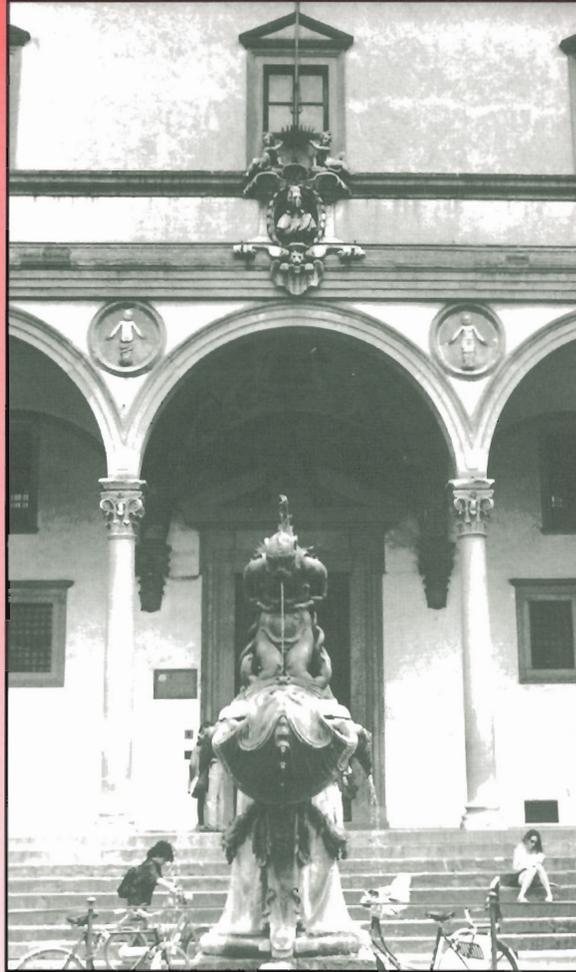


# CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, IMMIGRANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

INNOCENTI GLOBAL SEMINAR  
SUMMARY REPORT



UNICEF International Child Development Centre  
Spedale degli Innocenti  
Florence, Italy

Prepared by  
Maggie Black

**unicef**   
United Nations Children's Fund

INNOCENTI GLOBAL SEMINAR

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OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, IMMIGRANTS  
AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

6-15 October 1996

Florence, Italy

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UNICEF International Child Development Centre  
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ISBN: 88-85401-34-1

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Phototypeset by Bernard & Co. - Siena  
Printed by Arti Grafiche TICCI - Sovicille (SI)

# INNOCENTI GLOBAL SEMINAR

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## FOREWORD

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The seventh Innocenti Global Seminar, held in Florence in October 1996, was organized jointly by the Training and Staff Development Section of UNICEF's Human Resources Division and the UNICEF International Child Development Centre and had as its subject Children and Families of Ethnic Minorities, Immigrants and Indigenous Peoples. UNICEF's concern in this area has been legitimized, and indeed is required, by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Now ratified by all but two of the world's nations, the Convention guarantees children their rights "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status" (Article 2).

The experiences of children of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in many parts of the world are far removed from the concept of justice contained in this article. All too often children are discriminated against precisely because of their ethnicity or indigenesness, which may be manifested outwardly by their language, culture or religion but which has subjective dimensions as well, such as a sense of belonging. Minority children are frequently denied an effective education, fair treatment before the law and equal access to health facilities. Compounding this systemic discrimination is the fact that in developing and industrialized countries alike the specific problems deriving from minority status are regularly considered to be merely the consequences of poverty. The cases of Rwanda and Bosnia, with their disastrous internal consequences as well as regional and international repercussions, force us to see ethnicity as a variable that must be taken into account – not only because it can potentially be mobilized and politicized in 'ethnic' conflicts, but also because of its specific social value.

In tackling this important issue, Seminar participants brought to the debate a wide range of experiences and perspectives. This excellent report prepared by Maggie Black captures much of the richness of their discussion and contains many very useful suggestions of how improvements can be made in programming and advocacy for children

and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples.

As a first step, the report calls for systematic attention to be paid to minority populations in all situation analyses. Another major emphasis is the need to adopt a participatory approach in planning and development as well as in programme implementation and service delivery. Education is an essential entry point: efforts need to be made to involve minority groups in the preparation of messages, materials and non-formal curricula that are suited to their needs. Ethnic and indigenous groups also need to be empowered to undertake their own advocacy effectively.

While the report recognizes that the political climate in many countries can make advocacy on behalf of minority groups difficult, it also stresses that the near-universal ratification of the Convention brings with it the obligation to speak out for the rights of all children, and particularly the most disadvantaged. In some cases, this may require dealing with unpopular issues and opening up and sustaining critical dialogues with official partners who intentionally or unintentionally support discriminatory practices.

This Innocenti Global Seminar can be seen as part of an ongoing analytical process taking place at our UNICEF Centre in Florence. At the outset, attention was paid to discrimination against distinct population groups, including Gypsies, immigrants and indigenous peoples. The focus then widened to encompass definitional issues relating to such basic concepts as 'minority' and 'discrimination' and an evaluation of these concepts in the context of an evolving and expanding culture of human rights. Subsequently, the need to accommodate cultural diversity in a single social body emerged as a major concern. Almost all of today's conflicts have an ethnic dimension, and many share the tragic characteristic of making children and women deliberate targets of violence.

However, achieving the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups is not just a social engineering dilemma. It is based on respect for human rights and on the correct (but not yet known) equilibrium between tolerance and intolerance. It also

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has its roots in the complex process of creating collective values and identities. These considerations have led to a greater emphasis on the role played by education in its various aspects – formal, non-formal and informal, including the educative function

of religions and the media. Education has both a positive role (furthering respect for diversity) and a negative one (fuelling intolerance and conflict). The challenge now is to understand what causes the balance to be tipped in one direction or the other.

*Paolo Basurto*

Director

UNICEF International Child Development Centre

# I. INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, IMMIGRANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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During the last few years, the word 'ethnic' and the concept of 'ethnicity' have assumed a new and — to many — alarming set of associations. During the post-colonial era, the received idea of ethnic or indigenous minorities was of groups marginal to mainstream society whose lingering loyalty to ancient customs and distinctive ways of life would in time be extinguished by universalizing modernity. The loss this would represent to the family of humankind was regarded by anthropologists and ethnographers as a cause of regret, but the onward march of national and civic affinity as the organizing force in human society was seen as invincible. Occasionally, as in North America or Australia, the claims of indigenous peoples to rights over traditional lands assumed economic and legal significance. But — except in the rather special circumstances of sub-Saharan Africa — rarely was ethnicity regarded as an issue with serious political implications. Since the end of the Cold War, perceptions have dramatically changed.

During the 1990s, the world has witnessed an outbreak of conflict almost entirely within, rather than between, existing nation states. Much of this turmoil has been driven by collective assertions of self-determination or reactive aggression on grounds of ethnic identity. Some groups embarking on violence or retreating into violence are minorities within artificially constructed national societies, whose majority groups have sidelined them in the name of 'nation-building' (Africa) or of constructing the socialist state (former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe). Antagonisms have boiled to the surface partly as a result of the release of the Cold War stranglehold on tensions generally, and partly in expression of long-maturing historical trends, including those favouring democracy and human rights.

The disengagement by outside powers which previously viewed civil wars as proxies for the wider geopolitical struggle has removed one of the forces repressing nationalist or ethnic self-expression — for good or ill. And once their stranglehold was removed, the idea that ethnic identity would have been dissolved by the modernizing or 'development' process of the past several decades turned out to have been highly unrealistic. Many sets of resentments and rivalries are just as bitter as they were before the modern post-War and post-colonial arrangement of nation states came into being. In

some cases, the long state of smouldering paralysis accompanying the Cold War has had the effect of deepening rather than healing divides.

The phenomenon of ethnically-driven civil warfare and the many emergencies it has led to is one of the main reasons that UNICEF, along with other international humanitarian bodies, finds itself bound to address issues of ethnicity and the situation of children of minorities and indigenous groups. Since the mid-1980s, the proportion of UNICEF's annual expenditures absorbed by emergency programmes has doubled, from 10 to 20 per cent. As is the case for all international organizations concerned with long-term improvement in the human condition, this haemorrhage of resources into short-term relief assistance is a source of considerable dismay. Attention is increasingly being given to proactive work to prevent emergencies, including initiatives to prevent severe ethnic tension deteriorating into violence, war and large-scale flight of refugees and displaced persons. The increasing pressure and volume of emergency-related concerns in the world are, therefore, one reason for UNICEF to identify children and families of ethnic minorities as deserving special attention.

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*These minority issues are at the cutting edge of social issues. The people concerned are the most underpowered and the poorest in the community.*

Alan Phillips

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Another main influence pushing UNICEF in this new direction is its acceptance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the guiding framework for all UNICEF's work. Instead of focusing exclusively on the needs of children — and therefore primarily on social and economic disadvantage — the rights perspective demands that all bases for disadvantage should be brought into the picture. Already in many of its situation analysis, programming and advocacy exercises, UNICEF has begun to address types of disadvantage that it has not traditionally noticed: abuse and exploitation, for example, and legal and judicial disadvantage. But up to now, the question of disadvantage or discrimination that children might suffer on cultural grounds has not been addressed by UNICEF — except coincidentally in some area-based and educational programmes. In these contexts, UNICEF-assisted programmes have happened to tar-

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get children of minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups because they are among the most socially and economically disadvantaged in any population.

In the belief that the time has now come to identify this set of issues, fill out their contours, and see how UNICEF and its partners should address them, the seventh Global Innocenti Seminar took as its theme: *Children and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples*. The UNICEF International Child Development Centre (ICDC) in Florence has already undertaken research into children of minorities over the course of the past few years. The network of contacts they have built up allowed the Seminar organizers to draw upon leading expertise for the Global Seminar. The Seminar was particularly privileged to enjoy the full-time participation of Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Research Professor at *El Colegio de Mexico*, whose distinguished international career as an anthropologist has been dedicated to minority issues. Earlier ICDC publications (see Annex 3), to which Stavenhagen has contributed, provided many of the core readings for the Seminar's work.

Between October 6th and 15th 1996, 34 participants from around the world met at ICDC in Florence, a city whose own Renaissance past is

coloured by internecine warfare led by rival groups based on blood or family ties, which today might well be described as 'ethnic affiliation'. The UNICEF regions best represented at the Seminar were Latin America and East Asia; other participants came from offices in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, and from New York. They were joined by some representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and resource persons, including academics, lawyers and minority rights activists.

Their task was to begin the long process whereby a subject originally outside UNICEF's field of operational vision gradually comes into focus and eventually assumes a position within or near the mainstream of its work. As first steps, they set themselves the following objectives: to steep themselves in the issues by drawing on expertise as well as case study material; to consider the relevant international legal frameworks for analysis and intervention; to examine strategies and programmatic actions already in place; and to arrive at a preliminary view of how this new perspective of 'cultural disadvantage and discrimination' might be factored into UNICEF's view of the world and its activities. Annexes 1 and 2 contain, respectively, the Seminar Agenda and the list of participants and invited speakers.

## The Seminar Objectives

- To develop an improved understanding of the multifaceted problems of children and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups through a review of basic readings, research findings, situation analyses, policy reports and the results of specific programme interventions;
- To determine how both conceptual analysis and practical work for these groups relates to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- To examine the strategies, programmes and outcomes of the work of specific agencies, inter-governmental and governmental, as well as NGOs, concerned with these groups;
- To make recommendations and develop guidelines for programme work at various levels and for various partners for the improved protection and support for children and families of minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups, as well as for promoting better understanding and respect for their rights among the 'majority' population.

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Unlike many of the issues with which UNICEF is familiar, the starting point for an understanding of the problems of cultural disadvantage and discrimination is an appreciation not of generically similar characteristics, but of diversity. By definition, each minority group's sense of themselves is different both from the mainstream and from each other's, and it is the determination to assert these differences and to maintain a social identity based upon them that characterizes the 'ethnic problem'. Many minority peoples both wish to preserve their independent identity, and aspire to the same opportunities — jobs, education, wealth, societal recognition — that are only available within the mainstream. As Paolo Basurto, Director of ICDC, reminded the Seminar, these types of assertion can lead to oppression by the dominant group, which may seize upon ethnic or cultural differences to whip up fear, hostility and xenophobia towards the minority 'other'. Left unchecked, socio-cultural incompatibility can become inflammatory and ultimately degenerate into conflict and war.

The genesis of international approaches to shared problems is the notion that common values, common objectives and common strategies should be developed across countries and societies and can be usefully brought to bear on a particular situation. This idea appears to be fundamentally at odds with an overriding demand that diversity, not communalism, be respected and maintained. In the case of technical questions relating to many issues faced by the whole family of humankind such as disease control, environmental degradation, the spread of basic education and health care, experts and the governments they advise are usually able to reach agreement on universal standards and their application. But the insistence of a minority people on its right to cultural diversity may include refusal to accept those standards, and to refute the authority of those declaring them or applying them in law or in practice.

Deep-set dilemmas about how to reconcile internationalist doctrine and practice with aspirational diversity at national and subnational level present major challenges in the contemporary world. In no context are these dilemmas more acute than in the context of ethnic and minority rights. From this central dilemma flow many others, including the reconciliation of minority (and majority) standpoints with key articles of the Convention on the Rights of the

Child and other expressions of internationally agreed values and practice. Contradictions and dilemmas are so inherent to the juxtaposition of different value systems that the Seminar took a conscious decision at the outset of its deliberations to live with this situation rather than become enmeshed in trying to resolve the many paradoxes familiar to those working in the minorities field. These begin with the definitional issues discussed in the next chapter.

On the fifth day of the Seminar, participants took part in field visits to project sites in or around Florence addressing problems of immigrant or minority groups. Most of the services provided by these projects to their beneficiaries were supplied by NGOs; some were run by the immigrant or ethnic groups, others on their behalf. (According to official figures, at the end of 1995 there were about 7,700 immigrants from non-Western countries living in Florence). The projects mainly assisted Gypsies (who have a long historical presence in this part of Europe); immigrant Chinese; and illegal immigrants, of which the predominant group in Italy today is Albanian. The services included literacy in Italian; traditional Chinese medical care; support for juveniles in conflict with the law, among whom non-Italians are proportionately overrepresented; shelter, which in the case of the Gypsies appeared closely related to camped incarceration; legal counselling; and, in one case, protection from mafia-type gangs for girls who had been trafficked into prostitution.

These project visits gave many causes for reflection. In the first place, they illustrated the changing mentality within UNICEF stemming from the acceptance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the backbone of its organizational mission, whereby children everywhere rather than children exclusively in developing countries are logically subject to its mandate. Some representatives from developing countries had never previously visited a project addressing social disadvantage in the industrialized world, and found the experience salutary: "Every society in the world faces similar problems surrounding social casualty and inequities in the human condition" was how one Asian participant described her discovery.

Another cause for reflection was the relationship of UNICEF with its target beneficiaries in con-

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texts where straightforward service delivery using more or less standardized components is not the main programmatic thrust. UNICEF has primarily been concerned with mass programmes, much less often with small groups such as one parish or community, and almost never with individual casework. This kind of work is regarded as the realm of specialist government services or of NGOs; the UNICEF strategy for expanding such services is capacity-building for service providers, research and policy development, and advocacy on behalf of appropriate approaches.

