The Office of Research – Innocenti is UNICEF’s dedicated research arm. Its prime objectives are to improve international understanding of issues relating to children’s rights and to help facilitate full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child across the world. The Office of Research aims to set out a comprehensive framework for research and knowledge within the organization, in support of UNICEF’s global programmes and policies, and works with partners to make policies for children evidence based. Publications produced by the Office are contributions to a global debate on children and child rights issues and include a wide range of opinions.

This report was written by Prerna Banati, with input from Kerry Albright, Dale Rutstein, Nobuko Takahashi and research teams across the Office of Research.

Extracts from this publication may be freely reproduced with due acknowledgement. Further information on the role and mission of the Office of Research is available from the Communication Unit:
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ISBN 978-88-6522-043-6


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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWARDS RESEARCH EXCELLENCE WITH GLOBAL REACH</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015 HEADLINE RESULTS</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KEY OUTPUTS FROM THE INNOCENTI RESEARCH PROGRAMME</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHENING RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AT UNICEF</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOMENTS FROM 2015</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A DEEPER DIVE</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adolescent Well-being</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Children’s Use of the Internet</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contributions to Agenda 2030</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research Governance, Capacity Building and Support for Research Quality and Sharing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNICATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPACT</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFICE ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH OUTPUTS</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Midway through 2015, I joined UNICEF as Director of the Office of Research – Innocenti, taking over a rapidly expanding and increasingly dynamic research centre. The Office was already playing an important leadership role on research governance across UNICEF, and seemed poised to reposition itself as a global hub on research for children.

The start of my tenure was marked by a forum organized at Innocenti in July to celebrate the Centre’s achievements (as the Innocenti Research Centre) over its first 25 years (1988–2013). Attended by several former directors, senior researchers and key funders and partners, this event was a moment to reflect on how the Office can draw on its past to respond to the needs of UNICEF and of the world’s children today and into the future. It was also a chance to remind ourselves of the privileged space we occupy: physically, in a spectacular building designed by the foremost Renaissance architect Brunelleschi as a place of care for abandoned children, a historic legacy that we aim to continue in new ways. And institutionally as part of a global organization that provides us, as researchers, with unique access to country-level programming, to channels of communication, advocacy and policy engagement, and to research and academic partners globally who want their work to respond to real needs and be used by practitioners in the field.

The core mandate of Innocenti is to generate high-quality, cutting-edge and policy-relevant research that supports the organization and the global community in delivering results for children. Our research should inform, guide and also challenge. The legitimacy and credibility of our findings and how they are used rest on the quality and independence of our work, as well as its relevance to the current priorities of the organization, and its role in shaping future directions. This report highlights several areas where our research adds to evidence of ‘what works’ (for example, on cash transfers); challenges conventional wisdom or assumptions (on the links between transfers and fertility, for example); or brings to the fore previously neglected areas of research (on adolescents or children and the internet).

As UNICEF’s Office of Research, Innocenti also plays an important role in research leadership and governance across the organization. Here the expansion and recognition of its role over the past 12 months is clearly visible, in the development of a policy, procedures and guidance, training materials and webinars, and other forms of support particularly to country offices. Managing and finding institutional mechanisms to respond to the consequent expanding demand for support and technical assistance, given our limited staff and resources, will be a key challenge for the coming year.

Despite its significant growth, Innocenti remains a small office within UNICEF, directly responsible for less than 4 per cent of the total research expenditure of the organization. Prioritizing and focusing on selected areas is thus critical to our effectiveness. Currently, research is concentrated in a number of areas closely linked to strategic UNICEF priorities. These include work on poverty, equity and well-being, through research on the impact of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) and the Innocenti Report Card on child well-being in rich countries; on the drivers and prevention of violence against children; and on the determinants of adolescent well-being. A new initiative to develop research on education started in 2015 in collaboration with the education unit in Programme Division; while a major programme of work on children and the internet received funding and was launched in 2015. Further details of these and other activities are elaborated in the report.
During 2015, the global community agreed on a new set of sustainable goals: ongoing work at Innocenti will inform the response to and implementation of these goals for children. An initiative to develop a child-specific indicator of hunger in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) provides one example; others include work on multi-dimensional child poverty and well-being measures, including appropriate measures for rich countries in the context of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda. The key challenge of identifying interventions, policies and institutions that can be truly transformative in achieving the new global agenda is informing our discussions as we consider the new research directions and a future agenda for the Office.

The past year also saw strengthened efforts to engage with an expanded range of research and funding partners. Internally, closer links were developed with different parts of the organization – through research collaboration and facilitation activities in country and regional offices; with Programme Division colleagues in New York on particular areas of research (adolescents, poverty, gender, child protection); and in communicating our research and its use in advocacy. Linkages continue to be consolidated with other evidence functions (specifically data and evaluations) both as part of the Division of Data, Research and Policy, and through other mechanisms, such as UNICEF’s Standing Committee on Data and Research.

There was a significant expansion and turnover of staff at Innocenti in 2015. Nine new staff members joined. The smooth transitions, the increased workload of dealing with the needs of an expanding staff, as well as the management of a larger budget, have been ably managed by a small but dedicated and effective operations team.

We move into 2016 with ambitious goals and a full workplan. Key events include the launch of the 13th Innocenti Report Card in April, an edited volume of papers on cash transfers, and the first-phase outputs from the Global Kids Online project; a mid-term review of the adolescent well-being programme; and a range of outputs from the Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children. A new recruitment is underway that will enable the Office to develop a programme of research on migration and child rights. Improved communications products and tools will help to communicate the work and goals of the Office of Research to diverse audiences in a better way. A meeting of the re-established advisory committee of the Office is planned, and a new research agenda will be finalized following wide consultations.

