



Producing Evidence to Help Improve Child Well-being in Developing Countries

Commissioned by : 

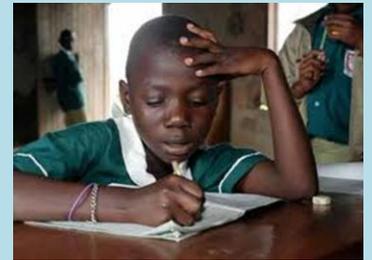
An increasing share of PEP activities in recent years have been devoted to expand both knowledge and local expertise related to child well-being in developing countries, and a great part of these activities was commissioned by UNICEF.

Drawing on the variety of analytical perspectives and methodological approaches fostered by PEP research, a series of initiatives have been implemented to produce empirical evidence that will assist governments and other stakeholders in designing policies and programs to achieve greater equity and well-being for children.

- **Identifying deprivation** among children in a multidimensional sense
- Analyzing alternative **public spending** on children
- **Evaluating the impacts** of specific child welfare policies and programs;
- **Simulating the effects of economic shocks and policies** on child well-being;

Child situational analysis

UNICEF is taking advantage of PEP's unique expertise in multidimensional poverty approaches in the analysis of the patterns, determinants, incidence and drivers of inequities. In the context of its global effort to study child poverty and disparities in developing countries, UNICEF has commissioned teams of local and international PEP researchers to conduct country-level "child situational analyses" in Uganda and Burkina Faso, following specific demand from the countries' governmental agencies to produce reliable evidence bases to assist in related policymaking.



Simulations of fiscal space and public spending on children

In 2011, the UNICEF Country Office of Burkina Faso commissioned a team of PEP local and international researchers to produce evidence regarding the economy-wide consequences, fiscal space, growth effects and short/long-term impacts on multidimensional child well-being, of new/expanded public spending for children, and alternative strategies to finance this spending. The evidence produced will help UNICEF make a stronger case for raising new revenues (internally or externally) or reallocating government spending toward areas that are more likely to contribute to the improvement of child welfare in the country.

Evaluating the impact of a sanitation program in rural Mali

In recent years, UNICEF has been contributing to the expansion of a promising new approach to improve sanitation practices in developing countries, called the "Community-led Total Sanitation" (CLTS) programs. By 2011 however, despite positive outcomes observed in several countries, no quality external evaluation had yet been conducted to assess the actual effectiveness of CLTS programs. As PEP research also fosters advanced methodologies that allow rigorous impact evaluation through randomized control trials (RCTs), a new collaboration was formed – led by the Argentine-based Centro de Estudios Distributivos Laborales y Sociales (CEDLAS) at the Universidad Nacional de la Plata, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and participation of local stakeholders – to produce scientific evidence on the actual impact of such a program on targeted outcomes and population in rural Mali.



Building and promoting local expertise on child-related issues

By catalyzing and supporting local know-how, these projects ensure that the evidence produced to assist in related policymaking takes full account of local and national contexts

Assessing the impact of crises and alternative policy responses on various dimensions of child well-being

Food Crisis in Mali

In 2008, UNICEF first called on the expertise of PEP lead researchers to develop an analytical approach that would serve to assess the impact of the 2007-08 food crisis and related policy responses on different aspects of child well-being in Mali (i.e. not only traditional monetary or food poverty, but also nutrition, education, child labor and access to health services).

The project was quite successful and even provided detailed assessments of how different policy targeting schemes may lead to the exclusion of specific groups of children, or have collateral effects on disparities in several dimensions of child well-being in the country.



Global Financial Crisis in West & Central Africa

In 2010, UNICEF decided to extend the collaboration to conduct similar analyses to assess the impacts of the global financial crisis on children in the region of West and Central Africa.

PEP, through its African partner (CRES), was selected in a competitive bid (the only Southern bidder) to lead a team of local and international researchers in a project including three country analyses – in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Ghana. Again, the outcomes provided compelling evidence, not only as to the expected deterioration of child welfare in the region, but on specific policy interventions to implement in order to effectively mitigate such impact.

Other PEP projects related to child well-being

PEP also supports initiatives from independent local research teams to study child-related issues in their home countries. Several of them can be found on pages 16-19, including several projects that focus on issues of child labor and education. Below is an example of PEP-supported research findings published in 2011, following completion of such a study, led by a team of Kenyan researchers.

“Analysis of Maternal and Child Wellbeing in Kenya, from a Multidimensional Poverty Approach”

The study reveals important complexities in what characterizes maternal and child deprivation in the country, with household and environment living conditions as main determinants, as well as considerable variations across country districts. The findings entail important policy recommendations for improving human capital investments in Kenya, including the implementation of policies to address specific issues such as nutrition deficiencies or lack of critical social infrastructure, while taking into account regional distribution. According to the analysis, such government initiatives would have long-term human capital returns and intergenerational effects in the country.



Using PEP Community-based Monitoring Systems (CBMS) to monitor and analyze child labor conditions in the Philippines

PEP Asian partner (AKI) has been called on by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office in the Philippines to design and provide a series of training programs to build the capacity of local government units (LGUs) in monitoring and analyzing child labor issues and their impact on development outcomes.

Specialized training was provided to 13 LGUs from different provinces of the country. The objective of the initiative was to ensure that LGUs were to assimilate and address issues related to child labor in the preparation of their local development plans. It was supported under the ILO-IPEC's program on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