However, there are occasions in relation to small-scale, casework projects — as these visits demonstrated — when UNICEF's position at a considerable remove from frontline interaction with beneficiaries feels very remote from the realities of work on their behalf. There is a danger that large amounts of organizational resources could be spent in intermediary activities, such as designing monitoring exercises or developing advocacy positions, which actually have very little impact on children in acute need. Seminar participants strongly expressed the view that UNICEF must retain its role in service delivery support in order to preserve its organizational credibility as well as for developing programmatic models and as a basis for advocacy. Credibility with government is important; but credibility with, and relevance to, the realities faced by partner NGOs and beneficiaries is equally or even more important. In the context of children and families of minorities, the development of effective relationships with those operating at the front line will demand extra effort.

Standing up for minority rights, even with the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a shield, can also place UNICEF in a difficult position vis-à-vis governments with whom it is in partnership. The question of whether members of the international community when employed in a professional capacity have any degree of autonomy was a subject which reared its head on a number of occasions. Should a UNICEF Country Representative risk his or her own status with a government, and by implication the UNICEF-assisted programme, by engaging in private or public admonition of gross minority rights violation? Basurto — an ex-Country Representative — felt that trying to make a country

adhere to the CRC could be an awkward, even sometimes a dangerous, undertaking, and that how this was handled by Representatives should not be left to chance, but needed policy attention from the centre.

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*There are no guidelines for the Country Representative. Can I go and say to the government: 'These children are excluded on cultural — and specious — grounds'? Can I take a critical position?*

Paolo Basurto

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It is normal at Global Seminars for creative tensions to emerge between the various agendas and expectations participants carry with them to the meeting. At this Seminar, no major divisions developed; but there was some difference of view between those who wanted to address at the earliest possible moment questions of programming implications, and those who wanted first to immerse themselves in the subject and engage in theoretical analysis before jumping to 'what does this mean for my programme?'. The balance between theoretical and practitioner work is always difficult for Global Seminar organizers to strike.

The same tension was also expressed strategically, between those who thought in terms of identifying the 'new' target beneficiaries by their distinguishing features and developing programmes specifically for them; and those who wanted to understand the parameters of being a child or a family in an ethnic minority group, and then examine how existing policies and programmes could be expanded or amended to embrace their particularities. The first approach seems more pragmatic; but given that many minority families are not living in geographically distinct locations such as border, jungle or mountain areas or in refugee camps but as sub-sets of the general population, an ethnic-area-based strategy is limited in application.

The approach adopted to the theme by the Seminar organizers was to spend one day on definitional questions and the international legal framework, and then begin addressing programmatic issues. Policy and programmatic action in Early Childhood Development (ECD) was first explored,

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with reference to growth and conditioning experienced in the early years. From there, the Seminar progressed to the school-aged child and appropriate education; and to bilingual and intercultural education among all age-groups. Various other specific topics were addressed, including the special problems of youngsters in conflict with the law; 'education for development and peace'; and approaches that reached ethnic minority children via occupational affiliations such as domestic service or recruitment into prostitution. For all topics, case studies were presented.

The special emphasis on education derived from the fact that this, so far, is the primary context in which UNICEF has noticed cultural disadvantage. Education is also the context in which attitudes and behaviour about 'the other' are formed. Useful discussions on such issues as the juxtaposition of traditional and modern medical or legal systems — both subjects of importance — would have required more time than the eight days at the Seminar's disposal. However, a fascinating glimpse into how one UNICEF Country Office had begun to address these issues within its situation analysis and programme was provided by a presentation from Paraguay.

Addressing the needs of children and families of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples is not an area, as all participants recognized, where easy answers are available. In its essence, the 'minority problem' appears a simple one of exclusion and marginalization of 'inferiorized' peoples. But its many components and variables enmesh it in a web of

complexity. This reflects the immense complexity of the world we live in — a world that is building globalized frameworks of trade, communications, information exchange, monetary union, language, laws and political culture; and at the same time is undergoing a process of splintering, diversifying, decentralization and democratization, within which vociferously expressed dissent is having both positive and negative impacts.

In the end, every human story is different and will always be so; no majority view, mass programme or assimilating force can make it otherwise. This was expressed in a poem written by a participant: "There is no power allowed to take my language away, or my soul, my spirit, my body, my loves, my poetry, my ancestors, my Gods, my music, the smell of my earth, the calls of the grass and water, my colours, my knowing, my passions." The problem is that some agents of power do not recognize these simple truths, and the consequences for some parts of humanity of imposing a blatant and oppressive conformity can be devastating.

Every participant at the seventh Innocenti Global Seminar took away with him or her a new perspective which will abidingly inform his or her work on UNICEF's behalf, and on behalf of children who are among the most disadvantaged and discriminated in the world. Most also took away a new self-knowledge, and a keen sense of awareness that respect for and toleration of the beliefs and customs of 'the other' begins inside ourselves.



## II. CHILDREN OF MINORITIES: DEFINITIONS AND DIMENSIONS

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The first task of the Seminar was to identify the children to be regarded as falling within the definition of 'minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups', bearing in mind all the different variables and quirks of fate that apply in different settings. For example, because of the arbitrariness of national boundaries in large parts of the world where colonization under one European power or another was the deciding factor in the creation of national entities, a people forming a majority or dominant group in one country may be a minority group across the border in the country next door. Alongside questions of identity concerning the children the Seminar was addressing, the question of how they and their rights were identified in international legal instruments was addressed in tandem.

Alan Phillips, Director of the London-based Minority Rights Group (MRG), informed the Seminar that governments and international lawyers had been discussing what is meant by a 'minority' for decades without coming to any conclusion: "We have to start somewhere, in spite of the fact that we don't have definitions." The United Nations had not always been a helpful forum for sorting out the problem. Its framework had been deliberately designed to exclude minorities and avoid any recognition of the independent identity or right to self-determination of subgroups within nation states. This was not surprising: the United Nations system had been created with an eye to the failures of the League of Nations. This had foundered during the inter-war years, during which the ethnic card had been frequently played as a legitimization for national aggrandizement.

Since the United Nations machinery was set up at a moment in history when checking the ambitions of the over-mighty state was seen as its principal political task, the protection of national sovereignty and the protection of collective rights were treated as the same thing. Below national level, the story of human rights in the post-war world has been the story of the protection of individual rights. The problem for a 'minority' — however defined — is that an identity is being asserted, and rights are being claimed upon that basis, at a level in between the national and the individual.

The importance attached to 'nation-building' in the period of decolonization had helped to depress further the possibility of advancing independent

claims on behalf of minorities. According to Phillips, the debate about minority rights emerged in the 1960s but took decades to get going. In the early 1980s, the issue of indigenous peoples' rights became more prominent. A Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been under discussion for over 10 years. Although there is as yet no final outcome, the effect of this protracted process has been highly mobilizing for indigenous groups themselves, over 700 of which are now represented in the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. Interestingly, they have categorically rejected a definition of 'indigenous peoples' in the Declaration on the basis that such a definition would amount to a rejection of their claim to self-determination.

In 1992, the United Nations passed a Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, but the United Nations Working Group on Minorities is relatively new and has not yet developed the international dynamism of the indigenous movement. Meanwhile, on migrants and refugees the discourse at the international level is very depressing because it is mired in negatives, such as equations between asylum seekers and terrorists and trying to keep immigrants out of, or at least deny them rights in, industrialized host countries.

### Who Are the Children of 'Ethnic Minorities'?

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Even if minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups themselves do not wish to be defined, and if the process of trying to do so — as Alan Phillips noted — can be fruitless and time-consuming, still Seminar participants needed a map and a compass through this particular minefield. In order to address the special problems of minority children it is, after all, necessary to decide who they are and where they are found.

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*The conditions of children of ethnic minorities are frequently at the centre of today's problematique. They are under constant stress from contemporary macroeconomic, demographic and political tendencies.*

Rodolfo Stavenhagen

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This process is fraught with all sorts of problems. Most people would automatically include —

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for example — the Kurds; but the Turkish government does not officially recognize Kurds in Turkey as a minority. Meanwhile, in Peru, the term ‘ethnic minorities’ does not imply all indigenous peoples; in government usage it only applies to Amazonian peoples: indigenous Andeans are known as *campesinos*. Are the Palestinians a ‘minority’, even in Palestine? The legal answer may differ from the demographic. The hill-tribes of South-East Asia certainly are minorities; but what about the ‘scheduled castes and tribal peoples’ of India? And in sub-Saharan Africa, where ethnic affiliations are often more important than nationality in terms of access to political and economic power, hundreds of groups could claim ‘ethnic minority’ status. San (bushman) and Pygmy candidatures would be clear-cut; but what about the Ogoni, the Dinka, and countless others who have lost out in the power struggle over the state and its resources, not to mention such ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ peoples as the Hutu and Tutsi?

The key resource person for the debate on dimensions and definitions was Rodolfo Stavenhagen. The first point he made was that, up to now, those involved internationally with ethnic minorities have given almost no attention to the special needs or rights of minority children; and similarly, those working on behalf of children have failed to engage with the special implications of cultural disadvantage and minority status. This was beginning to change with the new attention given to children’s rights, in which ICDC has been a leading intellectual force. Stavenhagen welcomed UNICEF’s initiative in bringing together these areas, and looked to the mix of theoreticians and practitioners at the Global Seminar to break new ground both on behalf of UNICEF’s clientele and within the subject area. He believed that the starting point for an understanding of the problems of ethnic minority children was an understanding of the parameters of the ‘ethnic question’ itself.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*There are thousands of social collectivities in the world but relatively few political entities. This imbalance leads to socio-political tension, and ultimately to killings, massacres, genocides and the flight of millions of refugees and displaced people.*

Stavenhagen contrasted the number of nation states belonging to the intergovernmental system as independent political actors — about 200 — with the 5,000-8,000 peoples that make up the complex organism of world society. (The numbers are estimates at best; they change according to the criteria applied.) These peoples are sociologically and culturally defined collectivities but have no independent legal existence. Unavoidably, multiple problems — administrative, political, practical — are created by a situation in which there are thousands of social collectivities in the world but relatively few political entities. For Stavenhagen, this contradiction confronts humankind with one of its most important problems, for it leads to the killings, massacres, genocides, and the flight of millions of refugees and displaced people we are witnessing today.

How did this contradiction between ‘peoples’ and ‘nations’ come about? The idea of the nation state was primarily developed in Europe, and became *the* unit of political, administrative, legislative and judicial organization worldwide during the past hundred-odd years. When the European colonizers arrived in most parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, they found peoples and civilizations — not states. They rarely left or were expelled without bequeathing nation-statehood to their political inheritors. In the Americas, where new states arose from the dismemberment of European empires, ruling élites copied the idea from existing metropolitan models. Within the new states, the existence of indigenous peoples — the ‘minorities’ who in many cases were actually majorities — was simply denied. Their non-existence as legitimate members of the state meant that they would have to disappear, either physically by extermination, or by assimilation into subsidiary or servile roles to the dominant group.

Elsewhere in the world, the story of the political, legal and cultural imposition of intruders’ systems of administration and government on indigenous groups was achieved with less stability. The examples of upsets, of popular upheavals in border territories, of generations of minority ethnic or ethno-religious refusal to lie down under another’s yoke, are more common in other regions than in the Americas, although an ethnically-inspired civil war with strong ethnic components lasted for 30 years in Guatemala, and an uprising of indigenous people in southern

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Mexico erupted only recently. Elsewhere, examples of ethnically-fuelled quasi-national upheaval stretch from Sri Lanka to Northern Ireland, from South Africa to the Palestinian West Bank, from Turkey to Sudan, from Kashmir to Chechnya, from Kosovo to Myanmar, from Nigeria to Afghanistan.

In many of these simmering or overt conflicts, there is a clash between two different concepts of 'the nation': the civic nation and the ethnic nation. In the former, where the organizing force is the rule of law over a given territorial area, anyone living within the boundaries of the area when they were drawn is theoretically a citizen of that nation. (In fact, exclusions have been and continue to be practised.) Similarly, outsiders who come to dwell in this area may apply for citizenship in due course, and anyone born there is entitled to citizenship. (Again, exclusions are practised.) The idea of the ethnic nation, by contrast, holds that its people share a common identity on ethnic, cultural and historical grounds; outsiders without the right pedigree cannot join even if born there. This has been the traditional standpoint, for example, of the German nation.

Many of today's wars are characterized by a rejection of the civic state in favour of the ethnic state, and the expulsion by a dominant group of those who do not 'belong' on ethnic grounds; this was the case in former Yugoslavia, for example. Many quite stable multilingual, multicultural and multireligious states exist. Nonetheless, much friction in the world today is caused by lack of tolerance towards minority customs and beliefs by a nationally dominant group. Increasingly, a sense of exclusion leads to the rejection of the civic state in favour of more potent ties of the 'imagined community' of blood, brotherhood, culture and belief.

Thus the existence of the nation state creates 'minorities'; its critical importance as a political, social and economic actor leads 'minorities' to make claims against it, thereby creating the 'minority problem'.

### Classifying 'Minorities'

Various sets of objective criteria are used to classify minorities. The most obvious are the **biological** criteria described as 'race' (although 'race' is actually a sociological construct). In South Africa and the

United States, for example, statistics are collected in such a way as to be able to make comparisons between survival rates, disease rates, educational attainment rates, and so forth, according to whether people are 'black' or 'white'. Certain conflicts, notably those between Hutu and Tutsi in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, are based on notional biological or tribal difference.

**Territorial** criteria are also very important. A people may claim ancestral rights to their traditional living and economic space: their 'homeland'. This people — such as the Tamils in Sri Lanka or the peoples of Southern Sudan — may not wish the writ of the dominant national group to run on its territory; they may want to govern their lives with forms of administration, laws and institutions that give primary expression to their own values and belief systems. Claims of territoriality — such as that of the Israelis in Palestine or the Serbs in Kosovo — can be one of the main impulses for conflict. The defence of cultural integrity may appear dependent on the creation of a 'homeland'; hence the recent rise in the number of claims to ethnic nationhood.

Another criterion independently applied is **religion**. In the Northern Ireland conflict, as in communal disputes in India, the minority group is defined by its religious affiliation even though the struggle is as or more importantly over power and resources. **Language** can also be used as an umbrella for assertion of minority rights: in the 19th century, when the nation state was less formally evolved, language was often equated with nationality. The saying 'Language is a dialect with an army' expresses this idea. Canada is an example of a country where a minority has expressed its determination to self-expression in terms of language rights.

Minorities may also be classified by their participation in a common **culture** differentiated from that endorsed at the level of the nation state. The concept of 'culture' is difficult to define: anthropologists take many different views. Broadly speaking, a 'culture' includes forms of social organization and community life, special modes of dress, musical and artistic expression, specific rituals and festivals, and a cuisine. Culture is difficult to divorce from narrower classifications such as religion and language, with which it is often integral.