As a critical year that initiates the implementation of the SDGs, as well as the development of the next UNICEF strategic plan, we hope that 2016 will see heightened recognition of the role that research can and should contribute to these processes. We look forward to working with you all – as partners within and outside the organization – to generate the knowledge that is needed to improve the world for children.

Sarah Cook
Florence, March 2016
Current and Evolving Research Areas at Innocenti

Poverty, Equity and Well-being
- High-income countries – Report Card 13
- Children of the Recession
- Transfer Project evaluations of cash transfer programmes in Africa
- Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA)

Child Rights and Governance
- Multi-country study on the drivers of violence
- Parenting and family support in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)
- Governance and rights – birth registration

New and cross-cutting areas
- Social and structural determinants of adolescent well-being
- Education research
- Gender socialization
- Global Longitudinal Research Initiative (GLORI)
- Children and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Migration

New leadership with Sarah Cook – former head of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development – joining to lead Innocenti.

Over 100 research products published in a range of print and digital media – including peer-reviewed journal articles, contributions to edited volumes, working papers, briefs and blogs.

New research programmes launched and underway, and future research directions for Innocenti forged.
Innocenti Research on cash transfers influences policy and challenges conventional wisdom. Innocenti-led impact evaluations of nine government-run cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa provide evidence of the role of cash in improving a range of development outcomes, including health, nutrition, education and household resilience to shocks. The findings have been instrumental in the expansion of government programmes in a number of countries. An important new finding is that unconditional cash transfers in the study countries do not increase fertility. This challenges a widely held assumption that has been a barrier to scaling up cash transfer programmes in some countries.

How far do disadvantaged children fall behind their peers?

*Fairness for Children*, the 13th Innocenti Report Card, scheduled for launch in April 2016 presents an overview of inequalities in child well-being in 41 countries of the European Union (EU) and/or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Undertaken in collaboration with the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey (HBSC), it focuses on ‘bottom-end inequality’, defined as the gap between children in the bottom decile and those at the median, and examines how far children are allowed to fall behind in the domains of income, education, health and life satisfaction.

Measuring multi-dimensional child poverty. MODA, a method for analysing multiple and overlapping deprivations affecting children, developed by researchers at Innocenti, is in high demand particularly in low-income countries as a useful baseline on child poverty in the context of the SDGs. While other multi-dimensional poverty measures exist, this is unique in directly examining child deprivation in relation to the key areas of child rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. During 2015, Innocenti assisted countries to undertake MODA analyses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malawi and Tanzania, and one is currently underway in Armenia. The number of countries carrying out national analyses (N-MODA) rose to a total of 26, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. A further 16 countries are planning to initiate MODA in 2016.

Filling evidence gaps on parenting support programmes in low- and middle-income countries. Family and parenting support are a growing area of policy concern in low- and middle-income countries. However, a number of challenges exist to the development and implementation of effective policies and programmes in this field. Preliminary research from Innocenti has identified some of the key evidence gaps and barriers to success, including poor implementation of programmes, limited services for parents of adolescents, and limited attention to the integration of services across sectors. For programmes that exist, there is scarce evidence...
on outcomes or impacts. With the University of Oxford and UNICEF South Africa, Innocenti is helping to build the evidence base on effective parenting interventions through analysis of factors that influence parenting of adolescents in six countries in Southern Africa, and with an evaluation of Sinovuyo, an intervention to support parenting of teens in rural South Africa. The evaluation study involves a randomized control trial, combined with qualitative research. Findings will be available in 2016.

Stage 1 of a multi-country study on reducing violence against children concludes with a number of important findings: children from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. poverty or low education levels among caregivers) are often at greater risk of experiencing violence; children often suffer multiple forms of violence at home, at school and in the community; violence has lasting effects on children’s well-being; age and gender are highlighted as important determinants of the types of violence that children experience, how it affects them, and their response to it. This programme has had an important influence on national understandings of violence in the four focus countries – Italy, Peru, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe – and in India and Ethiopia, through research collaborations with the multi-country longitudinal research group, Young Lives.

Structural determinants of adolescent well-being: first year of research programme completed. After a successful launch and the development of a conceptual framework, the adolescent research programme is producing preliminary findings from a number of activities in areas of violence against children, cash transfers, parenting and family support, and data and measurement. Together, these initiatives are filling gaps in knowledge about a neglected but critical age group, while also supporting better programming through the development of tools, including a ‘report card’ for monitoring and tracking adolescent well-being.

Children and ICT research programme launched in 2015. This research project, funded by the United Kingdom Government, is developing survey instruments and other tools to facilitate cross-national comparative research on children’s internet use. The project builds upon an established research partnership at the European level, previously funded by the European Commission, which resulted in a Better Internet for Children strategy. The toolkit is being piloted in four countries and will be launched with national reports in 2016. Through the research carried out with its partners – the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Chatham House, and the Global Commission on Internet Governance – Innocenti is contributing to the global debate on internet governance and children and is highlighting the relevance and applicability of child rights in the digital age.
Significant progress was made during 2015 in creating a framework for research governance in UNICEF. Innocenti has put in place a series of essential building blocks to enhance the efficiency of UNICEF’s overall investments in research. These include guidance on ethics and quality assurance, as well as an institutional research framework aligned to the strategic plan.

