

Report of the
CRC ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICAL MEETING

**ADVANCING ACCOUNTABILITY TO
CHILD RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING**

11 - 12 February 2012
Institut International des Droits de l'Enfant (IDE)
Sion, Switzerland (*Venue/Host*)

PART 1: Introduction and Overview for the Report of the
Committee on the Rights of the Child Accountability Meeting

Part 2: Detailed Report and Narrative in Sequence of the Agenda

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Rights and Well-Being. Please contact Philip Cook (pcook@uvic.ca) and/or Stuart
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Our appreciation goes to Marie Wernham for the development of part 2.*

**CRC ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICAL MEETING
ADVANCING ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHILD RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING**

**PART 1: Introduction and Overview for the Report of the
Committee on the Rights of the Child Accountability Meeting**

The report for the Committee on the Rights of the Child Accountability Meeting is organized in two sections: the introduction and overview, provided here, and the accompanying report of detailed items, discussions, and summaries/conclusions.

This brief introduction and overview presents a context of meaning and guide to reading the accompanying report on the technical meeting on advancing accountability to child rights and well-being. This meeting was requested by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It was formulated to be a beginning, a first step, in an envisioned longer program of work to design, activate and achieve advances. Only highlights are presented here. The attached report deserves to be read to appreciate the multitude of issues, challenges, and opportunities of relevance, the richness of the conversations, and the intellectual honesty and seriousness applied to associated deliberations.

Rationale and Purposes

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in consultation with experts internal and external to the Committee, has recognized that it and the world are without adequate standards, indicators and measurement and evaluation tools to guide fulfillment of obligations to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, for both its specific articles and the Convention as a whole. The CRC requested that a technical meeting be held to assist it and interested parties throughout the world to advance accountability to the rights and well-being of children.

Background

“A commitment to a purpose or goal should always be accompanied by willingness, in fact, a demand, to be held accountable—to be answerable for being, doing and achieving what has been promised” (IICRD, 2010). The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets forth obligations for each officially committed States Party (SP). The CRC is responsible for providing guidance in fulfilling obligations to the Convention, which includes periodic reviewing, evaluating and commenting on progress achieved and needed in the future by SPs. During the history of the CRC it has become increasingly clear to its membership that the lack of clarity of standards and indicators for fulfillment of obligations to the Convention has significantly inhibited the CRC’s ability to provide necessary guidance to SPs and for SPs to rigorously and confidently pursue and achieve needed progress.

Recent programs of development for General Comments (GCs), guides for specific articles and themes of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, have produced

strong interest in establishing accountability standards, indicators, measures and instrumentation to facilitate their implementation (see associated descriptions and references for GCs 7, 12, and 13 in the report). Additionally, numerous agencies and organizations (e.g., UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, Save the Children, World Vision, PLAN, HELP, ISCI) have mounted programs to monitor and evaluate accountability of child rights relevant areas. The International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), during the last 4 years, formulated and convened an International Standards Council (ISC), made up of experts from the CRC and many of the organizations/agencies cited, to provide guidance regarding accountability to child rights. Across these groups there was general recognition that we are presently in a state of 'indicators chaos and pollution' sorely in need improvement. The CRC requested that the IICRD organize a technical meeting of experts to cooperate toward advances, particularly to achieve the Conventions requirements and aspirations for child rights and well-being. UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) provided funding for essential components of the meeting

Participants

A carefully selected set of experts in child rights and related research and evaluation were invited to participate in the Meeting. Many of these experts were representatives of agencies and organizations vitally interested in the topic. The significance of the topic was underlined by the fact that the majority of these experts participated through self-funding. The participants are identified here with their initials and their primary affiliations. This is meant to assist in reading the attached detailed report of the meeting, which includes comments and conversations regarding key issues, referenced in some cases with the initials of the speaker. An addendum provides full contact information for participants.

- Agnes Aidoo (AA), Rapporteur, Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) & International Consultant
- Asher Ben Arieh (ABA), International Child Indicators Society & Director, The Hebrew Institute
- Sue Bennett (SBT), Director, Child & Youth Protection Program, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
- Susan Bissell (SB), Chief, Child Protection, UNICEF
- Isabelle Carboni (IC), Evaluation & Research Advisor, World Vision International
- Philip Cook (PC), Executive Director, International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD)
- Elisabeth Elo (EE), Programme Effectiveness Officer, Plan International
- Linda Engvall (LE), Associate Human Rights Officer, OHCHR
- Roisin Fegan (RF), Child Rights Officer, NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Nicolas Fasel (NF), Human Rights Officer, OHCHR
- Stuart Hart (SH), Deputy Director, IICRD
- Maria Herczog (MH), Member of CRC, Eszterhazy Karoly College
- Clyde Hertzman (CH), Director, Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)

- Robin Kimbrough-Melton (RKM), Kemper Foundation for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Cindy Kiro (CK), New Zealand former Children’s Commissioner & School of Public Health, Massey University
- Lothar Krappmann (LK), Former member, CRC member, Liaison with CRC Accountability Focal Group
- Gerison Lansdown (GL), International Child Rights Consultant
- Andrew Mawson (AM), Chief of Child Protection, Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)
- Gary B. Melton (GM), Professor & Director, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University
- Abbie Raikes (AR), Programme Specialist, UNESCO
- Eugene Roehlkepartain (GR), CEO & Director, Search-Institute
- Ruth Santisteban (RS), Senior Advisor, Plan International
- Marcus Stahlhofer (MS), Human Rights Advisor, WHO
- Ziba Vaghri (ZV), Research Associate and Program Director, HELP
- Marie Wernham (MW), Child Rights Consultant, Child Rights Evaluation, Advice, and Training Exchange (CREATE)
- Jean Zermatten (ZM), Chairperson, Committee on the Rights of the Child

Meeting Highlights

Agenda

The agenda for the meeting is attached. It provides information about the major topics and processes of the two-day meeting.

CRC History of Relevance to the Topic

Lothar Krappmann (recently retired longstanding member of the CRC) analyzed sample periods of CRC concluding observations to SP reports to determine the general nature of the evolution and application of standards and indicators. He produced a report of this study for this meeting (see report as an addendum). He recognized that the CRC has not previously had the time/opportunity to study its own processes across members and time in regard to standards for fulfillment of obligations. In his study he found that recommendations in the CRC’s ‘concluding observations’ to SP reports can be very important but that they suffer from the lack of availability of clear and consistent standards. He also found that CRC evaluation and observations have historically been quite strongly deficit or problem model oriented rather than strengths or assets model oriented and, thereby, to focus on violations and failings rather than on proactive guidance and promotion to fulfill the enjoyment of rights. He concluded that institutional affiliation, resources, and a group of experts working cooperatively are needed to develop a framework for accountability to the full set of rights in the Convention.

Perspectives Framing Hope and Possibilities for Advances

Philip Cook and Clyde Hertzman described related experiences and perspectives from the IICRD and the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)

IICRD: Following the hosting of an international conference on child rights accountability in 2008, the IICRD convened the ISC initially to assist it to assure it was accountable and then was encouraged to make it available for consultation toward similar ends to the international community of experts and organizations working on child rights related issues. UNICEF hosted an initial ISC meeting in 2010 in NY which considered the importance and potential of synergy among top-down, legislative, and bottom-up, community-based, approaches, focusing accountability work on CRC General Comments; giving high priority to child well-being as the superordinate goal of child rights; advancing credible accountability programs to reduce/overcome 'reporting fatigue' on the part of SPs; an array of accountability formulations beyond a 'tick-box' approach; and the value and importance of including children at all levels of accountability work – contributing 'subjective' and 'objective' indicators they have developed.

HELP: The GC7 Indicators Group was established in January 2006 with membership from HELP, CRC, UNICEF, ICC, CGECCD, SOS-Kinderdorf International, and the Aga Khan Foundation, with support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The GC7 Group has developed a comprehensive system of accountability to child rights in early childhood. Related experiences provide evidence that complex issues can be respected and dealt with in an accountability program in credible, efficient and powerful ways. The system employs the OHCHR recommended 3 types or levels of indicators (i.e. structure – laws, policies; process - programs; outcome – child-centred); promotes rights-based processes encouraging stakeholder engagement, ownership and cooperation; enables 'skip-over' for questions/categories justified by supporting evidence; encourages inter-sectoral consciousness; makes strong use of technology to achieve efficiency and power; applies logical and understandable flowcharts and color-coded mapping summaries (i.e., 'heat maps'); and has been piloted in Tanzania and Chile. This program is now expanding to incorporate GC13 indicators, in partnership with the IICRD, cooperating with the CRC toward incorporation in reporting guidelines, and preparing for pilots in 'rich' and developing countries. Lessons learned: The issue is quality and you first need to define the standards you want to measure in order to pave the way towards indicator construction. Its model is offered as the basis for further development to produce a model for framing accountability to all child rights and well-being issues.

Major Questions and Issues Considered

Review of the meeting agenda will indicate that six major questions were dealt with by participants in a combination of small group and plenary sessions. The accompanying report provides supportive detail in regard to the related discussions. Some of the major points are provided here.

