SWB.

A bifactor measurement model specifies that for multidimensional data, there is a general factor that explains the common item variance for items, but that there are also group factors or sub-traits accounting for additional common variance for item subsets.

The general factor represents the overarching construct, while the group factors represent the more conceptually specific latent constructs. The general and group factors are assumed to be orthogonal. While bifactor models typically help answer the question of whether scales have a strong enough general factor to justify a unidimensional model, it can also provide direction on the appropriateness of using a total score, or whether presenting the scores of the domain-specific latent factors would provide a meaningful interpretation. Importantly, it allows for the determination of the unique contribution of the general factor and group factors in the prediction of external variables.

**Method:** We specify a general factor of SWB and four group factors (context-free life satisfaction, domain-based life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) using structural equation modeling and parcelling. We sourced data from the Children's Worlds International Survey of Children's Well-Being (N = 92 782). Our analysis strategy included confirmatory factor analysis and bifactor analysis.

**Results:** We found a good fit for the specified bifactor model, with all items loading onto a general factor and group factors. For the bifactor analysis, after controlling for the general factor, the loadings on the group factors were substantially lower and did not meet the criteria of acceptability for bifactor indices thresholds. The common variance of the items is largely explained by the general factor; the specification of the group factors cannot be justified. Further, we found an excellent fit for a model using the parcelling approach.

**Conclusion:** From a measurement perspective, the construct of children's SWB can potentially be measured as a unidimensional construct. Thus, it may be feasible to report a total score for children's SWB, as opposed to scores on the individual subscales (group factors). Applied



researchers can thus confidently use subjective well-being as a unidimensional construct or follow the parcelling approach in the structural equation model context.

**ID: 162****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Index, children's well-being, South Asia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka

**A South Asian Index for Measuring Children's Subjective Well-being****Haridhan Goswami**

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***Background and purpose:***

The growing recognition of children's and young people's rights for having a good childhood and good future life chances, coupled with the injunction from the New Sociology of Childhood to consult with children and young people as active agents have resulted in an increasing number of studies on children's and young people's well-being at national and international levels. However, developing reliable and valid measures of well-being suitable for formulating evidence-based policies are still considered a major challenge especially in the South Asian countries where surveys developed by using a child centric approach are still in their early stages. In this backdrop, this paper presents an index suitable for measuring child well-being in the context of South Asia. It also discusses the policy relevance of such index for monitoring and evaluation of different services linked to children in the region.

***Methods:***

Data for this paper were obtained from a survey conducted in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in 2018 as part of the third wave of the Children's Worlds International Survey of Children's Well-being (ISCWeB). This survey used a common questionnaire and gathered data from over 12,000 children in these four South Asian countries. Children, aged 8 to 14 years, completed questionnaire in their schools and assessed different aspects of their own lives. For



this paper, data were used from 8,000 children in class year-5 (aged 10-12 years) and year-7 (aged 12-14). Exploratory factor analysis was carried out to examine the factor structure of the multiple-item measures of overall and domain specific well-being. Then Cronbach's Alpha was computed to examine the reliability of the scales. Finally, multiple linear regression was carried out to assess the influence of each domain on multi-item overall life satisfaction scale. The fifteen domains used in the analysis were appearance, classmates, freedom, friends, health, house, future, learning at school, student life, listening by adults, local area, family, safety, material condition, and time use. Among them, domains which were found to be associated statistically significantly were qualified to be the part of the index.

#### **Results:**

The eleven-point six-item scale appeared to have very good reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.88) in measuring subjective well-being of the South Asian children. Among the fifteen domains included in the regression model, twelve domains (family, health, material condition, student life, listening by adults, safety, condition of house, future life, time use, local area, appearance, and classmates) were significantly associated with overall satisfaction with life. These domains jointly explained almost 57% of the total variation on overall well-being.

#### **Conclusion:**

These results suggest that items measuring these twelve different aspects of children's lives could be used to develop a good index for measuring children's subjective well-being in South Asia. These findings are discussed in the context of previous empirical studies on child well-being indices carried out in both developing and developed countries. Wider policy implications of such index in the context of South Asia especially their usages and limitations in monitoring and evaluation are also discussed critically.

**ID: 163**

**Abstract Submissions**



**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

**Keywords:** Lead indicators, Restacking the Odds, Data-based decision-making, Equity, Policy

**Restacking the Odds: Using child lead indicators to drive policy improvements in the early years**

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Restacking the Odds (RSTO) aims to address intergenerational disadvantage by developing lead indicators that can drive equitable services to boost children's health, development, and wellbeing in the early years (0-8 years). Rather than taking a single program approach, RSTO "stacks" five evidence-based programs/services: antenatal care; sustained nurse home visiting; parenting programs; early childhood education and care; and the early years of school (through to Year 3). These are notably longitudinal (across early childhood), ecological (targeting child and parent), evidence-based, already available in many communities, and able to be targeted to those with the greatest needs.

We undertook restricted systematic literature reviews for each of the five service programs to develop 133 lead indicators of the "triple bottom line" of quantity, quality and participation. These lead indicators are related to service delivery (rather than lag indicators which are related to population outcomes) and can stimulate service provider, community, and government action to drive policy improvements that can enhance child wellbeing. RSTO is conducted in three phases.

*Phase 1: Test the potential of using RSTO indicators empirically and in a small number of Australian communities*

Key findings:

- Stacking the five strategies has a positive and sustained impact on children's health and development.



- Data can be defined and found (but not easily) for most lead indicators for the five strategies.
- Communities, service providers and government are not currently using best practice lead indicators to drive service delivery but they welcome RSTO's approach to address this gap.

*Phase 2: Determine the barriers and enablers for improving data collection, analysis, and reporting of lead indicators to enable more informed decision-making by service providers and other stakeholders*

Key findings:

- Using the COM-B (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation- Behaviour) model of behaviour change and Theoretical Domains Framework, we identified barriers and enablers to data utilisation behaviours.
- Emerging barriers span capability (skills and knowledge), opportunity (resources, culture, and support) and motivational factors (beliefs, feelings, and internal and external drivers).
- A systematic review of the academic literature describing data literacy and data-based decision-making interventions in relevant service settings has revealed that there is a dearth of rigorous evaluations conducted in these settings.

*Phase 3: Develop end to-end prototypes*

- We are now working with service providers and community-based early years initiatives to codesign multilevel strategies to routinely collect, report, visualise and use evidence-based lead indicators in strategic decision-making.
- We will implement, test, and refine prototype solutions at the service and community-levels and identify how to upscale these.
- Prototypes will provide the data capability uplift needed by service providers and solutions to embed and use lead indicators to drive quality improvement approaches to drive system change.

*Conclusion:*



The work to date indicates that there are real opportunities for local solutions and system-wide responses to improve service performance and achieve more equitable service delivery. There has been great interest from communities and policymakers alike due to the tangible and rapid potential for change using these indicators. In the current global environment, it has been a challenge to meet the relevant Sustainable Development Goals for children with almost no closing of the equity gap. Using data and lead indicators to empower services, communities and policy makers with actionable insights for improvement is essential for rapid system change.

**ID: 164****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* children's well-being, child's subjective well-being, Covid-19, Child's relationship, Latent Class Analysis

**Did COVID-19 Alter the Social Relationship Patterns of Children in Korea?****Sunsuk Kim**

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**1. Thematic importance**

This research on the changes in social relationship patterns among children during COVID-19 is relevant to the conference theme, 'Global Childhoods: Critical Perspectives promoting theoretical, empirical, and policy understandings.' The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to children worldwide, profoundly affecting their social interactions and well-being. By focusing on the specific age groups of 10- and 12-year-old children in Korea, this study sheds light on how the pandemic has reshaped their social relationships. This research contributes to the conference's objective of promoting critical perspectives on global childhoods, providing theoretical insights, empirical evidence, and policy implications for understanding the profound impact of the COVID-19 crisis on children's social lives.



## 2. Introduction and objectives.

This study investigates how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted social relationships among children in Korea. It specifically focuses on assessing the extent to which the pandemic has influenced the patterns of social interactions among children.

### The objective

- This study aims to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social relationship patterns of children in Korea.

### Research questions

- How have the social relationship dynamics of 10- and 12-year-old children in Korea changed during COVID-19?
- What are the differences in social interaction patterns among children before and during the pandemic?
- How do factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status moderate the effects of the pandemic on children's social relationships?

## 3. Method

### 1) Data

This research utilizes data from two surveys: the 2018 Comprehensive Survey on Korean Children, conducted before the pandemic, and the "Children's Lives during the COVID-19 Era" survey conducted by the National Center for the Rights of the Child in 2021. By comparing and analyzing these datasets, the study provides valuable insights into the changes in children's social relationships in light of the pandemic.

### 2) Research Method

To examine the impact of the pandemic on social relationship patterns, a latent class analysis (LCA) was employed, allowing for the identification of distinct latent classes or profiles that represent different configurations of social relationships among children.

Various dimensions of children's social relationships will be examined, including peer interactions, family dynamics, and community connections. The study will explore indicators such as the frequency and quality of social interactions, feelings of loneliness or social support,



and shifts in the composition of social networks. Additionally, the research will investigate how factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status may moderate the effects of the pandemic on children's social relationships.

#### 4. Results

By delving into the latent social relationship profiles, the study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of children's social interactions and the potential shifts brought about by the pandemic. This information plays a crucial role in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on children's social well-being. It allows for the development of targeted interventions to support their social development and adjustment during and beyond the crisis.

#### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social relationship patterns of children in Korea, utilizing data from pre-pandemic and pandemic-era surveys. The research aims to comprehensively understand the underlying structure of children's social relationships in pre-pandemic and pandemic contexts by employing a latent class analysis. This analytical approach uncovers the heterogeneity within the population, enabling a more nuanced examination of how the COVID-19 crisis may have influenced specific subgroups of children with distinct social relationship patterns. Ultimately, identifying diverse latent classes within the population contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on children's social relationships, offering valuable insights for interventions and policy considerations.

**ID: 165**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* economic development; adolescent life satisfaction; learning intensity; education competition; mental cost

**The Paradox of Wealthy Nations' Low Adolescent Life Satisfaction**



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While past research tends to agree that average subjective well-being (SWB) in a country rises with the level of economic development of that country, most of the studies in this area have been limited by the use of *adult* data. Given the shortage of data for minors, only some studies have examined the average SWB of *children* and *adolescents* from a cross-country perspective (e.g., Lee & Yoo, 2015; OECD, 2020; Bălătescu, 2021; Campbell et al., 2021; Marquez & Main, 2021). Thus, the relationship between economic development and the SWB of children and adolescents has remained largely unexplored. The current study aims to fill this gap by using data from the OECD's 2018 PISA round, which collected comparable data on SWB for 15-year-olds across a significantly larger number of countries (72) than earlier rounds.

Using PISA 2018 data from nearly half a million 15-year-olds across 72 middle- and high-income countries, this study investigates the relationship between economic development and adolescent subjective well-being. Findings indicate a negative log-linear relationship between per-capita GDP and *adolescent* life satisfaction. The negative nexus stands in stark contrast to the otherwise positive relationship found between GDP per capita and *adult* life satisfaction for the same countries. Results are robust to various model specifications and both macro and micro approaches. Moreover, our analysis suggests that this apparent paradox can largely be attributed to higher learning intensity (proxied by PISA test scores) in advanced countries. Results further show that higher levels of competition between students in school are negatively associated with adolescent well-being, while higher levels of cooperation relate positively with student well-being. Adverse effects of learning intensity, competition, and cooperation are found to be more pronounced for girls than for boys.

We suggest incorporating mental cost into any economic analysis of education that follows the standard cost—benefit approach. Moreover, we suggest fostering co-operative learning environments and aim for student well-being as a prime goal of education alongside academic performance.



We hope that future research directly addresses the underlying pathways, and the roles school curricula play therein. Particularly, an in-depth comparison of school curricula across countries and over time could prove very useful and might lead to the possibility to conduct a valid mediation analysis.

**ID: 166**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice

*Keywords:* wellbeing, socioeconomic status, conjoint analysis, representative survey

**Children at the Center of Polycrises: The Case of Children Living in Istanbul**

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Children remain at the center of polycrises such as financial crisis, polarization, climate change, civil wars, and massive internal and external migration. Not only as the adults of tomorrow, but also as members of today's society, they are multidimensionally vulnerable to these crises and are becoming more so as a result. In the absence of safety nets provided by welfare regimes, the socioeconomic status of families provides shelter, and social inequality persists. These vulnerabilities intersect with gender, race, and other demographic variables. To develop more effective policies against the effects of polycrises, a detailed description of the current situation is required.

Based on the results of a representative survey conducted in Istanbul in March 2023 (803 households, one parent, and one child), we will demonstrate how children's perceptions of their own well-being can be affected by household conditions. Our data indicates that the socioeconomic status of the household is the key variable that distinguishes between the overall and domain-specific satisfaction of children. Moreover, we will also show that opportunities provided to children have direct effects on the level of satisfaction, and



children are diversified in terms of anxieties they are experiencing. Our dataset also shows that digital life experiences of children must be included to the domains of children well-being. In addition, using conjoint analysis, a novel data analysis technique, we will identify which characteristics are associated with a happy child and which are more essential to children and parents. Child well-being domains, including health, relationships, academic performance, material well-being, and family relationships, are used to deduce attributes of an “happy child”. Our data allows us to compare the preferences of parents and children in terms of child well-being determinants. We will also present age, gender, and socioeconomic differences between the children who participated to survey.

Both presentation of findings of the survey and output of Conjoint analysis will be fruitful to open new research avenues for child-focused researchers

**ID: 168****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Subjective well-being; psychological well-being; childhood; adolescence; longitudinal; GAM models

**Well-being in late childhood and early adolescence: Evolution and explanatory factors**

**Ferran Casas<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Mònica González-Carrasco<sup>1</sup>, Sara Malo<sup>1</sup>, Xavier Oriol<sup>1</sup>**

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Subjective well-being (SWB) is one of the central concepts of the quality-of-life paradigm and is based on a positive approach to the study of human behaviour, health, and its determinants. In recent years, a decreasing-with-age trend has been identified in SWB levels between the ages of 10 and 16 depending on the country, which usually coincides with important life transitions such as the shift from primary to secondary education. Many authors have explained overall life satisfaction (OLS), taken as a global measure of SWB,



as the linear combination of satisfaction with different specific domains. However, previous studies have shown that adopting a non-linear approach from a bottom-up perspective contributes to increasing our understanding of this relationship. The extension of these non-linear analyses to positive and negative affect is yet to be addressed, however, a gap that this work attempts to fill. Finally, the notion of SWB has traditionally been differentiated from that of psychological well-being (PWB), to such an extent that researchers have tended to focus on one to the detriment of the other, even though a growing number of researchers argue that they are complementary approaches to the same broader construct of well-being.

Bearing the above considerations in mind, the aims of this work are three-fold: 1) to test whether a decrease in well-being scores is observed from one year to the next in the period between 10 and 16 years of age when measured using indicators of subjective well-being (SWB) (including the OLS as a global measure) and psychological well-being (PWB); 2) to explore the contribution of the primary/secondary school, gender and age in explaining global SWB; and 3) to identify potential non-linear relationships between SWB, measured globally, and other indicators of SWB and PWB. To this end, data were analysed from 994 Spanish students, who responded to the same self-administered questionnaire over two consecutive school years and were recruited through a process of non-random sampling.

The results obtained using Student's t-test for repeated measures and generalized additive models (GAM) showed a statistically significant decrease in 10 out of the 20 indicators considered (more of which assess PWB than SWB), and that the indicators measuring the SWB affective component made a more relevant and less linear contribution to a global SWB measure than those measuring the cognitive component or the PWB. Regarding the role of school, age and gender, none of these variables made a statistically significant contribution to explaining global SWB for any of the models calculated using data from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year of data collection.

These observations have relevant implications for both research and policymaking when it comes to the period of late childhood and early adolescence. In terms of research, they invite scholars to continue investigating developmental changes in SWB and PWB during this life period, since the decrease-with-age trend does not appear to be homogeneous for



all components of well-being and may be subject to important cultural differences. From a policymaking point of view, the fact that this decrease coincides with the transition from primary to secondary education implies the need to support this process much more than is done nowadays, focusing on those variables that play the most important role in this decrease, due to the consequences it can have for children and adolescents' well-being.