Strengthening capacity of country researchers through research and training. In 2015, research teams at the Office of Research initiated data collection and research efforts in social norms analysis, provided training on data collection and secondary data analysis, contributed to qualitative data-collection training, and conducted other training sessions on ethics in research and quality assurance and impact evaluations. Engagement in research projects provides researchers in the South with valuable learning opportunities. Technical assistance was provided to a wide range of countries, as well as to UN colleagues in the field.

The third annual Best of UNICEF Research initiative highlights the best research carried out by UNICEF. This project focuses on good examples of research produced by UNICEF offices and National Committees. Coordinated by Innocenti, 12 projects were selected through a competitive process and evaluated by an expert panel. They cover ‘traditional’ areas of UNICEF work (health, nutrition, sanitation and education), while also highlighting issues that have more recently gained prominence within the global policy agenda, such as social transfers, violence against children and school bullying, and various forms of inequality or exclusion. The competition for the Best of UNICEF Research 2016 was launched at the end of 2015.
New guidelines for UNICEF on research quality assurance and ethics launched, and a mechanism for programme impact evaluations set up for country offices.

Marta Santos Pais: discussions on research into bullying and violence prevention in schools.

Transfer Project data collection and fieldwork in Tanzania.

Global Kids Online: Children’s rights in the digital age, expert consultation.

Sarah Cook joins Office of Research as Director.

Fieldwork in the Eastern Cape South Africa for qualitative study on family and parenting.

25 training sessions, presentations and webinars delivered on research management and methods for UNICEF staff and partners.

22 seminars held in Florence, covering a variety of research topics, methods and disciplines.

33% increase in TWITTER follows, for @innocenti.

Four research fellows were hosted, Patrick Burton, Morag McCarthy, Mario Biggeri and Suguru Mizunoya.

Multi-media productions in Peru and Ghana.


Population Association of America (PAA) annual meeting.


Research Watch, recorded debate on ‘Are We Failing Adolescents?’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
<th>NOVEMBER</th>
<th>DECEMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana LEAP 1000 qualitative survey plus data check and analysis on quantitative field results</td>
<td>New partnership with Zurich university</td>
<td>Violence Affecting Children research workshops and training sessions conducted in Viet Nam and Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Best of UNICEF Research launched</td>
<td>OECD World Forum Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, Guadalajara, Mexico</td>
<td>Launch of Global Girls Research Initiative / ODI Research Programme and Partnership with UNICEF research on adolescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations for 25 years of research for children at Innocenti. Anniversary symposium held in Florence</td>
<td>Global Longitudinal Research Initiative Round Table with Young Lives and UNICEF, Oxford</td>
<td>Italian National Consultation on Violence against Children, Rome</td>
<td>Facilitation and participation at the International Society for Child Indicators, Cape Town</td>
<td>Malawi cash transfer impact evaluation data collection, data checks and training</td>
<td>Over 30 external speaking engagements and/or conference papers delivered by researchers in more than 10 countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution to Building Evidence in Education meeting, Oslo</td>
<td>Building Evidence in Education</td>
<td>As part of ongoing partnership with Istituto degli Innocenti, All Staff Library Meeting held</td>
<td>Engagement in panels and discussions at the Sexual Violence and Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum, South Africa with partners from Zimbabwe, Viet Nam, Peru and Italy and researchers on social cash transfers</td>
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The first year of work on the research programme analysing the determinants of adolescent well-being was completed in 2015. Funded by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID), the Swedish Government, the Italian Government and other donors, this programme will establish a platform for enhanced research cooperation across UNICEF, as well as with national governments and research institutions in nine focus countries. It aims to advance knowledge on the social and structural determinants of adolescent well-being across cultures and contexts in low- and middle-income countries. The emphasis is on shaping more effective policies and programmes for young people.

Innocenti’s adolescent well-being work focuses on critical vulnerabilities that many children entering adolescence face. These include domestic violence, violence by peers, the impact of early marriage (for both girls and boys), poor access to school, poverty and inadequate family support. The challenge is to improve programmes to take into account structural and social factors that underpin sustainable improvements in child well-being. The work will enhance the way effective interventions are designed.

Preliminary work indicates that family, peer and interpersonal relationships are primary structural determinants for healthy adolescent lives. Initial findings also cast light on the inter-connectedness of adolescent lives – highlighting the complexity of negotiating economic, social and other domains at this stage. How these relationships and interactions

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**Key components of Innocenti’s adolescent research programme**

**RESEARCH COMPONENTS**

- **CONCEPTUALISATION** Exploring structural determinants for adolescent well-being
  - Testing the global framework using Gallup data; exploring cross-cutting dimensions: gender socialization, learning and education.

- **CASH TRANSFERS** Identifying pathways through which cash impacts on a safe transition to adulthood
  - Cross-country and programme analysis to determine outcomes on HIV risk, violence, hope, mental health, work, fertility and education.

- **CHILD MARRIAGE** Developing a methodology for multi-sectoral action to address child marriage by identifying relevant entry points at the meso level
  - Analysing the policy environment; system and service mapping, with links to UNICEF’s global partnership to end child marriage.

- **FAMILY AND PARENTING SUPPORT** Assessing how parenting and parenting programmes can impact adolescent outcomes
  - Literature review; parenting programme: RCT + qualitative + process evaluation.

- **VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN** Discovering what drives violence against children and solutions for prevention
  - Multi-country comparative study, action research, developing how-to manuals.