(a) *What is the scope of major accountability issues (e.g. meanings, value, themes, components)?*

- Support for the reporting process is the main goal to facilitate constructive discussion within country, get more harmonized and consistent information to the CRC, and for capacity building to serve children and communities.
- The process must bring value to the SPs in ways facilitating meaningful change and improvement in children's lives
- The process can be more important than the actual data generated if it stimulates understanding of what is most important and promotes comprehensive measurement emphasizing critical engagement and sustainability.
- The meaning(s) and best applications of indicators must be clarified.

(b) *What are the characteristics, progress, and promise of existing accountability programmes (e.g. models, instruments, contributions)?*

- A preliminary mapping occurred during this session and related presentations/conversations which covered the HELP and IICRD GC7/13 projects and cooperation (see presentations by Clyde Hertzman & Philip Cook); World Vision International's accountability framework, Child Participation monitoring and evaluation led by Gerison Lansdown with cooperation among Save the Children, UNICEF, PLAN and WVI; UNESCO's Inter-Agency Holistic Early Child Development Index; UNICEF's MORE (Monitoring of Results for Equity) and CP MERG (Monitoring and Evaluation on Child Protection); Asher Ben Arie's report on international projects on children's subjective well-being or 'a good life for children; Gary Melton's report on Gallup multiple country data collection on happiness and well-being; OHCHR's development of conceptual and methodological frameworks to serve treaty bodies dealing with its 'structure, process, outcomes' framework; WHO's international framework on maternal and newborn health.
- The Convention needs to be understood more broadly, existing benchmarks are too low and not sufficiently aspirational.
- Feeding back findings to children and communities can have a transformational effect.
- Many silos of work exist which are unconnected, sometimes unknown, to other programs of work and which could/should be shared and promoted in ways likely to produce appreciation, enlightenment, and synergistic relationships.
- The Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health is applying a promising framework: (1) monitoring, (2) review, (3) redress/remedies
- Distinctions may need to be made between issues of SP accountability and those requiring more 'constructive' capacity building.

(c) Can and should an assets/strengths model have a central position in accountability work?

- While both strengths and vulnerabilities co-exist in the lives of children and should be considered, the engagement of young people (probably all people) is stronger with an assets approach and nurturing strengths is a critical resource for addressing vulnerabilities.
- A strengths perspective emphasizes the worth and value of all and aligns well with the Convention by keeping its ultimate goal in mind – the well-being and dignity of all children.
- A strengths perspective opens the door for constructive, positive engagement with parties, building trust and momentum.
- Thoughtful strategies can help overcome the challenges of shifting to a strengths orientation. (Challenges may include greater difficulty in measuring, tendencies to over-celebrate minimal progress, and the need to simultaneously protect from risk and harm).

(d) What is the optimum relationship between proxy/summative universal indicators and developmental/formative indicators for framing and operationalizing accountability?

- If proxy/summative indicators are understood to subsume critical underlying constructs they may be quite useful.
- We need to clarify the distinctions between ‘proxy’ and ‘summative’ indicators. The first may be accurately and easily measured, temporary and subject to change, and linked to but not truly representative of the indicators of concern; whereas the latter is more likely to be a superior hierarchical representation of the family of indicators of concern, to have credible face validity, but could be more difficult to measure.
- We need to talk about knowledge rather than thinking that indicators are an end in themselves – they are a tool to monitor what’s going on.
- We need to do the best we can now to be proactive and push forward simultaneously what is presently useful and the research agenda for improvements in the future.

(e) What must be done to ensure accountability is applied in practical ways on the ground to the advantage of child rights and well-being?

- A good job must be done in measuring both subjective and objective well-being.
- Good feedback loops are essential – information gathered must go back to its source for consideration of its accuracy, sufficiency, and applications.
- Incentives must be magnified and expanded to assure investment by concerned parties.

(f) How can top-down and bottom-up approaches inform one-another to optimize relationships between universal and culture/context specific values and standards?

- Outcome level indicators, though presently weak and challenging to acquire, may need to be given particular priority.
- Children's lived everyday experience will require concentrated attention – which may be acquired through a multitude of research techniques (e.g. interview, focus groups, surveys and retrospective data).
- Children's rights could/should be linked to the rights of others (e.g. women and teachers).

Conclusions

- Advancing accountability to child rights and well-being is a very important initiative for the CRC and for the world's children and societies.
- Child well-being and the 'enjoyment' of rights deserves primary emphasis.
- An integrated bottom-up and top-down approach and child participation/agency should be incorporated in the accountability program of work.
- It may be important to give particular attention to one or more areas of child rights and well-being early in this work (e.g. early child development, GC7, child protection, GC13, and child participation, GC12), but it is essential that this be done in ways leading to advances in accountability for all components, holistically.
- Establishment of a core set of proxy and/or summative indicators is a high priority to be employed in guiding and simplifying SP reporting processes of relevance to the CRC and other treaty bodies.
- A mapping of existing credible and promising related initiatives is needed to determine what can be included/employed in pursuing advances.
- Key questions for accountability to child rights and well-being must be expanded, delineated clearly, and further explored and resolved.
- In regard to data collection for monitoring and evaluation toward accountability, we must take steps to determine: What are the key questions? Who is asking them? Where is the discourse taking place? How can we be more strategic about collecting and sharing data?
- A key issue is how to manage the balance between detailed, summative and proxy indicators to keep information manageable yet useful and of good quality (there is already a huge burden on SPs for reporting and the potential for hundreds of indicators).
- Cooperation and synergy across related research and development projects is essential – silo isolation and competition fuels the existing state of indicators 'chaos and pollution' and lack of acceptance and application.
- The participants at this meeting can provide a core of cooperating experts and agencies which should be further expanded to assure good representation of competing conceptualizations and diverse frames of reference.

- A secretariat is required to coordinate and facilitate the needed program of work in the service of the CRC, in close cooperation with the CRC's Accountability Focal Group, OHCHR and the present and growing body of experts and agencies/organizations choosing to cooperate and contribute.
- Funding is required to support a program of work.
- Direct and long term supportive relationships with interested and responsible foundations/donors may be both desirable and essential to accountability work and the CRC's overall mission.
- The accountability work here envisioned is comprehensive in nature in comparison with existing initiatives.
- The envisioned accountability program of work should establish short and long term goals and be expected, realistically, to support a developmental process of many stages and plateaus requiring many years.
- A strategy paper is needed to set out the way forward.

Decisions

The following major decisions were made by the participants.

- A 'Global Reference Group' (GRG) on accountability to child rights and well-being should be formed now, to include participants at this meeting and to be expanded by invitations encouraged through this body, to work in close cooperation with the CRC's Accountability Focal Group, and to serve the CRC.
- A program of work should be undertaken that will provide sufficient clarity of status, prospects, promise, needs, and guidance to deserve the attention, cooperation and investment of all concerned with the issues.
- The 2013 CRC Day of General Discussion (2013 DGD) should be proposed to the CRC to be devoted to 'Accountability to Child Rights and Well-Being,' and the GRG should offer to help design, develop, and facilitate the 2013 DGD in close cooperation with the OHCHR, CRC and its Accountability Focal Group.
- The pathway for the way forward will be well served by the adoption and/or construction of an heuristic unifying model, including necessary core constructs, elements and framework possibilities. The GC7 Indicators Group – HELP – model will be used preliminarily to test its possibilities for adaptation toward this application.
- The IICRD will take the role of temporary secretariat, assisted by HELP, for this program of work through its first 2 years of development, and will give particular attention to serving the conclusions and decisions made at this meeting.
- Funding must be sought to underwrite the work of the GRG and its secretariat.
- A report of this meeting is to be presented by the secretariat for review and advice by the GRG, revised as needed, and then sent to all present, the CRC, and the IRC.

Related Actions

- The secretariat has made an official proposal to the CRC for the 2013 DGD.
- Meetings with CRC members in Geneva to discuss the evolving accountability work, with particular attention to the 2013 DGD, are planned for 1, 2, & 3 May, with Philip Cook, Stuart Hart, Lothar Krappmann, and Gerison Lansdown representing the GRG.
- The secretariat has formed a Child Well-Being Task Force to serve the GRG and CRC by developing a brief on the status, promise and way forward to accountability to child well-being. Present members include: Asher Ben-Arieh (International Society for Child Indicators), Scott Huebner (University of South Carolina), Lothar Krappmann (retired member from and liaison with the Committee on the Rights of the Child), Gene Roehlkepartain (Search-Institute), Paul Stephenson (World Vision International), Clyde Hertzman (Human Early Learning Partnership, HELP, University of British Columbia), Ziba Vaghri (HELP), Jeff Bulanda (Aurora University), Bonnie Nastasi (Tulane University), Nancy Erbstein & Jonathon London (University of California - Davis), Philip Cook (International Institute for Child Rights and Development, IICRD, University of Victoria, Canada), and Stuart Hart (IICRD); and an invitation has been sent to Jo Boyden (Young Lives Program). Additional members from the GRG will be welcome. Scott Huebner and Gene Roehlkepartain are developing the draft brief in consultation with the full membership of the Task Force.
- The GC7/GC13 indicators work is incorporating perspectives from the CRC-ATM.

Support Materials: Materials provided by participants for consideration during the meeting will be found attached as addendum items. Please let us know if additions or corrections should be made in this set.