**ID: 169****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Subjective well-being; psychological well-being; childhood; adolescence; Children's Worlds, machine learning

**A machine learning approach to well-being in late childhood and early adolescence:  
The Children's Worlds data case**

**Ferran Casas<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Mònica González-Carrasco<sup>1</sup>, Silvana Aciar<sup>4</sup>, Xavier Orio<sup>1</sup>, Sara Malo<sup>1</sup>, Ramón Fabregat<sup>1</sup>**

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Subjective well-being (SWB) is conceptualized as the way in which people evaluate their lives, regardless of age, both in general and in relation to specific life domains. It comprises a cognitive component (life satisfaction) and an affective one with two dimensions (positive and negative affect), reflecting the so-called tripartite structure of SWB. Current research on children's and adolescents' well-being tends to incorporate both hedonic and eudaimonic indicators to measure SWB and Psychological well-being, since a growing number of researchers argue that they are complementary approaches to the same broader construct of well-being.

Being able to explain what leads to a higher or lower SWB well-being in childhood and adolescence has become one of the cornerstones within this field of studies, insofar as it



can help to develop better preventive and promotion actions. Many indicators have been identified, some of them considered as the core of SWB due to their higher contribution, and others to be more peripheral for just the opposite reason. However, differentiating one from the other is not an easy task since the models are particularly sensitive to the indicators considered and vary significantly with the introduction of some of them and the exclusion of others, beyond theoretical reasons.

Besides, the explanatory capacity of the models is quite low, a limitation that does not seem to be overcome no matter how many indicators are added. The use of much more computationally powerful techniques, such as machine learning (ML), make therefore special sense. This work aims to explore the possibilities that derive from the application of ML to data belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the Children's Worlds project, without ignoring the current debate about the extent to which ML outperforms more traditional data analysis techniques such as linear regression. The second objective is to compare models for each country separately, as important country differences are expected to be found in the explanatory power of the different indicators.

The answers of 93,349 children belonging to two different age groups (mostly 10-year-olds and mostly 12-year-olds) were considered. Participants were recruited through a representative sampling procedure implemented in 35 countries. A wide variety of indicators, which covered different areas of children's lives: *Children's characteristics, Home context and Family, Friends, School, Neighbourhood, Economic/material context, Time use and Self*, were used to explain the scores to the CW-SWBS (Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale).

After comparing the results obtained through applying two widely used ML algorithms to the pooled sample, the *Gradient Boosting Classifier* ( $R^2 = 0.765$ , RMSE = .89) seemed to outperform the *Random Forest model* ( $R^2 = 0.953$ , RMSE = .61), since the latter overfitted the data. The model calculated through the *Gradient Boosting Classifier* algorithm also seemed to perform better than the lineal regression model ( $R^2 = 0.645$ ), which despite showing a good fit ( $F_{77,95575} = 2259.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), set aside 13 out of the 77 indicators considered. As expected, huge differences in the importance played by these 77 indicators at the country level were found after applying the *Gradient Boosting Classifier* algorithm.



As far as we know, this is the first attempt to evaluate, at an international scale and with a very large dataset, the use of supervised ML algorithms to study children's and adolescents' SWB, compared to linear regression. The process followed highlights the greater capacity of ML techniques to provide models with higher explanatory power and to differentiate more clearly the contribution of the different indicators to explaining children's and adolescents' SWB. This can contribute to the design of shorter but equally reliable questionnaires. However, due to the high risk of excessive data forcing, caution is advised.

**ID: 173**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* adoption-related stigma, microaggression, well-being of adopted children

**Microaggression experiences of Korean adoptive families**

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Adoption is a social system that finds a permanent substitute family for a child who cannot be raised in the family of origin. It is one of the important devices to guarantee the rights of children requiring protection. Nonetheless, the stigma associated with adoption has persisted over the past few decades and it harms the children's well-being in a variety of ways. This study tries to promote adopted children's well-being by tackling the stigma and microaggressions toward adoptive families.

As social awareness of political correctness has increased during that time, overt discrimination and institutional disadvantages against minorities (including adoptees and adoptive families) have gradually decreased. However, negative messages about minority groups delivered in intimate form have persisted. This subtle discrimination was conceptualized as microaggression and studied on various minority groups, such as the



disabled, women, and minorities. This study aims to examine the stigma experienced by adoptive families in Korea and their microaggression experiences in everyday life.

A qualitative research method was used. Research data were collected through online secondary data and focus group interviews with two groups of adoptive parents (a total of five adoptive parents). The core themes and sub-topics were derived using thematic analysis method. The topics derived from the data include secrets and lies, good (altruistic) adoptive parents, fake family (parents), bad seed adoptees, blessed adoptees, victim consciousness as adoptive parents, comparison with their biological children, the real purpose of adoption, the invitation of hardships, and unnecessary attention. etc.

Through this study, we intend to find out the experience of stigma and microaggression of Korean adoptive families and their own efforts to cope with it. The microaggressions towards adoptive families can deeply hurt the identities and self-esteem of adopted children. All adoptive parents participating in the study worries more of their child's reaction toward microaggression than their own feelings on it. Thus, seeking effective countermeasures against microaggression is crucial for the well-being of adopted children.

Through this study, the social awareness on adoption-related microaggression could be established. Then, it is possible to seek ways to increase social sensitivity to microaggression and decrease the social prejudice towards adoptive families.

**ID: 174**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Growing Up in Digital Europe, Comparative survey, Cohort study, Children and young people, Wellbeing



## Growing Up in Digital Europe (GUIDE): How this Pan-European Longitudinal Survey will Support Research and Child Wellbeing Policies

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### ***Background and purpose:***

Promoting children's wellbeing is vital for children to have a good childhood and is the basis for their future wellbeing as adults. The aspiration to secure the wellbeing of children is also explicit in the Grand Challenges such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, there is a lack of suitable child-centric survey across Europe which can help us understand child wellbeing over the life course. Recognising this gap, the European Commission gave us funding to run three separate but inter-linked research projects—Measuring Youth Wellbeing (MYWEB), European Cohort Development Project (ECDP), Cohort Community Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout Europe (COORDINATE). The overall aim of these projects was to develop a Pan-European Longitudinal Survey for children in Europe, called Growing Up in Digital Europe (GUIDE). GUIDE is now a recognised European research infrastructure which has been included on the 2021 ESFRI roadmap. This indicates that the EU regard it as a significant research project. The EU has provided us funding for the GUIDE pilot study which is being carried out in Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland in 2023. This presentation will focus on two aspects. **Firstly**, it will provide an overview of the GUIDE project by highlighting key findings from MYWEB, ECDP, and COORDINATE which provided foundation for the GUIDE project. **Secondly**, it will report the results of the GUIDE pilot survey.

### ***Methods:***

For the overview of the GUIDE project especially in explaining the context and rational for developing a Pan-European Longitudinal Survey for children, we will systematically review reports and articles produced from MYWEB, ECDP, and COORDINATE projects.



Guide pilot consists of three main stages: (a) Tools translation, (b) Pre-testing by cognitive interviewing (20 children in each pilot testing country—Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland), and (c) Piloting (250 children in each pilot testing country—Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland).

#### ***Results and conclusion:***

Guide pilot is currently in the field. We expect to have the preliminary results of the pilot by the end of 2023, and these should be ready for reporting to the ISCI conference in February 2024. Although we cannot draw firm conclusion on the pilot while submitting this abstract, the systematic review of the reports and articles from the three background projects highlights the followings:

- At present there is no nationally representative birth cohort study in most European countries, but the desire for such data is increasing. While register data can be used for some wellbeing measures, this cannot provide individual reported feelings, reflections, and experiences. These data provide important context in understanding wellbeing at the individual level and how it changes over time.
- The GUIDE will have ability to directly compare experiences with other countries across Europe as the methodology is input harmonised with a common questionnaire, sample criteria, fieldwork processes, fieldwork timing. Comparative analysis will inform policy development through identifying how interventions and contexts in different countries have influenced wellbeing at the individual and aggregate levels.
- GUIDE has been policy driven since its inception in the MYWEB project which established the feasibility and desirability of such a study using a range of methods including a Delphi study of policy makers, practitioners, and scientists.

**ID: 203**

**Panel Proposal Submission**



**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice, Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

**Keywords:** Right to Protection, Children in Difficult Circumstances, Children's Understandings of well-being, Child Safety and Institutions

### **Institutional contexts of safety, justice and well-being from children's perspectives**

**Susann Fegter<sup>2</sup>, Tobia Fattore<sup>1</sup>, Sabirah Adams<sup>3</sup>, Ravinder Barn<sup>4</sup>, Elizabeth Benninger<sup>5</sup>, Gabrielle Drake<sup>6</sup>, Jan Falloon<sup>6</sup>, Jan Mason<sup>6</sup>, Samia Michail<sup>6</sup>, Lise Mogensen<sup>6</sup>, Anne Carolina Ramos<sup>7</sup>, Andrea Riepl<sup>8</sup>, Marchelle Robinson<sup>9</sup>, Shazly Savahl<sup>10</sup>, Megan Schmidt-Sane<sup>11</sup>, Graciela Tonon<sup>12</sup>, Luiza Vafina<sup>8</sup>**

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Issues of safety are prominent in children's discussions of well-being, reflecting the salience that is placed on safety in contemporary society. In part this relates to risk anxiety, a widespread ontological insecurity about the future (Beck 1992). In contrast ontological security has been described by Pagett (2007) as 'the feeling of well-being that arises from a sense of constancy in one's social and material environment which, in turn, provides a secure platform for identity development and self-actualization' (p. 2). This definition relates well-being to safety not only as feelings which arise from being protected from threats, but foregrounds the institutional and locational conditions which are a pre-requisite for stable environments, which in turn produce well-being for children.

The four presentations in this panel explore these institutional preconditions for safety as well-being, and explores the potential of institutions for not only promoting well-being, but



threatening children's safety, as well-being. Moreover, it does this by foregrounding children's perspectives on safety and institutional characteristics that promote or threaten safety.

Adams and colleagues ('Children's perceptions of safety and subjective well-being in the context of COVID-19') present research with children living in extremely socially vulnerable conditions – South Africa, in which children's well-being is influenced by structural racism and environments of social exclusion and violence. It is these political factors which provide a deeply relevant backdrop for children's perceptions of safety through an analysis of how children make sense of safety in the context of COVID-19. Moreover, they point out a further level of how cultures of violence were worsened because of COVID-19 and the responses to COVID-19 did not mitigate this worsening, from children's perspectives. Institutional racism and its effects on children's well-being are also taken up by Benninger, Schmidt-Sane and Robinson ("What happened to my family?": Justice and well-being with children impacted by incarceration) who explore the impact of the US justice system on children who have been justice involved and/or impacted. Using participatory research methods with children 9-17 years of age, the participants emphasize systemic factors related to poverty, mental health, and racism, factors often overlooked in research focusing on individual factors influencing children's well-being. Drake and colleagues ('Researching Child Well-Being in the Child Protection Context: Challenges and Implications') also examine children's well-being in a context that is designed to promote safety, but often harms – children in out-of-home-care. Ramos and colleagues ('Friends and Time in the Context of Children's Well-being') examine how children use strategies of informal organizational resistance to make time and places important for their well-being, often to counter institutional demands within the education system that undermine their well-being.

By exploring these topics, the research presented in this panel demonstrate that any understanding of what child protection and safety practices mean in terms of child well-being is anything but straightforward and needs to be situated in political, organizational and ideological contexts. The panel therefore hopes to contribute to a nuanced understanding of safety and children's well-being across diverse contexts, and thus explore,



through a comparative set of presentations, how safety as well-being is deeply influenced by these political, organizational and ideological contexts. Moreover, the presentations also raise questions about the need for reform to safeguard children and promote their well-being, and what forms these interventions might take.

**Discussion possibility and Moderator questions:** Possible discussion generating questions include -

- What influence do local political, organizational and ideological contexts have on children's understandings of well-being?
- Given the presentations are based on diverse contexts from the 'Global North' and 'South', what might we learn from each other in terms of the differences and commonalities evident in children's discussions of context and safety?
- Can theories of decolonisation and post-coloniality help us understand the relationship between safety, justice and institutions?
- What practical reforms might be required to promote children's safety in the contexts discussed in the presentations?
- What implications do the study findings have for indicator development on this dimension of child well-being?

**Panelist Perspectives:**

The panelists are highly regarded scholars of child well-being who have published extensively on children's well-being in their different national and local contexts - Benninger, Schmidt-Sane and Robinson, from a socio-legal and community development frame, in both South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States; Adams, Savahl and Tonon as pioneers of applying community psychology approaches to the study of children's subjective well-being, Drake, Falloon, Fattore, Mason, Michail and Mogensen, analysing well-being as a category to understand intergenerational relations, and therefore an aspect of social orders from children's perspectives. Fattore and Mason pioneered the use of children's standpoint theory for child well-being studies. Ramos, Riepl and Vafina are cutting-edge childhood sociologists whose work involves participatory research with children.



The panelists are all members of the Children's Understandings of Well-being: Global and Local Contexts (CUWB) project and network which is a multi-national, qualitative study that reconstructs children's understandings and experiences of well-being in different parts of the world and explores the relevance of cultural and social contexts for these meanings and experiences. The aim is to determine similarities and differences in children's understandings of well-being in a locally oriented, and cross-cultural manner and to take into account the normative and value-oriented aspect of well-being. Currently the study involves 29 research teams from 24 countries. Furthermore, several of the panellists (Adams, Savahl, Tonon) are lead researchers in the world's largest study of children's subjective well-being, the Children's Worlds Study.

The starting point of this project is the assumption that well-being is a cultural construct, in the sense that well-being not only differs between people but that the concepts and experiences of being well are socially contingent. Secondly children's perceptions and practices are part of reproducing and shifting concepts of well-being in an ongoing way.

**ID: 207**

### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Research utilisation, research impact, politics of child wellbeing research, policy processes

**What do we mean by research impact anyway? From 'research utilisation' to 'research politics' in child well-being research**

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*Thematic Importance:*



This presentation addresses the theme **Children's Well-being and Happiness**, specifically the sub-themes **Understanding Wellbeing and Happiness** and **From Children's Welfare to Children's Wellbeing**, by examining the conditions under which research can be translated into policy and practice which positively impacts children's well-being.

#### *Introduction and Objectives:*

Translation of research into policy and practice impact has been a defining feature of the child wellbeing and child indicators movement. This reflects its genealogy and history - emerging from the social indicators' movement (Ben-Arieh 2008); its ontology - as involving a series of shifts from welfare to well-being (Ben-Arieh 2008); its normative commitment to rights (Tisdall 2015); and methodologically its interdisciplinary focus, with significant representation of the applied sciences (see the fields represented in Ben-Arieh et al. 2014). One of the prestigious ISCI awards reflects this applied focus – the ISCI Award to honor members whose work has made an impact outside of academia.

Despite the structural openness of the field to research utilisation, a measure of research impact remains elusive, in part because the impacts of child well-being research are 'diffuse', influencing broad areas of social policy relating to children and families (for an example see Bradshaw 2014); or are focused on one domain – for example education – as opposed to more holistic notions of well-being (for an example see Aber et al. 2010). For individual researchers, the successes are hard fought and the frustrations associated with failed attempts to make change common.

#### *Method and Results:*

This presentation is a first step in helping us think through 'research impact', by reframing these issues not as 'research utilisation', but as 'research politics'. Existing attempts at analysing the relevance of indicators for the policy process remain wedded to naïve conceptions of the policy cycle and positivist notions of indicator use (for example Brown and Corbett 2003), which fail to address the politics of research utilisation.

This presentation instead canvasses some of the seminal work on research implementation offered by policy scientists to demonstrate that the frustrations associated with research utilisation arise out of a misunderstanding of the role of research in policy processes. It does so by reviewing 'Frame theory' proposed by Yanow and van Hulst (2016), which



argues that well-being research is only one interpretive perspective on the problem of children's well-being; of Kingdon's (1995) theory of policy streams, which outlines the role of evidence as one factor amongst others in getting child well-being on the policy agenda; of Jenkin-Smith and Sabatier's (1993) work on advocacy coalition frameworks, which shows how well-being research is rationally used as a resource in policy contests; and Carol Weiss's (1979) seminal work on research utilisation in the policy process, that broadens the meaning of research utilisation and provides a framework of optimism for researchers hoping their research will effect change.