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In fact, many minorities assert collective claims based on a powerful brew of biological, religious, linguistic, cultural and territorial factors. And their own view is subjective: the 1992 Declaration refers to 'the will to remain a member of the group'. Ethnic identity has, ultimately, to do with the way people see themselves and project themselves.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*The recent decline in the importance of the nation state encourages people to place more emphasis on their cultural and ethnic sense of belonging. But collective rights below the level of the nation state remain unrecognized, and there is strong resistance to their recognition both on the part of nation states and on the part of the United Nations.*

In Stavenhagen's view, the recent decline in the importance of the nation state in the light of regionalizing and globalizing trends encourages people to place more emphasis on their cultural and ethnic sense of belonging. People need a sense of identity between that of membership of a small local community, and citizenship of the world. For this reason, Stavenhagen placed great importance on the recognition of collective rights below the level of the nation state. He believed that until this Rubicon is crossed — which the United Nations and many governments continue to resist — minorities will be unable to enjoy all the other rights to which, as individuals, all members of the human race are theoretically entitled.

A later contributor to the Seminar, Jagdish Gundara of the International Centre for Intercultural Studies in the University of London, made another important point about the historical relationship between minorities and the nation state. Post-colonial states in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are often described as socially pluralistic, in contrast with the supposedly homogenous and cohesive states of Europe and North America; this implies that threats to national unity posed by minority or ethnic groups only apply in the South.

In fact, Gundara suggested, this assumption is faulty. The 19th-century process of national integration excluded fundamental questions of diversity, camouflaging separate cultural, religious and territo-

rially-based identities within the imagined national community. In countries such as Britain, Canada, Spain and Italy today, and in many parts of Eastern Europe, the claims of minority linguistic and territorial groups are hot political issues. This indicates that the nation state was never the naturally integrated, organic affair its protagonists assumed. Today, when the citizens of European countries feel the cement of nationhood cracking, they usually blame the presence of immigrants of non-European origin. The real reasons for strain may lie within the body politic and its imperfect resolution of majority and minority perspectives. It is, after all, simultaneously under assault from other trends — transnational corporatism, globalization of trade, long-term unemployment — which may be much more disruptive than the presence of the unwelcome other.

#### The Application of Human Rights Instruments

The human rights machinery erected during the past 50-odd years theoretically protects everyone against discrimination on grounds of race, religion, gender and political persuasion. The fact is that members of minorities, singly and collectively, not only suffer acute discrimination, but are usually effectively disempowered from claiming suitable redress, both at the national and international level. The challenge is: How to handle diversity via universal norms?

Jim Himes, Senior Research Fellow at ICDC, reviewed for the Seminar the main international instruments available for fulfilling the rights of the children and families of minority groups. The story of the protection of minorities actually begins with the abolition of slavery: no form of discrimination against a people could be more acute than its enslavement by another. International action on human rights began between the two World Wars, when the League of Nations concluded various minority treaties and passed a 1926 Convention against Slavery and the Slave Trade. However, after the creation of the United Nations when the main body of international human rights legislation began to take shape, the emphasis was on individual human rights. Some governments were actively hostile to minority or indigenous group rights on the basis that this would stir up trouble within national boundaries and disrupt the great post-colonial 'nation-building' enterprise.

## Key International Instruments Agreed since 1945

- 1948:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1950:** European Convention on Human Rights
- 1959:** Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- 1960:** UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education
- 1965:** International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- 1966:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1966:** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 1979:** Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- 1989:** Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 1992:** Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

Conventions and Covenants are legally binding for ratifying States Parties; Declarations are non-binding.

Much of Himes' presentation related to an issue of great current concern in UNICEF: the transition from a needs-based to a rights-based approach in all its activity. Since the rights approach is the framework within which children of minorities are addressed by UNICEF, he reviewed the key principles that underpin their inclusion. Firstly, rights are **universal**, meaning that members of disadvantaged groups have the same rights as those in powerful groups. Secondly, all rights are **indivisible**; they may not be prioritized although they may be implemented progressively. Thirdly, rights are **interdependent**, meaning that rights such as those to education, health care and recreation should be implemented in tandem with — for example — the right to non-discrimination.

A number of articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child have general applicability to all children in the context of fulfilment of all rights. These include Article 6 (the right to survival), Article 2 (the right to non-discrimination), Article 3 (respect for the best interests of the child), Article 12 (the right of the child to express his/her own views). Some articles in the Convention specifically refer to 'cultural rights', or bestow rights that have a direct bearing on the situation of children of minorities. Article 30 is specific to the child of ethnic and indigenous minorities, stating the right to "enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language".

According to Alan Phillips, the United Nations Conventions that are most useful in the context of minority rights are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some of the specialized agencies, notably the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), have produced various statements and conventions that are also useful. A great deal depended on the effectiveness of the monitoring body charged with overseeing compliance.

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*Only when standards are taken back and owned locally can they be useful. Too often, they stay hidden, treated as state secrets, and people do not know what their states have signed up to.*

Alan Phillips

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In general, Phillips expressed scepticism about the use of international laws to defend the rights of minorities. They encapsulated a moral framework, which was laudatory in its way. But many states, he believed, were disinclined to take much notice of the instruments they had signed. In some states, the rule of law was itself barely operative; in others, the rule

of law was the rule of the dominant people's law and represented a hindrance rather than a help to the realization of minority and ethnic rights.

What role can NGOs play in promoting compliance with international rights instruments? NGOs have been the moving force behind the creation of some of them, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Where governments are reluctant to take their obligations seriously, the mobilization of public opinion in favour of disadvantaged groups can be an important — even the

only — means of leverage. As a first step, NGOs may have to take on the responsibility of acquainting people with the obligations their governments have accepted on their behalf at the international level.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*Where the rule of law operates, it is frequently the rule of dominant people's law and represents a hindrance rather than a help to the realization of minority and ethnic rights.*

## Minorities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The following articles specifically mention cultural and minority rights, or use language that integrates universality with diversity:

- ARTICLE 2:** enjoins the fulfilment of all rights "irrespective of ... race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin ...".
- ARTICLE 4:** "With regard to economic, social or cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources ...".
- ARTICLE 5:** "States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom ... to provide ... appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention."
- ARTICLE 8:** "States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations ...".
- ARTICLE 14:** "States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."
- ARTICLE 20:** provides for the care of a child deprived of a family environment; "due regard shall be paid to ... the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background".
- ARTICLE 29:** states that the child's education shall be directed towards, *inter alia*, "the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values ..."; and "the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; ...".
- ARTICLE 30:** "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."
- ARTICLE 31:** "States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

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In the North, NGOs are seen as an important reinforcement of civil society. In the past decade or so, the NGO movement in the South has grown exponentially — a trend celebrated as evidence of democratic expansion and increasing maturity of civic society. However, Phillips warned, the dynamics favouring the creation of NGOs has led to some anomalies, which may limit the effectiveness of some Southern NGOs in functioning as organized manifestations of civic society. Current free-market orthodoxy encourages aid donors to look for non-governmental partners rather than rely exclusively on the state for project implementation. There are many examples of GONGOS (government-organized NGOs) which speak for the government not for citizens; also DONGOS (donor-oriented NGOs) which use external resources primarily as a means of self-aggrandizement. The PINGOs (poor, independent NGOs) are most likely to be rights-minded, but they tend to enjoy minority status in terms of NGO influence.

The Minority Rights Group is one of the few international NGOs to have worked steadily in the area of minority rights over several decades. Its emphasis is on research and advocacy. It is about to produce a World Minorities Index, initially with 750 entries representing about 10 per cent of existing minorities. MRG also undertakes training activities, and participates in the various public debates surrounding minorities and indigenous groups at United Nations fora and elsewhere. MRG's experience indicates that NGOs are an important force on behalf of minorities. Their independence from government — which United Nations organizations do not enjoy — enables them to publish material and make statements that upset governments, from which United Nations bodies are constrained.

As part of the Seminar's work on definitions and dimensions, participants were invited to explore within small groups their own knowledge of minority peoples in their countries of work or origin. They also considered how such groups had come to be defined, by whom, and what types of discrimination this had led to. Policies, behaviours and attitudes concerning minorities were explored, as was the efficacy (or lack of efficacy) in redressing disadvantage or discrimination via international human rights instruments.

This exercise brought home to participants the multiplicity of the phenomenon of minority status and the degree to which many such groups had been brought into being by a historical process — colonization, war, conquest or other forms of coercive behaviour by dominant groups — completely outside their control. It also underlined the degree to which attitudes of superiority based on cultural difference appeared to be ingrained in the human condition.

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*"Tell me who I am." After a long and shattering struggle in which identity is denied, people may have great difficulty holding onto their cultural selves. There is a psychological need to rediscover an 'enduring self' vis-à-vis an 'immediately situated self'.*

Group work on 'dimensions'

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As a footnote to the Seminar's definitional work, various proposals were put forward over the eight-day period for an acronym to use in place of the cumbersome phrase 'ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups'. The one that met with least resistance was 'MIIP': minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples. This report will therefore deploy this acronym throughout its remaining text.



### III. THE YOUNG CHILD

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On the second day of the Seminar, the lens through which the children of MIIP were observed was reversed. Instead of considering the characteristics of the groups themselves and — by implication — what bearing these might have on UNICEF activities, the Seminar looked at a particular area of programming and considered how it could be adapted to suit the special needs of MIIP children. In keeping with a life-cycle approach, the first area to be addressed was Early Childhood Development.

Cassie Landers, the Seminar resource person on ECD, has been a long-standing UNICEF consultant in the design and development of ECD programmes. In close collaboration with partner agencies, UNICEF has developed a set of guidelines and strategies for ECD programming to help direct country initiatives. She set out to the Seminar how this overall paradigm could be adapted to the particular needs of children and families of minorities. Questions raised here were: Does UNICEF already have the capacity for analysis, and existing policy and programming approaches that are applicable? Will reaching this especially disadvantaged group merely require service extension, or will qualitative 'extras' need to be introduced?

Highlighting the importance of the early years as the foundation for lifelong learning, Landers began by documenting the developmental milestones of a three-year-old if things were going well, in order to see what risks MIIP children ran of failing to thrive physically, cognitively and socially. (The age she picked was arbitrary, but the pace of development up to three is dramatic, so this would be a benchmark age for disadvantage to emerge.)

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*Traditional practices are not always good. Accepting cultural diversity might mean accepting female genital mutilation. In some cultures, a child is not regarded as a human being before the age of three; in others, he or she is important as an individual from the day of birth.*

Egidio Crotti

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Characteristics of the well-developing three-year-old include confidence, ability to use language to communicate, intellectual inquisitiveness, and empathy towards others. Standard risk factors

include inadequate perinatal care, isolated parents, substandard child care, poverty and insufficient stimulation. These risks are cumulative: if a child does not learn how to learn well, he or she may learn to fail — even at this very early age. Long-term costs of inadequate child care in non-stimulating environments, when combined with other health risk factors in the early years, can later be measured in terms of school drop-out, unemployment and delinquency rates, and the intergenerational perpetuation of failure and poverty. Early childhood is a time of opportunity in which even small positive changes can generate long-term social benefits.

Membership of a minority group might have its positive as well as negative aspects in regard both to risks and to the kind of protective care given to the very young child. For example, in the risks area, mothers might not have access to good pre- and post-natal care; or poverty and the burden of female economic responsibilities in the household might mean irregular eating or poor nutrition, and lack of stimulation. Among the positive attributes of belonging to an ethnic minority might be the importance of the extended family and community, the learning of skills associated with the traditional lifestyle, and the cultivation of a positive sense of identity and ethnic self-esteem.

One of the key points emphasized by Landers is that ECD is not some luxury programmatic area to be considered when all the important services — health, education, and so on — are tidily in place. There has been a long tradition of seeing ECD as an expensive extra which better-off sections of society utilize to give their children a head start. Indeed, some Seminar participants chafed at being invited to take an in-depth look at ECD: Why was this relevant for MIIP? In fact, ECD programmes have a proven track record of preventing problems from occurring later in childhood (and adulthood), especially at school; are extremely pertinent in poor communities where mothers, in addition to child care, are heavily burdened with other responsibilities; and can be a good entry point for mobilizing a community behind other useful services. And they do not have to be costly. Programme quality is important, but is rarely correlated with resources, rather with creativity in using proven approaches and sound organization.

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Landers presented a typology of complementary ECD strategies, three of which seemed particularly relevant for MIIP children and their families. These were: the **education of caregivers**, especially parents, in ECD knowledge, skills and practice; the **promotion of community development** with childhood protection as a key value; and the **delivery of services** in organized programmes outside the home. Within all approaches, parental participation was critical. The main adaptive challenge was to develop understanding of traditional child-rearing practices used by ethnic and indigenous groups, and build on them where appropriate. In this process, family members and paraprofessionals can be trained as principal caregivers, and toys and materials can be developed by the community themselves.

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*It is important not to rush things. Allow parents the time to decide what it is they want to learn about. They will then proceed at their own pace, but will be active and involved partners.*

Cairo Arafat

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The subsequent discussion focused on existing experience with ECD programmes among MIIP. In some cases — in Viet Nam, for example — pre-school programmes among linguistic minority groups were used as opportunities for acculturation, to enable children to start school already conversant in Vietnamese. Many ECD programmes in Latin America included ethnic songs, dance and folkloric elements. ECD, in the view of Paolo Basurto, might well provide a pathway to reducing poor learning capacity and low self-esteem of the kind that negatively reinforces notions of cultural inferiority and second-class citizenship. Cairo Arafat from Palestine described how even pre-schools could be politicized: during the Intifada, small children had been taught songs with such lines as “My father has bought me a lovely *kalashnikov*”, and “It is great to be a martyr”.

The overall conclusion was that the central conflict between conformity and diversity surrounding all programming for MIIP could not be evaded even at the earliest age. The challenge is to develop programmes that build on existing traditional patterns and practices and at the same time ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to develop to their full potential.

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### Lessons from Case Studies

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The Seminar then proceeded to examine three ECD case studies, one on **caregiver education (Palestine)**, one on **community development (the Philippines)**, and one on **pre-school service delivery (Myanmar)**. The case studies brought out the specific characteristics of the population groups in question, in addition to describing the programmes.

Palestinians, as Cairo Arafat pointed out, fall into all the categories of MIIP addressed by the Seminar. In such countries as Lebanon and Syria, they are ethnic minorities; in countries all over the Western world, they are immigrants; in the land west of the Jordan River, they are indigenous although the current homes of many of those who have returned ‘home’ since the advent of Palestinian self-rule are not their places of origin. The Palestinian people have been exposed to warfare, occupation, refugee status and strife for over 50 years, and the effects are profound: marginalization, despair and disempowerment. Building the new Palestine entails tackling these phenomena, and this requires mobilizing people to participate actively in society after decades of forced passivity and lack of control over large parts of their daily lives.

The ECD programme therefore had the specific objectives of stimulating community participation, involvement and decision-making, and enriching the lives of children and families by empowering mothers with child-care knowledge, skills and practices. The programme was run under the umbrellas of the Ministries of Social Affairs in the West Bank and Gaza. Thirty NGOs each selected a coordinator. Each was trained in communication, community development, ECD, disabilities prevention and psychosocial health. They in turn identified outreach workers from pre-schools or disability centres, and gave them a one-week course. These then planned their activities in the communities with the coordinators. Thus, 300 community outreach workers were recruited; 120 additional mothers and young women who wanted to get involved came forward to volunteer.