**DATA AND MEASUREMENT**

- **RESEARCH METHODS, UPTAKE AND SYNTHESIS**
  - Adolescent research digest, adolescent method briefs, Gap Map, participatory research with young people, data visualization, longitudinal data network.

- **ADOLESCENT SCORE CARD**
  - Identifying a core set of globally comparable indicators and guidance.
  - Linking to Convention on the Rights of the Child implementation and state accountability mechanisms.
play out affects current well-being and the chances of a successful transition into adulthood. The research programme is adding depth to understanding of how adolescents – and their well-being – are factored into the SDG agenda. A review of findings from the first two years is planned for 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Household sample size</th>
<th>Adolescent age range</th>
<th>Adolescent sample size</th>
<th>Survey years</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC)</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>15–25</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>2007, 2009, 2011</td>
<td>Randomized Controlled Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia Multiple Category Targeting Grant (MCT)</td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>2011, 2013, 2014</td>
<td>Randomized Controlled Trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe Harmonized Social Cash Transfer (HSCT)</td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>13–20</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>2013, 2014, 2016</td>
<td>District Matched Case Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP)</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>13–19</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>2013, 2014, 2015</td>
<td>Randomized Controlled Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN)</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>14–28</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>2015, 2017</td>
<td>Randomized Controlled Trial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- One-on-one interviews with same sex enumerators
- Up to three eligible youth per household
- Nested qualitative longitudinal studies in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe

Below key qualitative emerging messages from initial research are described:

**FAMILY, PEER AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY DETERMINANTS FOR HEALTHY ADOLESCENT LIVES**

An Innocenti review of parenting and family support for adolescents in East and Southern Africa has articulated the range of care arrangements experienced by adolescents.

- The diversity of family and parenting patterns is partly due to circumstances such as labour migration and HIV.
- The review found that having more than one adult at home and culturally appropriate support can mitigate negative impacts on children, such as maternal depression or the death of a family member.
- The study highlights the important role of social networks, extended family and informal support systems for adolescents – particularly when dignity is at stake.
- The effects of poverty and associated stigma on the family unit are key structural considerations, with direct impacts on adolescent well-being outcomes.
- Parenting support programmes have value in improving family well-being, reducing parental stress, and addressing the risk of child neglect and abuse. However, many such programmes pay little attention to parenting of adolescents and have not been evaluated in low-income settings. Innocenti is partnering with the University of Oxford and the Parenting for Lifelong Health network to improve the evidence base on parenting programmes. One of these programmes, Sinovuyo, a programme to support parenting of teens, was evaluated by Innocenti and Oxford in 2015 and will be reported on in 2016.
SOCIAL TRANSFER PROGRAMMES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT ADOLESCENT LIVES ACROSS MULTIPLE DOMAINS OF WELL-BEING

Research conducted by the Transfer Project team at Innocenti has shown that unconditional cash transfers to households in a number of African countries have a range of positive impacts on adolescent well-being.

- Young people benefiting from cash transfers have increased school attendance and attainment, with the probability of secondary school attendance increasing by 5 to 12 percentage points.
- Cash transfers may also improve the psychosocial well-being of young people through reductions in insecurity and stress, and can improve future expectations and physical health. Existing evidence on the ability of cash transfers to improve adolescent mental health is mixed; however, the evidence base is growing.
- Another important pathway for improved well-being is economic security, and there is robust evidence that cash transfers positively impact spending in beneficiary households across a range of categories. Increased economic well-being has implications for young people’s school attendance, health and future expectations.
- Cash transfers also have an impact on health and nutrition. Evidence shows that they reduce morbidity, and may increase the use of preventive care (although the evidence on health care utilization is mixed).
- There is robust evidence that cash transfers increase food security. Better health helps young people to stay in school and lead more productive lives.
- Improved economic well-being, education, and mental and physical health are interrelated and reinforcing. All contribute to the increased general well-being of young people and to reductions in risky behaviours, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will lead healthy, productive lives in adulthood.
Recent studies have highlighted the effect of changed economic circumstances within households on different household members, with direct impacts demonstrated on schooling for adolescents and child labour.

Analyses of the Child Grant Programme – targeted at households with children under 5 in Zambia – have shown the impacts on child schooling and work for older children in the family. A 6–9 per cent increase was noted in school enrolment among adolescents aged 11 to 14.

The evidence on children's labour – both economic and household chores – has been mixed, with some studies showing that school attendance increased together with participation in productive activities. This suggests that further work is needed to unpack the complexity of decision making within households.

**VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL, CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOL AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE CONTRIBUTE TO LONG-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR CHILDREN**

- Innocenti-led research exploring bullying and corporal punishment in schools has shown impacts on the self-efficacy of adolescents and their relationships beyond the schoolyard. The study shows the widespread use of corporal punishment in four countries – Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam.
- The experience of being bullied is more prevalent among children – especially boys – from disadvantaged urban households (as measured by household expenditure or caregiver’s level of education), highlighting the complex interplay between violence, poverty and urban spaces.
- Corporal punishment is associated with poorer cognitive development outcomes.
- Peer bullying was also found to exist at high rates in all study countries – with almost a third of Indian children in the sample experiencing indirect bullying, such as humiliation and social exclusion.
- The effects of bullying at age 15 are associated with later negative consequences for self-efficacy and self-esteem, peer and parental relations at age 19.
- These findings point to important policy reforms for schools, and for teacher training to support the use of non-violent discipline and to break cycles of violence normalization.
- Evidence from high-income settings indicates that school-based interventions, especially ‘whole-school approaches’ which comprehensively target the social environment in schools, can reduce levels of bullying.
- To effectively combat bullying, more evidence is needed on the transferability of interventions to low-income settings, as well as on their scalability.