#### *Conclusion and a Way Forward*

This presentation provides a set of considerations through which well-being researchers might identify how their research influences policy and practice beyond mere direct translation, and outlines strategies that might be used by researchers to increase their research impact. Ultimately, the objective of the presentation is to progress understanding of research impact more generally in the child well-being field.

**ID: 212**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* well-being indicators, child-friendly indicators, community assessment, children's rights, participatory assessment

**Spatializing children's rights into global indicators to assess children's well-being in communities and schools: An overview of indicators from the Child Friendly Places and Young Citizens Score Cards resource kits**

**Sruthi Atmakur-Javdekar<sup>1,2</sup>, Pamela Wridt<sup>1,3</sup>, Roger Hart<sup>1</sup>**

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From 2008 to 2017, the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG) coordinated an international research initiative called Child Friendly Places (CFP), which is an approach for integrating children's rights into local development initiatives and educational programs through a participatory, intergenerational and child-friendly assessment and planning methodology. During this time, CERG worked with multiple partner-organizations across the world to produce the CFP resource kit that empowers children, adolescents, families, educators, service providers and decision makers to assess and improve their local environments using child-friendly indicators, which in turn, improves the health and well-being of children, young people and adults living in those communities. Further, in 2014, CERG collaborated with Plan International's Because I Am A Girl – Urban Programme (BIAAG-UP) to produce Young Citizens Score Cards (YCSC), which is an adaptation of the CFP approach that focused on improving the well-being of children, young people and adults with a focus on 'safety and protection'.

The CFP approach includes a resource kit with pictorial child-friendly survey tools uniquely designed to be useable by children as young as seven years of age as well as by adults, including those with low literacy levels, to assess the quality of their communities, including their built environments. There are six domains and approximately 100+ global indicators that incorporate the spatial and physical dimensions of children's rights to enable the collection of comparable, scalable data on community conditions for children. Domains include: 1) play and recreation, 2) nature and ecology, 3) housing and learning environments, 4) participation, 5) safety and protection, and 6) health and social services. The indicators are positively drafted and simple-worded sentences that can be easily translated into local languages.

In addition to the 100+ global indicators, the CFP approach enables communities to identify context-specific indicators. For example, in Mumbai and Bhavnagar cities in India, partner organizations added new indicators focused on children and young people's individual and collective health and well-being such as secure housing, safe and accessible toilets, and pest-free homes.

Besides the assessment of environments using context-specific indicators, the CFP approach empowers communities to collect, analyze, and act upon the collected data by



summarizing the opinions and experiences of children, adolescents and parents to influence local development processes at different scales of change, including small scale improvements in the built environment and large-scale impact on policy-making.

Keeping the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) central to the CFP methodology, this presentation focuses on the entire range of assessment indicators that reflect the spatial and physical dimensions of children's rights, which in turn reflect the well-being of children, young people and adults. This includes the original 100+ global indicators and new indicators added by specific communities in Mumbai and Bhavnagar cities in India, and new indicators specific to 'safety and protection' that were produced by CERG and Plan-International for the Young Citizens Score Cards (YCSC) implemented in (a) Kampala, Uganda; (b) Benin, Togo and Burkina-Faso in West Africa; and (c) Cairo, Egypt.

This presentation draws from a living database of more than 50 case studies that have been contributed by organizations and partner colleagues across the world who implemented the CFP methodology to improve communities and schools in various urban and rural settings. These global case studies reveal the importance that children, adolescents and their families place on improving their environments to support their health and well-being. Examples include, both genders having opportunities for safe play places, and access to basic services such as safe and secure housing, toilets, water, and health care.

**ID: 213**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* SDGS, Child Rights, Caribbean children

**The fulfillment of the sustainable development goals (SDGS) for children: The Case of the Caribbean**

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### **The fulfillment of the sustainable development goals (SDGS) for children: The Case of the Caribbean**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched on 25-27 September 2015. We are seven years away from the deadline to fulfill the 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and has slowed progress in the fulfillment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). This paper examines the progress made since 2015 in the fulfillment of the SDGS in the Caribbean.

All SDGS affect children but this paper focuses on SDGS 1-5, 13 and 16.2. The main objectives of the paper were to (1) examine whether the targets set for SDGS 1-5 and 16.2 have been met or on target or under threat of not being met and (2) determine whether quantitatively and qualitatively the quality of life of the children in these countries has improved. The research methodology was mainly qualitative in nature. Secondary data from previous research, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations and local newspapers were analyzed. The research methods were also supported by data from elite interviews carried out with 8 key informants (2 each in these four countries). They were selected based on their work with children in these countries. Using data from local newspapers, case studies of children whose situation had either improved or worsened were conducted.



The analysis of the data showed that children continue to more disproportionately affect by the pandemic. Hundreds have dropped out of school and not returned to the classroom, thousands have increased exposure to violence in private and public spaces and deterioration in their mental health has become increasingly worrisome. Climate change, especially in Haiti continues to have an adverse effect on children. Save the Children (2023) notes that almost 50% of Haitian children face acute hunger - 5 million people – nearly half the population including 1.9 million children – are classified as acutely food insecure. In all countries, certain groups of children remain more disadvantaged than others; children with disabilities, those in conflict with the law, children working and living on the streets, children in violent circumstances and those living in poverty, among others.

The findings highlight the dire situation of children. This calls for immediate global, regional and local action from all key stakeholders and duty bearers. The study underscores the importance of research to inform policies to reduce the vulnerability of children. More research is needed to examine more in-depth the situation of marginalized groups of children. The study does present 'hope' as it reveals that a concerted effort of some key stakeholders (e.g. UNICEF and the voluntary sector) to increase resources to programmes that target children.

However, significantly more financial and human resources must be made available for the implementation of policies and programmes for children. There must be targeted attention made to the marginalized children. Since 1989, through the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), we promised to ensure that at all times, the best interests of the child would be the paramount consideration. This study reveals that this is not so. Unless urgent attention is given to children, the targets/objectives set in UN 2030 or the CRC will not be fulfilled in 2030 or in the near future.

**ID: 216****Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

**Keywords:** wellbeing, participation, evaluation, agency, capabilities

### **A participatory assessment of children and adolescents well-being during pandemic crises in Italy: the application of the MACaD-RCA model**

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#### **Thematic importance:**

The paper presents the results of an applied research which highlights how the more effective pedagogical spaces for children's agency are guaranteed, the more empowerment processes and integral development are encouraged. In this sense, the research observes children's well-being in relation to their full enjoyment of rights relating both to freedom of expression and action and to protection. On the other hand, it highlights how the process of putting children at the center of the educational community, can foster change and contribute to the design of local public policies.

#### **Introduction and objectives:**

The research was conducted within the framework of a collaboration agreement between the Italian National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP) and Piedmont Region, with the objective of implementing tools and practices for the assessment of children's well-being.

In this context, in 2020, INAPP developed the MACaD-RCA (Multidimensional Analysis of Capability Deprivation-Rights of Childhood and Adolescence) model aimed at analyzing the well-being of children in terms of capabilities observed within a rights-based account.

During pandemic emergency (2021-2022), INAPP applied the model in the Municipality of Druento, with the aim of planning actions and designing local policies that could improve children's well-being.

#### **Method:**

The MACaD-RCA model, based on the framework of the capability approach, is composed by a questionnaire and two participatory workshops, combining and integrating



quantitative and qualitative research methods. The questionnaire consists of 106 items organized into different life domains (school, family, household, neighborhood, health, friends, emotions, social networks, life satisfaction) taking into account the Rights of the Child (UN Convention). The tool also includes two psychometric scales: Emotional Well-Being and Self-Esteem. Scales reliability was verified through a psychometric analysis of fit indexes.

Participatory workshops promote children's direct expression of their views and perspectives on their rights and wellbeing.

Children participated voluntarily and informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians. Anonymous questionnaires were self-completed and carried out in the classroom.

The sample is not representative: 42 school groups were selected directly by school principals. In total 781 primary (46%) and middle school (54%) students participated, of which 41.8% female, aged between 8 and 13.

### **Results:**

The application of the MACaD-RCA model confirmed its capacity to generate descriptive microdata on children's multidimensional condition and the pedagogical approach used in the workshops, promoted critical reflection and children's agency. Main findings highlight children's critical condition in two dimensions: children's perception of not being recognized and listened to within their families and school contexts; high percentage of children with low self-esteem.

### **Conclusion and a Way Forward:**

After this applied research, the Municipality of Druento decided to: (i) set up a Children's Municipal Council: a first mechanism for children's participation in the life of the city; (ii) implement a new project called "Rights at stake" which promotes actions aimed at fostering permanent reflection and listening in schools context; (iii) repeat the application of the MACaD-RCA model in 2025 to evaluate changes produced by the actions implemented in educational and other contexts.



Other Municipalities of the Region have decided to apply the MACaD-RCA model in primary and middle schools.

**ID: 221**

### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* After-school activities, subjective well-being, children's voices, Ethnicity, Hong Kong

### **Children's participation in after-school activities and their subjective well-being: Voices from ethnic Chinese and ethnic minority children in Hong Kong**

**Maggie Lau**

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Children are regarded as experts on their own well-being and daily lives. Such as focus on *child-agency perspective* aims to capture the lived reality as reported by children themselves. While there has been significant progress in data collection on child well-being internationally, the local studies on child deprivation and well-being in Hong Kong have predominantly focused on children of ethnic Chinese background hampering any attempt for a detailed analysis of children of ethnic minority background. Empirical evidence shows that children from ethnic minority background (particularly children of South Asian background) are more likely to be suffered from multifaceted disadvantages (e.g., being living in poor families, having poor developmental outcomes and academic performance) than their ethnic Chinese counterparts. If policy advocacy is going to influence policy making on child development in Hong Kong effectively, it is vital that we obtain information on all children in their middle childhood living in Hong Kong, including those from ethnic minority background. It is evident that studies on children's time use and patterns of daily activities play a key role in our knowledge and understanding of children's current well-being as well as their future. Against this backdrop, this article uses an ecological framework to explore how children of different socio-demographic background spend their time on out-of-school activities, the degree of satisfaction with their time use



and the effects on their subjective well-being among ethnic Chinese and ethnic minority children in Hong Kong, in which is a largely homogeneous population with an ethnic Chinese majority. Given the sampling limitations, this study adds important insights into our knowledge of child well-being through the lens of children's own views about their lives in Hong Kong, especially those from ethnic minority background. This exploratory study drawn from two related child well-being studies in Hong Kong which were fully supported by Lingnan University Faculty Research Grant, Children's Views on their Lives and Well-being in Hong Kong (CW-W3 survey), as well as the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF, The Voices of Ethnic Minority Children on their Lives and Well-being in Hong Kong (UNICEF-EM survey), enables – for the first time – a comparison of children of ethnic minority background with the general Hong Kong child population and appraisal of their specific protective and risks factors influencing their well-being.

**ID: 158****Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice

*Keywords:* ethics; informed consent; compensation; dissemination; digital technologies

**Ethical Issues in Research with Children and Young People**

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Ethical issues in research involving children and youth are of paramount importance, as they pertain to the role of rights and methodologies to promote the well-being of these populations. Globally, the ethical considerations in such research are complex and multifaceted. Central concerns include: obtaining informed consent from both the children and their guardians; ensuring the research benefits outweigh potential risks; maintaining the power dynamics and avoiding coercion or exploitation; addressing issues of privacy, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study; and promoting inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, special attention must be given to the developmental capacity and evolving autonomy of young people, as their ability to comprehend and make autonomous decisions may vary. These ethical considerations are crucial to safeguarding the rights and welfare of children and youth while advancing knowledge through research endeavors. Presenters will use real-life studies to showcase issues pertaining to valid consent, fair compensation, dissemination of results, and the use of digital technologies. This will frame and generate critical discussion with the audience, with special attention to surfacing variations and similarities in the ethics challenges and solutions encountered by child indicators researchers working with young people across cultures and jurisdictions.

#### #1 Developing Visual Informed Consent (VIC) Forms

Balancing the need for meaningful participation and safeguarding against potential harm is a delicate task in research with and by children globally. The informed consent process, a fundamental ethical requirement in research involving human participants, including children, plays an important role in ensuring respect for participants' wishes and wellbeing. Obtaining informed consent from both the participants and their parents or guardians, while considering age-appropriate methods of communication, is essential to uphold ethical standards and promote the dignity and agency of children and youth in research settings. This can be challenging as children's capacity to provide informed consent varies with age, maturity, and cultural contexts. As a result, traditional text-based consent forms may pose difficulties for children, hindering their comprehension and active participation in the research process. To address this issue, the presenter and colleagues have developed visual



informed consent (VIC) forms as a potential tool to enhance children's understanding and engagement. Using empirical evidence from a study with children in Canada, Ghana, and Laos, they will emphasize the importance of adopting innovative approaches to ensure that children's rights and autonomy are respected, ultimately leading to ethically sound research practices involving child participants.

### #2 Reciprocity in Co-Production

As children and young people becoming increasingly involved in research, they are taking on roles not only as research participants but in forms of co-production. While issues about reciprocity and power are salient in any such research projects, they become even more acute in intergenerational and cross-national collaborations. This paper will share the dilemmas from the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP), as it navigates institutional ethics committees in such countries as Brazil, Canada, South Africa, and the UK. These dilemmas have been further explored by a rapid review of academic literature. Both the ICCRP and the literature review suggest that reciprocity for children and young people is widely accepted. However, the different terminology unveils varied principles underneath: such reciprocity can be termed incentives, payment, thank yous or compensation. In some contexts, individual financial payments are expected whereas in others only collective in-kind thank yous are welcomed. Our paper will share the dilemmas and potential ways to frame them. As we gain ethical approval to engage children and young people as ICCRP advisors, we will learn their views about how to address them.

### #3 Sharing results with children

Although the importance of sharing the results of a research project with the children who participated in it is now considered an ethical responsibility of the researcher, few resources are usually provided for this stage of research and few guidelines exist as to the best ways to do it. Moreover, traditional result dissemination activities are often inappropriate for children, whose literacy may variate and may have limited access to information technology. In this context, how should the results of the study be translated in an accessible and fun way for those who contributed to them and are affected by them? How should children's contributions to the study be recognized without compromising their anonymity? And how should be proceeded to reach out participating children to share the results with



them? Based on three recent Canadian studies, our paper will present three innovative ways to share results with participating children and discuss ethical issues that aroused throughout their realization and dissemination. These three examples will highlight how the research team can act ethically to recognize children contribution in knowledge development and to thanks them for their participation in it, as well as to allow children to learn new information that empower them.

#### #4 Digital technologies for research with young people

Research using digital technologies have provided new research opportunities and enhanced the scope for child participation. However, little is known about the ethical dimensions associated with research using digital technologies with minors, particularly focusing on sensitive issues. This paper will share the ethical dilemmas and experiences from a study with a local charity in Scotland, engaging child and adolescent survivors of childhood sexual abuse, for co-production and dissemination of evaluation tools based on their experiences of services received. It began with face-to-face consultations, however continued virtually due to the COVID lockdown. Specific issues in digital settings around informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, autonomy, data protection, and dissemination using social media will be discussed. Other challenges encountered included power imbalances between researchers and child participants and unequal access to digital technologies and internet connectivity (aka “the digital divide”), while ensuring child protection, safety, and wellbeing at all levels. Addressing these ethical challenges requires a comprehensive framework, joint decision making following the principles of co-production, and ongoing reflection and evaluation of ethical practices to balance the benefits of digital research with the protection of children’s rights, privacy, and well-being.

**ID: 204**

#### **Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics: Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness*



**Keywords:** qualitative approaches, children's perspective, CUWB study, culture, well-being

### Children's Concepts of Well-being as Cultural Constructs

**Susann Fegter<sup>1</sup>, Veronika Magyar-Haas<sup>2</sup>, Daniel Stoecklin<sup>3</sup>, Jaime Alfaro<sup>4</sup>, Alejandra Villarroel-Gisela Carrillo<sup>4</sup>, Christine Gervais<sup>5</sup>, Fattore Tobia<sup>6</sup>**

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#### Thematic Importance:

This panel addresses the theme Children's Well-being and Happiness, specifically the sub-themes: Understanding Wellbeing and Happiness and Methodologies for Understanding Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, by examining the value of qualitative approaches that conceptualize well-being from children's perspective and by reflecting on the relevance of language, discourse and other cultural orders for children's understandings and experiences of well-being and their change over time.