Mothers were reached by word of mouth and via radio, and the outreach workers also targeted some families. Maximum effort was made to implant the idea in the mothers that this was their pro-

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gramme, and that they had the main role in shaping the activities they thought would be most valuable for themselves and their children. The experience of the programme showed that doing things together was an excellent way for people to alleviate their tension and despair. Not every individual problem could be solved, but mothers gained the confidence and ability to take initiatives in their lives, rather than wait for others to come and save them.

The programme in the Philippines was a classic UNICEF-style area-based programme, including a variety of components related to young children, in remote areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Daisy Ano, who presented the study, pointed out that the programme had not been devised to target the special needs faced because of cultural disadvantage, but was pre-indicated by families' poverty. In the Philippines, minority status was, in addition, regarded as a category of 'especially difficult circumstances' (CEDC) affecting children for whom extra measures beyond standard health and education services might be needed. The CEDC link was particularly marked in areas subject to armed conflict, which also correlated with minority areas. The area-based 'integrated services for minorities' programme was intended to address social disadvantage and poor service provision.

This pattern — of a coincidence between socio-economic targeting and service delivery to ethnic minorities — characterized most existing UNICEF programming directed at MIIP groups. Questions outstanding for the Seminar included whether failure to take cultural disadvantage specifically into account impeded or diluted programme benefits, or in other ways affected programme implementation or outcomes. Ano's case study offered some partial answers.

The various evaluations, progress reports and other programme documentation all focused on such indicators as child and maternal mortality and morbidity rates and the goal of reducing geographical disparities. Thus, because the programmatic mind-set was tuned to standard indicators, cultural specifics were not systematically addressed. Nonetheless, they were not altogether invisible. Ano had been able to draw out some general lessons on programming with MIIP groups by

analysing factors that facilitated or hindered programme implementation.

The lessons learned were equally applicable to other programme contexts as to ECD. As in the case of Palestine, a community-based participatory approach, which allows cultural dimensions to emerge, was underscored. Villagers themselves had been invited to make a diagnosis of their situation, and the information thus gathered on cultural beliefs and values provided insights into conditions that perpetuate maternal and child health problems. As a result of this research, the government had been obliged to recognize that universal approaches to programme implementation needed to be adjusted. There was no point in setting up birthing centres, for example, if MIIP mothers invariably delivered their babies at home. Equally, indiscriminate implementation of standard technologies could lead to non-acceptability of projects. In one area, people's regard for water as a communally owned sacred resource led them to reject individual water-points. Other problems of service spread and acceptability could be overcome by training and utilizing service providers indigenous to the community: for vaccination services, for example.

Another dilemma brought out by Ano's study was the difficulty of 'going to scale' and 'replicability'. This article of programmatic faith was always intoned when dealing with specific project interventions tailored to specific groups. Rarely was it recognized just how difficult it is to replicate or scale up community-based projects; the special tailoring process whereby they genuinely respond to felt needs is their make-or-break ingredient, and the standardization implied by replicability is the kiss of death. This reality must be acknowledged in working with MIIP.

The third case study came from Myanmar and concerned the work of an NGO. It was presented by the Reverend Saboi Jum of the Kachin Baptist Convention. The Kachin people, who inhabit a border area in the far north of Myanmar, have been embroiled in insurrections associated with the assertion of their autonomous rights for the past 30 years — rights that the government has been unwilling to concede in spite of agreement to do so at the time of independence. These circumstances have effectively deprived the Kachin people of economic and social

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development. Recently, a cease-fire has been arranged, but the effects of the devastation, and the marginalization and discrimination, continue.

The government has lately been trying to extend social services into the border areas, but resources are very limited. The Kachins themselves have tried to organize some responses to the acute needs of children and families who have lost their livelihoods because of war and face acute stress, including family disintegration. Over 130 Kachin churches have started pre-schools for 3- to 5-year-olds, and have also held classes at weekends and during school holidays. Among other purposes, these schools provide instruction in the mother tongue and help keep alive cultural identity. They have received almost no outside support, except some assistance from UNICEF for the training of local Kachin teachers. The major obstacles are the isolation, remoteness and rugged terrain, and the political climate which affects all initiatives by Kachins and by donors on their behalf.

The Kachin case study was significant for its demonstration of the difficulties of programming activity and resource procurement in environments suffering from acute political discrimination based on ethnicity. Those who most need not only financial resources but technical and organizational assistance may be starved in all contexts. They will have great difficulty in developing ingredients such as learning materials in the mother tongue, or income-generating

projects to pay for running costs and incidentals. The Kachin ECD programme also depends on a 'volunteer teaching' approach which may not prove sustainable; there are also no resources or expertise to carry out monitoring and evaluation exercises to assess programme achievement.

Although some dissatisfaction was expressed with what some participants saw as too abrupt a shift of focus from MIIP to ECD and an insufficiently strong sense of linkage, a number of embryonic principles concerning ECD for MIIP children had emerged by the end of the discussions. They were based on the view that ECD is not a sector, but a set of interrelated aspects of early childhood growth and protection affecting all children including ethnic minority children. The principles included:

- Prevention must be understood as the most cost-effective way of addressing the needs of disadvantaged families and children;
- Programmes should take a holistic perspective and simultaneously address the child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development;
- It is important to be aware of traditional practices and build on their positive aspects;
- It is necessary to analyse changing environments, especially poorly integrated urban neighbourhoods, to see how childhood development among minority groups is being negatively affected;
- The community must be involved in assessment of their situation and in the design of interventions and their implementation.

## IV. LEARNING FOR DIVERSITY: THE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE

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The Seminar placed a great deal of emphasis on education, spending 25 per cent of its time in this subject area. This allocation of time was partly a reflection of the existing UNICEF programming reality: up to now, where UNICEF has noticed cultural difference and designed interventions accordingly, education — especially the development of bilingual education — is the most common programmatic reaction.

Education is unlike health care and other health-related sectors in that technologies are not scientifically standardized in the same kind of way. There may be standard principles governing educational ideas, a standard basic education curriculum, and standard skills to be learned such as literacy and numeracy. But since education is not only a means of imparting skills and knowledge, but also of transmitting culture, beliefs and values, educational systems and content are bound to vary. Indeed, they cannot meet minorities' needs unless respect for diversity is contained within them.

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*What kind of society are we trying to build via education? There are strong arguments for universal values in education. But 'universal' can be a cosmetic for the values of some dominant group.*

Rodolfo Stavenhagen

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Education can, in certain situations, become the battleground on which minorities, or peoples treated as minorities, assert their rights. One case was the 1976 uprising in Soweto by black students who refused to accept schooling in Afrikaans. Today education-based political protest is taking place in Kosovo; Flaka Surroi described how ethnic Albanian teachers have rejected a Serbian-imposed educational system and set up parallel schools. Education can be the medium through which inferiority or subjugation is imposed on a minority group, as exemplified by the Kachin experience of education as a political tool deployed against their separate sense of identity. Equally, education offers an opportunity for learning attitudes of tolerance and skills for conflict resolution. The school therefore has potential as a tension-reducing as well as a tension-exacerbating environment.

Education is an interactive process which knows no boundaries. It begins in the home and fam-

ily where the child first learns how to use language to communicate and absorbs a sense of maternal, paternal and sibling roles as well as a slowly emerging consciousness of self. As the child's horizons expand and he or she begins to develop a relationship with a wider community, the learning environment contains an increasing number of actors influencing the development of attitudes and behaviour. The formal context for learning is the school; although the school is only one part of the total learning environment, the learning process there is at its most intense, and the attitudes and behaviours inculcated in school — including those about one's own social identity and 'the other's' — are formative for adult life. However, education in the broadest sense continues beyond school, outside it, and throughout life in all social contexts.

The Seminar drew on three principal resource persons for its deliberations on education: Richard Maclure of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ottawa; Elaine Furniss, currently UNICEF's Education Advisor in Viet Nam; and Jagdish Gundara of the International Centre for Intercultural Studies in the University of London. Maclure presented an overview of classroom education, with reference to the particular issues of relevance for minority groups; Furniss examined the experience to date with specific educational initiatives for minority children and youth; and Gundara explored the issues surrounding the provision of intercultural and bilingual education in multicultural societies. Each resource person emphasized the balancing act, which had to be redesigned in every given educational situation, to reconcile the two key MIIP principles: the right to be **equal** and the right to be **different**.

### KEY CONCEPT

*Two fundamental rights need to be borne in mind when analysing the situation of MIIP: the right to be equal and the right to be different.*

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Maclure set the tone for the debate by presenting 'a baker's dozen' of contradictions surrounding the ideology of education. Many rationales on which educational systems are based turn out different in the eating than in the cooking. For example, investment in education has been commonly held to be

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essential for economic growth; but in the face of today's economic crises and structural adjustment programmes, the education sector is frequently cut back and seen as a drain on resources. Similarly, education is constantly held up as the chief means of human capital development; but many countries are awash with graduates unable to find work. Within development ideology, education is a means of promoting national unity and citizenship; but today claims to ethnic nationalism or separatism are everywhere articulated — often by the most educated among minority peoples. Education has the capacity to generate upward social mobility; at the same time, education systems reproduce inequality.

Other inherent contradictions are contained in the content and methodology of education. Children are genetically programmed to learn, and if they learn to learn well, education should enable them to fulfil their potential to the maximum. But education also manufactures failures because those who do not do well within the terms of the system are designated second-class. Education is supposed to cultivate the capacity for critical thinking; but it can also be a means of indoctrination. Most education systems are national in origin and are designed to develop conformity to national visions of informed and loyal citizens; thus the culture they transmit is selective and — implicitly or explicitly — designed to enculture nonconformists. For minority children, this may amount to a form of cultural alienation or imperialism. For aboriginal communities in, for example, Canada and Australia, standard education has sometimes led to a traumatizing loss of identity and a predisposition to despair and suicide.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*Most education systems are designed to develop conformity to national visions of informed and loyal citizens. For minority children, this may amount to a form of cultural alienation or imperialism.*

The reactions of MIIP children to the education they receive are varied, ranging from assimilation — which they may positively seek — to various forms of resistance. This resistance may be passive: they may simply select what they learn, and learn how to 'pass the tests' while retaining a sense of their own

identity. Or it may be more overt: they resist by being indisciplined, failing deliberately and dropping out. By resisting, therefore, they may aid and abet the process of their marginalization from and by the mainstream.

On their side, teachers and educational administrators may reinforce the process of marginalization, even though they never consciously set out to rob children of their culture, language or history. They may stereotype or 'stream' MIIP children, so that their underachievement becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Teachers' own ingrained attitudes may reflect majority values, and constitute additional problems for minority children. Parents and the ethnic community, where they interact with education systems at all, may counsel their children to 'play the game', focusing on the economic returns to the group of a child who can perform well in majority terms. And minority children may end up subscribing to, and even fiercely championing their rights to join, the majority culture via its norms.

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*What does it mean to be 'learned'? In Botswana, it is essential to speak English to be eligible for a job, and only people who know English can be 'learned'.*

Mothusi Mogasha

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#### The Search for Appropriate Schooling

The record shows that MIIP children do not generally do well educationally compared to peers in the majority group, as Furniss emphasized in her presentation. Education statistics from around the world, in industrialized as well as developing countries, demonstrate this fact conclusively. Minority children are strongly represented among the categories of out-of-school children, and girls are the most likely to be excluded. This is partly because remote areas, which rural MIIP tend to inhabit, contain fewer schools, and schools of low quality or a perceived lack of curricular relevance.

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*The onus must not always be on the minority group to find a solution to 'their' educational problem.*

Richard Maclure

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Where minority children are in school, attainment tends to be lower than that of their counterparts. Poverty is one major factor: the costs of schooling even where it is theoretically free, including the costs of loss to the family workforce, put education beyond the reach of economically marginalized MIIP groups. Another problem is that the language of schooling is often not the child's mother tongue. There are places where the main language of instruction is the child's third language. In a number of environments, the teacher may not be able to speak the minority children's own language, so there is no possibility of translation.

Another problem is posed by the extra degree of exclusion typically experienced by girls. In Viet Nam, the girls of one minority group spend literally years preparing elaborate clothing for their future roles as wives. They are therefore removed from school at the age of 9 or 10 to start their sewing in order to complete the garments before marriage at the age of 14 or 15. In other settings, traditional practices, such as the seclusion of women in Afghanistan, enjoin parents to keep girls out of school.

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*Could we accept the idea of education for national harmony instead of for monocultural national unity?*

Savitri Suwansathit

*Everything depends on the underlying motive and what is meant by 'national harmony'. If the motive is good . . .*

Rev. Saboi Jum

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The question of 'what is appropriate education for minority children' underlay much of the discussion on education. But the extension of the education system to reach remote minority and indigenous children was not overlooked, nor the adaptations that such an extension might require: for example, multi-grade schools, different school timetables to take account of farming seasons, problems facing teachers working in areas with sparsely settled populations, and boarding schools for areas where populations are nomadic.

The case study presented by Ann Dykstra, UNICEF's Education Project Officer in Cambodia,

focused primarily on issues related to outreach of a primary system to minority children marginalized by geographical isolation. In Cambodia, a complete overhaul of primary education had been required by the emergence from years of internal disruption and warfare, during part of which schooling had been totally abolished.

Dykstra described the huge challenges confronted by the Ministry of Education in fulfilling needs for classrooms, teachers, textbook production in the Khmer language, and its efforts to develop the capacity to put an effective primary education system in place, administer and pay for it. At present, minority groups were still much less well-served than the majority population, but various outreach strategies — including floating schools for fishing populations — were being gradually put in place. Members of minority groups were being given special teacher training, which was regarded as an essential element of the outreach strategy. Participation by parents and communities was being encouraged. The case study illustrated how hard it is to separate physical issues of educational extension from qualitative issues relating to who teaches, what they teach, educational tools and methods, and how the system is run.

These were the main emphases of most of the discussions and case study presentations. What were the qualitative changes needed so that education was 'appropriate' to the needs of minority peoples' children?

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*Appropriate education may conflict with effective education. Effective education allows you to succeed according to majority norms. Appropriate education may simply be a romanticized version of education, and then it will reinforce marginalization.*

Miguel Ugalde

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The possibilities explored included:

- **curriculum adaptation**, for example by adapting textbooks to make them meaningful to the lifestyles pursued by minority groups;
- **bilingual teaching**, meaning that the first few years of schooling would be performed at least partially in the mother tongue while the children learned as a foreign language the national tongue, to which teaching would later transfer;

- **after-school or weekend classes**, which would allow minority children in existing majority schools to keep pace with peers;
- **improvements in teacher training**, which, as a minimum, would reduce the ingrained prejudice of teachers from the majority culture towards minority peoples;
- **recruitment and training of minority and indigenous teachers**, especially in areas almost exclusively inhabited by minorities;
- **decentralization of education structures**, to allow more local say over schools' management and educational content;
- **involvement and participation of minority parents** in decision-making at the schools attended by their children.

Choices about which approach or mix of approaches would constitute 'appropriate education' in any given minority setting would depend on a number of variables including the availability of resources and the political climate; it must also depend on indigenous or minority peoples' own choices. As Maclure pointed out, "There are no quick fixes or formal solutions. There will always be trade-offs between approaches aimed at respecting difference, and approaches aimed at equality."