**MONITORING PROGRESS IN ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING IS IMPORTANT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY**

The development of a national adolescent assessment card (NAAC), an important part of Innocenti’s adolescent research programme, is a critical initiative to encourage governments to invest in measuring and tracking adolescent well-being. UNICEF, along with partners, is contributing to an outcome-based framework aligned to the SDGs that incorporates key domains of adolescent well-being. The proposed indicators should provide a common platform to track the progress of adolescent development and well-being globally. The five domains are: health and well-being, education/learning, protection, livelihood/economic opportunities and participation/engagement. Indicators included in the initial framework were developed in consultation with key partners and are now being piloted in a number of countries.
Innocenti’s research programme has contributed to knowledge on children in a number of areas where more work is called for and support and partnership are sought.

**Filling knowledge gaps on gender-based violence**

Recent analysis conducted by Innocenti staff explored age at onset of intimate partner violence (IPV) in 30 low- and middle-income countries. The report describes the alarmingly high rate of women reporting physical or sexual intimate partner violence – approximately 29 per cent overall, with an average age of 22.1 years at first abuse among once-married women. Approximately 38.5 per cent of these women experienced abuse within the first 1–3 years of their relationship, suggesting that primary prevention for IPV must take place before first intimate partnerships are made – i.e. before age 19 – to capture the most relevant and at-risk target population. Given this, a focus on filling the evidence gap on effective interventions for primary prevention of abuse during women’s early years in developing-country settings would have a significant impact.

Moreover, there is a paucity of evidence documenting the causal link between structural factors, such as poverty and education, and gender-based violence in developing-country settings. These knowledge gaps represent missed opportunities, as national programmes and policies designed to address structural determinants typically have extensive scope for cost-effective scale-up. In addition, programmes and policies that educate girls or economically empower women have positive spill-over effects on society. Research planned for 2016 will contribute to our understanding of how social protection interventions affect women’s and girls’ experience of violence, and particularly how policies and programmes which address structural determinants can facilitate the reduction of violence.

**Time use among children**

While there is broad evidence on current trends in increasing children’s school attendance, important questions about child, and in particular adolescent, time use remain. How do adolescents distribute their time across school, income generation, domestic chores, care for younger and elderly family members, spending time with family and friends, internet, gaming and other leisure activities? How does the distribution of adolescents’ time correlate with other pertinent outcomes, such as health and health-related behaviour, engagement in risky activities and exposure to violence? How do economic growth, technological change, and development policies affect these patterns?

With additional funding, readily available survey data could contribute to cross-country analysis that would help present the big picture and generate insights into differences in adolescent time use across regions. Examples of possible further research include: rigorous impact evaluations that examine the effects of policy changes likely to have profound impacts on adolescents’ time use; primary data collection, including the collection of qualitative data; and focus-group discussions with youth to get a better understanding of the issues they themselves consider to be most relevant.

**Impact of cash transfers on adolescent well-being**

*Combined impact of ‘Cash Plus’ interventions.* There is a critical mass of evidence regarding the impact of cash transfers on multiple outcomes. However, the way in which these interact with other social protection components and instruments is less well documented. Emerging evidence shows that non-cash social protection interventions (such as access to social insurance or care programmes) can considerably enhance the positive impact of the cash itself. More research is now needed to assess the combined impact of ‘Cash Plus’ – households linked to cash and other services and programmes to maximize wide-ranging benefits.

*Sustainability of impacts over time.* Existing cash transfer evaluations have tended to examine only short- and medium-term benefits. There is a need to see whether there are differences in impact when households are enrolled for a longer period of time. Is there a stronger investment case in terms of breaking inter-generational cycles of poverty? Subject to funding, future work could track adolescents in these studies, as they enter the workforce and have families of their own, in order to assess the longer-term impacts of social protection programmes.
Children's Use of the Internet

As the internet rapidly expands globally, children and adolescents today use it for exploration, communication, learning and socialization. This raises important questions about how to safeguard children's rights, as their use of digital devices often precedes an effective rights framework and outpaces legislation and regulation. The rapid growth in digital engagement often occurs more quickly than the understanding of what constitutes safe and positive use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

By the end of 2015, 3.2 billion people will be using the internet; 2 billion of them will be in developing countries, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). It is estimated that of these 3.2 billion users, a third will be children. Although evidence from the global North shows how the risks and opportunities of internet use are impacting on child rights, there is a lack of robust evidence from developing countries, even though this is where we are likely to see most of the future growth in the population of young internet users.

Although many valuable initiatives to address children’s positive engagement online are underway, the lack of comparable baseline data and robust evaluations makes it difficult to learn from the experiences of others and to share best practices. Building a solid evidence base will ensure that programmes are better able to respond to country-specific contexts and to inform more effective policies, while simultaneously building national research capacities. At the global level, such research will influence discussions related to the future of internet governance processes and policies, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries.