CRC ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICAL MEETING

ADVANCING ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHILD RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING

Part 2: Detailed Report and Narrative in Sequence of the Agenda

Saturday, 11 February 2012

A. Introductions and overview of programme intentions and processes

Jean Zermatten

- Welcome and background on the work of IDE.
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC): stakeholders need to practically and cooperatively apply standards and indicators to monitor, measure and evaluate obligations to fulfill children's rights.
- Tools do not exist in the Convention to measure 'States Party' (SP) implementation, but the CRC uses implicit tools and references to indicators.
- This meeting presents an important opportunity to move forward.

Stuart Hart

Outcomes desired from the meeting:

1. The 2013 CRC Day of General Discussion (DGD) will be devoted to Accountability to Child Rights and Well-Being.
2. A 'Global Reference Group' (GRG) on accountability to child rights and well-being will be formed from and expanded beyond participants in this meeting.
3. Respect and incorporation for ongoing and planned initiatives and programmes of relevance will be embedded in programs of work extending from this meeting.
4. A primary pathway / model for advancing accountability to child rights and well-being should be identified/selected for incorporation and application in this programme.
5. An agreement and sustainable relationship with one or more potential sponsors should be achieved.
6. A secretariat should be established/selected to provide continuing logistical and practical support to this programme of work – responsible to the CRC and GRG.

B. CRC history of establishing and applying standards / indicators of accountability and associated discussion of implications

Lothar Krappmann

- LK's involvement in indicators began following CRC adoption of General Comment (GC) 7. CRC wanted to find out whether anyone pays attention to GCs. Received support from Bernard van Leer Foundation amongst others.
- Early Childhood Committee Jamaica started a dissemination project. It became clear that it is not enough just to read the GCs but they need to be implemented in order to have impact. The implementation must become measurable, hence the need for indicators. This led to the formation of the GC7 Indicator Group. The Indicator Group is hoping that the CRC will accept the outcome of the work and encourage SPs to include information in the preparation of their State Party Reports – which will in turn affect the recommendations issued by the CRC.
- There is a proliferation of indicators, but the issue is quality. The GC7 Indicator Project demonstrates that you first need to define the standards you want to measure in order to pave the way towards indicator construction. Both GCs and indicators are linked to specific Convention articles.
- Many initiatives and stakeholders are not grounded in an understanding of human and child rights approaches. For example, economic approaches to child poverty in Germany are not linked to Convention Art 27.
- There are 5 GCs currently under development by the CRC.
- The CRC Reporting Guidelines refer to a long list of issues to which SPs should refer in their reporting. From the perspective of indicators it is regrettable that the CRC has reduced the detail of the guidelines over the years.
- Concluding Observations: recommendations tend to be very important but very general, with little emphasis on promotion of good care and primary prevention in relation to child protection. Children need the space and opportunity to *enjoy* their rights, not just to be protected from violations. There is a need to base work on the full set of child rights, not to get too focused on particular articles. The CRC would greatly benefit from the development of a consistent framework. There is a need for a coherent framework between human and child rights which is acceptable and comprehensible. SPs need to understand their obligations and that the CRC does not just give 'friendly advice'. Energy and endurance is needed for this work. The goal cannot be achieved by a group of experts who meet once or twice a year. It needs an institutional affiliation, resources and a group of experts.
- LK supports the proposal for a 2013 Day of Discussion (DGD).

Questions and comments:

- JZ: I agree with the key points in LK's presentation. The CRC has focal groups working on different issues. There are 5 people in the Accountability Focal Group (Yanghee Lee, Marta Santos Perez, Agnes Aidoo, Jean Zermatten, Maria Herczog; and soon expected to be enlarged to 7 persons with the addition of Pilar Norres and Sanphasit Koompraphant). There is strong commitment to these issues. More clearly articulated indicators will help SPs to prepare better reports.
The CRC receives lots of requests and suggestions for potential DGDs and will discuss the 2013 DoD in May / Sept 2012. The Focal Group will advocate for this but there is no guarantee at this stage.
- MW: The key issue is how to manage the balance between detailed, summative and proxy indicators: to keep information manageable yet useful and of good quality. There is already a huge burden on SPs for reporting and the potential for hundreds of indicators.
- GL: Note the importance of integration and cross-linking / recognising the inter-linkages between different clusters of indicators, for example disability, early years and the right to play. Indicator development can't be done on a piecemeal basis. There is a need for collaboration to ensure consistency of language and to do this at the same time, across the board.
- EE: Who is going to measure these things? What purpose will they really serve? Who will use them, for what? What kind of indicators for what purpose? Can we have very clear definitions as to what we are working towards and distinctions between different types of indicators? The audience needs to be clear.
- SB: Reporting Guidelines on the Convention and Optional Protocols: Did LK feel that indicators were overlooked or that, if indicators were better articulated, this would provide better information? [LK to respond later]
- CH: Data collection exercises may be able to do multiple functions. Every time a new set of indicators comes along it divides people's focus and causes pollution. An indicator set for the CRC is a question that they have a right to ask. The question is how we can create banks of questions which identify existing data sources. The use of proxy indicators and adaptation of existing indicators should be considered.
- NF: Indicators are one element of a larger system for strengthening accountability. They are a tool that can be a bridge between the 'human rights' and 'development' communities.
- IC: World Vision (WV) went through the process of cutting down a huge number of indicators in the need to articulate something navigable and practical. They developed five criteria to which indicators had to apply. Identifying a hierarchy proved very controversial. Once you start unpacking an issue, you identify the

assumptions of researchers. What will this look like? One indicator per Convention article? Should there be some kind of choice for different contexts? The selection process needs to be made simple. Three criteria were found to be very useful in WV relating to ownership and incentive: i.e. indicators which are useful for both the CRC and the actual country:

1. Allow countries to select indicators according to their own strategy;
 2. Indicators must be appropriate for their own context;
 3. Indicators must be relevant for the work they're actually doing.
- MH: Are there opportunities for developing composite indicators?
 - MS: Prioritisation and hierarchy is extremely important to avoid adding to the 'pollution'. People on the ground shouldn't feel that they are helping the CRC but that they are doing something useful for themselves which also happens to help the CRC. It can't be done in isolation. We need to have a core set which everyone can rally around and then optional additional indicators.
 - AA: The CRC is an instrument, not an end in itself. The work of the CRC is a way to ensure children are enjoying their rights. I agree with LK that we have not given enough attention to rights-based and strengths-based accountability. The child as a rights-holder is not coming through in our recommendations. We are so focused on marginalised children. The CRC needs to refine their recommendations and giving advice about the essence of SP obligations: what is really essential to be delivered by a SP. There is a great deal of scope to be very specific and concrete depending on the stage of development and context of a particular country. Some kinds of standards are required to allow for a step by step approach by SPs.
 - ABA: We need to talk about knowledge rather than thinking that indicators are an end in themselves. Indicators are a tool to monitor what's going on. I don't think that we could use existing indicators to develop composite indicators. We also need to look at what children themselves need and want.
 - RKM: Governments have to want to do this. We need to create an accountability system which moves governments to want to do something for children, otherwise they will find ways to circumvent what we want them to do. We are constantly funding small community projects and struggling with the questions: Why aren't things getting better? What do we want to see for our children and how can we build a system around that?

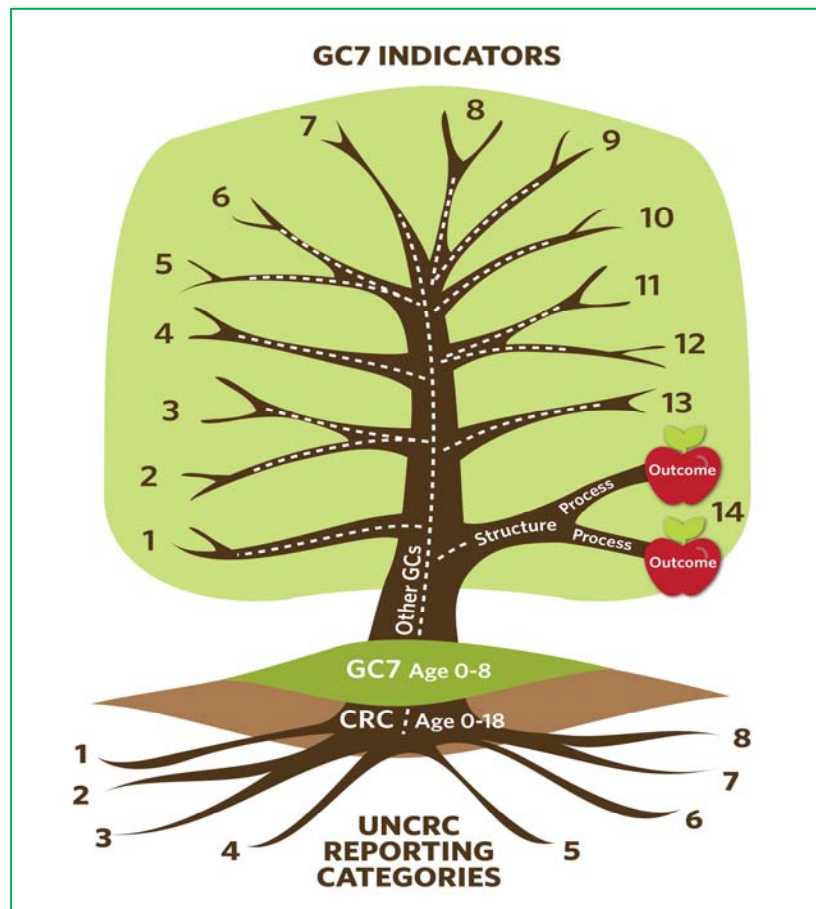
C. Context of needs, opportunities, relationships and supports