The dilemmas do not end with the attempt to identify the right package of ingredients for 'appropriate education'. As Furniss observed, there are even greater difficulties down the road. How is educational accomplishment to be measured? Tests tend to be biased in favour of those attuned to majority knowledge and behavioural norms. A suitable test for a San bushman or a Crow Indian might include the ability to recognize different kinds of animal tracks. Is it right to assess minority children's learning achievement by national learning achievement scales?

As well as the need for minority children to navigate between their own identity and that of the majority culture, the Seminar also stressed the need of the majority to learn to appreciate the cultures of minorities: equality cuts both ways. However, it was often the case that where this occurred, the activity of the majority — learning a minority language, dressing up in exotic costumes and playing curious musical instruments — was more an entertainment than a serious educational task. This dilemma was

probably unresolvable. At least entertainment was an improvement on disparagement, even if it did not altogether remove notions of inferiority.

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### What Works?

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In the search for 'what works?', several case studies were presented. Some of these illustrated the various 'alternative' ingredients in action. The first of these was presented by Cliff Meyers of UNICEF Nepal, and concerned a project in which the production of Learner-Generated Materials (LGM) had formed part of adult education activity among the minority Tharu people.

A local NGO had brought together groups of 15-25 Tharu women graduates of adult literacy courses and conducted five-day writers' workshops. The women had engaged in writing exercises in which they drafted, shared, revised and edited their own stories, songs, dramas, poems, riddles and essays on a wide range of topics. Over time, five texts were produced and published in quantities of 5,000-8,000 copies, which were then used as course books in the post-literacy programme.

Meyers had undertaken evaluative research into LGM activities in Nepal, and found that these learner-generated texts were extremely popular with readers. Two of the Tharu language texts were the first of their kind. They used a simple, spoken Tharu, written in the national script. Village readers found them more interesting, easier to read and more relevant than educational materials prepared in Kathmandu. People felt motivated to follow their messages, stating, "If our sisters can write about development issues, we feel capable of carrying them out". The texts also made them feel that Tharu knowledge is important. The authors reported that their relations and status in the community had improved, and that they were more confident and more closely involved in community affairs.

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*Curriculum development is not understood in UNICEF. This is where the government states the purposes it has in mind for education. In UNICEF there is a tendency to think of education as a catch-all for other problems — AIDS prevention, for example.*

Ann Dykstra

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A case study presented by Savitri Suwansathit of the Ministry of Education in Thailand introduced a rather different set of inhibitions to the education of cultural minorities, particularly the retention of girls of the northern hill-tribes in school. Since the 1990 'Education For All' Conference in Jomtien, Thailand had been committed to the universal extension of compulsory primary education. The enrolment rate was now 94 per cent; the remaining 6 per cent not in school were mostly children of minorities. However, respecting educational rights and respecting cultural rights could clash. The reason that many girls of the northern hill-tribes were not in school was related to culturally-based parental expectations.

Interviews conducted in 1994 with children leaving primary school in northern districts had revealed that a high number did not regard staying in school as an option because their parents had made prior prepaid agreements with agents to send them to work in Bangkok or elsewhere. The traditional cultural value was that adolescent girls should spend the time between physical maturity and marriage earning money for their parents. In today's world, parents set much store by materialist values, and this combined perniciously with the demands of the entertainment industry for female sexual workers.

In some hill-tribe families, three generations of women had worked in prostitution, and this mode of earning was culturally accepted. The Ministry of Education was now involved in putting into place a number of strategies to change this situation, including the provision of scholarships to keep girls in school. Community-based efforts were being supported to change parental values and develop alternative income opportunities which depended on education and training. The promotion of schooling for ethnic minority girls was therefore being actively supported both to reach the Education For All goal and as a strategy against their sexual exploitation. So far, it was too early to judge the results of the programme, but the indications were that schooling was being more highly valued and was helping to keep at least some girls out of the sex industry.

A case study on bilingual education in Viet Nam illustrated the correlation between the political environment and the prospects for putting in place a primary syllabus which includes the possibility of mother

tongue instruction for minority children. The history of language use and education in Viet Nam reflects the story of different political ascendancies. During the long Vietnamese struggle against external colonists and invaders, the loyalty of minority peoples to the national cause was frequently in doubt. Today, the national policy is to reach out to minorities in an effort to prevent old divisions and tensions from re-emerging.

Whereas minority peoples account for 13 per cent of the population, they represent only 4 per cent of national school enrolment. Extra efforts are being made to provide access to primary education while respecting minority language and culture. The policy in Viet Nam is for all students to learn and use Vietnamese as the national language. Because there are high drop-out and repetition rates in the early primary years among minority pupils, pre-schools have been set up for five-year-olds so that they can be conversant in Vietnamese before they start school. Once in school, minority students may learn their mother tongue as a subject from Grade Three (if it is one of the 11 languages already developed for use in school). Ethnic minority language teaching is not encouraged at earlier grade levels because it is thought confusing to teach two romanized scripts simultaneously.

UNICEF has for some time been supporting a multigrade and bilingual education project directed at ethnic minority children living in remote and mountainous areas. Its special target is to bring more girls into school. The original emphasis was on building classrooms and supplying equipment, but now it has changed to teacher training and the preparation of localized bilingual materials. During the past two years, bilingual books have been produced in Khmer, H'Mong, Bahnar and Cham, and 11 Teacher In-service Training Modules have been developed. The project helped to achieve Universal Primary Education in four new provinces in 1996.

One of the next steps is to establish Literacy Production Centres in provinces where these four minority languages are used, so as to decentralize the development of literacy materials and produce local language books. The model for this work is a project in Alice Springs, Australia, which has been visited by Vietnamese project counterparts. In August 1996, the Ministry of Education held a workshop for linguists, anthropologists and educationalists to

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develop action plans for the development of bilingual texts on local topics, linked to the current national curriculum for primary schools. In spite of problems, including shortage of minority teachers and resistance to using the mother tongue for instruction in the initial primary years, the results of UNICEF-assisted work are encouraging.

### **Intercultural Education for Multicultural Societies**

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During the deliberations on education, Rodolfo Stavenhagen referred to the work of a recent UNESCO International Commission on Education for the 21st Century. This Commission had tried to address the common attributes of education from which everyone in the world should benefit. Reconciling the materialist view of education — which prevails in Western thought — with the spiritualist view held in other cultures was one of the main tensions within the Commission. In India, for example, ancient wisdom has been transmitted and learned for 3,000 years, to be upset by the recent introduction of Western instrumentalized education systems.

#### **KEY CONCEPT**

##### *The four UNESCO principles:*

- *learning to know*
- *learning to do*
- *learning to be*
- *learning to live together*

The UNESCO Commission concluded that four major principles govern the aims of all education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Thus, respect for multiculturalism is a cardinal value in current international thinking on education.

'Learning to live together' could be described as the subtext of Jagdish Gundara's presentation to the Seminar on 'Intercultural and bilingual education in multicultural society'. One important issue was the way in which religion and religious knowledge are handled in education systems. Religion is one of the main contexts in which cultural and ethnic diversity, intolerance and antagonism are played out; and yet the right to believe and worship in your own way is critical to minority rights.

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*The enhancement of minority rights is a way of fostering common identity. But it can also foster greater divisions. You can argue that multicultural education will fragment people because minorities who have been oppressed have an axe to grind.*

Richard Maclure

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Many societies are witnessing an increase in the influence of religion on governments, even in countries such as the United States that are overtly secular. Gundara suggested that secularism — whereby the rule of law rather than of organized faith governs relationships between citizens — whatever its merits for guiding relationships between humanity's individual and group components, does not seem to answer people's need for a safe and inspiring framework for their lives. Secularist thought — from which all international human rights instruments derive their inspiration — does not seem to have the same power over the imagination that religious faith exerts.

The basis of interdependency ought to be, on the one hand, a mutual respect for different belief systems, and on the other, an enabling of diverse groups to understand common rights and responsibilities. 'Positive secularism' should provide a framework for asserting complementarity between the inculcation of specific religious faith, and the multicultural teaching and learning of subjects such as literature, history, geography and science. However, it is easier to theorize about the balance to be struck between that part of education which has to do with religious faith and that part underpinned by a universal set of shared values than to realize the balance in practice. Some religious groups want their own schools, implying a special slant to the whole of learning; and some ethnic groups — nomads, Gypsies — hold beliefs and live lives that make it difficult for their children to go to school at all.

Given the weakness of secularism compared to religion as a force, and given the different features of communality, can schools impose an across-the-board value system satisfying all members of the multicultural society? Is it really possible for teachers to instil in their students the notion of a 'common good'? Education and the school play an important

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part in the socialization of the individual, so this ought to be an aim. As well as its pedagogic function, the school plays other institutional roles: it is a safe place for children, an environment where all have equal opportunities and which demonstrates the ethical principles it teaches; and it is where many children learn how to interact with the wider world both during childhood and beyond. Within the school, a common and shared culture can be developed to counter 'ethnicization' both in school and the wider society. If children do not experience non-discrimination, respect for diversity and democratic expression of different culturally-based opinions in school, they will not carry these values forward in life.

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*Does difference really have to be ironed out? I am arguing that difference is endemic to humanity. What has become a problem is that difference is regarded as deficiency by the dominants.*

Jagdish Gundara

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Gundara identified certain ingredients needed to support intercultural education. One was intercultural teacher education with emphasis on children's rights. At the minimum, teachers should themselves not be xenophobic, racist or intolerant of other faiths; at the best, they should be made aware of classroom methods that work in mixed cultural settings.

Teacher training curricula should avoid ethnocentrism and respect plurality. Teachers and youth workers may also need to learn how to mediate between peer groups who develop their own autonomous youth cultures and indulge in ethnic and racist competition. School-community links can help counteract these growing tendencies, which have been much commented on in Europe. Finally, sports and other extracurricular activities can contribute to the development of shared values and respect for mutual rights.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*Discrimination occurs when the 'different' is regarded as 'deficient' by the dominant; teachers must not wittingly or unwittingly promote such ideas.*

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The theme of intercultural education was reflected in a number of case studies, including some of those already cited. Another example was a case study from Peru, in which a variety of UNICEF-assisted activities designed to promote the rights of indigenous peoples — in this case, peoples of the Amazon — were presented.

Egidio Crotti described how, in cooperation with an NGO, an itinerant multimedia exhibition had been developed using photos, crafts, paintings, statistics relating to children, ethnographic information and videos. This exhibition has been mounted at two national museums, three universities in Lima, and at various schools and other sites. Educational materials were developed to accompany the exhibition. Its purpose was to present indigenous peoples' culture and lifestyle to the majority population, alongside information about their rights — including their right to be different. Thousands of students and schoolchildren have seen the exhibition, and television coverage of it has helped promote a debate on multiculturalism, and exchanges between indigenous and other cultural groups.

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*Who controls what is going on in the name of education? A pluralist position can be just as doctrinaire as — for example — a fundamentalist position.*

Elaine Furniss

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A similar theme was presented by two speakers — Mariangela Bavicchi from UNICEF Geneva and José Juan Ortiz Bru of the Spanish Committee for UNICEF — who discussed the 'education for development' work of UNICEF National Committees. This area of Committee activity has grown in importance in recent years, and its character has been redefined to accord with the principles enshrined in the CRC. 'Development education' used to be about teaching children in the North about children in the South; 'education for development' has universalist values equally applicable in both North and South. At its heart are ideas of developing attitudes of cultural respect, toleration towards other peoples and their values and ways of life, as well as creating an environment that supports the peaceful coexistence of all the world's peoples.

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One partner of UNICEF's National Committees has been the Council of Europe and its various programmes in support of toleration towards ethnic minorities, particularly the migrant workers who have borne a burden of racism and hostility from some elements of host country populations. A theme UNICEF has tackled is that of 'images and perceptions': the stereotyping, often reinforced by media simplifications, which fosters impressions of 'otherness' and inferiority and can promote racial or religious prejudice. Ortiz Bru described 'education for development' as "an approach to learning which aims to build global citizenship". Other themes tackled under this banner include:

- **interdependence:** seeing the world as a system, understanding the web of relationships in that system and appreciating the delicate balance between parts of the web and their interactions;
- **social justice:** learning about the diverse ways in which human rights can be denied or promoted;
- **conflict and conflict resolution:** learning that the clash of opinions and ideas can form part of a healthy debate in a democratic society, and that violence is not a necessary outcome; skills for resolving conflicts in nonviolent ways can be learned;
- **change and the future:** learning that decisions taken today can and will shape the future world; stimulating children to imagine a just and peaceful future and how to help build it.

The presentation on UNICEF National Committee work and its back-up at the European level indicated a new direction within UNICEF thinking, namely that National Committees are no longer regarded as vehicles only for generating funds and information focused on children in other parts of the world, but that they have a part to play in influencing policies and public attitudes towards children in their own countries. Since children of immigrants and minorities often feature among the poorest and most discriminated against groups in any population, work in the area of MIIP is an important starting point in promoting childhood protection in industri-

alized countries. Many Seminar participants underlined the need for better mechanisms for exchange between National Committees and Field Offices to pursue common agendas.

Group work on education focused on identifying principles to be applied in appropriate policies and programmes for the education of MIIP children and families, and in the pursuit of interculturalism as a basis for a multi-ethnic and peaceful world. Certain key principles emerged: the principle of partnership and of full participation of minority peoples in education systems designed on their behalf; the principle of mutual toleration and intercultural respect, starting from within ourselves, which all education systems should be based upon; the principle of flexibility and sensitivity in responding to different combinations of political, social, economic and cultural disadvantage; the principle that the majority needs to do as much learning about the minority as the minority is forced to do about the majority in order to survive in the cultural mainstream.

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*At what age is intolerance generated? Maybe it starts with the very young child. But I would suggest that adolescence is much more important. But this is not a group that UNICEF has focused much upon.*

Rodolfo Stavenhagen

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Specific ways in which UNICEF could absorb ideas emerging from these discussions into its educational work in both industrialized and developing countries are covered more fully in Chapter Six. Steve Umemoto, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, assisted the thought process by preparing a visual expression of all the roadblocks suffered by MIIP children along the path to successful educational achievement, and the consequences — low levels of literacy, high rates of drop-out, limited future prospects, frustration and dislocation — in failing to overcome them.

## V. ADDRESSING MINORITY ISSUES FROM OTHER DIRECTIONS

### Integrated Community-based Approaches

Other than education, the main UNICEF programmatic context in which the needs of ethnic and indigenous minority groups have been addressed is area-based programming. Some of the case studies brought to the Seminar were of this kind. The Philippines' programme for ethnic minority areas presented by Daisy Ano was multi-pronged, delivering a range of components, from maternal and child health to water supply to women in development (including functional literacy). (For lessons learned from this case study, see Chapter Three.)

The need to factor into situation analysis a specific focus on MIIP groups, including data collection on key woman and child well-being indicators such as mortality and morbidity, and MIIP access to services, was a recurring theme of the Seminar. Many participants suggested that, using the CRC for legitimization, the situation analysis process could be used to identify discriminations suffered by children of MIIP groups, including qualitative discriminations such as those suffered by girls, as well as minorities' relative lack of access to services. Too often, it was suggested, UNICEF programme documentation had been inclined to understate problems related to ethnicity because of government sensitivity.