Innocenti, in collaboration with the London School of Economics, has launched a global research consortium involving key actors and universities from the global North and South. The research partnership – Global Kids Online – draws on and expands the achievements of the EU Kids Online network – an innovative cross-national initiative funded by the European Commission’s Better Internet for Kids (originally, Safer Internet) Programme. The partnership has begun work with four UNICEF country offices – Argentina, the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa – to pilot a global research toolkit with the goal of expanding to additional countries. UNICEF’s global presence facilitates this multi-national partnership by enabling the project to conduct research across multiple contexts. Research outputs include a modular survey, qualitative research protocols and a survey administration toolkit that would include methodological guides and expert reports. The toolkit will be robust, yet flexible enough to take account of variations in national contexts and children’s diverse online experiences.

The project aims for a balanced approach that focuses not only on the risks that children encounter on the internet, but also on the opportunities for social connectedness, entertainment, learning, participation, creativity and expression of identity. To accomplish this, a bottom-up research approach is adopted, focusing primarily on children's own experiences.

As part of the same project, Innocenti co-published a paper – ‘One in Three: Internet governance and children’s rights’ to facilitate the work of the Global Commission on Internet Governance. The paper highlights how one in three internet users in the world today is under 18, and how internet governance bodies need to take account of this fact in their processes and policies. This paper received widespread press coverage and is directly feeding into high-level debates about the future of internet governance and the role of children within it.
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CONTRIBUTIONS TO AGENDA 2030

Innocenti research aims to engage with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a number of ways.

Climate change and resilience: the SDG target focuses on “strengthen[ing] resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”. At the household level, resilience would involve avoidance of detrimental coping strategies that undermine longer-term capabilities, such as selling off productive assets or pulling children out of school.

An Innocenti study recently conducted in Zambia investigates the role of cash transfers in enabling households facing climate shocks to avoid detrimental coping strategies that can lead to poverty traps. In the face of shocks, cash empowers households to employ alternative coping strategies, such as drawing on savings, and also enables them to preserve their food consumption and overall food security. This evidence demonstrates that extending relatively small cash payments unconditionally to the rural poor is a powerful policy option for fostering climate-resilient development (www.unicef-irc.org/publications/777).

Data for monitoring the SDGs: Innocenti hosts the Global Longitudinal Research Initiative (GLORI), a network of 30 longitudinal studies collecting data on children around the world. Longitudinal data tracks children over time and is well suited to understanding the main features of children's physical, cognitive, psychosocial and developmental trajectories during these critical early years. Such studies will be valuable in the context of the SDGs, providing a life-course perspective, and also validating cross-sectional data most often used to operationalize goals and targets in SDG monitoring reports.

Additionally, Innocenti is involved in the development of a UNICEF Data Strategy for Children as part of our response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for a data revolution. Work is being explored in the area of big and open data, and ethics in data and research, particularly in relation to child rights.

Food insecurity and nutrition: Progress towards SDG Goal 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” requires a system to measure and monitor children’s experiences of hunger. A joint collaboration between Innocenti and the FAO has produced a paper reviewing existing measures of child food insecurity, and describes conceptual and practical challenges to developing an effective and efficient system for global monitoring of child food insecurity (www.unicef-irc.org/publications/784).

An Innocenti article on ‘catch-up growth’ has also pointed to the importance of public policies that can influence household behaviours which generate the possibility of ‘catch-up growth’ in children – overcoming nutritional deficits and stunting in early life. In some countries, including Nicaragua and South Africa, the modelled differences are quite substantial, suggesting that improved household behaviours (e.g. improved care practices as a result of early childhood development or nutrition programmes) might have substantial implications for later school attainment, learning or economic productivity (www.unicef-irc.org/publications/778).

Measuring multi-dimensional child poverty: SDG Goal 1.2 states: “By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.” Innocenti developed the
Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) as a tool for measuring child deprivation across the main domains associated with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In contrast to other multi-dimensional poverty measures, this is unique in being child specific. It thus provides a particularly valuable tool for countries to use in obtaining SDG baseline data, and in constructing specific national indicators for monitoring progress in the context of the SDGs. During 2015, Innocenti assisted countries to undertake MODA analyses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malawi and Tanzania, and one is underway in Armenia. The number of countries carrying out national MODAs rose to a total of 26, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. A further 16 countries are planning to implement MODA in 2016.

**RESEARCH GOVERNANCE, CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH QUALITY AND SHARING**

Significant progress was made during 2015 in creating overall research governance in UNICEF. The Office of Research put in place a series of essential building blocks to enhance the efficiency of UNICEF’s approximately US$100 million annual investment in research for the organization as a whole.

a. Innocenti has led the development of a global research policy which sets a framework and governance arrangements for research within UNICEF. Other documents produced to support the policy include an analysis of UNICEF’s overall research expenditure, and guidance on academic publishing.

b. The development of a research framework, including a comprehensive set of thematic research priorities for UNICEF, was led by Innocenti. The framework unifies current and future research directions for the organization, based on current areas of research in support of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan.

c. New instructions on ethics in evidence generation and quality assurance for research procedures have been released. This has been accompanied by the provision of substantial, ongoing technical and advisory support, with over 300 requests in 2015 from UNICEF’s Country and Regional Offices, Headquarters locations and National Committees.
d. Improved mechanisms for internal sharing are now available. A joint Evaluation and Research Database is operational, capturing research and evaluations conducted across UNICEF. Informal discussion and dialogue about research evidence and management throughout the organization was helped by the introduction of the social networking tool Yammer.

e. Innocenti produced a set of Impact Evaluation Briefs, which have been widely used by both internal and external audiences. A related series of webinars was well attended, and these are helping to raise the visibility of research in UNICEF. Innocenti also established a long-term agreement with 10 leading institutions to support UNICEF country offices in undertaking impact evaluations.

f. Innocenti research programmes in collaboration with country offices are helping to build the capacity of national research counterparts. For example, in the Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children, nearly 20 statisticians and demographers from four government statistical offices and related agencies were trained in advanced secondary data analysis techniques within their own ministries. Eight national social scientists, across four countries, were trained in how to conduct systematic literature reviews.