#### Abstract:

Child well-being is gaining increasing attention in international comparative studies of childhood. The concept is seen as central to understanding childhoods and thus essential to developing an understanding of generational orders within societies and in understanding the everyday conditions of growing up that children face (Fattore et al 2021; Ben-Arieh et al 2014; Andresen & Betz 2014; Minkkinen 2013) However, conceptualisations of well-being are often applied uncritically, rather than interrogated. Current challenges address the normativity and cultural contingency of well-being as well as the question of how children themselves conceptualize well-being and how this is embedded in social and cultural contexts (Fattore et al 2019, 2021; Fegter 2021; Eßer 2014, Weisner 2014,



Camfield 2013). In terms of methodology this raises the question of how to address the historical, cultural and individual contingencies of well-being and that well-being is culturally contingent, value-oriented, a construct embedded in society and culture and prone to change and redefinition over time (Fattore, Mason & Watson 2007). Further challenges are linked to the integration of children's perspectives as social actors in well-being research. the reception of the Children's Rights approach, social constructionism and the New Sociology of Childhood approach have provided impetus for research that places more weight on children's voices in research on child well-being, to the extent that a shift from an adult perspective to a child perspective has been posited (see Ben-Arieh 2005; Tonon 2013). Yet, while children's rights and child participation have become more generally accepted, the meaning of these rights and the practice of participation are by no means unambiguous. This also applies to the approach of theorising and conceptualising well-being from the perspective of children. As Hunner-Kreisel and Kuhn (2010) argue, children's perspectives reflect the social orders in which they are positioned. In addition, children adapt their ideas and assessments of well-being to 'objective' affordances in their life contexts, which is captured by the term of adaptive preferences in the Capability Approach (see Fegter and Richter 2014). In this regard there are significant gaps in research how to conceptualize child well-being from children's perspectives in ways that address the relevance of local, cultural and individual contexts (see Fattore et al 2010; Casas et al. 2014). The three papers of this panel provide contributions to these challenges in conceptualising child well-being from children's perspectives in a culturally sensitive way. They all draw on empirical work from the multinational qualitative study on children's understandings of well-being – global and local contexts (CUWB) (Fattore et al 2019) and present theoretical, methodological and empirical approaches that deal with the question how children's understandings and experiences of well-being change over time and how this is embedded in language, discourse and cultural orders.

Paper 1: Paper 1: Loneliness, fear and anger. How children talk about their emotions in different phases of childhood (Prof. Dr. Veronika Magyar-Haas)

Paper 2: Paper 2: The transactional horizons of subjective well-being: outline of a systemic theory of action (Prof. Dr. Daniel Stoecklin)



Paper 3: Paper 3: What do adolescents tell us about the trajectories of their Well-being?

Qualitative results (Prof. Dr. Jaime Alfaro; Alejandra Villarroel-Gisela Carrillo)

Paper 4: 4. Self-management as a way to promote children well-being: children's experience of self-management strategies taught at school. (Prof Dr Christine Gervais)

Abstracts of the individual papers please see the attached document.

The panellists are all members of the Children's Understandings of Well-being: Global and Local Contexts (CUWB) project and network which is a multi-national, qualitative study that reconstructs children's understandings and experiences of well-being in different parts of the world and explores the relevance of cultural and social contexts for these meanings and experiences. The aim is to determine similarities and differences in children's understandings of well-being in a locally oriented, and cross-cultural manner and to take into account the normative and value-oriented aspect of well-being. Currently the study involves 29 research teams from 24 countries.

Discussion possibility and moderator questions: This panel will involve much lively debate, being a topic, which has major topical relevance for children's well-being and which involves presenters who share a similar epistemology but utilise different disciplinary perspectives. As noted, the panellists are all members of the CUWB project and network, which has been a forum for lively debate, collaboration and knowledge development around children's perspectives on well-being, for the last decade.

We expect that discussion will be generated organically given the expertise of the panellists, topic and audience interest. However possible discussion generating questions include:

- How can we conceptualize child well-being as a cultural and social construct, including emotions and feelings?
- How can we conceptualize children's perspectives and "voices" as embedded in language, discourses and cultural practise?
- How can we consider the power of language and which ways of speaking are marked as legitimate and recognized (in research, in public and private spheres)?



- What lessons can be learned from fieldwork experiences with children across nations for debates about well-being research as embedded in cultural and social relations?

**Required Information**

Chair: Prof. Dr. Susann Fegter (University of Technology Berlin, Germany)

**ID:**
**205**
**Panel**
**Proposal**
**Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Children's understandings of well-being, crisis and well-being, theories of well-being, community advocacy for well-being, political and environmental crisis and well-being

**Contexts of crisis and well-being - Managing and responding to existential threats to children's well-being**

**Tobia Fattore<sup>1</sup>, Başak Akkan<sup>2</sup>, Ravinder Barn<sup>3</sup>, Elizabeth Benninger<sup>4</sup>, Emre Erdogan<sup>2</sup>, Gozde Durmuş<sup>2</sup>, Anne Carolina Ramos<sup>5</sup>, Damanjit Sandhu<sup>6</sup>, Megan Schmidt-Sane<sup>7</sup>, Pinar Uyan-Semerci<sup>2</sup>**

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Whilst much research, policy and practice focus on individual/psychological factors that affect well-being, the papers in this panel foreground a social environment of crisis and ask how ongoing ontological experience of crises influence children's well-being. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, anthropogenically created climate destruction and political instability in many parts of the world has revived the relevance of a chronic



experience of crisis as a state of existence for entire populations, and especially children, whose generational positions makes them disproportionately vulnerable to these crises. Yet the relevance of theories of crisis and change are yet to be fully realized in understanding children's well-being. On the other hand, the capacity of broader social policy, community and strengths-based approaches, as a way of safeguarding children's well-being have emerged. The relevance of some of these responses to crisis will be considered in this panel.

The first paper by Uyan-Semerci and colleagues ('Being a child in the Age of Polycrises: Reconsidering children's well-being in Turkey') discusses child well-being in Turkey in an environment of uncertainty generated by intersecting crises, and discusses a theoretical framework and methodology to study crisis and well-being. The second paper by Barn and Sandhu ('Climate change, spatiality and inter-generational order: An exploration of children's experiences of everyday life in Punjab and Kashmir, India') specifically examines the impact of climate crisis on children, but does so by obtaining children's perspectives, something still uncommon in the literature, with children in the 'Global South' who are thus structurally disadvantaged because of their generational and socio-political positioning. Ramos (Dispersed Family Relations and Well-Being of Ukrainian Refugee Children in Switzerland) examines children's experiences of perhaps the most significant contemporary political crisis, that of the war in Ukraine. Ramos, in speaking with Ukrainian children settled in Switzerland as war refugees, examines the multiply accumulating effects of war, dispersion and resettlement on children's well-being. Ramos' analysis is broad reaching, having implications not only for refugee resettlement of children and families, but of understanding of what 'family' is and how the meaning of family and how children 'do family' can be fundamentally altered through crisis. The fourth presentation by Schmidt-Sane and Benninger ('Child-led community asset-mapping to promote neighborhood happiness and well-being') demonstrates how a novel participatory project with young people identify community infrastructure and resources as a means of promoting well-being. Their work demonstrates the importance of community-based and participatory responses to crisis, which provides salutary lessons for safeguarding children's well-being in crisis situations more generally.



The papers utilize either qualitative or mixed-methodologies that involve child-centered perspectives that foreground children's perspectives, as experts and active research participants. Within this shared methodological framework, the presentations draw upon a range of theoretical perspectives, including developmental, political-economic, bio-ecological, sociological and capability perspectives. In doing so they demonstrate the value of taking interdisciplinary approaches to understanding children's well-being, as well as applying novel theoretical insights as a means to develop policy for children. Moreover, the presentations draw upon research undertaken or being conducted in diverse contexts, Istanbul, Turkey; Punjab and Kashmir, India; Switzerland and Cleveland, USA.

#### Panelist Perspectives:

The panelists are highly regarded scholars of child well-being who have published extensively on children's well-being in the different national and local contexts - Uyan-Semerci; Erdoğan, Akkan and Durmuş from a psycho-sociological perspective in Istanbul; Barn and Sandhu from a socio-legal, social policy and psychological perspective in various parts of India; Ramos as an educational scientist and sociologist of the life course working in Switzerland; and Benninger and Schmidt-Sane, from a socio-legal and community development frame, in South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

#### Discussion possibility and Moderator questions:

This panel will involve much lively debate, being an area which has major topical relevance for children's well-being and which involves presenters who share a similar epistemology but utilize different disciplinary perspectives. As noted, the panelists are all members of the CUWB project and network, which has been a forum for lively debate, collaboration and knowledge development around children's perspectives on well-being, for the last decade.

We expect that discussion will be generated organically given the expertise of the panelists, topic and audience interest. However, possible discussion generating questions include:

- What can crisis frameworks tell us about how children experience well-being?
- What protective factors can safeguard well-being within a context of complex crisis and transition?



- How can concerns about future well-being, emphasized by experience of crisis in children's lives, be reconciled with their sense of well-being in the present?
- What lessons can be learned from applying interdisciplinary perspectives to the study of child well-being?
- What implications might there be from the presentations for child well-being indicator development?

#### Thematic Importance:

This panel addresses the theme Children's Well-being and Happiness, specifically the sub-themes Understanding Wellbeing and Happiness and Best Practices for Promoting Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, by examining the relationship between complex crisis (including political-economic, social and environmental crises) and community resilience and how this relationship influences children's understandings of and experiences of well-being and happiness.

The multi-national character of the presentations and their focus, further aligns to the overall conference theme of Global childhoods: Critical perspectives promoting theoretical, empirical and policy understandings.

**ID: 224**

#### **Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 5: Food and Child Wellbeing, Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing, Theme 8: Children's Access to Justice

*Keywords:* multidimensional poverty, Consensual Approach, child's dignity, food insecurity

**Assessing multidimensional child poverty and wellbeing for the SDGs – examples from the Global South**



**Luis Renato Vedovato<sup>1</sup>, Shailen Nandy<sup>2</sup>, Ana Elisa Spaolonzi Queiroz Assis<sup>3</sup>,  
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David Gordon<sup>8</sup>, Sunny Jose<sup>9</sup>, Fernando Cardenes Hilbert<sup>10</sup>, Flávia Uchôa<sup>11</sup>, Luis  
Beccaria<sup>12</sup>, Ana Laura Fernandez<sup>13</sup>, Gabriela Fernandez<sup>14</sup>, F.M Uchôa de Oliveira<sup>15</sup>,  
Mary Zhang<sup>16</sup>**

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#### Panel Description

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require countries to report on poverty ‘in all its dimensions’ for adults and children, according to national definitions. While there has, in recent decades, been a flowering of indicators and measures of multidimensional poverty – like the MPI and MODA – this presents both an opportunity to place children and child poverty at the centre of the social policy space, but also a challenge – as to how to best do this? A plethora of research methods and approaches means countries are either using different methods to report on progress to important goals like SDG1, generating non comparable data, or, worse still, choosing to not report on child poverty, or multidimensional poverty, at all.

Poverty has long been recognised as being multidimensional, affecting adults and children differently, and thus requiring age-appropriate and socially realistic measures. The Consensual Approach, based on the Peter Townsend’s sociological theory of relative deprivation, has evolved over 40 years, and been used in a variety of low-, middle- and



high-income country settings. This panel will present its use in recent years from countries in the Global South.

Multidisciplinary teams in these countries have used a mix of research methods (qualitative focus groups and quantitative household surveys) to examine the meaning of multidimensional poverty in two Latin American mega-cities (Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires), what people consider to be 'the necessities of life' for all citizens, and the extent and nature of consensus about these necessities. People's inability to participate in or have these 'socially perceived necessities' due to a lack of resources (financial or otherwise) is one conceptualisation of poverty, and the work presented here is from the first ever use of the approach in each country. The papers present how the approach has been applied in each country, and is now being extended by legal scholars, to link with Constitutionally mandated economic and social rights for children and their families.

#### Perspectives of the Panellists

Every member of each research team is an engaged social scientist, teaching and researching issues related to poverty and social justice. Their academic disciplines cover economics, social policy, development studies, education, social psychology, anthropology, and law. Each panellist considers poverty to be a preventable violation of people's basic human rights, and their research is intended to tackle this ongoing social ill in each of their countries.

**Possibility of Discussion -** The possible issues in the topic that can generate interesting debates and discussions from diverse perspectives.

There are many possible discussions to be had from the papers in the panel. The presentations will come from legal, education, economics, and social policy scholars, with a methods and concepts focus. Discussions could centre on the results presented, the suitability of the Consensual Approach to such countries, the nature and meaning of multidimensional poverty, the wider application of the work and its implication for policy and economic and social rights for children and their families.

**Moderator- Questions that moderator will use to get the discussion going.**

1. Explain the research process and motivations for the work in each country.



2. Is child poverty viewed differently to adult poverty in each country?
3. How have results been received in each country? Have they begun to change how child poverty is conceptualised and measured by policy makers and the wider public?
4. Each study is currently on a sub-national level; is there scope for national studies using the Consensual Approach?

**ID: 228**

**Poster Presentation**

*Topics:* Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness

*Keywords:* Children wellbeing, Algeria, child-centred research, drawing technique, writing technique

**Understanding the Subjective Wellbeing of Algerian Children: A Qualitative Study**

**Habib Tiliouine<sup>1</sup>, Naime Daoust-Zidane<sup>2</sup>, Soumia Belazzoug<sup>1</sup>**

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**Purpose:** In the context of cultural shifts, economic challenges, and evolving family structures in Algeria, very little has been done to examine children's wellbeing in this world region. Compounded by issues like instances of child labour, a low performing educational system, and the amplified challenges unveiled by the COVID-19 pandemic, including frequently found cases of violence against women and children, the need for comprehensive insights becomes evident. While acknowledging the nation's efforts in child protection, this study delves into children's discourse to report their experiences and perceptions of their wellbeing, aligning with the United Nation's call for their active involvement in research.

**Methods:** Using a child-centred approach, the study was realized with 20 children, aged from 8 to 12, from three private schools and one public school in eastern Algeria. We conducted focus groups using the Draw and Write technique along with the protocol



suggested by the Children's Understanding of Well-Being Study. This multinational comparative study within which our research is embedded aims to describe the cultural dimensions of wellbeing.

**Results:** The results reveal five key themes in children's experiences of wellbeing: 1) aspiration for a better world 2) the importance of participative and non-violent teaching approaches 3) the impact of cultural and religious backgrounds on wellbeing 4) the desire for more freedom and autonomy 5) relationships as sources of physical and emotional safety.

**Conclusion:** Our findings provide insights into what Algerian children find meaningful for their wellbeing, offering valuable guidance not only to practitioners and policy-makers but also to fellow researchers. Based on the perspectives shared by children in this study, we will discuss recommendations for adults to locally enhance children's wellbeing. Furthermore, suggestions for future research focusing on the wellbeing of Algerian children will be presented.



## Theme 3: Health of Children



- Health Indicators for Children
- Children's Experience with Healthcare Services
- Access to Healthcare Facilities: Public vis-à-vis Private
- Schemes, Policies and Programs Affecting Children's Health
- Cultural Practices Affecting Children's Health (Circumcision, Female Genital Mutilation etc.)



**ID: 102**

### **Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 3: Health of Children

*Keywords:* Child work; child labour

### **Understanding the extent and impact of child work and child labour: Evidence from the United Republic of Tanzania**

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Child labour refers to work that deprives children of their potential, dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and/or mental development. In addition to being a human rights violation, child labour interferes with children's education, it negatively impacts children's future earnings ability as well as health outcomes, and ultimately reinforces the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, the key source of child work and child labour data is the Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS). The ILFS is conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania Mainland (NBS) and Office of the Chief Government Statistician, Zanzibar (OCGS) – who are responsible for collecting, compiling and disseminating official statistics – in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office, Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disabilities, the President's Office, Labour, Economic Affairs and Investment (Zanzibar), and Development Partners (DPs).