One country programme that had already set out on a corrective path was the one in Paraguay. Miguel Ugalde, Assistant Representative in Asunción, charted UNICEF's course of action following the discovery early in the 1990s that, according to UNICEF's situation analysis for Paraguay, the indigenous populations did not exist. Yet the Guaraní are such an important influence in the country that their language had prevailed against the colonizing Spanish: 42 per cent of Paraguayans do not speak Spanish, and 50 per cent are bilingual in Guaraní and Spanish.

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*A country with such deep heritage of Guaraní language and culture cannot watch impassively the imminent extinction of its ethnic minorities.*

Miguel Ugalde

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The first step taken by UNICEF Paraguay following their discovery was to analyse census data

and develop a picture of the settlement patterns of indigenous populations, and combine this with information about mortality rates and other social indicators. Among the revelations was that, in 1992, while the country's infant mortality rate (IMR) was 42 per 1,000 live births, the indigenous populations had rates starting at 64, rising to 186. Similarly, the illiteracy rate for the country was 19 per cent; but for the indigenous populations, it ranged between 42 and 94 per cent. The same story was repeated for access to safe water, sanitation and electricity. UNICEF then set itself the task of identifying the immediate, underlying and basic causes of these phenomena, including such causes as the ecological damage and sequestration of land imposed on Indian peoples because of economic extraction, notably forest destruction.

UNICEF based its justification of a programme component for the indigenous peoples on the violation of indigenous peoples' rights. (It was also noted that, by the standards of the CRC, Indians too violated their children's rights: infanticide of girls was fairly common, as was early and forced marriage.) UNICEF also recognized from the outset that the nature of the MIIP programme would have to be different. For example, indigenous peoples' concept of health implies complete harmony between the physical, spiritual and social elements of the human being; it is not predicated on technological interventions to prevent or cure physical 'disease'. If it was the policy of the programme to change this perception, and create services on which the indigenous people became dependent, their last state might be worse than their first — especially if the services were unsustainable, poorly run, or required payments the people could not afford.

Conditions for intervention were carefully laid down. Partnerships and alliances had to be built with the indigenous peoples; their felt needs had to be the starting point for action; flexibility and feedback must be keynotes; community mechanisms should be used and strengthened; and projects should be self-sustaining. But these principles, however valid, did not overcome many critical dilemmas the programme faced.

In the context of religious beliefs, should respect for tribal rites and shamans (religious lead-

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ers) transcend respect for human rights, including gender parity? Should the tribal justice system prevail? — in which case appealing to the national law to assert rights over traditional lands threatened with sequestration would be inconsistent. Should hunting and traditional slash-and-burn agriculture be used for food production, or should modern agricultural technology be introduced? Similar dilemmas confronted the quest for appropriate education and health systems. And although these dilemmas were not new to NGOs who have worked in indigenous areas, answers were not immediately forthcoming.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*Where space is created for dialogue and collective learning by minority groups, many dilemmas they confront concerning majority values can be worked out by MIIP themselves.*

In some instances, indigenous peoples might need to be persuaded that they could change a practice (for example, female genital mutilation) without compromising their cultural integrity. In others, as in the case of property ownership and land use, they would have to decide among the various options after due consideration of the implications. The ultimate dilemma was that if they did not make compromises of some kinds, they would be unlikely to survive as collectivities.

The Paraguay case study was very important for the Seminar in that it demonstrated existing UNICEF MIIP activity in three important areas: situation analysis; operational issues; and qualitative dilemmas that area-based programmes had to address when working with peoples holding radically different beliefs from the mainstream.

The UNICEF-assisted programme for social development among Vietnamese minorities also fell into the area-based services category. A case study on this programme was presented by Le Hong Loan of UNICEF Viet Nam. The Vietnamese government has a policy of affirmative action towards areas of extreme rural poverty and backwardness, which coincides with minority-inhabited mountainous areas. The UNICEF-assisted programme began in 1993, and was intended to repair the far higher rates of young child mortality and illiteracy experienced

among the ethnic minorities than among the majority Kinh Vietnamese. The goals of the programme have become more pressing since the economic reform process in Viet Nam is tending to increase socio-economic disparities between highland and lowland areas.

The main problems the programme has faced have to do with ineffective targeting and with the tendency of programmes in Viet Nam to be designed centrally for a notionally homogeneous population. For example, the Vietnamese government has up to now defined 'programme participation' as the mobilization of people behind programmes designed outside the communities to meet problems defined outside the communities. This has meant that the ethnic minority communities have been involved in implementation, but not with analysis of their situation and the search for appropriate solutions.

In the next phase of the programme, this problem is to be addressed operationally. The missing link was identified as the lack of a local mechanism for public consultation and the deployment of existing knowledge, skills and resources. Therefore, a new mechanism is to be set up: the Hamlet Development Centre. This does not officially exist in the formal administrative structure. It allows for a decentralization of the project planning and implementation process. Thus, in the Vietnamese example, qualitative issues are being addressed by a change in the participatory mechanism, which will allow both for physical difficulties — such as geographical isolation — and cultural differences to be better integrated into the various educational, health care, water supply and women's development activities.

Finally, an area-based case study was also presented by Clara Scherer of the Mexican Integral Family Development Organization (DIF). The programme was being conducted in the very poor state of Oaxaca among indigenous minorities, focusing on women and children. Here too, regular indicators demonstrated a fundamental inequity between the socio-economic condition of minorities compared with the national average. The programme was adapted to cultural circumstances and designed with respect for the idea of local cultures as living and dynamic. Local concepts of 'education' and women's role in society were integrated.

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Services included the provision of water supplies and latrines; health education and care using traditional medicines as well as techniques such as oral rehydration therapy; education, including on children's rights; recreation; and the use of drama and art. Scherer emphasized the importance of name and birth registration: this presented problems as some ethnic groups do not finally settle on a child's name until the child is well into his or her teens. Adaptations to cultural norms included the use of different language versions for posters on children's rights: minority groups themselves worked out which CRC articles were being violated, and then developed their own posters and messages for use in plays and other communications channels.

#### **Discriminations Affecting Girls**

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One of the topics to emerge at different points throughout the Seminar was the special discriminations affecting girls of ethnic minorities and indigenous groups. The case of the girls in the northern hill-tribes of Thailand being enticed or trafficked into prostitution was one instance; very early and forced marriage was noted as a frequent characteristic of minority lifestyles, including among the Gypsies of Europe; the exclusion of girls from school and high levels of female illiteracy were mentioned in many case studies; and girl infanticide was mentioned in relation to Paraguay.

Two presentations primarily focused on girls. One was a case study concerning the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, where girl oppression is culturally and religiously driven. The other presentation linked MIIP girls with an occupation that reinforced their exclusion and marginalization: domestic service. In this context, 'senders' — parents, families and recruiters — and employers, who typically belong to the majority culture, are both party to the process of exploitation and denial of rights.

The case study on Afghanistan was presented by Alan Brody, now serving UNICEF in Beijing but previously based in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a country, according to Brody, all of whose peoples have characteristics of ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples. The mountainous territory they inhabit

is extremely poor, and the various tribes and clans (mostly Pathans) are fiercely independent, attuned to hardship and trained to glorify martial valour. In the 19th century, the Afghan peoples were prey to the manoeuvres of Russian and British imperialist interests; in the late 20th, to the manoeuvres of the Cold War. Afghanistan was one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world and enjoyed only a thin patina of national unity, even before it began to suffer the destruction arising from its role as a proxy warrior in the final chapter of the Cold War.

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*If minorities cannot assess clearly their real situation and power relations with majorities, mobilization around rights denied may only endanger them or lead to their enhanced oppression.*

Alan Brody

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Traditional customs place particular constraints on female education among the Afghan peoples. The Pathan code of behaviour places a high premium on family honour, whose maintenance depends on keeping the family's womenfolk from the view of other men. Any woman leaving the family compound has to be completely covered, the garment including netting over the eyes. During the 1960s and 1970s, the influence of modernization began to erode the tradition of total seclusion and improve women's participation in education, social and professional life. However, when Afghanistan was engulfed by war in the 1980s, these processes were reversed. Resistance was powered by the mobilization of religious fervour. Used originally against the Communists, this fervour is now the rallying point for a continuing armed struggle among factions and clans. This has led to a political, economic, social and cultural debacle.

The Taliban movement, which has recently gained significant military ground, is an extreme fundamentalist movement drawing its recruits from the Koranic schools set up in refugee camps in Pakistan. Their self-discipline and respect for Koranic norms have given them appeal to a war-weary population. Their views on the strictures to be imposed on women are so extreme as to affect the access of all females to basic education and health care. In areas controlled by the Taliban, women are commonly confined to the household. This view of the nature of the 'protection of women

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and girls' is so particular as to challenge the ingenuity of UNICEF and all international organizations subscribing to human rights conventions including the CRC. Until recently, UNICEF managed to pursue a 'backdoor' approach to education, using such ideas as the promotion of 'child care in Islam' and support for home schools. Now even these are put in doubt.

The case study on Afghanistan did not lead to any conclusions regarding the specific implications for UNICEF. But it did illustrate in an extreme way the power of cultural and ethnic forces to seize the popular imagination in environments where the modern and secularist state has not become established, and where for reasons that include the machinations of outsiders, the rule of law has completely broken down. The brunt of social collapse normally falls on women and children, but in Afghanistan this particular tendency was being played out in an extraordinary way. How the international community, including UNICEF, would respond was currently still in the balance.

The presentation on children in domestic service by Maggie Black started from an angle similar to that of Savitri Suwansathit's earlier presentation from Thailand: the occupational association between membership of a minority and recruitment into a servile type of work, in this case domestic service. (Black has been working with the NGO Anti-Slavery International on the issue of child servitude in domestic work.) However, ethnicity might be a coincidental variable.

Most children in domestic work were recruited as a product of the extreme poverty of their parents; this poverty already stamped them as inferior human beings to whom the employer was providing a beneficent opportunity. Where the child domestic worker also came from an ethnic minority background, as was often the case in the Philippines and in Latin American countries, this might well reinforce the employer's attitude of superiority and the degree of exploitation. It could also reinforce a child's sense of isolation, particularly where she had to learn a different language from her mother tongue.

Black's work on child domestics had mainly focused on situation analysis, and the need for

research into this much neglected area of child economic exploitation. Data were needed about the prevalence of child domestic work, the nature of employment, the supply and demand factors, and the impact of their employment on the children concerned. The need for data collection and the inadequacy of existing data about MIIP had been a common theme of the Seminar; in this context, questions concerning domestic workers' ethnic background and affinity could be factored into the methodology Anti-Slavery International was developing.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*Not all MIIP are in geographically distinct locations; many form part of the general population. Discriminatory practices against MIIP may coincide with their recruitment into low-paid and servile occupations; this is a potential programmatic route.*

Information about child domestic servants' ethnic or geographical affiliation, social and cultural background and language facilitated the development of both preventive actions — such as awareness-building among 'sending' communities — and of service delivery. Being able to meet up with members of their own ethnic group placed in similar situations could help overcome feelings of isolation and despair, as some programmes in the Philippines and elsewhere had shown. Psychological stress was common among this group of child workers.

#### Minority Children in Conflict with the Law

In many countries, children of immigrant or other minority groups feature disproportionately among those coming into conflict with the law and deprived of their liberty. Ralph Krech, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer of the United Nations Office in Vienna, told the Seminar that he was pleased that UNICEF was beginning to demonstrate some concern towards children who found themselves in this predicament. UNICEF traditionally viewed children through the lens of childhood innocence; but the dilemma confronting society in relation to this group of children was that they have been designated non-innocent — or criminal.

## The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Children Deprived of Their Liberty

### ARTICLE 37:

- No child may be subjected to torture or cruel or degrading punishment; no capital punishment or life imprisonment;
- No unlawful or arbitrary arrest; imprisonment only to be used as a measure of last resort;
- Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect, and in a manner taking into account the needs of his or her age; shall be separated from imprisoned adults; and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family.

### ARTICLE 40:

- The child in conflict with the law is to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, taking into account the desirability of the child's social reintegration and assumption of a constructive social role;
- Certain guarantees apply to the child accused of infringing the law, including the right to be presumed innocent, to have legal assistance, to have the matter determined by competent and impartial authorities, to have an interpreter if the child cannot understand or speak the language used in court;
- States should establish special laws, procedures, authorities and institutions for children in conflict with the law;
- States should establish a minimum age of criminal responsibility;
- Wherever possible, non-custodial treatment programmes should be utilized, including care, counseling, probation, supervision orders, education and vocational training.

In recent years, the rising incidence of juvenile delinquency and increasing seriousness of youthful crime has been of concern to many governments. In a climate that demands punishment and correction for children and young people in conflict with the law, it is important that effective methods are found of reducing delinquency and that the rights of the institutionalized child and juvenile are respected.

One of the features of prison life for children in many countries is that living conditions in prison are very poor: adequate food, reasonable accommodation and health care services may be lacking. Children who have no families to offer them support while in detention — for instance, children surviving on the street — may barely be able to survive. There

are few, if any, opportunities for education or the fulfilment of other children's rights, such as the right to recreation or to express an opinion.

Such problems are magnified for institutionalized children of MIIP backgrounds. Children in prison have very few means of protecting their own culture, preserving or practising it. They may instead be attacked by other children or otherwise discriminated against because of their culture; and this is a situation from which they cannot escape. Xenophobia is common in many prisons, and traditional cultures are subsumed into the 'prison culture': survival in this culture is the child's only option. In some instances, the culture in which the child has been socialized may inhibit the ability to

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cope with loss of liberty. In Australia, for example, there is a high suicide rate among Aboriginal detainees.

Krech reviewed existing international instruments that could be used to protect the children of minorities deprived of their liberty. Although the existing rules did not specifically refer to MIIP children, they did assert the right of all such children to respect for civil, economic, political, social or cultural rights to which they were entitled under national and international law and compatible with their loss of liberty. Certain articles of the CRC applied, notably those on non-discrimination (Article 2), the "best interests of the child" (Article 3), the rights to survival and development (Article 6), the right to enjoyment of culture (Article 30), as well as Articles 37, 39 and 40, which contain provisions on juvenile justice and the rights of detained juveniles.

A number of other standards were also reviewed, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, known as the Beijing Rules. These were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985 and set out desirable principles and practice for juvenile justice. These had been followed by the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, known as the Riyadh Guidelines, and the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, both of which had been passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The Riyadh Guidelines include measures for the protection of young persons who are neglected, abandoned or abused, seen as 'at risk' situations for conflict with the law. The Rules for the Protection of Juveniles advocate the least possible use of deprivation of liberty, especially in prisons and in other closed institutions. Specific principles are laid down for juveniles held in any form of detention, including their separation from adults and other provisions designed to reduce their exposure to harmful influences.

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*One of the problems with juvenile justice is that politicians think they know all the issues, and they constantly misuse statistics.*

Ralph Krech

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Krech suggested that these various instruments did provide a framework for protecting MIIP children in conflict with the law, but more work needed to be done in interpreting the standards in the light of these groups' special needs. Also needed was to raise public awareness among the judiciary, lawyers and police on the fact that MIIP children are treated unequally when it comes to institutional placement. Criminological research indicates that ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in prison. Recent research in Australia, for example, revealed that in 1996, an indigenous juvenile was 21 times more likely to be held in prison than a non-indigenous youth.