Philip Cook - background

- Discussions took place 4 years ago in Whistler, Canada on monitoring and evaluation in relation to child rights. There was interest in serving the CRC but also in linking disparate initiatives. This process initiated a line of enquiry focusing on GCs, both as identifying specific Convention issues, but also bringing bottom-up work to the attention of the CRC. For example, the GCs can be used to identify evidence and strengthen approaches and they have the potential to frame the gathering and measuring of information that speaks to children's own lived experiences.
- 2010 UNICEF NY hosted a meeting of the International Standards Council which involved a lot of discussion on how the UN Study on Violence Against Children (VAC Study) could be brought to bear on bottom-up / top-down dynamics.
- What is the role of SP reports in facilitating how governments can compare their experience with that of other governments? There are important regional initiatives underway to compare progress on children's rights which are deemed to be more useful than 'international' comparisons of vastly different countries such as, for example, Norway and Indonesia.
- It would be interesting to look at the accountability approaches being used in relation to CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPD).
- There is interest in information on children's well-being. A focus on gaps and deficits needs to be balanced with a longer term focus on assets and a strengths-based approach (as championed by the SEARCH Institute). We need to bring in inter-agency discussions.
- There is a lot of discussion about 'reporting fatigue' and the lack of SP desire to take children's rights seriously. We need to link child rights more strategically to development more broadly, for example making links to social policy, social protection, social well-being and the reformulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- It is important not to take a 'tick-box' approach towards indicators for children, and to emphasise correlational approaches: not only how specific indicators relate to children's lives, but how indicators relate to each other, especially in light of the equity approach.
- How can we better understand the legislative environment? Work on accountability is weak on outcomes and children's own lived experience, for example how their lives are changed or not by a focus on the Convention.
- IICRD is looking at children developing their own indicators on protection.

Clyde Hertzman - 'Building on the GC7 Monitoring Protocol'

- In January 2006 the GC7 Indicators Group was established: HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership), CRC, UNICEF, WHO, ICC, CGECCD, SOS-Kinderdorf International, Aga Khan Foundation (supported by Bernard van Leer Foundation).
- A draft electronic version of GC7 indicators was developed and passed to the CRC in May 2008.
- Pilot tests were conducted in Tanzania and Chile on the draft indicators which were then refined.
- It provides a comprehensive system of accountability to child rights in early years.



- GC7 has 15 indicator clusters [based on Convention reporting clusters] and over 100 questions:
 - General measures of implementation
 - Civil rights and freedoms

- Family environment and alternative care
- Basic health and welfare
- Education, leisure and cultural activities
- Special protection measures
- There are three types of indicators relating to:
 - Structure: respecting rights [mandates, laws, regulation, and ...]
 - Process: Protecting and promoting rights [mechanisms, capacity building, interventions, services, ...]
 - Outcome: Fulfilling rights [particularly child outcomes];
- The project has provided a bridge between focusing not only on outcomes, but also on promoting a rights-based process to encourage stakeholder engagement, ownership and cooperation.
- Flowcharts have been developed based on compliance: is something in place? Yes/No etc. If 'yes', then provide evidence. If 'no', the tool gives suggestions and examples of international programmes, with web links, to stimulate the cross-fertilisation of ideas. The tool maps out overall how many 'yeses' and 'nos' are in the system and advises on how to transform 'nos' into 'yeses'.
- Pilots in Tanzania and Chile - achievements to date:
 - It can be implemented in low and middle income countries: inter-sectoral teams from different ministries worked with civil society organisations to generate the information.
 - Ambiguous questions have been addressed: questions are now much clearer.
 - Skip patterns have been introduced to account for different levels of development. For example, a country can 'skip over' detailed questions on birth registration, but they still need to provide evidence to justify this 'skip'.
 - It is possible to draw on information from a wide range of sources: 281 documentary sources were cited in Chile, e.g. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). It is not in conflict with other initiatives but draws on relevant documentation.
 - The process can help build inter-sectoral consciousness. Inter-sectoral teams establish for the GC7 project are turning into permanent working groups.
 - It is important to capitalise on the benefits of technology. An automated electronic version of the tool is available in English and Spanish which provides a colour-coded 'mapping' summary (called a 'heat map') of compliance with the indicators, but which also allows for 'digging down' into questions for more detail. Subsequent 'heat maps' (colour coded aggregated data sets made for easy comparison) could be overlapped to analyse positive and negative change over a period of time.

- Next steps:
 - Finalise GC7 revisions and the peer review;
 - CRC to consider incorporating it into Convention reporting guidelines;
 - Build in enhancement of indicators on GC13 for children aged 0-8 and pilot this in Colombia (already in progress);
 - Carry out a 'rich country' pilot and how it could be adapted to federal / de-centralised countries;
 - Expand the availability in different languages;
 - Expand the scope to apply to children aged 0-18.

Questions and comments:

- AR: What are the differences between Tanzania and Chile: is there a value in comparing the two?
 - CH: The capacity to compare countries exists. However, we should be trying to encourage countries to progress along their own trajectory rather than engage in cross-country comparison.
- SB: Budget and investments: where is the analysis of the bottlenecks to 'no' answers, for example why there is no birth registration?
 - CH: We have managed to get funding largely from non-traditional sources. It is better to get country stakeholders to discuss the bottle-necks in their inter-sectoral working group.
- NF: Who is saying 'yes' and who is saying 'no' to compliance with these indicators? How can you arrive at indicators which do not create controversy? How do you see this tool being used in developed countries?
 - CH: The primary idea was to produce a reporting tool for SPs but also encouraging collaboration with civil society. It is not clear that it could or should stop being an adversarial process. The issue is less about the number of 'yeses' and 'nos' and more about gathering valid information in relation to the questions. There are relatively few countries that can truly say they have fully achieved the goal. There is always room for improvement.
- ABA: Who decides on the questions? What do you do when there is no consensus on questions within an inter-sectoral group? Have children's perspectives been considered? Who reports back on the questions? Do you report on the legal situation? On the status of children? On the relative budget invested?
 - CH: Between January 2006 and May 2008 the group generated a first set of questions. All questions can be anchored in GC7 and the Convention. There are questions that deal with budget, legislation etc. Teams have managed to muddle through and come up with something.
 - ZV: A critical step is to select the right task force. Arriving at consensus and assessing information then comes more easily.

- GM: Looking at consolidated data and pulling it apart, you will not find more than what individuals already know. The Convention contains ideas which are much more advanced than almost any country has formulated in its child policy, but which are nonetheless not beyond the capacity of individuals to comprehend. What are societies learning about what they can do differently? It requires an approach which goes above and beyond measuring specific issues. A systems-building approach is not reducible to statistical prediction. For example, key recurring issues are whether or not you can judge an individual case on the basis of group data. I don't think correlation gets you very far in all this, especially in relation to 'what moves the needle'.
 - CH: The process is all-important and has led to the creation of new policy coalitions and discussions which did not exist previously. We need to look at what indicators can do rather than what they can't do. We will never get the perfect measure of 'dignity' but looking at data on incidence of (e.g.) physical abuse can still be assumed to correlate.
- ABA: The starting point on which questions to ask can often result in a wrong starting point and 'getting off on the wrong foot'. Who decides what is important to measure in the first place?
- AM: I like the presentation and aspects of process. Within the pilot countries, what level of input was required? Is it sustainable?
- RF: Chile and Tanzania participated in the pilot but have not yet linked it to Convention reporting (they presented reports in 2006 and 2007). How can we get SPs to buy into it and see it as integral to the reporting process? We want to avoid cross-country comparison. How can it be used in states where civil society is not even able to operate?
- MS: How is 'ownership' sustained after the pilot phase? It is a highly complex and expensive exercise. We should look at similar initiatives.
- LK: The green, yellow and red areas of the heat map help us to find relevant documents. We are not looking for indicators for child development in general. Standards are already outlined in the Convention. We just need tools to help us assess progress.
- MW: What is the interplay of this with other indicators? Will it not become a forest of trees? Is there a danger that the 'leaves' (such as child protection) fall off and become seeds which result in a new tree? What time is needed to collect data? How often should it be repeated? Will it take 3 months each time? What kind of capacity building is required to enable stakeholders to use the tools? How does this type of 'heat mapping' relate to the need to 'avoid the tick-box approach'? How does this relate to GL's comment that we have to do it all at the same time: isn't this still piecemeal?