The Best of UNICEF Research competition for 2015 had a record number of research projects submitted. This initiative highlights the best research carried out by UNICEF offices.
UNICEF’s Office of Research – Innocenti Celebrates 25 Years

Over the quarter century of its existence, the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, based at the 600-year-old Ospedale degli Innocenti, in Florence, Italy, has produced ground-breaking analytical work which has informed action and shifted global development discourse on issues that are critical to child rights, development and well-being.

To mark its 25th anniversary, the Office convened a special seminar to reflect on its achievements and look toward future directions for research at Innocenti. In its historic Renaissance surroundings, former directors and senior researchers, together with a constellation of local and national Italian partners, shared their experiences and insights. On behalf of the Italian Government (the Office’s most generous donor), Luca Zelioli, First Counsellor, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delivered the opening remarks.

Following ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a range of research projects at Innocenti contributed significantly in shaping UNICEF’s adoption of the human rights-based approach to development. Research on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child conducted at Innocenti allowed UNICEF to explore aspects of children’s development which were considered sensitive or taboo subjects in various cultural and national contexts.

Innocenti also pioneered much of the early work on child protection, while a number of influential studies focused on what were at the time ‘emerging issues’, such as the impact of economic transition on children, child trafficking, children in conflict with the law, and child labour.

Panellists highlighted the important benefits of having a UNICEF research centre with a mandate to pursue independent research of relevance to the strategic priorities of the organization. They noted Innocenti’s unique contribution in taking a long-term, multi-disciplinary approach to generating knowledge on children.

Today, through its dedicated research office at Innocenti, UNICEF plays a critical role in evidence gathering and knowledge building on a wide range of cutting-edge children’s issues. A publication celebrating the event has links to all major outputs (www.unicef-irc.org/publications/783).
Innocenti has created a number of high-performance partnerships with leading institutions in research, policy and practice (see page 25). Research partners in the field are connected to a variety of national institutions, including government, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local research institutions, working together to implement quality research activities.

Partnerships with academic institutions are further strengthened through the Innocenti Senior Fellowship programme. The Office seeks to ensure a vibrant intellectual environment by encouraging visiting researchers whose research topics complement ongoing projects. The fellows contribute to office seminars, discussions and joint projects. In 2015, four researchers visited Innocenti as senior fellows.

In recent years, increasing attention has been focused on the need to ensure that high-quality research also influences policy and practice. Research impact pathways are often indirect and may occur over longer time frames: Innocenti is committed to ensuring that research uptake and intermediate impacts are monitored and documented as systematically as possible, in order to learn lessons and to maximize the chances that research will have a positive impact on the lives of children.

Research impact is defined in a holistic manner, seeking contribution rather than direct attribution, in a range of ways, including:

- Contributing to the long-term scientific evidence base through publishing high-quality, relevant research in peer-reviewed books, journals and other relevant fora (academic impact).
- Influencing discourse, debate and dialogue among key stakeholders (academics, policymakers, NGOs, media) to affect their knowledge, understanding and attitudes (conceptual impact).
- Building the capacity of researchers from the global South to engage in research design, analysis and implementation in focus countries, to engage in new practice and policy-development processes and to enhance their international profile (capacity-building impact).
- Being able to demonstrate a plausible contribution to changes in policies, programmes and practice in focal countries and within UNICEF, as well as broader impact pathways more generally (instrumental impact).

Some examples of impact from current research programmes is now being documented:

- Impact evaluations of nationally owned anti-poverty programmes underpinning the Transfer Project, initiated at the request of partner governments, are providing rigorous evidence on the impacts of those governments’ cash transfer programmes and potential for scale-up. Such a research model ensures full local ownership, and government-initiated regional workshops are now sharing lessons and influencing regional discourse on design of cash transfer programmes in support of children throughout sub-Saharan Africa. A 2015 evaluation conducted by an independent panel of academics stated that: “evidence coming from the Transfer Project is among the highest ever produced by UNICEF for four reasons: the broad scale of the programming in the host nations; the use of gold standard research techniques such as randomized control assignment into beneficiary and control communities; large research budgets allowing abundant and sophisticated data collection;
and cooperation among agencies (FAO and others) to pool expertise in research design and analysis.”

● In the Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children, inclusion of policymakers as key research partners from the outset has ensured real-time application of emerging evidence to national advocacy and programming. In Viet Nam, initial findings are being used to help design a national child protection evaluation and to draft legislation regarding violence against children, as well as to inform a multi-year national strategy for behaviour change. In Zimbabwe, findings are informing the National Girls’ Empowerment Framework and have provided the space for the Zimbabwean Government to present its findings on violence internationally, for the first time. In Peru, in-country, participatory analysis of existing secondary data with government officials has led to a government decision to establish a collaboration across ministries – including the Ministry of Finance – to calculate the burden of violence, building bridges between ministries that formerly had never worked together.