The overrepresentation of MIIP juveniles in crime statistics is thought to result partly from the fact that the majority distrusts them and is wary of any behaviour that appears suspicious. Criminal action by them is therefore more noticed and reported than that by inconspicuous members of the population. Reactions by the justice system may also be harsher even if not predicated on overt discrimination; pre-trial detention may be imposed to avoid nonresidential populations moving on and escaping justice, for example.

A case study on legal issues concerning immigrants in Thailand was presented to the Seminar by Pisawat Sukonthapan of the Thammasat University Law School and the Mekong Region Law Centre. MRLC is primarily addressing the problems of very poor and undereducated aliens in Thailand, many of whom have emigrated from neighbouring Myanmar without the appropriate legal permission. Their purpose is to seek work and higher wages than are available at home. Altogether, there are thought to be some 650,000 illegal immigrants in Thailand from neighbouring countries, of whom a proportion of between one third and two thirds are from Myanmar. MRLC runs workshops and training programmes for police and lawyers dealing with this problem, and legal aid clinics and other services for the illegal immigrants.

Sukonthapan examined the comparative chances in Thailand of immigrants of various backgrounds, including the situation faced by their children. It was evident that immigrants with resources, or who were skilled or professionally qualified, were

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more welcome in Thailand than those from poverty-stricken backgrounds. The Myanmar, even though they may be of an ethnic group that does not accept Myanmar nationality, will not easily be able to obtain legal permission to stay in the country. Because of their illegal status, they hide themselves, which includes keeping their children out of school. Other disadvantages for children include the fact that birth on Thai soil does not gain the child of illegally resident parents Thai nationality. Such a child may remain stateless.

This case study told an age-old story of families enduring deprivation or oppression in their native land undertaking migration to another country in search of hope and better opportunities. Questions concerning what is 'wrong' and illegal coincide according to a given set of circumstances and majority-driven values. In today's world, the minority or indigenous person trying to gain a foothold on a better life via migration may well find him- or herself in a losing situation given most countries' attitudes towards what are known as 'economic refugees'.



## VI. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR UNICEF OF ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF MIIP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

During the last day and a half of the Seminar, participants examined how to absorb into their future work the many issues and dilemmas raised from the process of discussion and reflection. In groups and individually, they sought answers to the question: Where do we go from here?

For participants from certain countries, the overall question of how far, if at all, UNICEF could pursue the rights of children and families of minorities was very difficult to determine. Duru Tobi of UNICEF Nigeria asked: "Would drawing attention to ethnic minority concerns not be interpreted by Government as a subversive act designed to rake up old ethnic wounds that should have been left well alone to mend? Is it best to pick your way carefully, trying assiduously to win converts and whittle away resistance, or is extreme caution a recipe for inaction?"

### KEY CONCEPT

*For UNICEF, the most difficult dilemmas are posed when governments themselves practise or actively support discrimination against MIIP.*

This overall dilemma was one that applied in many countries where confrontation with the majority cultures represented by government could well prove self-destructive and ultimately do nothing for the minorities it was supposed to aid. However, the nuanced response based on persuasion and the qui-

etly principled stand should never be abandoned as a way forward — albeit one less than wholly satisfactory. In some settings, it might be necessary to emphasize socio-economic or other forms of disadvantage as a surrogate for drawing attention to ethnic disadvantage. However, while this might be adopted as a strategic approach in a political climate hostile to minority claims, political sensitivity should not be a reason for UNICEF itself to neglect the MIIP dimension in its own situation analysis and programming work.

Participants were invited in groups to explore the implications of Seminar discussions for situation analysis, programme planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. They were to consider the political, social, economic, legal and cultural realms; look at the various levels — international, regional, national and subnational; survey the possible actors — governments, NGOs, research institutions, and MIIP themselves; and bear in mind the various international instruments, including the CRC, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities.

The recommendations coming forward from the groups as a result of a thorough process of discussion and analysis are given in Chapter Seven. The following synthesis of the implications for UNICEF has been developed from these recommendations.

### UNICEF and MIIP

UNICEF's existing work with MIIP can be seen as falling at different places along the following spectrum:

1. Minority peoples referred to in the situation analysis;
2. MIIP targeted by programme and advocacy interventions coincidentally because of poverty or Especially Difficult Circumstances affecting children;
3. MIIP targeted by programmes and advocacy because they are MIIP;
4. Programmes qualitatively designed not only to target but to suit MIIP.

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## Situation Analysis

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- The most important starting point for change to existing UNICEF programming and advocacy will be to notice MIIP systematically within the country situation analysis (applying the CRC), both in terms of data collection and its analysis; within MIIP groups, special discriminations related to age-group and gender should be noticed.
- In countries where MIIP populations occupy geographically contiguous areas, it will probably be possible to develop a picture of socio-economic indicators from existing census and household survey data. But where they are intermingled with the majority population, it may also be necessary to use other methods; for example, to understand correlations with categories of 'Especially Difficult Circumstances' affecting children, such as economic or sexual exploitation, from which data can be extrapolated. The category of children in conflict with the law and deprived of their liberty, who should be included in EDC situation analysis, should also be analysed for correlations with MIIP.
- Existing national laws relating to MIIP children should be analysed for consistency with the CRC.
- Indicators of cultural disadvantage need to be developed. This is complicated by definitional problems relating to MIIP. In some countries, certain MIIP groups are not recognized as 'minorities' or not recognized at all. Political sensitivities may be encountered.

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## Programme Planning

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- Programme planning and development for MIIP should, as a first principle, be with MIIP. Alliances should be built with organizations, especially NGOs, which represent them and in which they are represented. All programme planning should be participatory. Although this may take time, it cannot be short-circuited; long time-frames must be allowed.
- Two overall strategies can be adopted in relation to programme planning for MIIP children and families: **mainstreaming** and **affirmative action**. Mainstreaming will require including MIIP as members of the target beneficiary populations for regular and CEDC programmes and making appropriate quantitative and qualitative adjustments in programme design to ensure that they are

reached. Affirmative action implies special initiatives targeted and designed for MIIP children and women as a distinct group, and for subgroups of MIIP, such as girls, children in institutions and children deprived of their liberty.

- Among sectoral programmes, the most important is likely to be the education programme; within other sectoral programmes, education elements (nutrition education, health education) will also be important. Targeting MIIP, either as members of the general population or specifically, will require special adaptations in the educational context, especially in relation to language of instruction, messages, materials, and so forth.
- Importance should be attached to the need to help MIIP develop their own organizational, technological and presentational capacities. NGOs are likely to be key partners in the capacity-building process, which should be regarded as key to the empowerment of marginalized groups. Income generation may also be closely associated with capacity-building, especially among women.
- Within the budgetary process, MIIP must receive recognition. Although their numbers may be few, their degree of marginalization and disadvantage is normally high; financial resources dedicated to work on their behalf should therefore be allocated according to their degree of disadvantage and not to their population figures, in keeping with a rights-based approach.

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## Programme Implementation

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- Again, the principle of participation of MIIP in programme implementation and service delivery should be central. This may be realized by, for example, training members of MIIP groups as volunteer or frontline workers in community-based service delivery schemes.
- Knowledge of and sensitivity towards cultural beliefs, practices and values should be built into programme delivery. Some cultural practices may be valuable and can be built upon (for instance, long breastfeeding duration); others (such as FGM and early marriage) need to be combated. Dialogue with MIIP and knowledge-building may open up space for their own reconsideration of helpful/harmful traditional practices relating to child upbringing, health and education.

- Pilot schemes and projects may be a suitable way of experimenting with new approaches suited to MIIP. These include: the generation of local language educational materials; the use of bilingual texts and other special curriculum elements; nutritional schemes using local ingredients and mixes; the development of programmes to combat exploitative child work that target ethnically-based occupational groups.
- Successful pilot schemes can be used for cross-cultural exchange and visits from MIIP leaders from other areas. They can also be used to help the majority culture view MIIP more favourably and to encourage MIIP to become effective advocates on their own behalf.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

- As already noted, data — especially baseline data — are needed concerning MIIP. Monitoring and evaluation both of their situation and of programmes for MIIP cannot proceed without data, which in turn requires the development of indicators for cultural disadvantage.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*If cultural considerations are not factored into programme design and implementation, UNICEF could unwittingly become part of the process reinforcing MIIP exclusion and marginalization.*

- It is necessary to review existing programmes to try to identify where factors affecting success or failure are associated with cultural difference relating to knowledge, attitudes and practice. It is important to document and share widely experiences with strategies that are unsuccessful vis-à-vis MIIP, particularly those that have negatively affected them by increasing their marginalization or creating dependence.
- Participatory evaluation techniques should be used, and this requires the training of MIIP, including youth, to take part in evaluation exercises.

### Advocacy

- Advocacy is a component of programming as well as an external relations function. Advocacy on

behalf of MIIP should always be undertaken in partnership with MIIP representatives, whether at local, national or international level.

- Advocacy on behalf of MIIP where the political climate is fraught with tension and sensitivity is bound to confront UNICEF, and its country representatives and officers, with problems. However, international organizations do have some degree of autonomy in pursuit of their professional activities, an autonomy legitimized by international treaties such as the CRC and decisions of their governing bodies. This whole area needs exploration and debate. UNICEF needs to give guidance to its representatives and officers in how to fulfil their role as advocates on behalf of children's rights in politically sensitive situations so as to uphold equity and avoid exacerbating divisive tendencies.
- To combat the 'inferiorization' of MIIP peoples by majority group(s) (and vice versa), it may be helpful to identify and publicize positive aspects of MIIP cultures, especially the ways they handle coexistence, peace and tolerance. Building the presentational capacities of MIIP themselves so that they can undertake their own advocacy is an important strategy.
- A major target for advocacy is government; governments have to be persuaded of the importance of addressing the needs of MIIP families and children living under their remit. Therefore, the participation by government officials and local politicians in the implementation of activities with MIIP should be ensured. Where possible, academic researchers, NGOs, churches and the media should be similarly exposed to MIIP problems. Where appropriate, UNICEF Country Representatives should visit and engage in dialogue with representatives of MIIP on a regular basis.

#### KEY CONCEPT

*In everything relating to programming and advocacy on behalf of MIIP, their participation must be a fundamental precondition of UNICEF activity.*

- Links should be developed with cultural institutes and other organized groups and institutions which foster pluralism, multiculturalism and intercultural exchange, in order to promote understanding of MIIP identity and traditions, including

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music, the arts, language and cuisine, especially among young people.

- In all countries experiencing intercultural tension, but especially those enduring, or on the verge of, armed ethnically-driven conflict, consideration should be given to 'education for peaceful coexistence' as an ingredient of country programmes and of 'education for development' activities undertaken by UNICEF National Committees.

### In Conclusion

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A report of this kind cannot do justice to the range of ideas and experience explored over the course of a week. The recommendations described above do not adequately reflect the depth of group and individual thinking about a subject much of whose language and terminology, let alone its many complexities and dimensions, had been unfamiliar when the Seminar began.

One Seminar participant had brought with her to Florence a set of questions posed by her UNICEF office to which, they had hoped, the Seminar would provide answers. In her personal workplan, she had set these out as follows: "Issues affecting children of ethnic minorities are often related to issues of gross economic and political inequity. There are many instances where minorities are pushed to the periphery of societal structures and processes, and thereby become marginalized, deprived and discontented. How then can we talk of preserving 'their positive cultural traditions'? Whose cultural values, beliefs and practices are to prevail? How will UNICEF intervene in the light of these realities? How can we correctly apply the CRC for the survival, development, protection and participation of children of ethnic minorities vis-à-vis the rights of majority cultural groups?"

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*'When things fall apart, the best lack all conviction,  
while the worst are full of passionate intensity'*

W.B. Yeats

*Anger's passionate intensity thrives upon perceptions  
of rights denied. In the immature or mis-  
directed, anger spills into violence: by the powerful,  
upon the other; by the powerless, upon themselves.*

Alan Brody

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All these were questions the Seminar had addressed. But there were no definitive answers — as, perhaps, her office might have guessed. What the Seminar had revealed was that balancing different human imperatives — as the CRC itself attempts to do — is an extremely complex process. Almost always, there are trade-offs. In UNICEF, where there is a desire to make the cause of children ring out clear as a bell, this is not something that is easy to accept. But where minority rights are concerned, some dilemmas cannot be resolved in a tidy and satisfactory manner at national, let alone international, level.

Once a determined effort is made to respect the rights of minorities to different values and belief systems, the process of identifying goals and activities for child well-being becomes a pursuit of consensus which will vary in every setting. However, the rights approach, which is today accepted by UNICEF as its guiding institutional dynamic, requires that this effort be made. Without such effort, UNICEF can unwittingly become a part of the process that fosters rather than defuses the building of tensions whose ultimate outcome is violent reaction or cultural extinction.

The process of bringing a new dimension of human predicament into organizational focus takes time. The Global Seminar on children and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples can be regarded as a step in that process. That this can be an important step is illustrated by previous Innocenti Seminars, which have helped guide organizational thinking in key policy areas. The next steps will be governed by the degree to which Seminar participants are able to act as advocates on behalf of the minorities dimension in areas they can professionally influence. They will be aided by two important features of the programming environment. One is the position now accorded the CRC as the overarching guideline for UNICEF's work. The other is that many existing policies and programming strategies, especially in education, are already designed to reach the most disadvantaged population groups, including MIIP.

In their workplans for follow-up action, Seminar participants indicated that their heightened perception of MIIP opened up new organizational

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needs. These included: the need for data; the need for new forms of expertise; the need for new partnerships, especially with MIIP themselves; and the need for new indicators to enable cultural disadvantage to show up as part of the framework of socio-economic disadvantage or types of Especially Difficult Circumstances (EDC) affecting children.

Some participants felt that a review of existing government programmes and of UNICEF-assisted programmes was needed to find out to what extent targeting the most disadvantaged populations coincided with targeting minorities, and whether quantitative and qualitative adjustments were in order. For those working in politically sensitive environments vis-à-vis ethnic minorities, initial work would have to be done by identifying proxy approaches towards programming and advocacy which were uncontaminated by an 'ethnic problem' tag.

For many participants, the work of the Seminar had prompted a new appreciation of the CRC and the ways in which it could be dynamically applied within the country situation. One participant noted: "It is important to understand the CRC better, and to use the CRC and other legal instruments as a framework for UNICEF work with governments, and to lobby that it be genuinely applied as a cornerstone of the government's approach to services for children." Many intended to organize national seminars to familiarize officials, politicians and members of the judicial system with CRC provisions. In some cases, these activities would be surrogates for promotion of MIIP rights; in others, MIIP rights could be openly discussed.

As part of the ongoing process of mapping extremely poor and disadvantaged areas within countries with a view to improving performance in relation to Year 2000 goals, the MIIP factor should be consciously built in. In some settings, locations for area-based interventions could be deliberately selected according to MIIP criteria. This would con-

form with the twin principles of 'action as advocacy' and 'process as product'. All interventions should be designed with inbuilt monitoring elements so that lessons learned could be shared and the organization's body of expertise regarding programming with MIIP could be developed.