The latest official child work and child labour estimates date back to the ILFS 2014. According to this data, there were 8.3 million (6.8 per cent) children aged 5-17 years involved in some form of work in Tanzania Mainland. Notably, 4.2 million (8.8 per cent) children were engaged in child labour, and 21.5 percent of children were engaged in hazardous child labour. In Zanzibar, the child labour rate stood at 5.6 per cent; 52.7 per cent of children engaged in child labour were also engaged in hazardous work.



The recently released ILFS 2020/21 provides an excellent opportunity to update our collective understanding of child work, child labour and hazardous child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania (URT). Data generated from this national survey plays a unique role in guiding policy decisions to foster child health and wellbeing, including monitoring progress against key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators and international obligations, particularly the application of international treaties and conventions on children's rights such as CRC, ILO C138 and C182.

More specifically, the aim of this analysis is twofold: (i) Identify the extent to which children are engaged in economic activities, carry out household chores or do not work; and amongst working children (ii) generate socio-economic profiles of children who are involved in child labor, as well as hazardous labour. In doing so, this analysis will yield estimates of child work, child labour and hazardous child labour disaggregated by different characteristics including age, gender, disability, location (rural/urban), region, and sector, among others.

To conclude, this deep dive into the depths of child work and child labour in URT is expected to go a long way in informing government's efforts to eliminate child labour. In the case of Zanzibar, this work also represents an essential contribution to inform the preparation of the next National Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC).

**ID: 113**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 3: Health of Children

*Keywords:* Girl, Subjective Well-being (SWB), Disadvantage, Out-of-hom care, Cross-country

**Being a girl child in difficult circumstances. Results from several countries.**

**Carme Montserrat**

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We have been gathering scientific evidence for some time on how girls' subjective well-being (SWB) is affected in difficult circumstances. We have observed this in the following contexts: children in disadvantage situations in Spain; in different living arrangements in Spain; in seven countries within the framework of Children worlds ([www.isciweb.org](http://www.isciweb.org)) regarding the effect of critical changes on subjective well-being; and also in several countries in the field of children in out-of-home care. In this presentation we will discuss this issue focusing on the studies from the point of view of children in residential care with the ultimate goal of making proposals for professional practice and policies with a gender perspective. Several studies, quantitative in nature, have been gathered using an adaptation of psychometric scales on SWB with children and adolescents in residential care in Spain and Portugal (N=551), Chile (N=106) and Peru (N=606), also in Spain in therapeutic residential centres (N=567), and with young people leaven care (N=81). Similar results have been observed in all of them regarding gender: girls show a significantly lower subjective well-being than boys at the same age and in the same context. Explanatory hypotheses and proposals for debate are formulated from a gender perspective: the reproduction of gender roles in adverse contexts, the assumption/assignment of responsibilities, interpersonal relationships, the role of the family, the perception of security, spaces of intimacy, the opportunity to make their voice heard, or their own perception of well-being, are some of the elements of the debate and proposals to be incorporated into practice and child policies.

**ID: 125****Abstract Submissions***Topics:* Theme 3: Health of Children*Keywords:* Child medical neglect, Healthcare needs, children participation**Understanding Child Medical Neglect from the Perspective of Palestinian Children in East Jerusalem****Mayada Karjawally<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>The Haruv Institute, Israel; <sup>2</sup>The Hebrew University Jerusalem, The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare; [mkp2812@gmail.com](mailto:mkp2812@gmail.com)

### **Thematic Importance:**

The following abstract highlights the significance of involving children in research related to their health. By including children in discussions about their health, we can gain valuable insights into their needs and effectively address them.

### **Introduction and Objectives:**

Child medical neglect MN is a subtype of neglect that manifests when necessary medical care and basic health needs are lacking or denied, which imposes detrimental consequences on health. Compared to other types of child maltreatment, it is more closely associated with morbidity and mortality. MN is often associated with potential harm making its recognition even more challenging. It is crucial to have a more precise understanding of child medical neglect to minimize and manage adverse sequelae. Adults primarily conceptualize MN, often overlooking and failing to seek input from children.

The research aims to study children's perceptions of MN and the contributing factors to their perceptions. We know that children's healthcare needs vary from adults and engaging children in research will help us understand their specific needs and elucidate the topic from their perspectives.

### **Method:**

A qualitative research study was conducted with two focus groups consisting of fourteen healthy Palestinian children attending elementary schools in East Jerusalem aged between 12-14. They were selected through convenient sampling. Semi-structured questions were asked at the beginning and following short vignettes for cases of child medical neglect. The discussions were recorded on audio, transcribed, and analyzed using Thematic Analysis.

### **Results:**

The findings offer insightful information on what children perceive as MN, providing some assessment criteria based on parental behaviors/practices in different contexts. The discussions revealed that children need and even demand to be approached and engaged in decisions on their matters, particularly health matters, suggesting their relevance in judging



parental behaviors and their intentions to neglect. Children identified a range of perceptions, attitudes, and messages to adults on MN: (a) They pointed to lack and necessity of knowledge and awareness regarding optimal medical care for children and parents, subsequently affecting their ability to discern MN that may require corrective actions; (b) They considered MN not only when acute treatment was lacking but when preventive medicine and their psychological needs to be loved, cared for, and nurture were also denied; (c) They used comparisons of previous parental behavior in similar situations, and with siblings and friends spouses in their circles, altering their ability to discern MN when they perceive them cultural norm; and (d) They expressed a lack of trust in Israeli child protection services as culturally inapplicable to Arab children, rendering these services less effective when most needed. Since the study was conducted on overall healthy children, they found it challenging to consider MN based on potential manifestations, making them less likely to perceive minor events as threatening.

### **Conclusion and a Way Forward:**

This study provides an authentic understanding of children's perceptions and attitudes toward MN, emphasizing the significance of their participation in healthcare discussions. The insights obtained contribute to the existing body of research and pave the way for developing a systematic protocol to enhance the assessment of child MN and probably prevention.

### **Recommendations and way forward:**

1. This exploratory study enriches the understanding of child MN, bringing new perspectives and credibility to children's healthcare research.
2. The findings can serve as a foundation for the development of a framework or systematic protocol for improved assessment of child MN.
3. There is a pressing need to raise awareness about appropriate health-related issues and practices for children.



**ID: 230****Abstract Submissions***Topics:* Theme 3: Health of Children*Keywords:* Care Economy, Economy, Gender Equality**Unpaid Care Work: The Unacknowledged Pillar of India's Economy and Gender Equality****Bandyopadhyay Veena**UNICEF-India, India; [ybandyopadhyay@unicef.org](mailto:ybandyopadhyay@unicef.org)

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the significance of care work as a foundational element of an inclusive society and a thriving economy. Despite this, most of the care work remains unpaid, with women dedicating two to ten times more time to unpaid care work than men[i]. The time invested in these unpaid activities is intrinsically linked to gender inequality in labor force participation, access to social protection (SP), wages, job quality, and overall wellbeing and empowerment. Evidence suggests that unpaid care work, predominantly performed by women and girls, provides a public good without appropriate compensation[ii]. The value of unpaid work performed by women is estimated to be as high as USD 10 trillion per year, approximately 13% of the global GDP[iii].

Care work not only sustains individuals and families daily and intergenerationally, but also lays the groundwork for all other economic activities. It is imperative for the State to not only provide care but also recognize the value of unpaid care work in the economy. This recognition should be reflected in a political and normative framework that legislates unpaid care work. The State bears the responsibility to ensure adequate investment in an inclusive lifecycle SP system that acknowledges care as a fundamental pillar of wellbeing.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has underscored the importance of care work and its integral role in the economy. India dedicates less than one per cent of its GDP to care work infrastructure and services, encompassing pre-primary education, maternity, disability and sickness benefits, and long-term care[iv]. As per an ILO report, with the anticipated rise in global demand for care work by 2030, investment in India's care economy could potentially generate 11 million jobs, with women expected to hold 32.5%



of these positions. This projection indicates a growing acknowledgment of the care economy's significance and a transition towards more inclusive and transformative policies.

In India, the onus of care work, a significant part of which is either unregulated or inadequately compensated, falls predominantly on women. This responsibility is particularly pronounced in the realm of childcare, a crucial component of the care economy. The burden on women has been amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that 3.2% of the total child population missing on school enrollments[v] underscores the inadequacy of childcare facilities and the consequential shift of care responsibilities onto children themselves[vi]. However, concerted efforts have been made by the national and various state governments to address the gaps[vii]. India has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty to 21%, a more than halved infant mortality rate, around 88% of women now opting for institutional deliveries[viii], and a reduction of two million out-of-school children. These advancements signify a growing recognition of the importance of childcare and a transition towards more inclusive and transformative policies.

In conclusion, care economy in India is a pivotal sector that necessitates heightened attention and investment. Steps towards recognizing and valuing unpaid care work, ensuring adequate compensation for care providers, and implementing effective policies are fundamental to fostering a more equitable care economy. These measures not only contribute to economic growth but also promote gender equality and social justice.

[i] OECD Development Centre, *Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*, (2014), [https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid\\_care\\_work.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf)

[ii] The Hindu Business Line, *India in transition. 'Care' economy uncharitable to women*, (2021),

[iii] [iii]McKinsey Global Institute, *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*, (McKinsey&Company 2015),

[iv] <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/old-care-for-fow/lang--en/index.htm>



[v]<https://educationforallinindia.com/do-we-have-or-not-have-child-labour-in-india-2022/>

[vii] <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1989473>

[viii] [https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/NFHS-5\\_Phase-II\\_0.pdf](https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/NFHS-5_Phase-II_0.pdf)



## Theme 4: Children's Education



- What Children want to learn? Sites of Learning: Homes, Neighbourhood, Schools, Child Care Institutions, Popular Culture
- How do Children want to Learn?
- Schemes and Initiatives for Children's Education
- Alternative Education for Children
- Education in Natural Disasters
- Accessibility to Education
- Inclusivity in Education



**ID: 142****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 4: Children's Education

*Keywords:* educational outcomes, out-of-home care, longitudinal study

**Educational outcomes and child centered out of home care: Perspectives of children.****Elizabeth Fernandez**

University of New South Wales, Australia; [e.fernandez@unsw.edu.au](mailto:e.fernandez@unsw.edu.au)

**Thematic importance**

This presentation relates to the focus of the ISCI Conference on children's rights to education and the achievement of optimal educational outcomes for all children. It draws attention to a marginalized group of children- those living away from their families in out of home care and who are vulnerable to suboptimal outcomes. The voices of children are incorporated into the presentation.

**Introduction and objectives**

Research into the education of children and young people (CYP) in care reveals consistent findings evidencing an attainment gap for CYP in care relative to their peers. For instance, in Australia CYP in care recorded 13-39 points less across assessments compared to all school students (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2015). With respect to high school completion only 45% of those in care achieve this milestone against 77% in the general student population (Harvey et al.,2015). Internationally, there is policy attention being paid to the education of children in care to ensure they achieve optimal educational and psychosocial life outcomes. Important to enhancing the educational achievement of children in care are support, stability of environment, teaching resources and the recognition by all stakeholders - foster carers, social workers and statutory authorities that education is paramount to a child's future wellbeing. The objective is to highlight the perspectives of children, carers and teachers on the care experience and educational outcomes drawing on a research study of children in long-term care.

**Methodology**

The research used a mixed method, prospective longitudinal, repeated measures, multi-informant design. The sample for this study included 59 children in care representing both genders and a diversity of ages, entry paths and trajectories. Children were assessed by teachers and carers for academic competencies and emotional and behavioural functioning using the Achenbach CBCL and its companion the Teacher Report Form. Analyses focused on the educational experience and outcomes drawing on teacher and carer assessments at two points in the study. This is complemented by excerpts from the qualitative data from CYP.

### Results

Findings indicated a high level of externalising and internalising problems in initial assessments and demonstrated gains in terms of improved scores in academic performance and adaptive functioning at subsequent assessments. A notable finding was the similarity in gains in specific domains between the care sample and the control group in later assessments following a 2-year spell of stable care.

The qualitative data from CYP highlights perceptions of their engagement with school, confidence in their own ability to perform at school, the impact of school changes, their perceptions of carer, teacher and peer support, and perceived obstacles to doing well at school, their worries, fears, personal aspirations and career goals.

### Conclusion and implications

The voices of children added important insights, bringing into the study their lived experience. The knowledge gained from capturing children's voices about their educational experiences in care, and of being on the receiving end of interventions emphasise the value of direct communication with children and facilitating their agency and participation underlining the importance of listening to children and respecting their capacity and right to self-expression.

Viewing these findings from the lens of an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner 1979) the implications for practice at the micro, meso and macro levels will be discussed emphasizing the need for a coordinated strategy for proactive professional and organizational support with respect to the emotional and educational needs of children in out of home care.



**ID: 211**

### **Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 4: Children's Education

*Keywords:* learning environments, children's well-being, qualitative research methods, global perspectives, educational processes

### **Enhancing Children's Well-Being in Diverse Learning Environments: Insights from Global Perspectives**

*Theme:* Children's Education

*Subthemes:* Sites of Learning: Homes, Neighborhood, Schools, Childcare Institutions, How do Children Want to Learn?, Schemes and Initiatives for Children's Education

Our panel aims to explore a wide range of learning environments that children encounter, such as school, out-of-school leisure activities, within the family and the internet. The panel will consist of four presentations each highlighting a distinct setting for children's education and learning.

The panel, with its focus on children's subjective experiences within diverse learning settings and the inclusion of insights from children, including Germany and Canada, plays a vital role in achieving the conference's objective of supporting collaboration, integrating findings, and disseminating research on indicators and measurements of children's well-being. This panel also highlights the universal need for improved education opportunities and support for all children, particularly those facing health, economic, or social vulnerabilities. By combining perspectives from children across the globe, this panel aspires to provide valuable insights and recommendations for fostering children's well-being in a multitude of learning environments, benefiting international researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.



This panel includes four presentations and explores children's well-being and discourses using qualitative and mixed methods approaches to analyze processes of subjectification, digital practices, intersectional differentiations, social inequalities, and learning and educational processes.

The following questions aim to discuss the panel's contributions collectively (Moderator-Questions):

- What can we learn about educational processes and their institutional contexts from the perspectives of children?
- To what extent is it necessary to reflect on the variation of pedagogical environments in which children operate on a daily basis in order to understand their perspectives as well as their learning challenges?
- Given this context, what can a differentiated critique look like from a children's well-being perspective, taking into account global structures of inequality and the specific conditions of the education sector at local and national levels?
- How can interventions and strategies be implemented to effectively enhance children's well-being within diverse educational environments?

#### **Title presentation 1: School as a Resilience Factor for Newcomer Youth with Traumas in Canada**

This presentation emphasizes the significance of schools as privileged environments for newcomers to connect with the local culture and access to aid from the community and professionals. It stresses the importance of prioritizing the quality of school services, school climate, and relationships in order to support the successful adaptation and well-being of immigrant children who have experienced traumas and face posttraumatic symptoms.

#### **Title presentation 2: Too Little to Not Care - Infancy in a historical perspective**



Through a historical perspective, this study explores infancy and the scientific knowledge production within the family in the western context. In this presentation, the discourse relevant to infant development in the 20th century will be presented. Providing critical historical insights into contemporary commonly-adopted approaches to children and childhood, this work shed light on infants' rights and wellbeing.

**Title presentation 3: “They Empty Our Brains Instead of Us Learning” Processes of Subjectification of Children in School and Out-of-School Learning Settings in Germany**

This presentation underscores the paramount importance of leisure activities outside of schools for children's well-being and overall development. It particularly focuses on their significance for children who receive limited recognition in school and may face marginalization.

**Title presentation 4: Children Taking Care Online: Findings from Ethnographic Laptop-Interviews with Children in Berlin, Germany**

This presentation addresses the role of the internet in children's lives and learning processes in today's digital age. It emphasizes that online activities have become essential for children's everyday experiences and explores how they can provide insights into children's discourse on values, norms, and relationships.