D. Group work

a. What is the scope of major accountability issues (e.g. meanings, value, themes, components) -- facilitated by CK

Summary of group discussion:

- There are general concerns around proliferation, burden on SPs, what kind of information is required to be collected, etc. We need clear parameters and to put indicators in context.
- The main goal is to support the reporting process within the parameters of the Convention and the work of the CRC. 3 main purposes:
 1. For SPs – facilitating constructive discussion within the country;
 2. For CRC – getting more harmonised, consistent information;
 3. For children and communities: capacity building as rights-holders.
- Questions are used as a catalyst for further discussion.
- Prioritisation: maybe some articles already have more established indicators. The process must bring value to the SP, even if they feel uncomfortable, and bring about meaningful change and improvement in children’s lives on the ground.
- Should there be many tools, or one tool with many aspects?
- The group ended up agreeing that we want something that can stimulate discussion and incentivise people. The process can be more important than outcomes and actual data generated, allowing and stimulating people to understand what is most important. Comprehensive measurement places an emphasis on critical self-engagement.
- We recognise that we may need multiple ways of stimulating this process: empirical tools and also a ‘narrative’ for self-reflection. How do we find tools that allow people to explain things that are important for children’s rights?
- How do we prioritise issues given that rights are indivisible and we want to avoid ‘siloes’?
- How do we deal with collective rights (e.g. for indigenous children) versus the ‘usual’ concentration on individual rights?

Questions and comments:

- MW: The importance of the process is noted (e.g. the creation of steering groups and task forces), but the issue is how to make them sustainable, given personnel and political turnover - and the challenging issue of children’s participation. How can we get a process to incentivise people? How can we link this to formal reporting process? Can the CRC be seen as an umbrella to incentivise SPs?

- EE: It is not because of the quality of evidence that we ask governments to report but because we want them to engage with the issues.
- ZV: It is the engagement of country personnel that keeps things sustainable.
- CH: The Convention is a mixture of procedural and substantive rights. We want to tie the reporting process together with a change of consciousness.
- AR: Every country faces different problems and bottlenecks. Can we develop indicators that address these bottlenecks?
- GM: What is the role of accounting as part of accountability? For example, there has been public uproar in the USA about perceptions that aid money is not being spent for the purposes for which it was given.
- SB: This can focus attention on 'counting crates in warehouses' rather than looking at the 'real' issues of child protection.
- LE: Can electronic software help provide information directly for SPs?
- ZV: GC7 covers only age 0-8. Chile's next report is due sometime soon and they may be using this.
- NF: There is confusion around understanding of the term 'indicator': we are referring to possible 'questions' that the CRC could ask rather than actual 'indicators' as a base for statistical information. We need clarity on what people understand as 'indicators'.

b. What are the characteristics, progress, and promise of existing accountability programmes (e.g. models, instruments, contributions) – facilitated by ABA

Summary of group discussion:

- Group participants summarised existing initiatives they are involved in.
- [GC7 – see above]
- IC: **WV accountability framework** is a system which ensures that all WV baseline and other data collections provide feedback to children and communities themselves. It includes participatory tools for gathering children's views, emphasises the importance of visual images and includes a complaints mechanism with children's ideas taken into consideration. Children respond positively to the process: when they see the results of small complaints being taken seriously, their confidence and trust is built, leading them to confide more serious complaints.
- GL: **Save the Children, UNICEF, Plan, WV: GC12 pilot in 15 countries**, monitoring and evaluation of child participation as both a process and an objective:

- **Part 1:** 5 clusters of benchmarks were developed to measure child participation in the environment. They were drawn partly from GC12 but were also based on research done with children. The benchmarks include matrices. They could be reconceptualised around the three types of indicators highlighted by the GC7 Indicator Group (structure, process and outcomes).
- **Part 2:** A framework was developed to measure the quality and nature of child participation itself, for example in programme cycle management. The framework is accompanied by detailed tools on how to gather data. Countries have submitted plans. A piloting of the materials started in January 2012 for an 18 month period.
- **AR: UNESCO – Inter-Agency Holistic Early Childhood Development Index** (for children aged 0-8). UNESCO is collaborating with working groups to develop indicators and is hoping to pilot it in the summer of 2012. It is possible that the same indicators (such as those developed for GC7) could be used for different frameworks and analyses.
- **SB: UNICEF –**
 - **‘MORE: Monitoring of Results for Equity’** Level 1: Country situation analysis; Level 2: Identifying data sources and prevalent deprivations; Level 3: Implementation monitoring [what is in place to determine impact and ‘bottlenecks’]: linked to Monitoring Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).
 - **CP MERG: Monitoring and evaluation on child protection:** academic advisers are absent and there is no money available so it hasn’t really taken off yet as an initiative.
- **ABA:** Trying to collect information on children’s subjective well-being or ‘a good life for children’. There is an international project for children aged 8, 10 and 12 being piloted in 6 languages across 10 countries including Romania, Turkey, UK, Israel, Catalonia, Nepal, Brazil, Canada and others. There is also an opinion poll undertaken by children themselves every two years in Germany.
- **GM: Private companies:** Gallup is doing data collection in many countries around happiness and well-being, for example, ‘How satisfied are you with life?’ – linked to other things happening in their lives.
- **NF: OHCHR work on indicators** using the ‘structure’, ‘process’ and ‘outcomes’ framework. The work was initiated in 2004-2005 at the request of all treaty bodies. It consists of a conceptual and methodological framework and there is an emphasis on structural indicators which are simple for governments to use. However, it is not a prescriptive list: the process is all-important. We need to look at multiple sources of information and to ask questions of the main duty-

bearers (governments) as well as civil society organisations. OHCHR is in the process of editing the guide and trying to link the indicators with recommendations coming from the treaty bodies.

- **MS:** International framework on maternal and newborn health.
- **Other initiatives and issues mentioned:**
 - Mechanisms dealing with personal complaints / rights violations
 - Importance of a mutual relationship with communities
 - Benchmarks / outcomes
 - Child participation as a mechanism for accountability – bringing children into the process [democracy as a mechanism of accountability]
 - ‘Index’
 - League tables between and within countries: subject of a big discussion in the international community. UNICEF has stopped doing this and donors are not interested in cross-country comparison.
 - Opinion polls
 - Subjective studies of well-being
 - Value of visual summaries (heat maps, spidergrams etc.)

Questions and comments:

- **ABA:** Most people don’t see the Convention as broadly as we do. They see it as a narrow, legal document. As a personal opinion, existing benchmarks are too low and are not aspirational enough. Accountability around children’s health and survival is relatively good, for example infant mortality, as these things are easier to measure.
- **AR:** We may need to have many ways to measure the same indicator.
- **IC:** We should not underestimate the transformational effect of feeding back findings to children and communities and the contribution this makes to raising consciousness and engaging people from the bottom up.
- **MW:** It seems that there are many ‘indicator / accountability trees’ out there, each nurtured and tended by groups who have an interest in continuing in their own silo rather than cutting down or pruning their own tree. What does this mean for the way forward for this group and this initiative?
- **JZ:** The OHCHR initiative is a large tree in the forest.
- **SH:** To continue the metaphor, an Aspen forest is actually one plant: it is all interconnected.
- **ZV:** There is not a forest of trees, but a forest of branches and leaves which need to be put together into one tree which is clearer and more ‘fruitful’.
- **EE:** How much is the CRC going to take on in this initiative? Are we really trying to address everything from SP accountability right down to community level for

the whole Convention? What is the added value of this group? What can we do that will really make a difference for the Convention?

- MS: In relation to maternal and newborn child health, the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (2011) developed a framework for accountability made of 3 components (involving Paul Hunt, the former Special Representative on Health):
 1. Monitoring
 2. Review
 3. Redress / remedies

The three components are useful as 'accountability' is not just about monitoring, indicators and tracking results. It is important not to forget about 'redress' and 'remedies', although they can be very controversial. The accountability framework led to 10 recommendations for global and country action and an independent review group for international oversight has been established. We hope to see the adoption of indicators which go beyond the usual disaggregation of data. We would like to see international treaty monitoring bodies becoming a part of this initiative but it requires some very careful coordination. There are many definitions of accountability floating around. This group in particular would have to look at this in detail.

- EE: WHO already seems to have good indicators on health: why does the CRC need to add anything?
- GL: These indicators are very clinical. We know that, for example, infant mortality is the result of gender inequalities, early marriage, poverty etc.
- MS: At national level, workshops will have to address societal issues in depth: it was decided not to articulate these as high level indicators as there would have been too many issues.
- CH: If we focus on reporting to the CRC, there needs to be a distinction between issues where SPs should be 'held accountable' and issues which require a more 'constructive' capacity building approach. For example, if there is not a system in place to deliver responses to problems which are deeply-rooted in social-cultural issues then a name-and-blame 'accountability' approach may not be useful.

c. Can and should an assets / strengths model have a central position in accountability work? – facilitated by GR

Summary of group discussion:

Four major themes emerged from the group's discussion, which fully answered "yes" to the question of whether assets/strengths models could play a role in CRC accountability work.