In the context of educational programmes, the Seminar had proved extremely rich in illustrating participatory models for curriculum development, the development of bilingual education, and the production of local and appropriate educational materials. Many participants were resolved to pursue new ideas in these contexts with Ministries of Education. Some were also intending to take up the idea of an educational module on peace education for the basic education curriculum, emphasizing such values as appreciation for cultural diversity and tolerance.

Within UNICEF, ICDC itself will continue to play an important role in developing the MIIP perspective in advocacy and programming. Already, UNICEF's publications and databases provide an essential resource; international and regional monitoring and evaluation officers may be able to activate their networks for further analysis of relevant UNICEF experience and help promote the MIIP dimension in policy development. The fostering of participatory processes in monitoring activities should begin to include the intercultural dimension. Expertise from ICDC, and from headquarters and relevant field offices, can be drawn upon for follow-up regional meetings and CRC Seminars.

ICDC has established for itself an important role within UNICEF as an internal advocate for issues still only glimpsed above the policy horizon, but which in time take their place in the mainstream of organizational concerns. It is hoped that, in the interests of a fairer and a safer world, consideration for the needs of children of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples will be destined to follow a similar path.



## VII. SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following are the recommendations offered by the Seminar's three working groups on the implications for UNICEF of addressing the needs of MIIP children and families. The three groups were asked to approach the task from separate directions — **advocacy, capacity-building and empowerment, and service delivery** — recognizing that these processes are closely interrelated. There is some overlap between the groups' recommendations, but obvious repetition has been excluded.

### I. Advocacy

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#### *a) Situation analysis:*

- Taking the CRC as the framework for situation analysis, participants agreed that it is important to consider MIIP within this context. The need for data on MIIP is paramount, and is an essential basis for all advocacy work.
- The situation analysis is itself an opportunity for advocacy — for example, with partners undertaking joint research, and at its conclusion by publication and widespread dissemination.
- The situation analysis targets children at risk, not adversarially but as a means of clarification, a strategy that allows for action. MIIP should be named and their situations addressed in the situation analysis in this spirit.
- Laws and regulations relating to MIIP should be analysed and practice reviewed.
- Work needs to be carried out on indicators; guidelines for the inclusion of MIIP in situation analysis are needed, including their participation.

#### *b) Programme planning:*

- The programme planning process must assume that involvement of MIIP in situation analysis will require a programmatic response, which should be developed in accordance with the findings.
- The Master Plan of Operations must name marginalized groups, and allocate budget according to their degree of marginalization, not to their population figures (rights-based approach).
- Advocacy must be directed at other donors and at Ministries to gather cross-actor support for MIIP-related programmes.
- Commitment must be credible; for example, other organizational dynamics and goals must not be allowed to override goals negotiated with minori-

ties, and these must be left in place for a minimum of five years; Country Representatives should visit minority areas and meet with minority leaders and representatives with some degree of regularity.

#### *c) Programme implementation:*

- Use examples of programmatic success in one area of the country as models for others; arrange visits and exchanges by minority leaders — they will be the best advocates on their own behalf.
- Ensure participation by government officials and local politicians in the implementation of activities with MIIP, and where possible, bring in NGOS, churches, media, researchers from different institutions, and others.
- Use MIIP groups to develop materials, messages and non-formal curricula; network with media to avoid poor MIIP 'images' and stereotyping.
- Help organizations in which MIIP are represented to undertake advocacy on their own behalf.
- Support the development of local language materials by government, NGOs and research institutions.
- Identify and publicize positive aspects of MIIP cultures, especially the ways they handle coexistence, peace and tolerance.

#### *d) Monitoring and evaluation:*

- Monitoring and evaluation are participatory processes involving all actors, including target beneficiaries, programme implementors and donors. Monitoring and evaluation should therefore be seen as part of an overall advocacy strategy.
- The evaluation and documentation of successful activities should support their replication; experiences with unsuccessful strategies, particularly those that negatively affect MIIP, should be shared widely.

#### *e) Other advocacy issues:*

- UNICEF staff and others need training and support for successful advocacy on behalf of MIIP, to avoid sensationalism and to handle tough, unpopular or risky issues.
- Advocacy takes time, especially building the capacity of local groups to undertake their own advocacy effectively.
- In all advocacy with MIIP, women must be involved.

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## II. Capacity-building and Empowerment

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The group addressing this area started out by clarifying basic assumptions and definitions. It decided to redefine its area as capacity-building for empowerment, in a conscious decision to follow the definition of strategies recently presented to the UNICEF Executive Board in the Medium-Term Plan. This consisted of: strengthening institutions; building and strengthening infrastructure so that programmes can be implemented; and strengthening and developing human resources.

The following basic assumptions were identified:

- Within the framework of the CRC, UNICEF needs to concentrate on the most disadvantaged groups, which include MIIP. This emphasis should be universally reflected in all UNICEF situation analysis, programming and budgeting.
- All activities should be undertaken using a participatory approach.
- All relevant international human rights instruments, and national laws where they offer more protection, should be applied.
- UNICEF staff should be empowered to take an independent stand vis-à-vis the government, and be backed up internationally in case of conflict.

The group reached similar conclusions to the advocacy group's in the context of *situation analysis*. In the context of *monitoring and evaluation*, two additional recommendations were made:

- Special indicators need to be developed for effective and appropriate monitoring systems, which include MIIP involvement.
- Members of MIIP, including youth, should be trained to take part in participatory evaluation exercises.

The group's main conclusions about planning and programming for capacity-building were broken down according to the subjects addressed by the Seminar.

### *a) Capacity-building in the context of programmes for the young child:*

- Develop participatory planning techniques for designing child-centred ECD curricula based on positive traditional practices.

- Strengthen the capacity of organizations delivering services.
- Provide training for ECD resource persons and workers; pay attention to language issues.
- Develop mechanisms for the active participation of MIIP communities and families.
- Conduct research on the impact of special interventions on behalf of MIIP children to guide and support future activities.

### *b) Capacity-building for education and the schools:*

- Develop curricula for MIIP in education which emphasize basic learning skills, values and processes including those regarded as important by MIIP.
- Develop the capacity of local education officials, school personnel and MIIP educators to work with MIIP children and communities, and to produce appropriate classroom materials, with special attention to minority languages.
- Familiarize teachers and education officials with appropriate methods for planning and monitoring educational activities and progress.
- Research the impact of special interventions on behalf of MIIP children to guide and support future activities.

### *c) Capacity-building for bilingual and intercultural education:*

- Promote the development of cultural institutes that promote understanding of MIIP cultural identity, including language.
- Enhance international, regional and local-level communication between cultures and promote intercultural exchange.
- Enable MIIP to project their own cultural values and practices, such as food, music and dance.
- Build into teacher training the need to learn about and respect the culture and language of minorities.

### *d) Capacity-building for children in conflict with the law:*

- Train the judiciary, police, magistrates, lawyers and other relevant actors on preventive measures to reduce juvenile delinquency and the appropriate ways in which to handle children in conflict with the law.
- Familiarize members of the judiciary with particular issues relating to MIIP children in prisons,

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and with international guidelines for the protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty.

### III. Service Delivery

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The group on service delivery looked first at definitions and basic principles underlying service delivery.

Service delivery was defined not just as an issue of 'supply', but a more comprehensive support to the government in the establishment of adequate service delivery, often with a focus on the development of models or systems. It was regarded as undesirable to separate service delivery from advocacy and capacity-building, as UNICEF interventions are normally a balance of the three.

The following are basic parameters for service delivery:

- Involvement and financial support for service delivery are sometimes needed as a 'bait' to encourage government and NGO partners to try out new approaches or expand existing services to reach new target groups.
- Sustainability and replicability are key principles for service delivery programme design and implementation. Community development MIIP projects are likely to have high (non-replicable) start-up costs; attention should be given to developing low-cost approaches using local personnel; participatory approaches are essential to replicability.
- Creative and innovative approaches will be needed to reach MIIP, who are often the hardest-to-reach groups both geographically and because of ingrained resistance to the mores of outsiders.
- Programming for minorities can complement initiatives for reaching majorities, and needs to be conducted alongside existing National Programme of Action activities.
- Service delivery remains a key weapon in UNICEF's strategy arsenal. Something more concrete is needed than words of wisdom in order to claim a place at the table where policy decisions are taken.
- Community-focused approaches must be the starting point for policy formulation for MIIP groups; when micro-successes occur, then it is possible to graduate to macro level.
- Experimenting with new service delivery

approaches and developing service delivery technologies will be needed for MIIP-related programmes, in which UNICEF has a particular forte.

The group identified the following lessons learned regarding service delivery from the case studies presented to the Seminar:

a) *Situation analysis:*

- 'Status of minorities' must be examined in the situation analysis, including the roots of inequities in MIIP women's and children's access to services, and a breakdown of available census data on MIIP by age and gender.
- The gender dimension should be given special attention.

b) *Programme planning:*

- Government has to be persuaded of the importance of addressing the needs of MIIP families and children with special service delivery approaches, where necessary.
- MIIP themselves must be involved as full partners throughout the programme planning and implementation process.
- MIIP members should themselves be involved in delivering services.
- Localized approaches may require that there is a willingness to decentralize administrative decision-making in order that services take into account cultural beliefs and practices.
- There is a need for flexibility in designing services for MIIP in very remote isolated areas; top-down vertical programmes do not work.
- Long time-frames are required; foundation building is time-consuming and very necessary.
- Attention is needed to the dynamic of 'culture' as a variable in development. Long-standing experience of discrimination may discourage MIIP from participation in standard service delivery. Where there is a strong resistance to change, this needs to be thoroughly explored.

c) *Implementation:*

- Affirmative action may be required on behalf of MIIP.
- When introducing new services, there is a special need for dialogue with MIIP to examine the way the new services will interact with existing roles and traditions.

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- ❑ MIIP have an important role to play in the development of messages and communications materials.
  - ❑ Education for tolerance and conflict resolution should be part of the spirit informing programme implementation and service delivery, whether targeted at majority or minority populations.
  - ❑ Services for adolescents should receive more attention within UNICEF programmes.
  - ❑ Legal services may be a new form of service delivery supported by UNICEF which is especially appropriate for MIIP children and youth.

*d) Monitoring and evaluation:*

- ❑ When tracking the allocation of resources to

assure equity in service delivery, UNICEF should keep in mind that MIIP are one dimension of the picture; this dimension should in turn be broken down by age and gender.

- ❑ Process indicators and monitoring systems need to be developed for the monitoring of service delivery interventions, with the participation of MIIP.
- ❑ Evaluation of negative outcomes needs to focus on failures of systems, not on the victims as scapegoats for inadequate outcomes; if a service is not being used, explanations should be sought within the framework of unsuitable technology, poor communication, inaccessibility, or a combination of these factors.

# ANNEX 1

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## AGENDA OF THE SEVENTH INNOCENTI GLOBAL SEMINAR: SYNOPSIS

### 1. Sunday, 6 October

*Evening* Welcome, introductions and overview of the Seminar  
(Paolo Basurto, Jim Himes and Alan Silverman)

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### 2. Monday, 7 October

*Morning* Global perspectives: How do international initiatives/instruments address and apply to children and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples (MIIP)?  
(Alan Phillips and Jim Himes)

*Afternoon* Global perspectives: How do definitions and dimensions of MIIP vary in different parts of the world? What are the key issues concerning protection of culture versus integration within the wider society?  
(Rodolfo Stavenhagen)

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### 3. Tuesday, 8 October

*Morning* The young child: How do children's different family configurations affect early socialization? How can pre-school children be reached to increase their present and future tolerance for diversity?  
(Cassie Landers)

*Afternoon* Related case studies: Palestinian child returnees; minority populations in Mindanao, Philippines; and the Kachin communities of Myanmar  
(Cairo Arafat, Daisy Elena F. Ano and Rev. Saboi Jum)

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### 4. Wednesday, 9 October

*Morning* Education and the schools: What differences are there in the schooling and school attendance rates between MIIP children and the wider population? What are the reasons behind this? What additional educational opportunities are there outside the formal school setting?  
(Richard Maclure and Elaine Furniss)

*Afternoon* Related case studies: the Thuru of Nepal; ethnic minorities in Cambodia; ethnic minorities and immigrants in Thailand  
(Cliff Meyers, Anne Dykstra and Savitri Suwansathit)

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## 5. Thursday, 10 October

- Morning* Bilingual, multicultural and intercultural education: What are the pros and cons of bilingual education? What can be done to further education for tolerance and respect for diversity? What special issues are there for MIIP girls?  
(Jagdish Gundara)
- Afternoon* Related case studies: the Peruvian Amazon; Southeast Asia; and Viet Nam  
(Egidio Crotti, Stephen Umemoto, Elaine Furniss)
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## 6. Friday, 11 October

- Morning* The European experience: field visits to Florentine programmes designed to improve the situation of MIIP children and families
- Afternoon* Discussion of field visits. Europe and the work of UNICEF National Committees: What has been the experience of UNICEF National Committees in Europe on MIIP issues? What are the special challenges for Europe?  
(Mariangela Bavicchi and José Juan Ortiz Bru)
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## 7. Saturday, 12 October

- Morning* Additional case studies: indigenous peoples in Paraguay; ethnic minorities in Viet Nam; ethnic Kurds in Turkey and minority women in Afghanistan; child domestics in the Philippines and elsewhere  
(Miguel Ugalde, Le Hong Loan, Alan Brody and Maggie Black)
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## 8. Monday, 14 October

- Morning* Legal issues: What special legal measures could be taken to protect MIIP rights? What are the causes of criminality among MIIP children and families? Why are MIIP often overrepresented with respect to criminal activities? What special issues are there related to traditional law versus the law of the wider society?  
(Ralph Krech)
- Related case study: immigrants in Thailand  
(Pisawat Sukonthapan)
- Afternoon* Partnerships in working towards improving the situation of MIIP: discussion of the roles of UNICEF and multi/bilaterals, governments and public institutions, NGOs, universities and research institutions, schools and community groups
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## 9. Tuesday, 15 October

- Morning* Where do we go from here? Roles, recommendations and follow-up. Participants' recommendations at the policy, programme and research levels
- Afternoon* Individual follow-up plans and Seminar evaluation
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## ANNEX 2

### PARTICIPANTS AND INVITED SPEAKERS

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## ANNEX 3

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### CORE READING LIST

*In addition to the following set of ICDC and ICDC-assisted publications on minorities, immigrants and indigenous peoples, a 67-page list of references/resources was prepared for the Global Seminar by the UNICEF New York and ICDC Florence libraries. This document is available upon request.*

Blanc, Cristina S. and Chiozzi, Paolo, 'Children of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities: An Overview and Conceptual Framework', *Innocenti Occasional Papers*, UCS 5, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, September 1992.

Costarelli, Sandro (ed.), 'Children of Minorities: Gypsies', *Innocenti Insights*, IN1, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, 1993.

Minority Rights Group, *Education Rights and Minorities*, MRG, London, and UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, 1994.

Stavnhagen, Rodolfo, 'Double Jeopardy: The Children of Ethnic Minorities', *Innocenti Occasional Papers*, CRS 10, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, November 1994.

UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 'Children of Minorities: Deprivation and Discrimination', *Innocenti Insights*, IN2, ICDC, Florence, 1995.

