GLORI is a global network of longitudinal researchers working with data on children in low, middle and high income countries. The network has a Secretariat based at UNICEF’s Office of Research - Innocenti.
The Unique Value of a Longitudinal Approach

• Captures the dynamic nature of processes that shape child development, including trends and trajectories
• Can capture intergenerational transmission
• Understands drivers and determinants of outcomes
• Measurement and evaluation of impact
• Captures child wellbeing in holistic & integrated ways
• Can play role in building evidence for policy and programme

‘Because longitudinal surveys can track people over periods and can illuminate many aspects and stages of their lives, including unexpected events, they provide more of a film strip than a single image, capturing evolution over time.’
A short primer on longitudinal studies

A longitudinal study starts with identification of questions to be examined in the lives of a given group of people. Respondents may be followed up every few months or every few years, or there may be decade-long gaps between questionnaires. Each survey round is called a ‘wave’ and frequency often depends on the availability of funding. A study’s overall length may be a few years or several decades. Individuals may be studied from before birth (during their mothers’ pregnancy) through adulthood, when their own babies may join the study. The longer a study endures, the greater its value in terms of the comparisons available through each wave of the survey. However, as years pass it becomes increasingly challenging to track original respondents and maintain participation. Attrition results mainly from death, migration or disinterest.

The list below offers some distinctions between different types of longitudinal studies; studies often display characteristics of more than one type.

1. **A CENSUS** of a country’s entire population.

2. **PANEL SURVEYS** – Individuals or households agree to take part and are tracked over time to continue participating in subsequent survey waves.

3. **IMPACT EVALUATIONS** include randomised control trials and quasi-experimental studies. These are designed to evaluate the impact of an intervention.

4. **COHORT STUDIES** – Individuals who have something in common (e.g. age, a health condition) are followed to explore the ways they develop and factors affecting their development as they age.

5. **RECORD-LINKAGE STUDIES** – Administrative or survey data are linked across time. For example, census and birth records may be linked to school and health records.
Why we need a coordinated approach

Consistency and comparability of data on children and adolescents can be improved

- SDG push for better data quality
- Data needs wider ownership, more analysis and use
- Data instruments and study protocols are frequently reinvented
- Research needs better links to policies and programmes
- Growing number of new studies
- Studies could benefit from sustainable approaches

“We need the capacity to translate longitudinal evidence into a common good.”
An Introduction to GLORI

GLORI is a global network of longitudinal researchers working with data on children in low, middle and high income countries.

Set up in 2014, the network has members working in over 30 countries.

The GLORI Secretariat is based at UNICEF’s Office of Research - Innocenti.

This is a developing community of practice seeking to:
• Add to the evidence base through a coordinated approach
• Create an inventory of resources and harmonise tools in some areas
• Document and share best practice
• Develop mechanisms to strengthen institutional capacity and local ownership
• Explore contributions to the SDGs
GLORI’s Programme of Work

A four year programme of work is under development

Knowledge generation and coordination
- Online repository
- Comparison of existing datasets to answer questions on child and adolescent wellbeing with life course perspective
- Coordination of measurement instruments and adaptability
- Articulate the value

Building capacity for technical excellence
- Share best practice
- Learning and training also for young researchers
- Small grants
- Identify and promote mechanisms for research uptake
- Support new cohort studies guided by post 2015 framework

Extending the reach of current cohort studies
- Improve cost effectiveness
- Share practices on new tools, innovations
- Explore extension to humanitarian or fragile contexts
- Explore a pooled set of core measures for an SDG cohort
The Sustainable Development Challenge

- **Overarching question**: how can longitudinal research be better leveraged to track the development and wellbeing from childhood through adolescence and to better understand the trajectories of children globally, in a way that helps inform the SDGs?

- **Concretely, can GLORI contribute to discussions:**
  - In which methodologic and thematic areas can longitudinal research contribute to the SDGs?
  - What could a research agenda look like?
  - What links need to be made and who needs to be involved?
A Lifecourse representation of the SDGs

Diagram describes non-exhaustive set of relationships between SDG indicators that are relevant for children and bear on primary school completion rates as an illustration.

The positions of the indicators are suggestive of the expected time of the outcome measured.
Questions?
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