1. **The alignment of the underlying philosophy.** Strengths and vulnerabilities co-exist in the lives of children (and in each country, society, and culture). The strengths-challenges debate is not an either/or question in daily life. Integrating an assets perspective begins to frame the lives of young people in a more balanced and accurate way. In addition, when we talk with young people, we find that they most want to talk about their strengths, assets, and sense of hope/promise. Finally, research clearly shows the power of nurturing strengths as a critical resource for addressing vulnerabilities (a core assumption of resilience research).
2. **Alignment between the Convention and strengths/assets.** A strengths perspective emphasizes the dignity, worth, and value of all, highlighting their contributions, not just their vulnerabilities. It keeps the ultimate goal of the Convention in mind: The well-being and dignity of all children, as reflected in the preface of Convention. It sets an aspirational vision for the Convention, not a minimum threshold. It also invites a shift from “having” and “protecting” rights to “enjoying” rights. By integrated strength-based measures into Convention accountability, we have the opportunity to motivate positive change as leaders are most likely to focus on what they measure.
3. **A focus on strengths is a strategic opportunity for Convention Accountability.** Leaders in strength-based and asset-based work have found that a strengths perspective opens the door for constructive, positive engagement with parties, building trust and momentum. Though crisis can spur initial action, it is less clear that it sustains change. A strengths perspective also gives states parties an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the resources they have for children that can be leveraged to meet their Convention goals, rather than focusing only on the gaps and lack of resources, which can lead to inaction.
4. **There are, of course, important challenges to integrating a strengths/assets perspective.** Often it is easier to think about, articulate, and measure what is wrong. On the surface, a strengths perspective can be seen as ignoring the risks and vulnerabilities. It can also lead to over-celebrating minimal progress, creating an acceptance of mediocrity. In addition, the accountability framework must clearly protect children’s rights as a baseline. That’s what we can most easily hold States accountable for. It is much more challenging to hold States accountable for “enjoying” rights, an aspirational goal. These issues, though salient, were not, in the view of those in the discussion, insurmountable. Rather, they call for thoughtful strategies that address the concerns effectively.
 - Children themselves often want to talk about strengths.
 - Vulnerability and strength co-exist everywhere.
 - How does this fit with the Convention?
 - How do we ‘enjoy’ rights?

- How can we emphasise the dignity of all, not only of children but also in communities and in systems which are struggling?
- Are we holding people accountable to the bare minimum or to the aspirational?
- What is the strategic value of integrating strengths? We've tended to think that 'crisis motivates', but we are not sure that 'crisis sustains'. It is always easier to name what's wrong. However, a strengths-based approach opens people up to build a relationship of trust. It results in a tendency to lean forward rather than push back and there is value in that alone. It also automatically identifies resources available in a community or country. It demands that you deal with the whole ecology.
- There are points of energy in some existing work, for example research on subjective and collective well-being, research on well-being in relation to child protection and a focus on assets and capabilities.

Questions and comments:

- AR: Are we talking about strengths of systems or of individual children? [Both]
- SH: We should focus on what should be promoted rather than what should be prohibited. This was the essence of discussion during the development of GC13.
- EE: We have a lot of indicators, but what I really want to hear about is the best interests of the child and the child's well-being. Specialists tend to focus on their own area and things around the edges get woolly, for example WHO has a technical focus on health. Should the CRC be getting a grip on the best interests of the child and let the specialists deal with everything else?
- SB: Things are not left out by accident but deliberately because they are more complex and political (e.g. WHO indicators not looking at issues in the 'bigger picture').
- GL: The Convention is about legal and many other entitlements of rights, not just about the best interests of the child. Why are governments not doing it? If you have a deficit-based approach you can blame the individuals and their families (for example in juvenile justice) whereas a strengths-based approach places a greater emphasis on government and systems.
- ABA: It takes time. We need more consideration of this.
- AR: Child development literature tends to be based on a homogenous group of studies in the developed world. There is a need for sustained research alongside the development of indicators.
- LK: Convention preamble stresses well-being. SPs have to create and construct conditions which lead children closer to these goals. SPs are not responsible for the happiness of the child but for the conditions which create or make this possible.

d. What is the optimum relationship between proxy/summative universal indicators and developmental/formative indicators for framing and operationalizing accountability? – facilitated by CH

Summary of group discussion:

3 key points:

1. If you understand proxy indicators to be an indicator that can be unpacked to reveal underlying constructs, it would very worthwhile to identify valid proxy indicators accompanied by guidance on how to dig down further.
2. We have to view the blossoming global work on indicators as our friend rather than as our enemy: there is probably more information out there than we realise.
3. Proxy indicators are likely to be temporary and subject to change as the evidence base increases. Is it possible to provide a pathway to show links between previous, current and future indicators to ensure longitudinal continuity?

Questions and comments:

- GL: A proxy indicator is the collection of one piece of information which stands for people's lives more generally. For example, maternal mortality and infant mortality are extremely good proxy indicators, but it is difficult to articulate good proxy indicators for education, protection and participation. The challenge is to construct key proxy indicators which give a clear overall picture, yet which provide the opportunity to collect more detailed information as necessary. What would be two indicators for child participation which would reveal an overall picture, yet behind which would be a whole set of indicators and benchmarks?
- EE: There is a difference between a high level indicator which is difficult to measure (e.g. all children's rights are respected in juvenile justice systems) and a 'proxy' indicator which can be accurately and easily measured, which reveals a picture but which can lead to unpacking and more in-depth analysis.
- CK: 'Proxy' means something that stands in for something else because you can't measure the original thing that you want.
- CH: If there were a way to identify these proxy indicators, is that something that everyone would get behind, i.e. identifying a valid proxy with a system of downward unpacking / the possibility of unpacking it down to deeper level?
- ABA: A proxy indicator needs an evidentiary base to show the correlation between the proxy and the other indicators. The exercise would be very useful.
- AR: If you want to use it to get people to do something, then infant mortality is not a great example as it takes so long to change.

- EE: We need to be clear at what level the indicators are aimed and be very clear with guidance. For example, 'the top 10 things which impact on infant mortality' to allow people to unpack it in more detail and to have a scale of accountability.
- CK: Yes, it would be useful as people will find it more manageable to work with a smaller number of indicators. There is a lot of interest in the 'qualitative' experience of improving children's lives, i.e. quality of life.
- ABA: Any list will never be the perfect list – it will always be a compromise. People with different agendas will use other proxy indicators. We need to move away from a binary approach. It is a process that will take time. For example, the Body Mass Indicator (BMI) is now increasingly being used along with infant mortality.
- CH: We need to be clear about moving towards a goal over time versus simply accumulating more indicators as we go along.
- ABA: We could map out the Convention rights to which there are already good indicators ('List A'), then 'List B' where there is agreement on the principle or concept at stake, but not the actual indicator and finally 'List C' where there is not even agreement on the principle or concept at stake.
- RF: The CRC is part of a bigger process of procedural discussion. Their working methods are more limited than we are implying. Harmonised reporting guidelines exist. It is not compulsory for SPs to come to Geneva: they choose to do so. The CRC has dialogue with some of the most difficult states in the world, unlike other bodies and we can't afford to lose this. We need to work within their procedural framework (i.e. list of issues, SP reports, Conc Obs, GCs, DGDs).
- LK: On the other hand, the guidelines still have a statistical annex: SPs are asked a lot of statistics. In the list of issues there are clear indications and requests for specific information.
- MH: The approach can be strengths-based rather than deficit-based.
- GL: We need to make sure we get the right indicators, for example, in juvenile justice the minimum age of criminal responsibility is a frequently used but very poor indicator.
- EE: We need to have an evidence base. What is a useful, high level proxy indicator? Put the money into the research to find those proxy indicators.
- LK: The CRC does not ask SPs to supply indicators: the CRC members look them up themselves and the secretariat supplies some others. It is useful to get a good overview, but it can still be misleading. We need to make it very clear which additional indicators we ask for. SPs are already overburdened. We need carefully selected indicators closely linked to Convention articles.
- ABA: What would be the indicator for good development? We can more easily measure what is harmful to development.

- CH: EDI in Canada, Australia and one province in Mexico can produce evidence on holistic child development (physical, emotional, cognitive, language and communication).
 - MW: How can we produce the evidence base to determine a truly proximal indicator? What about organisations which have invested a lot of time and resources in indicators which are not great (for example UNODC and UNICEF's juvenile justice indicators)?
 - CH: We can't be stopped by assuming that something will not be culturally applicable.
 - AM: We probably need to accept that it will take 5, 10 or 20 years but we need to have a concerted research effort towards getting evidence to develop a particular indicator.
 - CH: The Cochrane initiative for structured literature reviews which exists in the health sector does not exist for us.
 - AR: We need longitudinal studies to see the impact of indicators – e.g. post-partum depression.
 - MW: What is the hypothetical pathway? To develop a partial list now or to wait 20 years?
 - AM: Not necessarily 'wait' but 'proactively 'make happen'.
 - GL: We should do the best we can now and push forward simultaneously the research agenda.
- e. What must be done to ensure accountability is applied in practical ways on the ground to the advantage of child rights and well-being? – Who facilitated this group?**

Summary of group discussion:

3 key points:

1. It is of critical importance to do a good job of measuring subjective and objective well-being using subjective information from the child and objective indicators from peers, parents, schools, the environment and faith community etc.
2. We need good feedback loops: when we gather data at community level, the information must go back to that level.
3. We need to develop or magnify and expand our system of incentives for something to happen on the ground. There need to be reasons for SPs to invest in it.

f. How can top-down and bottom-up approaches inform one-another to optimise relationships between universal and culture/context specific values and standards? – facilitated by PC

Summary of group discussion:

3 key points:

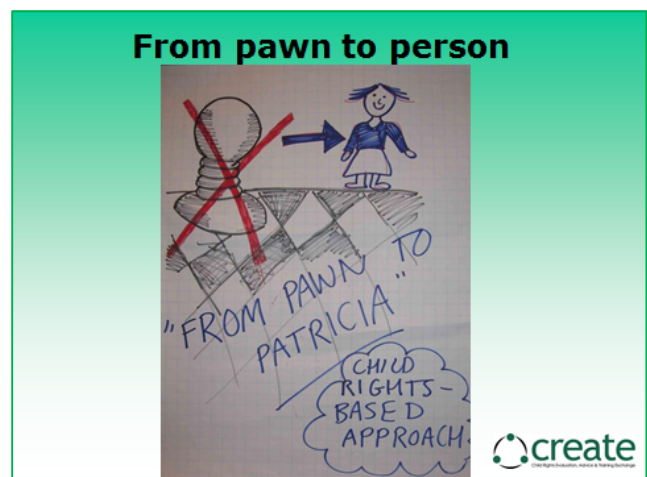
1. How do we better understand the bottom-up approach and children's lived experiences? Outcome level indicators are probably the weakest. There is an understanding that it is expensive and difficult. Are we moving away from engaging with children due to the expense and difficult methodological issues? UNICEF is citing longitudinal studies with serious child protection methodological issues.
2. We need to look more generally at children's everyday experiences. We could look at retrospective perspectives from adults on how childhood has changed.
3. Where do opportunities exist to make links with women's rights, for example the work on linking CEDAW to community level? Where is the emphasis on the 'remedy' aspect as highlighted by WHO? UNICEF is engaged in a 33-country study on child protection system strengthening. IICRD is looking at decentralisation of power in federal systems, the opportunities this raises at municipal level and how these opportunities get fed up into national policy level. It is important to take into consideration regional approaches which provide the opportunity to bring the CRC Concluding Observations into further discussion between countries which are on more of a 'peer' level.

Sunday 12 February 2012

E. Report and consideration of the first day highlights, findings and implications

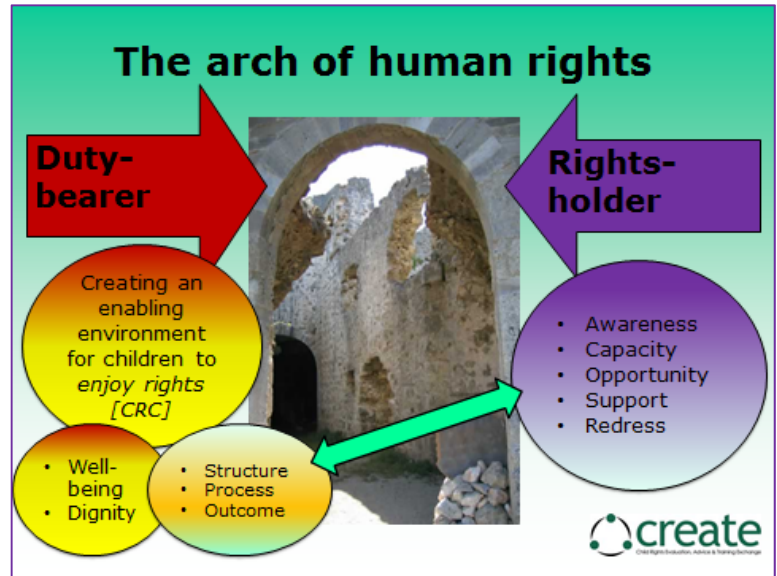
Marie Wernham

- What is new and different about what we are trying to achieve? We are not only addressing accountability in relation to the Convention but what it looks like to apply a *child rights approach* to the process.
- What does the child rights approach look like? Treating children as human

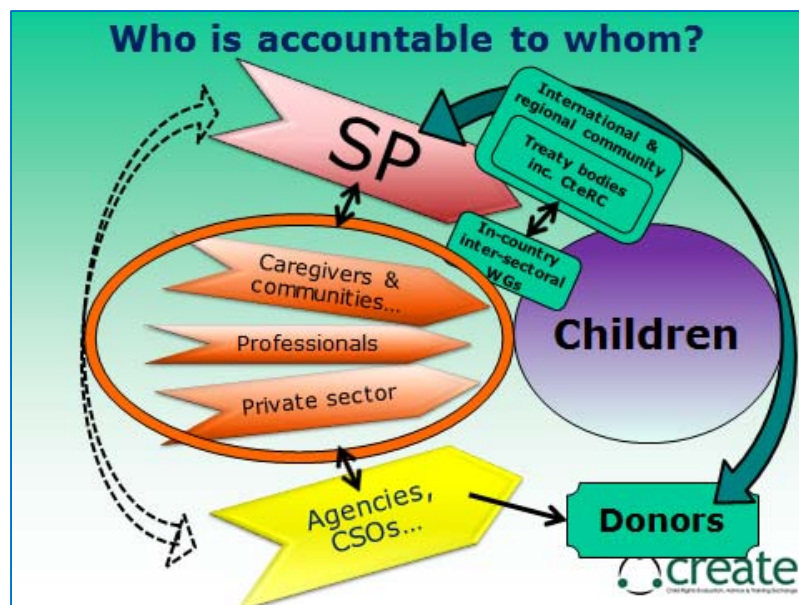


beings rather than objects; treating them with respect and dignity – how we ourselves would want to be treated.

- We need to build capacity on both sides of the ‘human rights arch’: for duty-bearers and rights-holders. In relation to accountability this means supporting duty-bearers to create an enabling environment for children to *enjoy rights* in a positive, holistic way ensuring their well-being and dignity – not just to be protected against negative violations of their rights. Indicators for structure, process and outcomes can help to measure duty-bearers’ progress towards this goal. On the other side of the arch, children (as rights-holders) need to be supported to ensure awareness of their rights and that they have the capacity and opportunity to claim them. Mechanisms for redress are an important part of this process.



- What do we mean by ‘accountability’? ‘Accountability’ to whom? [Revised diagram based on group discussion] Participants pointed out that there may be both thick and thin ends to each arrow.



- Participants shared where their existing work / initiatives / models fit into this diagram to show the 'level' of accountability at which they are working.
- The group discussed mechanisms for:
 - Monitoring
 - Review
 - Redress
- We must remember that 'children' are not a homogenous group. There are vast differences in age (0-18), experience and individual resilience and risk factors. What does a 'Convention-happy child' look like (i.e. one who has experienced optimal child-rearing in a rights-respecting family, community and state)? What does a 'Convention-sad child' look like (i.e. one who has not experienced this)? What does a 'Convention-medium child' look like (i.e. one who is in between these two stages)?
- Key questions were raised in relation to data collection for monitoring and evaluation / accountability:
 - What are the key questions?
 - Who is asking them?
 - Where is the discourse taking place?
 - How can we be more strategic about collecting and sharing data?

Comments and questions:

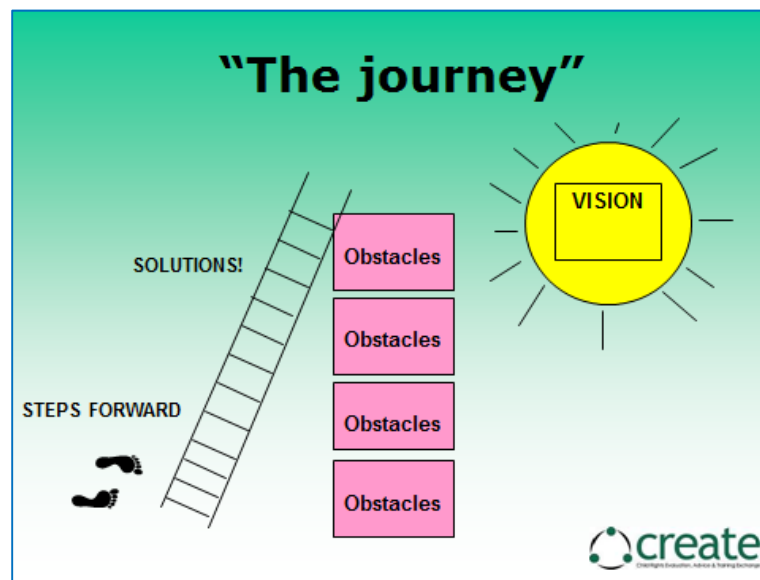
- SH: We are calling for accountability to a shared, respected set of proxy indicators which are sufficiently clear and manageable (whilst respecting people's existing and more detailed indicators).
- AM: How many SPs would recognise this accountability model? The whole thing is about governments: we talk about government issues but don't term them in government terms. How decisions are made and resources are allocated is all about how governments function and public sector reform. The 'elephant in the room' is corruption but there are not many agencies working on this. How are we leveraging the UN and World Bank country teams?
- GL: Governments are accountable to other constituencies which may conflict with the child rights agenda: child rights can be a 'hard sell' politically.
- GM: The Convention is a constitutional document, not a code. The effectiveness of legislation assumes linear cause and effect. The idea of philanthropy as being creative and flexible is being undermined. There is an increasing emphasis on 'accounting' and not 'accountability'.
- MW: We need to clarify whether we are talking about legal, moral or financial accountability – or all three.
- MH: There is a notion that we understand the level of responsibility between SPs and caregivers (i.e. that caregivers bear the main responsibility, supported by

SPs), but SPs themselves can be unclear on this issue. The best interests of the country are automatically served by a focus on the best interests of the child. Lack of resources is often used as an excuse for lack of accountability by agencies and professionals.