**Name, affiliation, contact information and brief bio of the panellists and chair:**

**Authors Presentation 1:**

Naime Daoust-Zidane, M. Sc. candidate and research assistant, University of Montreal, School of Psychoeducation | [naime.daoust-zidane@umontreal.ca](mailto:naime.daoust-zidane@umontreal.ca)



Field of interest: Cultural adaptation of intervention programs for immigrant families with traumas, school engagement and school adaptation of vulnerable immigrant students including those experiencing mental health difficulties and drop-out, child well-being in an international perspective, qualitative methods, child-centered approach, and participative approach

Isabelle Archambault, Ph.D., professor, University of Montreal, School of Psychoeducation | [isabelle.archambault@umontreal.ca](mailto:isabelle.archambault@umontreal.ca)

Field of interest: Youth mental health and school engagement, well-being and school experience of immigrant students, the role of educators, school climate, and community in supporting youth adaptation, evaluation of implementation and impact of educational practices and intervention programs promoting well-being and success, mixed methods

#### Author Presentation 2:

Tatjana Dietz, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Faculty of Educational Sciences | [t.dietz@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:t.dietz@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

Field of interest: Childhood and Family Studies, Social Pedagogy, Infancy and Early Childhood, Children's Rights, Child Protection, Historical Perspectives on Childhood and Qualitative Research

#### Authors Presentation 3:

Stella März, PhD Candidate, research assistant and lecturer, University of Vechta, Faculty I- Educational and Social Sciences, Social Work | [stella.maerz@uni-vechta.de](mailto:stella.maerz@uni-vechta.de)

Field of interest: International child well-being research, intersectionality, childhood and social inequality, childhood in intersectional perspectives, qualitative methods, intersectional multi-level analyses, Crisis of Care, subjectivation theory



Elisa Exeler, research assistant, University of Vechta, Faculty I - Educational and Social Sciences, Social Work | [elisa.exeler@uni-vechta.de](mailto:elisa.exeler@uni-vechta.de)

Field of interest: Child well-being, well-being and education in out-of-school environments, childhood and social inequality

Author Presentation 4:

Lisa Fischer, PhD candidate and research assistant, Technical University Berlin, Faculty I of Humanities, Institute of Educational Sciences, General and Historical Educational Sciences | [lisa.fischer@tu-berlin.de](mailto:lisa.fischer@tu-berlin.de)

Field of interest: Qualitative methods, international child well-being research, sociology of childhood, children's media practices and engagement with digital culture, (unequal) children's well-being and education in urban and out-of-school environments, historic perspectives on (Western) pedagogical concepts of relationships

Chair: Yuli Ketain Meiri (Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel)

Yuli Ketain Meiri is a social worker and works as a research assistant at the Haruv Institute. She has a BA in Social Work and is now a master's student in the Department of Social Work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Yuli has been working with children and families in various settings.

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**ID: 220**

**Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics: Theme 4: Children's Education*



**Keywords:** Sites of learning; inclusivity in education; children's perspectives; school-related well-being

### Schools and Well-being from Children's Perspectives

**Jan Mason<sup>1</sup>, Doris Bühler-Niederberger<sup>2</sup>, Leon Dittmann<sup>2</sup>, Claudia Schuchart<sup>2</sup>, Susann Fegter<sup>3</sup>, Lisa Fischer<sup>3</sup>, Miriam Kost<sup>3</sup>, Lorena Ramirez<sup>4</sup>, Jesus Medina Maldonado<sup>5</sup>, Marian Ojeda Carrillo<sup>5</sup>, Tobia Fattore<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Western Sydney University, Australia; <sup>2</sup>University of Wuppertal, Germany; <sup>3</sup>Technical University Berlin, Germany; <sup>4</sup>Centro de Investigación para la Educación Inclusiva- PUCV;

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School-related well-being is a subject of educational research that is currently receiving increasing attention. These debates have obtained increasing attention in the wake of school closures due to COVID-19 related measures (UNESCO 2022, Andresen et al. 2020; Budde et al. 2022; Bujard et al. 2021). Here, the focus is particularly on the negative impact and distress experienced by children and adolescents.

In educational research, two broad approaches can be distinguished that understand wellbeing either as a means or an end of educational processes (Fegter and Kost 2023). The first constructs well-being as a means or source of successful learning and academic achievement. This approach is supported by international studies that show the positive effects of subjective well-being on self-confidence, curiosity, and openness to new situations (Erdem & Kaya 2021; Lavis & Robson 2015). The second approach sees well-being as a goal of education and educational systems. This approach is often found programmatically in school education policies or programs that aim, for example, "to support pupils' growth into good and well-balanced people and members of society and to give them the knowledge and skills needed in life" (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002: 80). An important example of this approach is the European Council campaign "Improving well-



being at school" as part of the Democratic School Network of the European Council (Council of Europe, n.d.).

The question of how children understand well-being in learning environments and how these understandings relate to their social and cultural contexts and the context of local (i.e. jurisdictional) education policy has rarely been studied. The broad approaches to school well-being commence with established propositions regarding the relationship between well-being and educational outcomes and usually adopt narrow concepts of well-being, which reflect developmental, deficit-based or institutionally oriented measures of well-being (see Fattore and Mason 2016). Children's perspectives have rarely been included in conceptualizing and theorizing well-being in school/learning environments. The papers in this panel demonstrate the need and potential for research that critically reconstructs the relationship between schooling and well-being from children's perspectives. These studies demonstrate not only the complex relationship between well-being and education, but how novel and important insights can be attained from research that engages with children's perspectives seriously and rigorously.



## Theme 5: Food and Child Wellbeing



- Access to Food
- Addressing Malnutrition
- Child Targeted Advertising: Marketing of Junk Food
- Breast Milk Substitutes
- Nutrition in Child Care Institutions



**ID: 119****Abstract Submissions***Topics:* Theme 5: Food and Child Wellbeing*Keywords:* Mid-day Meal, Corruption, Childhood Nutrition, Literacy Rate**MID-DAY MEAL: India's Attempt to Ensure Nutritional Security of Children****KANISHKA.**NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY ODISHA, India; [kanishka@nluo.ac.in](mailto:kanishka@nluo.ac.in)

Mid-day Meal(MDM) is one of the most significant programmes against hunger and malnutrition in India. The programme originated in form of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, 1995 aimed at promoting the increase & subsequent universalization of Primary Education in India and improving the nutritional standard of primary class students. A child suffering from malnutrition is prevented from attaining a fully functional adulthood. Such malnourished children have a higher chance of not attaining the school regularly. Even when they attend school, it is harder for them to focus on classroom teaching and thereby feel incompetent to cope up with the classroom performance pressure. Thus in future their chances of dropping out increase further. It was thought that by supplying them foodgrains the schools could increase the rate of attendance, reduce the school drop out rates as well increase the learning capabilities of the child and her self-esteem. Thus in 1995 programme popularly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme was launched as a central government sponsored scheme comprising of foodgrains and transport subsidy. Cost of cooking the meals was not provided by reasoning that state government should meet the expenses from its own fund. Anticipatively six states floundered in the implementation of the scheme and the quality of meals in other states too was not satisfactory standards Leading to intervention of Supreme Court in case of PUCL v Union of India & Ors.

Thereafter central government decided to revamp the old scheme by launching National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education 2004 with addition of cooking cost subsidy. Considering the hardship the facility was also extended for summer vacation



in the draught prone areas. The central government also agreed to provide two percent grant towards the assistance for Management, Monitoring & Evaluation.

Since then the programme has played an instrumental role in eradicating child malnutrition in India. Children born into poor and underprivileged sections of the population are often deprived of proper nutrition. Even if food is available, it is accessed first by male child and then by the female child. Often such female child lack nutrition, education and healthcare, are underweight and prone to different diseases. Pushed into matrimonial relations at a tender age, they constitute a bulk of underweight pregnancies that primarily contribute to Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate. Such child even when she survives will be underweight and weak perpetuating the cycle of poverty. MDM offers a tool to break that vicious cycle. Caste & class discrimination, untouchability were stark realities of India. Children of all castes and classes sitting and dining together have helped in diluting the discrimination and increasing the social cohesion.

However recent happenings have proved that there is still a large scope of improvement. The recent COVID 19 pandemic and the accompanying lockdown saw brief disruption in mid-day meal distribution in schools. On top of that there is persistent issue of corruption in MDM. A major chunk of MDM never reaches the beneficiaries and is “lost” in allocation, distribution and cooking. The programme also has witnessed controversy regarding choice of serving vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals. There needs to be strict accountability to ensure MDM meets the nutrition needs of the children. In last five years India has witnessed a surge in the number of hungry and a gradual slide in World Hunger Index. With proper overhaul and reorientation from ‘meal’ to nutrition the MDM can be an effective tool in India’s fight against hunger and malnutrition in ‘children’ as well as ensuring their overall well being.



**ID: 127****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 5: Food and Child Wellbeing

*Keywords:* CIAF, Stunting, Wasting, Underweight, Overweight

**Do more than half of the Indian children suffer from at least one anthropometric failure? Empirical evidence from NFHS-5 (2019-21)****Diksha Rani**

International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, India; [dkra7170560@gmail.com](mailto:dkra7170560@gmail.com)

**Thematic Importance**

This research is about the estimation of the proportion of the under 5 children in India who suffer from any anthropometric failure or more than one among stunting, wasting, underweight and overweight using the height, weight and age data. It gives the empirical understanding of anthropometric failure among Indian children which will be helpful in resource allocation for the policy makers.

**Introduction and Objectives**

Anthropometry is the outcome of food production and consumption; allocation creates the difference in consumption. Conventionally, we have Stunting, Wasting, Underweight and Overweight to capture malnourished children, but it is possible that a child can suffer from multiple anthropometric failures at the same time. To estimate the overall malnourished children, a Composite Index for Anthropometric Failure can be used. So, we used CIAF to estimate the anthropometric failure among Indian Children and associated it with maternal anthropometry. Objectives: Estimating anthropometric failure among Indian children using CIAF, Association between Maternal and Child Anthropometry, Difference in Maternal Anthropometry among Social Groups in India

**Method**

We used secondary data from the 5th round of NFHS (2019-21). From a total sample of 232,920 women (age 15 -49 Years) who have given birth to a baby in preceding 5 years of



the survey belonging to 232,920 children under 5, a selected sample of 227,040 women with height between 80-203 cm and 206,025 children were chosen, whose anthropometric data and age were complete and plausible. Seca 874 Digital Scale and Seca 213 Stadiometer were used to measure the weight and height of the mother and children respectively. Seca 417 Infantometer (Length) was used for children less than 2 years old or less than 85 cm. Cross tabulation & Binary Logistic Regression were used to assess the prevalence and odds of CIAF across the selected variables to find out the association between Maternal & Child anthropometry using NFHS 5 Data. The dependent variable had values '0' for "No failure" and '1' for "Any failure". Furthermore, maternal anthropometry was traced using cross-tabulations to find out the difference among social groups in India.

## Results

CIAF value for NFHS 3 was 61.41%, 55.34% for NFHS 4 and 53.2% for NFHS 5. Almost half of the Indian states & UTs have more than 50% of children, who have any anthropometric failure. Jharkhand has the highest CIAF value 66.37% and Mizoram has the lowest 33.14%. CIAF value is around 50% throughout age 0 to 59 months; however, "wasting only" shows higher prevalence for the first 9 months, and other groups have a lower value for the first 6 months and then they start increasing, a different age pattern was observed for different age groups. Mothers with lower height and thin BMI were at higher risk of having children suffer from any anthropometric failure with the odds ratio of 2.27 (CI 2.2-2.33;  $p<0.01$ ) and 1.62 (CI 1.62-1.69;  $p<0.01$ ).

## Conclusion and a way forward

This study shows the state-wise burden of undernourished children by CIAF groups, which might be useful in the allocation of resources for the need for special attention. This study identifies the association between Maternal and Child anthropometry, suggesting mothers with low height and thin BMI are at greater risk. Stunting, Wasting and Underweight need different approaches for addressing from a program point of view, so further research is needed for the actual cost analysis by each anthropometric failure. So, it would be easy for the policy makers to allocate the resources and plan accordingly.



## Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice



- Evolving Capacities and Children's Opinion
- Balancing Children's Privacy and Parental Control
- Sexual Autonomy
- Child Marriage
- Manipulating Children's Choice: The Effect of Tobacco Advertising



**ID:****103****Abstract****Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice

**Keywords:** Children, gender-based violence, school, detection model, child participation

**Model indicators for the detection of gender-based violence in schools designed with children's advisory groups**

**Carme Montserrat, Marta Garcia-Molsosa**

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As pointed out by recent studies on the participation of children, they should play a relevant role in explaining and seeking help when they experience a situation of gender-based violence in the home. Their contribution to the early detection of the problem can empower them as subjects of rights while being heard and considered victims of this context of violence. Assuming these premises, by collecting children's voices we have grasped the obstacles and barriers they identify to know what would need to be done from their perspective to enhance early detection of gender-based violence. The objective of this presentation is twofold. On the one hand, to know who, how, when and where they would confide the problem and ask for help, analysing the factors that influence their perceptions (gender, age, having suffered violence or not). On the other hand, to gather children's contributions to design a detection model to promote prevention and early detection in schools effectively according to children's needs. Regarding the method, 6 advisory groups of children between 9 and 16 years old (46 participants) were formed to participate in the research, from the design of the instruments, the interpretation of the data and the construction of the model detection. Besides, a questionnaire was answered by a representative sample of 3,664 students between 9 and 16 years old with an average age of 13.16 years, 50.7% girls, 64.6% in secondary school and 35.4% in primary school in Catalonia (Northeast Spain). The questionnaire, co-



designed with the children's advisory groups, was administered in the schools, in an electronic, self-administered, and anonymous format. Bivariate analyses and multiple logistic regression were carried out. The results indicate that children want to play an active role in solving the problem, from knowing how to identify it, to defending the mother and asking for help safely. Still, they often do not know where or whom to turn to, and they are afraid of the consequences if they confide in it. In addition, students who have experienced gender-based violence at home are less likely to ask for help and trust adults less, with statistically significant differences compared to those who have not been through this experience. As conclusions, when children ask for help, they would like the school to be safe, with clear information on who they can turn to protect themselves and their family. Therefore, there is a need for specific training for teachers and information programs aimed at students on gender-based violence. The detection model that is presented reflects these issues while it highlighting the need for applied research counting on children as experts.

**ID: 144****Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice

**Keywords:** Visual methods, transnational families, life course, childhood, freedom to choose

**To give a voice to a child is not the same as being heard: visual methods approach in analyzing Lithuanian transnational family cases**

**Ginte Martinkene**

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This paper aims to show methodological opportunities to study children and how to give them the voice to express their life stories. The methodological approach consists of a combination of the My Family Map method (Levin, 1993) with the



Vignette Sketch method (Brannen, 2002) and My Family Map method modification (Juozeliuniene, 2014) with Timelining method in a life course perspective (Elder, 1985). My Family Map method approach invites children to paint their families and to use these paintings in in-depth interviews. The Vignette Sketch method invites children to look indirectly at the same life stories and throw other's children cases to express their own experiences. My Family Map method modification invites young adults or emerging adults to analyze their life course through significant life events. The Timelining method approach is valuable in putting all the significant life events not in one line by time but by significance time. Some events that happened in early childhood might be the most significant in emerging adulthood from a life course perspective. By using this unique qualitative visual methodological approach researchers can link experiences from childhood to adulthood and capture unique life strategies emerging in a life course perspective. These opportunities to use visual methods in the research also help to encourage children to speak up and express their experiences. Verbal and nonverbal meanings might be seen while using this visual methodological approach. Research with Lithuanian transnational family cases reveals the possibility to hear children however in-depth interviews show that children are not heard in most cases in their childhood and this experience forms their life strategies from a life course perspective. While not heard of in childhood Lithuanian children in transnational families have no opportunities to choose the life they want to live. Freedom of choice is related not to hearing but to being heard. Deep qualitative listening is needed in the being heard process.