● As part of ongoing work on child rights and the internet, a new Innocenti-led research partnership – Global Kids Online – has been launched with academic partners and four UNICEF country offices. The initiative will develop a global toolkit to facilitate national and cross-national comparative research on children’s internet use. Although the toolkit is still under development, at least 40 countries and UNICEF offices have expressed keen interest in using the toolkit for national research. Stakeholders as varied as UNESCO, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Council of Europe intend to establish partnerships with Innocenti and Global Kids Online either to support national research or to use the research results for policy development once the current pilot phase has been completed.

In terms of the broader communications work of the Office, our visibility and influence continue to grow. In 2015, over 140 research products were published in a variety of media, including blogs, peer-reviewed journals, research briefs, working papers and others. A new streamlined approach to core publications series has been adopted, and a completely new publication series – Innocenti Research Briefs – has been inaugurated. Visual multi-media documentation of strategic research priorities was greatly expanded, with short films and photo essays produced for the research programmes on violence affecting children (Peru) and on social protection cash transfer (Ghana). The Research Watch series continued with the latest edition ‘Are we failing adolescent girls?’.

**RESEARCH IMPACT: ABOLISHING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN PERU**

On 10 December 2015, the Peruvian Congress approved the Law prohibiting the use of physical and other humiliating punishment against children and adolescents. The new Peruvian law was officially gazetted on 30 December 2015. The reform came about following the submission of three previous legislative initiatives. Research had an important role to play. The Committee on Women and Family considered research on the prevalence of corporal punishment in Peru – including contributions from Innocenti – and examined the laws prohibiting all corporal punishment in other countries of the region. And finally, it examined the costs and benefits of prohibition with regard to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, the Public Ministry, families in general, and children and adolescents themselves.
The Innocenti website overhaul and redesign project, including new user experience design, adaptive screen, cloud server hosting and web-based content management system, was developed throughout 2015 for a launch in 2016. The new user experience will make it much easier to find, search, scan and cite Innocenti publication resources. The new site features substantially upgraded the profiles of current Innocenti research projects, experts, partners, conferences and blogs.

The frequency and quality of social media content generation has increased, contributing to a 30 per cent increase in Twitter followers. Innocenti has been an early contributor to the new global UNICEF Connect blogsite. As a result, the second ever blog area on UNICEF Connect will focus on data and research and will be jointly managed by Innocenti and UNICEF’s Division of Data, Research and Policy.

The new Innocenti website has been optimized to make much better use of digital communication and social media platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Linked In and the UNICEF Connect blog. Innocenti has reached over 15,000 people via Facebook and has over 5,000 followers on Twitter.

In 2016, Innocenti will continue to invest in capturing the impact of its research, exploring the use of altmetrics and media monitoring to better capture online and offline impacts beyond traditional academic citations; developing independently verified evidence-based case studies working with international research uptake and impact experts; exploring the use of data science to better visualize emerging research findings; and supporting colleagues throughout UNICEF.
PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNICATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPACT

A SELECTION OF KEY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

- African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)
- Centre for Social Research – University of Malawi
- Centre of Applied Social Sciences – University of Zimbabwe
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE) in Peru
- Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights
- Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) – WHO collaborative survey
- Institute for Social Development Studies – Viet Nam
- Istituto degli Innocenti
- London School of Economics Department of Media and Communication
- Maastricht University School for Business and Society
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
- Overseas Development Institute – United Kingdom
- Palm Associates (Zambia)
- Policy Research for Development (REPOA) (Tanzania)
- Pontifical Catholic University of Peru – Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas, Economicas, Politicas y Antropologicas
- Southern Cross University Centre for Children and Young People
- University of Edinburgh Department of Education, Community and Society
- University of Ghana
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Carolina Population Center
- University of Oxford Department of Social Policy and Intervention
- University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences
- University of York Department of Social Policy and Social Work
- University of Zambia
- University of Zurich Department of Economics
- Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
- Women's University in Africa
- Young Lives Study – University of Oxford Department of International Development
Through the generous contributions of its partners, the Office of Research – Innocenti continued to grow in support of its core mission in 2015. Total budget expenditure reached US$7.57 million for the year. The Italian Government continues to provide stable core resources to Innocenti. Over one third of total expenditure for 2015 came from UNICEF regular resources, with additional project funding coming from the United Kingdom Government (DfID and Home Affairs), Swedish Government (Sida), United States Government (USAID and the US Department of Labor), Swiss National Committee for UNICEF and other donors. The estimated budget allocation for Innocenti in 2016 is US$8.5 million.

In 2015, nine new staff joined the Office, bringing the total number of research and support staff and consultants to 44. In addition to a new Director, newly joined staff include both quantitative and qualitative research professionals from the fields of education research, social and economic policy analysis, impact evaluation, child protection, public health, programme management, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management. The Office welcomed four senior research fellows and eight interns during 2015.

Staff expertise is drawn from diverse professional settings, including humanitarian response, fragile states and conflict zones, transitional, and development contexts. The staff/consultants came from 15 countries, adding office diversity in terms of both nationalities and language competencies. At the end of 2015, 70 per cent of staff were women.

In 2015, the Office continued to facilitate informal exchanges and held 22 ‘Office Seminars’ covering a variety of research topics, methods and disciplines.
INNOCENTI PUBLICATIONS

Innocenti Research Papers


**Innocenti Research Briefs**


**Innocenti Op-eds, Commentaries and Blogs**


Other Innocenti Outputs


EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

Chapters in Books


Journal Articles and Research Papers


**RESEARCH BRIEFS – OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PARTNERS**


**OTHER PUBLICATIONS**