- MS: The determination of how the MDGs should be followed up represents a missed opportunity. The CRC can play a role in pushing, but it needs to be supported by the UN family at global and regional levels.
- AA: What happens post-MDGs will be a negotiation with competing priorities and the bulk of country efforts focused on ‘youth’ aged 15-24 or even up to age 35 (given issues of voting, security, unemployment and that fact that this is a very vocal group). We need to ensure that a focus on children aged 0-18 is included in indicators and proposals.
- GL: The child rights community has failed to build links with other human rights communities such as women’s rights and rights for people with disabilities.

F. Priority setting for short and long term advances

Participants took part in an individual visual exercise to articulate their own ‘vision’ for ‘accountability’, the steps forward which have already been taken towards this goal, the obstacles and solutions to these obstacles.



Many participants expressed a vision of practical tools for the Convention and CRC, for example:

- A set of limited proxy indicators for the Convention, capturing the essence of each Convention article for children;
- A series of questions for the CRC to ask in order to stimulate discussion with SPs;

- A tool for the CRC to review progress on particular issues (and include the opportunity to add additional issues which might arise), e.g. visual summaries of Concluding Observations;
- More detailed tools for use at community level.

Participants posed the question as to whether we are aiming for tools more for the CRC reporting process rather than for measuring actual implementation of the Convention, or whether these things go hand in hand.

G. Design of strategies and expectations for contributions for next steps

The group discussed the six expected outcomes of the meeting:

1. 2013 Day of General Discussion
2. Primary pathway
3. Global Reference Group
4. Respect for ongoing initiatives
5. Potential sponsors
6. Secretariat

1. 2013 Day of General Discussion (DGD):

- RF: In terms of process, a proposal must be submitted to the CRC who will then have an internal discussion on if and when the day will take place. The CRC drafts its own concept note on the main topics and structure of the day. The DGD goes live as a public event: diplomats can walk in and out and there is therefore a need for some sensitivity.
- LE: The CRC will be supported by OHCHR and the NGO Group for the CRC.
- ABA: Is the DGD the main goal? We shouldn't put all our eggs in one basket. There are pros and cons to working with a outside large organisations. It can be difficult to jump from one to the other.
- JZ: The DGD would be one step in the journey, not the final goal. If this group writes a letter to the CRC asking for work indicators, with a DGD as a first step, the CRC will answer with some instructions.
- SH: There is a need for someone to communicate with the CRC: if not a secretariat then at least a 'focal point(s)'.
- GL: the challenges with the process have been outlined as follows:
 1. There are people missing from this group which is made up of very northern dominated people with particular, top-level expertise.
 2. There are competing organisational priorities and investments.
 3. The topic of 'accountability' has a very broad focus and is poorly defined.

4. There is a fear that we are reinventing the wheel in relation to existing initiatives.
5. There are inherent challenges to working with large organisations.
6. The CRC is under increasing pressure in terms of workload, mandate and financial resources.
7. There is a need for someone to take things forward.

The initial focus on the DGD is a means to an end with the opportunity to tease out issues and focus on the agenda. IICRD – as a proposed temporary secretariat - is well placed to get us from here to there. They already have strong partnerships with the south, with academic institutions and with NGOs. They can bring greater legitimacy and make it clear that the focus is on the whole of the Convention, not just GC13.

- PC: IICRD would need the support of the CRC.
- GC7 SP representatives from Chile and Colombia could be invited to attend the DGD.
- HELP offers to work with and support the IICRD in its secretariat role and is already working with the IICRD to advance monitoring, measurement and evaluation for GC7 & GC13

2. Common pathway:

- A primary pathway is something we can continue to work on whilst first paving the way to the 2013 DoD. This gives us 18 months to achieve a material advance. We should enlarge the group, but not so it becomes unmanageable. We need a position paper showing links to the MDGs etc.
- What is achievable in relation to the way forward? Do we want to construct a set of proxy indicators for the Convention?
- AA: The benefit is in being strategic to set up a core of proxy indicators that the CRC can use to encourage SPs to report on, on the understanding that it may need to change and be adapted as time and circumstances progress.
- JZ: It is a very important initiative for the CRC to ultimately improve the implementation of children's rights. We are not promoting revolution but reform from a practical aspect. We do not want 200 indicators but simple and practical ones. We must draw on all UN agencies, NGOs and other organisations. For the DGD, and to get funds, the process must have credibility and the involvement of *all* relevant bodies. IDE is at the service of this initiative. "I was not a big friend of indicators but I have been convinced by indicators in relation to GC7" – due to the impact on child rights more broadly and the value of the *process* of dialogue. Indicators can be used as an impetus to forward rights implementation. We have to work in a global context of treaty body reform to avoid problems with SPs.

- GM: Supporting the CRC versus helping SPs are not necessarily the same things. There is value in distilling the CRC's jurisprudence into something more than a memo but less than a GC, showing real or hypothetical countries.
- SH: What would be the most effective design of priorities.
- SB: Child protection is the area with the biggest gaps which beg further attention, especially violence against children and children out of households.
- GM: Be clear about whether the indicators are for the whole Convention or just GC13.
- MS: A product has to come out that applies to a wide range of issues, not just child protection or many crucial people will lose interest.
- CH: GC13 and GC7 are put out as examples, demanding that we have to have monitoring and evaluation and start to show how it can be possible to end up with a set of indicators for the whole Convention.
- Indicator development is a way to distil the GCs into something which is usable by stakeholders. We need to find ways to state them simply, then promulgate and disseminate existing interpretations by the CRC. This is different to an operational guidebook. Organising indicators around 'structure', 'process' and 'outcomes' would help to organise discussions. GC7 offers a model for the main life cycle stage groups.
- A glossary / clarity is needed in order to agree on a common approach and to avoid undermining each other.
- GL: It is important to have an immediate next step: to write up the summary; develop a short strategy; draft a letter to the CRC (to circulate for sign-up) regarding support for the initiative in general and tabling the 2013 DGD in particular; discussion regarding the DGD; and come up with names of potential GRG members from the south as soon as possible in order to ensure buy-in – not as an add-on.
- SB: Use CRIN to spread the word.
- SH: Keep an eye on opportunities to pilot ideas of interest.
- MW: Tell as many other people as possible within your own organisations.
- IC: Send a summary email to communicate the key points to share for consistency. What is the role of WV, Plan and Save the Children apart from 'business as usual'? We are already sharing information via MERG etc.
- AM: Post-MDG discussions are six months from now. We can demonstrate where things are clear, for example, in relation to child health, and demonstrate the applicability of child rights so that we can get to something useful.
- ?: Be careful about the term / label 'accountability' as part of the work plan. We need a series of good practices to show through research that we are improving (e.g.) children's health through child rights accountability.

3. Global Reference Group:

- We need resources and to engage people in other parts of the world. It needs to be an open and democratic process.
- SB: The Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG), under the leadership of UNICEF and Save the Children, is the first ever attempt to bring together a rights-based group but it has no resources. We need to look at what parallel structures can be tied together, for example the USAID 'evidence summit' on children outside parental care.
- Key questions for the GRG:
 - What kind of people?
 - Specific indicator specialists?
 - Strong communication/ IT skills?
 - Geographical representation?
 - Need to do a stakeholder analysis.
 - Need a clear TOR with selection criteria for group members.
 - Need clarity around the domains we are targeting, for example, MS is the only health representative here.

4. Respect for ongoing initiatives:

- We need a mapping of existing initiatives not just 'respect' for them.

5. Potential sponsors:

- SH: We can identify in-kind support, working together on areas of mutual advantage.
- AM: Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) is *UNICEF's* office of research. It could be part of the GRG but everyone is searching for money. IRC publishes working papers and there are costs involved. IRC is facing a huge set of new challenges and the need for prioritisation. In principle we can publish papers by others and be involved in peer review, but we are constricted by funds.
- CH: In terms of the sequencing of events, IICRD as the temporary secretariat could circulate a letter with a list of 'buy-ins'.
- ABA: The money is not out there. We need a few people to take it forward regardless. Lack of funds impacts most strongly on participation of those from the south.
- SB: We need to take advantage of new technologies.
- CH: We will make it happen whilst also seeking resources.
- EE: Plan is very keen to work on Convention reporting and supporting participation from the south in a global agenda.

- GL: Oak Foundation, Bernard van Leer, UNICEF, SOROS. The resources needed are mostly for coordination. There should not be any need for face-to-face meetings until the DGD in 2013.
- MS: We need to make an impact and have a 'product' that can be sold to donors. There is money around, but we need products that donors like. Indicators, their application, and a focus on *outcomes* are of interest to donors.

6. Secretariat:

- The group agreed that IICRD should take on the role of temporary secretariat in order to move the process forward.
- It would be very beneficial to have a letter from the CRC asking for a secretariat (as with the GC7 process). What does the CRC want and how to get it out to the global south?

H. Closing

Jean Zermatten

It is necessary to strengthen mechanisms for accountability - for structure, process and outcomes. However, we need to keep in mind the global context: human rights mechanisms are in the middle of large reforms. SPs are very reluctant to give the necessary resources to monitoring and evaluation. There are now 10 treaty bodies and 58 special procedures. Beware of introducing new tools and mechanisms for danger of weakening monitoring and evaluation in the international human rights system. Any work on indicators *must* be linked to the work of OHCHR. The human rights bodies such as the CRC are always being warned not to go beyond their mandate. The CRC is working more on follow-up and with the 'lists of issues' rather than with reports. Indicators could be useful to these two mechanisms. We should also remember the Optional Protocol on complaints and country visits.