**ID: 180****Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 6: Children's Freedom of Choice, Theme 4: Children's Education

**Keywords:** parenting, parental values, privileged childhood, inequality

**Reconfigurations of middle-class childhood in Germany – Shifting parenting values, remaining privileges**

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For the past decades, debates around intensive parenting and increasingly competitive and monitoring parenting styles among the middle and upper-middle classes have shaped the dominant notion of a 'good childhood' in capitalist market societies of the northern hemisphere (e.g., Faircloth 2014), and with a slightly different twist in countries of the Global South (Ayling 2019; Gu 2021). For example, in Germany, the public ideal is that children should enter education and care institutions from early on, and parents should prioritize the promotion of children's development and talents (Betz 2012; Walper and Kreyenfeld 2022). However, there has also been a growing concern about parental stress and the negative ramifications of parents' 'pushiness' on children's well-being (Ashton-James, Kushlev, and Dunn 2013; Lee and Macvarish 2020). Public attention is shifting toward young adults' desire for more work-life balance and finding meaning in one's work tasks.

In this paper, we first ask how well-off parents among Millennials in Germany approach child-rearing in times of a deepening social divide on the one hand and a growing valorization of self-fulfillment, mental well-being, and personal growth on the other hand. Second, we aim to discuss whether middle-class parenting is shifting away from 'concerted cultivation' (Lareau 2011) towards a more laid-back



mix of child-centered practices and focusing on children's freedom of choice in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

To address these questions, we are currently doing a qualitative interview study that explores the decision-making processes, educational goals, and values of parents from the upper and middle classes in Germany concerning their children's educational pathways. We present preliminary findings from an initial sample of  $N = 24$  parents with children ages 3–25 that we collected in Germany in 2023. We use inductive coding methods to analyze material from interviews with affluent, academically educated parents. The study is part of a comparative project focusing on "National Stratification Systems of Higher Education, Parenting Logics, and Social Reproduction" (Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, PI: Janice Aurini, University of Waterloo, Canada).

Our findings reveal that the parents idealize the notion of bolstering their children's personalities, fostering their unique talents, and facilitating a broad range of school and extracurricular engagements through involvement in sports clubs. However, in contrast to 'concerted cultivation' parents try to avoid a hectic life but instead stress children's free choice of leisure activities and emphasize the goal of supporting and counseling their children in finding an individual purpose in life, which seemingly can be anything from becoming a carpenter to a doctor. The parents convey an easiness and laissez-faire attitude that we interpret as an expression of stress-free privilege and confidence: Life is full of choices, and more importantly, choices are reversible at any time. Thus, there is no need to push children in a certain direction. At the same time, we find that children's educational pathway attending the German academic school track (*Gymnasium*) seems to be the logical and undisputed trajectory. The emerging parenting style is in sharp contrast to the success orientation that lately has been observed in countries like China (Gu 2021).

Building upon these initial findings, we will discuss the implications of these shifting parental ideals on middle-class childhood in Germany. We explore the resulting consequences for their educational trajectories and how they may also give rise to 'new' forms of social exclusion. Particularly when these novel ideals of



childhood and child-rearing are examined in relation to family's resources and available choices, they offer a unique lens through which to approach inquiries about the sociocultural reproduction of social belonging and the socialization of children from diverse social backgrounds.



## Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing



- Right to Survival
- Right to Family
- Right to Identity
- Right to Development
- Right to Protection
- Right to Participation
- Children in Difficult Circumstances
- Harmonising the Basic Rights
- Children and Environmental Harm



**ID: 152****Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

**Keywords:** Estonia, children's rights, child perspective, reporting to CRC, children's report

**Composing Children's Report to the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child – Estonian first experience.****Andra Reinomägi**

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Sociology of childhood understands children as active agents and participants in constructing their own reality and sees children as social category in society. According to Ben-Arieh and Khoury-Kassabri (2008) the understanding of children's rights is critical to children's meaningful participation in a civil society, and thus to their well-being.

By acceding to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, Estonia assumed the obligation to ensure the rights of the child for all children in Estonia. In 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child will expect a report on the situation of children's rights in Estonia. With the support from the Chancellor of Justice Office children and young people first time can report about their situation in Estonia and propose recommendations what should be done to improve their lives. The children's report is drawn up by ambassadors for the rights of the child of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare.

Children were free to decide about the reporting, e.g., how they collect ideas from other children and present them to the Committee. They decided to apply discussion groups method and conduct web-based questionnaire. The young ambassadors for the rights of the child carried out 25 workshops with 560 children as total and 438 children responded to the web-based questionnaire – both in the age range of 6-17.

The aim of the presentation is to reflect this first experience in Estonia of involving children into reporting work about their rights. By laying down the workshops' experiences into the SWOT analysis the objective is to summarize lessons that this process offered. Presentation will also illustrate the children's messages by placing them in the framework of the rights of the child.



For example, children pointed out, that children and young people are afraid to ask or look for help, as they're afraid they will be met with condemnation and punishment. Children want to remain anonymous when asking for help. Some children are unable to engage in hobby activities, either because the groups are too expensive or they live in rural areas where hobby groups are lacking and they lack transport to attend the groups. There are homes with no warm meals. Homes that are cold. Homes where there is no bed. In medical system, sometimes doctors do not speak with children, only with parents. According to children, school starts too early and children are unable to go to sleep at the right time because of a large amount of homework. Young people are afraid to talk about their problems in public and at school. Issues related to sexuality education in schools are handled very inconsistently, as it depends on the teacher. There is a lot of violence and bullying aimed towards children in families, schools, hobby groups and public spaces. There is a lot of exploitation, abuse and extortion online, e.g. with pictures. However, many children still believe that their best interests are being taken into account.

To conclude, children were very determined and active by preparing and carrying out the workshops. It is also clear that children need knowledge about their rights before they can analyze critically what needs to be done to realize their rights. Experiences from the children's report process can help us to understand the views of children and address the policies to protect and promote the children's rights among children and adults.

**ID: 185****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

*Keywords:* Child Protection, Child Sexual Abuse, Ethnic Minorities, Scotland, Service Provision

**Childhood Sexual Abuse within the Scottish Ethnic Minorities**

**Javita Narang<sup>1</sup>, Nauman Qureshi<sup>2</sup>**



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### **Thematic importance:**

Child protection is a fundamental right of children to live a safe and secure life, free from abuse. Childhood sexual abuse (CSA), a significant threat to child protection, causes severe physical, emotional, and psychological harm to children, often leading to lifelong trauma. This paper will present the findings and outcome of a research on CSA within the Scottish Ethnic Minority (SEM) communities.

### **Introduction and objectives:**

Childhood sexual abuse in the ethnic minority communities is affected by specific socio-cultural barriers, which not only impede the ability of its survivors to disclose abuse, seek help, and access appropriate support services, but also hinders its effective prevention and intervention. Scotland has a diverse population with various ethnic minority communities. However, there is scarcity of information on CSA within these communities. According to the 2011 Census, the largest ethnic minority groups in Scotland were people of Asian, African, and Caribbean backgrounds.

The key objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate socio-cultural barriers experienced by the survivors of CSA within the SEMs at the individual and community levels.
- Understand the provision of and access to services for child and adult survivors of CSA from the SEMs.
- Explore strengths and gaps in service provision for the SEMs with respect to socio-cultural barriers and needs of survivors and communities.

### **Method:**

A qualitative research methodology was adopted for the study. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with survivors of CSA and service providers in Scotland from different settings including statutory, voluntary, and private sector. They included representatives from Police Scotland, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Convenor of the



Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Adult Survivors of CSA, representatives from charities/NGOs working on CSA with SEM communities, and psychotherapists. Focus groups were also conducted with community youth leaders and groups. The data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes.

### Results:

- **Lack of Data:** There is lack of data and information on CSA in SEMs and there is no provision currently to segregate data from different authorities and service providers based on ethnic background of survivors.
- **Socio-cultural barriers and factors** hinder disclosure, reporting of CSA, and access to services. **Four key themes emerged:**
  - **Community-based barriers:** A number of socio-cultural, familial and gendered norms, values, and belief systems upheld by the communities were revealed. These included focus on marriageability, family honour, close-knit family systems, and lack of agency of children.
  - **Psychological trauma and services:** Challenges in accessing culturally sensitive trauma-informed services, including overall lack of ethnicity-specific service provision, language barriers, lack of or concerns with interpreters, and lack of socio-cultural understanding of service providers.
  - **Police and legal proceedings:** Complexities associated with the legal proceedings were highlighted, such as lack of socio-cultural understanding of service providers, fear of stigmatising respective communities, and overall lack of ethnicity-specific service provision.
  - **Government response and policy initiatives:** Lack of policy for survivors of CSA in general and specific to the SEMs; and limitations of resources and funds.

### Conclusion and a Way Forward:

The key outcome of the research is a documentary film, 'Hidden in Silence' based on the findings. It has been developed as a 'Training Tool' along with a Training Handbook by funding from the Survivor Support and Innovation Development Fund, Scottish Government.

A short clip of the Training Tool including the film would be embedded in the presentation.



Addressing CSA and promoting child protection in SEMs requires culturally sensitive and inclusive approaches, such as targeted awareness campaigns, community engagement, language support, involvement of trusted community leaders and organisations, and concerted policy and government initiatives. Further research on best practices and knowledge exchange are recommended in all these domains.

**ID: 191**

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

*Keywords:* Infancy, Children's Rights, Child Protection, Prevention of Child Maltreatment

**The best interest of the infant? Insights and considerations from a scientific evaluation of an early prevention program in Germany**

**Tatjana Dietz, Sabine Andresen**

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Infancy is a life phase with a special connotation. Birth is a unique experience, it can create a lot of hope and fascination when a human steps into this world. Infancy is a phase with a great potential for development and strong dependence at the same time. Infancy is especially vulnerable regarding the high level of need for care and protection. Moreover, infants are not yet able to express verbally what they need to feel well and safe. From day one, every child has its own rights as mentioned in the UNCRC and all actions concerning the child should be made in its "best interest" (Article 3). However, the term "best interest" is used in the field of child protection and enables to articulate violence against children and to protect children legally. From a childhood theory perspective, we raise the question: How childhood research and social action can actually do justice to the best interest of the child including infants?



This paper will be structured as follows: (1) Firstly, deconstruct the best interest of the child in a theoretical discussion, drawing attention to the scientific discourse about infancy in western societies. (2) Insights into an empirical study on the prevention of child maltreatment. (3) Concluding on the scope and limits of the construct of the “best interest of the infant”.

The baseline of this paper is the mixed-methods evaluation study “Welcoming New-borns and Supporting Families” on an early prevention program (Babylotse – “Babypilot”) in the German city of Frankfurt am Main. Since a new child protection law in Germany in 2012, the state has created a growing network of so-called “Early Childhood Interventions”, which focuses on the support of pregnant women and their families. One of the main ideas is, prevention of child maltreatment works best when it recognises the challenges for families as early as possible, i.e. during the pregnancy of a women and from the infant’s first day of life. The perspectives of mothers, fathers as well as professionals were captured in qualitative interviews. By a quantitative survey we got insights from professionals from the social and health sector, who were connected to the “Babypilot” program. The results show that the beginning of life is especially vulnerable for the mother and the infant. The interviewed mothers expressed ambivalences regarding the yet unknown child and their new role as well as the big amount of paperwork, to name a few. Professionals raised questions about the line between prevention and intervention, how they work together with other services and create a supportive network for young families. The professionals working as “Babypilots” also shared their thoughts on what it means to implement a social service on a low-threshold level and what they heard from parents, what prevents them from seeking help and support. The results of the evaluation study can open a fruitful ground to discuss prevention in infancy, the reachability of services for young families and to think about how to do justice to the best interest of the infant. The presentation addresses professionals and scientists from various fields, as it needs an interdisciplinary network to keep children safe.



ID: 192

**Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

*Keywords:* Children, poverty, material deprivation, subjective well-being, child-centred

**The Relation between Child Poverty, Material Deprivation and Children's Subjective Well-Being: A Population-Based Study**

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**Abstract**

**Thematic relevance:** The current study provides a consideration of how poverty and material deprivation impact on children's subjective well-being. Studying the impact of poverty and deprivation on children is of paramount importance due to the profound and long-lasting consequences it has on their well-being, development, and future prospects. Understanding these effects is crucial for policymakers, practitioners, and society as a whole to implement targeted interventions and policies that address the needs of vulnerable children.

**Introduction and Objectives:** Child poverty is a complex and devastating human rights violation, experienced by a large proportion of children around the world. In South Africa, child poverty is one of the most critical social issues impacting the lives of children. While child poverty is often measured in relation to household income, it has shown to be an inadequate measure failing to accurately capture the complexity and multidimensionality of the construct. A strand of research within poverty studies has shifted the focus towards a material deprivation approach, which focuses on the tangible outcomes of income, specifically in terms of children's access to a range of material items that are deemed requisite to maintain a decent standard of living. A material deprivation approach has shown to be a more powerful predictor of poverty and happiness than income-based measures. This shift has also ushered in a focused consideration of children's perspectives of poverty, which ultimately increases the credibility of the findings. The overarching aim



of the study is to provide a child-centred perspective of material deprivation, and children's subjective well-being among a national sample of children in South Africa. The study further aims to determine the relation between children's material deprivation and children's subjective well-being across the nine provinces.

**Method:** We sourced data from the Third Wave of the South African Children's Worlds International Survey of Children's Well-Being. Our sample included 7428 children (10 and 12-years old) randomly selected from 61 schools in all nine provinces across South Africa. This represented a population-based sample. Our measurement scales included the Material Deprivation Scale, and three Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scales (cognitive context-free, domain-based and positive/negative affect). Our analysis strategy included confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and multigroup structural equation modelling.

**Results:** Using confirmatory factor analysis we found appropriate psychometric properties for all the scales used in the study. We used structural equation modelling to determine the relation between the constructs. For the overall model we found material deprivation to be significantly associated with all the subjective well-being scales. Multigroup structural equation modelling confirmed the attainment of scalar invariance, which allowed for comparability of mean scores across provinces. We found significant relations between material deprivation and subjective well-being in each province.

**Conclusion:** The findings generated from some the study provide an indication of the value of adopting a child-centred approach to understanding the extent to which deprivation impacts children's lives. They also establish a valuable baseline which can be used to assess the impact of social policies and interventions on children subjective well-being as well as time trends in children's experiences of their material living standards.

**ID: 206**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

**Keywords:** Children, Participation, Wellbeing, Participatory research, Bangladesh



## Children's participation in research: Going beyond qual-quants binary mode of inquiry?

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### ***Thematic importance:***

The growing recognition of children's rights for having a good childhood and good future life chances, coupled with the injunction from the New Sociology of Childhood to consult with children as active agents have resulted in an increasing number of studies on children and young people's wellbeing at national and international levels. Currently, several models exist on children's participation in research. However, in applying these models, researchers tend to use either qualitative or quantitative method(s).

### ***Introduction and objectives:***

This paper critiques this choice of binary mode of inquiry and presents a holistic mixed-methods approach for children's participation in research. It presents a case study from the child well-being research programme carried out by the South Asian Research Network for Childhood and Youth Studies. With the aim of ensuring children's participation in formulating evidence-based well-being policies in South Asia, it develops a two-phase participatory model by designing a quantitative survey in phase 1 and developing a series of qualitative vignettes in phase 2.

### ***Method and results:***

Using data from Bangladesh, this paper reveals the application of this participatory model in co-production of child wellbeing policies. In this regard, key findings from a large-scale survey carried out among 3000 Bangladeshi children were taken back to children to develop further insights on quantitative evidence and coproduce policy messages with children. The quantitative part of research identified gender, rural-urban disparity, family structure, material deprivation, and worry about family finance as key determinants of children's well-being in Bangladesh. Five vignettes (one for each factor) were prepared to develop



deeper understanding on these factors. Twenty-four children (9 girls and 15 boys) aged 10-12 were put into four groups (six in each group) to identify (a) how children interpreted the influence of these factors on their happiness, (b) what they suggested for improving happiness, and (c) which agencies they identified to solve this problem.

#### ***Conclusions and implications:***

This paper debates the key findings from this project in Bangladesh. It discusses the application of this participatory model in co-production of child well-being policies by highlighting its strengths in improving children's participation in decision making in South Asia and other regions.

**ID: 226**

#### **Abstract Submissions**

**Topics:** Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

**Keywords:** public policies; children's rights; human dignity; SDGs; National Education Guidelines and Bases Law of 1996

#### **HOW STRONG IS BRAZIL'S NORMATIVE BASIS FOR THE DEFENSE OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?**

**Ana Elisa Spaolonzi Queiroz Assis<sup>1</sup>, Luis Renato Vedovato<sup>2</sup>, Fernando Cardenes Hilbert<sup>3</sup>, Flávia Manuella Uchôa de Oliveira<sup>4</sup>, Shailen Nandy<sup>5</sup>**

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Since 2019, researchers in Brazil have been developing research on multidimensional poverty using the Consensual Approach, with the aim of producing data to corroborate the country's progress towards the SDG goals. In 2021 a survey of 2,303 households was carried out in the city of São Paulo, focusing on Brazilians' understanding of child poverty and what constitutes a 'decent standard of living' for all Brazilians. Results showed a universal agreement (90% or more) about what people think are necessities for children; the domains of deprivation and disadvantage identified are clearly relevant and linked to international agreements about poverty and to fundamental economic and social rights as set out in Brazil's Constitution. A second phase of the research involves continuing the use of focus groups and cognitive interviews, in the Metropolitan Region of Campinas, focusing on the cities of Valinhos and Hortoândia, has identified five important national legislative frameworks related to the dynamics of poverty. These include the *Federal Constitution* of 1988; the *Child and Adolescent Statute* of 1990; *National Education Guidelines and Bases Law* of 1996; the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, enacted in 1990; and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, enacted in 1992. This paper shows how the key articles are related to the items/activities indicated as necessary for children by the survey data from São Paulo. This work provides a strong normative basis for the defence of children's rights in Brazil and operates in the context of ongoing problems of malnutrition, low schooling and poor housing conditions, for too many children. We want to understand why, despite a variety of legal bases and the existence of at least three important institutions for implementing and denouncing rights violations (the police, the Guardianship Council and the Public Prosecutor's Office), Brazil has not yet been able to fulfil its intentions in the run up to the 2030 SDGs.

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**ID: 161**

**Panel Proposal Submission**



**Topics:** Theme 2: Children's Wellbeing and Happiness, Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

**Keywords:** child supervision; home alone; low- and middle-income countries; public policy

### **Socio-Ecological Indicators of Non-Adult Supervision in Low- and Middle-Income Countries**

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Adequate supervision is crucial to promote healthy child development and to prevent childhood injuries, sexual abuse, and risky behaviors. However, many young children in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) spend time home alone or under the care of another young child in those settings. Large variation in non-adult supervision highlights the need to examine political, socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors that act as either facilitators or barriers to adequate child supervision. Particularly, the impact of policies such as paid leave and access to childcare deserve a closer inspection, since they influence parental availability to care. Yet, empirical evidence on the relationship between family-support policies, socio-cultural practices, and nonadult child supervision in LMIC is lacking. Similarly, little attention has been paid to context-specific information to help interpret population estimates and improve actions to promote child supervision. Presenters in this panel will present the most up-to-date population-based estimates and discuss the role of public policies in nonadult child supervision arrangements in LMIC. They will also engage critically with what constitutes 'adequate' supervision cross-culturally, and how to measure it in a valid way. Among questions to understand socioeconomic differences across



contexts, panelists will look at the role that mothers' as well as fathers' characteristics, jointly or individually, play when responding to challenges associated with child supervision. They will also refer to how methodological options of both policy's measurement and types can only be adequate to assess child supervision when considering local responses from countries' own trajectories.

### #1. Children as Caregivers

**Introduction and Objectives:** The supervision of young children by their peers, without adult presence, is a common practice worldwide, with potential implications that can be both beneficial and detrimental to children, families, and communities. However, there is a lack of population-based information on this phenomenon, particularly in LMIC. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by estimating the prevalence of children under five years old being supervised by another child under the age of 10 and exploring the influence of maternal education on this type of childcare arrangement.

**Methods:** We constructed Poisson random effect regression models using the latest available Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in 81 LMIC. These models were used to estimate the prevalence of child-to-child supervision and to examine the role of maternal education in this context.

**Results:** The global prevalence of child-to-child supervision ranged from 0.0% to 55.7%, with the highest prevalence in West and Central Africa. Across all regions, higher levels of maternal education were consistently associated with lower prevalence rates of child-to-child supervision. However, among the eight countries exhibiting the opposite trend, there was no clear pattern.

**Conclusion and Future Directions:** Further context-specific research is warranted to deepen our understanding of this childcare arrangement and to inform targeted interventions to support maternal education and to promote optimal caregiving practices in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

### #2 Factors and Regional Disparities in Unsupervised Children at Home in Ghana

**Introduction and Objectives:** The prevalence and cultural acceptance of leaving children unsupervised at home vary across LMIC. However, there is limited empirical research on the factors associated with unsupervised children in these settings. Existing studies



primarily focus on individual and household-level factors, yielding mixed and insignificant associations. The impact of structural factors, particularly in regions with notable disparities, remains understudied. Additionally, understanding the evolution of child supervision practices over time can enhance our insights.

**Methods:** Data from the two most recent rounds of Ghana MICS (2011 and 2017/18) are used to examine factors related to unsupervised children. A regional analysis is conducted using mixed effects models at the strata level.

**Results:** The prevalence of unsupervised children in Ghana increased by 8.5% between 2011 and 2018. While certain individual or household-level variables showed significant associations with unsupervised children, these associations weakened and became insignificant after considering the strata-level mixed effect.

**Conclusion and Future Directions:** Regional analysis proves valuable in understanding changes in unsupervised children, suggesting a need for a structural explanation of regional disparities. Future research should focus on how structural conditions, represented by regions, can either hinder or support adequate child supervision practices, offering insights into unexplained variances beyond individual and household factors.

### #3 Selecting policies and countries to understand variation in child supervision practices

**Introduction and objectives:** When assessing the effects of policies on childcare practices, not accounting for countries' own differences over time nor with other jurisdictions may lead to biased estimates. This study explores how these conditions can be properly satisfied in studies of child supervision and the role that state interventions may play in shaping child supervision practices.

**Method:** Three policies to foster adult supervision were operationalized through qualitative analysis. We then integrated these policies in our analyses of the two most recent rounds of MICS in The Gambia, Mauritania, and Sao Tome and Principe (N= 44,607) in two forms to examine their association with the number of days children were supervised by adults. The first form did not consider differences across countries, and modelled child supervision as if its distribution was random. A second model considered unobserved changes within and across countries to account for absence, presence and change of policies to foster child supervision. Cross country analysis was conducted using mixed effects models.



Results: When using the first operationalization of policies assuming a random distribution across countries, these interventions were associated with reductions in the number of days children were unsupervised by adults, wrongly estimating the impact of the interventions. However, when models considered each country's trajectory over time, policies were not associated with number of days children were supervised by adults. In both models, household and family characteristics were consistently associated with the outcomes.

Conclusions and a way forward: To evaluate policy impact, researchers must establish clear, *a priori* definitions. If a jurisdiction shows increases in inadequate child supervision over time, absence of policy cannot be postulated to explain this change, unless presence of a policy has been theoretically defined as an intervention that will stabilize child supervision practices.

**ID: 225**

### **Panel Proposal Submission**

*Topics:* Theme 7: Basic Rights for Children's Happiness and Wellbeing

*Keywords:* dignity of children; concept of human dignity; consensual approach; socially perceived necessities; human rights

### **THE CONCEPT OF CHILD'S DIGNITY RELATED TO SOCIALLY PERCEIVED NECESSITIES - VULNERABILITIES AND MINORITY RIGHTS**

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The paper examines the connection between the concepts of child's dignity, socially perceived necessities, multidimensional poverty, and children's fundamental human rights. The Consensual Approach presents an opportunity for legal scholars in Brazil to use it to



examine societal notions of met and unmet needs. Using focus groups we examine the links and dynamics between SPNs and understandings of human dignity and, consequently, the dignity of children. The paper aims to present to Brazilian Courts how socially perceived needs and multidimensional poverty measurement research are fundamental for informing decisions about scarce public resources, services and social rights. One objective of this body of work is to contribute to the construction of the legal concept of children's dignity to aid courts on deciding on what rights and entitlements should be guaranteed to children and their families. This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001 - Research was financed in part by FAPESP (proc. 2022/15017-5) and CNPq (proc. 403578/2021-3)



## Theme 8: Children's Access to Justice



- Understanding Children's Access to Justice
- Child Advocacy
- Children's Voices in the Institutional Decision-Making
- Legal Aid for Children
- Support System in Legal Proceedings



**ID: 122****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 8: Children's Access to Justice

*Keywords:* child voice, participation, decision making, child safeguarding

**Do children's voices in institutional decision making complexify child protection systems?**

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**Thematic Importance**

This paper examines the practitioner's experience of decision making in a safeguarding context, particularly the nature, scope and personal cost of the decisions that need to be made. This perception impacts the capacity of the institution to prioritise children's voices in decision making processes.

**Introduction and Objectives**

The practitioner perspective is examined from a system theoretical perspective. Using organisational management theory, child safeguarding work is described as one complex adaptive system to understand the impact of child voice on the way the system functions. Traditional organisation management rules of the Newtonian machine model prioritise efficiency, however, including children's voices is perceived to complexify rather than simplify system functioning. Children's voices provide additional information that needs to be incorporated into the system, but they are often rejected on the grounds of 'complexity reduction'.

**Method**

This mixed method research involved narrative, semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 12 key informants from the child protection system in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. These participants also responded to questions in an online document. A six-step thematic analysis process was used to determine themes in the data and their significance.

## Results

Practitioners experience the decision-making process in child protection as overly burdensome. Thematic analysis indicated there are three complications that may underlie resistance to children's participation in decision-making processes; the number of decisions practitioners are required to make; the dangerous nature of the decisions; and the personal emotional cost of the decisions. So, although children's voices provide additional information that needs to be incorporated into decision-making processes, practitioners often reject this concept because the children's voices are perceived to complicate further the decisions that they already experience as taxing. Conclusion and a Way Forward The alternative option of 'complexity absorption' poses a resolution to these complications. It allows practitioners to seek and synthesise information from children's participation rather than reject the task of incorporating children's voices in decision making processes in the first place. Systems can choose to absorb the complexity of children's participation by developing practitioner skills and abilities that encourage them to take on unfamiliar roles and new patterns of working and by establishing horizontal organisational structures that promote shared decision making. Complexity absorption may address the decision-making complications faced by practitioners, because it facilitates efficient practice in complex adaptive systems of child protection while honouring the lived experience of individual children.



**ID: 123****Abstract Submissions**

*Topics:* Theme 8: Children's Access to Justice

*Keywords:* children's participation, decision making, child protection policy, child protection practice

**Competing understandings of how to operationalise children's voices in institutional decision making.**

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**Thematic importance**

This paper is relevant to the theme of children's access to justice as it discusses the complexity involved in practically embedding children's voices in institutional decision making despite widespread discourse and policy supporting children's rights to participate in decision making processes.

**Introduction and objectives**

Many organisations continue to struggle to meet the right of children and young people to express their views and the aim of this research is to understand more about why this is the case. It makes inquiries into the operationalisation of participation, asking how the intersection of micro-elements of practice, the changing nature of social movements, powerful political agendas alongside the influences of policy and organisational level prerequisites for participation impede children's access to justice when they are at risk of harm.



### Method

This qualitative research explores the policy to practice gap with senior decision makers in the child protection system in New South Wales (NSW), Australia between 1960 and 2021. They held different responsibilities in service provision and child safeguarding policy setting and purposively selected from NSW, the Australian state with the highest number of children in out-of-home care (Child Protection Australia 2020–21, 2022). A total of 12 senior executives were invited via email to be involved in a 1-1/5 hr online, narrative semi-structured interview to share their experiences of children's participation in child protection over their career. The interviews were recorded and transcribed using NVIVO transcription, and the researcher made field notes. Participants were also asked to contribute additional written responses to a shared online document.

### Results

The research data indicate there are competing understandings of participation at play, depending on the actor, their role and organisation. Four dimensions of participation were indicated in the data that describe understandings of participation based on different stakeholder positions. These descriptions demonstrate the potential tensions when participation is seen as personal or public in nature and located within either procedural or conceptual aspects of individuals or societies. These dimensions are described in detail in the paper.

### Conclusion and a Way Forward

The dimensions from the research accentuate the need to overcome the problem of epistemic differences (ways of knowing) and stakeholder interests (different ways of doing) amongst individuals, groups and societies that look to implement children's participation. This paper suggests that genuine participation in practice relies on bridging the epistemic differences and interests of different stakeholder groups who are all critical to achieving children's participation in service decision-making. By bringing to the surface epistemic differences, it potentially enables a nuanced way to dialogue around the policy-practice gap



and why institutions struggle to embed children's voices in their decision making. The four dimensions conceptualise the operationalisation of children's participation in decision making as multimodal, requiring distinctive implementation strategies from a range of people and offer a way to discern where individuals place their participation efforts. This means the research extends discourse beyond singular strategies to ensure children participate in decisions towards a conglomeration of strategies and approaches that coalesce to facilitate children's access to justice.

**ID: 179**

**Poster presentation**

*Topics:* Theme 8: Children's Access to Justice

*Keywords:* Children, International Law, Conflict zones, protection, sexual violence

**Protection of children from sexual violence in conflict zones: A critical analysis**

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Sexual violence against children is a heinous crime that has been prevalent in conflict zones across the world. Children are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, where they may be subjected to rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. The impact of these abuses can be devastating, leading to physical and psychological trauma, social isolation, and long-term health problems. One of the most notorious examples of sexual violence against children in a conflict zone occurred during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. During the genocide, which claimed the lives of many, children were subjected to widespread sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery. Many of the victims were young girls who were targeted because of their ethnicity. Another example of sexual violence against children in a conflict zone is the conflict in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. During the war, children were subjected to sexual violence, including rape and



sexual slavery, by both Serbian and Croatian forces. Many of the victims were girls who were kidnapped and held captive for extended periods of time. The trauma of these abuses has had a lasting impact on survivors and their families, and has contributed to ongoing social and political tensions in the region. In more recent times, the conflict in Bangladesh's Rakhine State has seen widespread sexual violence against Rohingya children.

The Rohingya, who are a Muslim ethnic minority, have been subjected to a campaign of violence and persecution by the Myanmar military, which has resulted in the displacement of over a million people. Children have been particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, with many girls being raped and forced into marriage at a young age. The psychological and physical scars of this violence have had a devastating impact on survivors and their families. Despite the prevalence of sexual violence against children in conflict zones, efforts to protect children from these abuses have been limited. International law provides some protections for children in conflict zones, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which prohibits the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

However, these protections are often not effectively enforced, and children continue to be subjected to sexual violence and exploitation. To address this issue, there is a need for greater international cooperation and a commitment to protecting children from sexual violence in conflict zones. This includes increased funding for programs that provide support to survivors of sexual violence, as well as greater efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes. It also requires a commitment to addressing the root causes of sexual violence in conflict, including gender inequality and discrimination. By taking these steps, it is possible to protect children from the devastating impact of sexual violence in conflict zones and to ensure that they are able to thrive in safety and security.



## 9th CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CHILD INDICATORS

The International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) is an international organisation that is home to researchers, data users, child advocates, and policymakers. It has made considerable advances in developing and using indicators to measure the well-being of children and adolescents.

The ISCI Inaugural Conference on "Child Indicators: Diverse Approaches to a Shared Goal" (June 2007) dealt with several themes such as the theory and conceptual framework of child indicators, development of policy using child indicators and children's involvement in measurement and implementation of indicators. Since then, ISCI has organised 8 Biennial International Conferences exploring the use of child indicators to improve the well-being of children in a globalised world and to assess children's subjective well-being from an international perspective. On average, hundreds of delegates consisting of academics, researchers, data analysts, child advocates, and policymakers from 35-47 countries across the globe have attended these conferences and have shared best practices in their countries and regions for improving the wellbeing of children. The research and experiences presented from the grassroots have broken many myths about adult thinking regarding children's awareness of their environment and have provided centre-stage to the voice of the child. The 8th ISCI International Conference on "Children's Rights and Opportunities in an Unequal World: Research, Policy and Intervention" (May 2022) offered a critical perspective on public and social policies and promotion of equality of well-being for all children and how children dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic in different parts of the world.

In 2024, ISCI is going to hold its 9th International Conference for the second time in Asia.

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