**UNICEF
Office of Research – Innocenti**

2017

RESULTS
REPORT

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Office of Research-Innocenti

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.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The conclusion of UNICEF's 2014–2017 Strategic Plan and accompanying Office of Research – Innocenti Programme provides an excellent moment to reflect on the impact and influence of our work over this period.

The quality and relevance of the research we undertake, and our contribution to results, depend on many factors: a stable financial base; excellent staff; our embeddedness within UNICEF and close relationships, particularly with country and regional offices; and partnerships with a wide range of research and policy institutions.

Progress has been made in all these dimensions over the past four years, and translated into impacts on programmes, policies, advocacy and research capacities across UNICEF, as this report demonstrates. Looking back to 2014, we now see an office that has grown rapidly – in its budget and staffing, in its outputs and activities, in its partnerships, and in its visibility and influence.

At the start of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, the former Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) had only recently taken on the functions of the Office of Research for UNICEF. Now its mandate has expanded to leading the research function across UNICEF, creating a stronger evidence base for programming, and strengthening institutional and staff capacities for evidence generation and use.

Demonstrable results over this period are seen in the establishment of a research governance structure for the organization. This includes: a research policy, quality assurance and ethics procedures, a research framework, and committees to ensure quality oversight and coordination. Research management training in most regional and some country offices has been welcomed, along with a broad range of technical support services. The annual *Best of UNICEF Research* competition, now in its sixth year, recognizes good, policy-relevant research by UNICEF staff, and has clearly incentivized greater investment in such research across the organization.

Many of the achievements by the Office of Research – Innocenti covered in this 2017 Annual Report are an outcome of efforts over many years. They benefit from the endeavour, underscored here, of building the institutional infrastructure and processes that support high-quality research and a wider appreciation and use of evidence. They are achieved through solid partnerships with research institutions and with country offices in ways that firmly link the research with programming.

Through the quality of our work, Innocenti is increasingly recognized as a leader and sought-after partner in key areas of research relating to children and adolescents – such as poverty measurement, social protection, violence, digital use and ethics. We have been *forward-looking* in identifying issues before they are priorities for the wider community, including research on child rights and internet use, which is informing both UNICEF positions and broader child rights and protection debates; or research on

adolescence, which now forms an evidence base for a stronger focus within UNICEF's new Strategic Plan. We have been *innovative* in adapting rigorous methodologies to understand the impacts of interventions in humanitarian contexts, assessing how cash transfers enable education among Syrian children in Lebanon – studies that will be replicated elsewhere. And we have been *responsive* – including having a staff member deployed to Cox's Bazar to work with the Rohingya refugees, where we have demonstrated how good, timely research inputs can inform and transform the emergency response.

The quality of our research as measured by peer-reviewed publications continues to rise, while we have also increased our dissemination to wider audiences through social media, and to policy and programme audiences through more targeted briefs and short outputs. Our signature publication – the *Innocenti Report Card* – focused on Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, and was the first report on this issue for industrialized countries. An edited volume, *Children of Austerity*, based on an earlier Report Card, has been widely acclaimed and used for advocacy purposes.

2017 was also a year of planning and preparation – both for the new work plan, aligned with UNICEF's 2018–2021 Strategy, and the imminent move into expanded office space, still within the historic *Ospedale degli Innocenti*. Our new premises provide an opportunity to enhance our role as a physical and virtual convening space for dialogue and critical thinking on issues concerning child rights, well-being and development in support of the new Strategic Plan. Over the next four years, the Office of Research – Innocenti has the opportunity to strengthen its role as a leading hub in a global knowledge network – generating and sharing evidence that can improve the lives of the world's children, and strengthening UNICEF's position as the global thought leader and policy advocate for children.

We look forward to working with colleagues across UNICEF and partners around the world to achieve our ambitious shared goals for children.

Enjoy this report and we welcome your feedback on our work.

Sarah Cook
Director

OVERVIEW

During 2017 the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti contributed to UNICEF's strategic goals for children through:

■ **Knowledge generation.** Through its research activities, UNICEF Innocenti produces rigorous, policy-relevant evidence that can inform UNICEF's policy advocacy and programme priorities and contribute to knowledge as a public good. Key research programme areas in 2017 included:
  – Poverty and inequality affecting children;
  – Social protection for children and adolescents;
  – Education and learning outcomes;
  – Child rights and protection – violence against children and children online;
  – Adolescent well-being and development;
  – Children affected by migration, conflict and displacement; and
  – Children in humanitarian and emergency contexts.

■ **Strengthening capacities for evidence use in UNICEF.** Training, technical assistance and guidance to UNICEF staff around the world are improving standards of evidence generation and use across the organization.

■ **Knowledge sharing and convening.** Regular events bring together UNICEF staff, policy makers and researchers for dialogue around key programmatic and policy issues, while digital media are increasingly being used to share research findings, methodologies, and evidence.

This report presents selected results of an extensive programme of work across these three key areas. It highlights how our research contributes to programming, policy and advocacy, how we contribute to UNICEF results, and how we generate knowledge as a public good.

RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN

GENERATE HIGH-QUALITY EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE GENERATION AND USE	CATALYSE AND CONVENE RESEARCH ON CHILDREN
■ Undertake research on critical issues for child rights and well-being	■ Set corporate standards and procedures	■ Produce a global mandate on research for children
■ Provide evidence to inform policy, programmes and practice	■ Shape a UNICEF research agenda	■ Convene global thinkers and expertise
■ Evaluate impact to understand what works, and challenge conventional ideas	■ Provide technical assistance and advice	■ Work with partners
■ Identify emerging research areas and future priorities	■ Support research uptake through communications and outreach	■ Shape global research questions and priorities
	■ Promote ethics in evidence generation	■ Work in high-, middle- and low-income settings
		■ Use Innocenti setting for high-level exchange

Cross-cutting research themes	GENDER
	HUMANITARIAN
	ADOLESCENCE

2017 HEADLINE RESULTS

High-quality research produced at the Office of Research – Innocenti influences policy and practice. We continue to provide cutting-edge research on a range of topics including: child poverty and equity; social protection; violence affecting children; and education and learning. We have led the development of new areas of evidence generation, which are essential for a forward-looking strategy for UNICEF, including research on: adolescent well-being and opportunity; child rights in the digital age; displaced and refugee children; and children in humanitarian contexts.

OUR RESEARCH IMPACTS INCLUDED:

■ Generation of the first global estimates of food insecurity in households with children, which constitutes a significant step towards measuring progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 2.1: end hunger.

■ Development of a child-specific, multidimensional poverty measure appropriate to high-income countries, which can be used for SDG monitoring in Europe.

■ The Innocenti Report Card 14, *Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in rich countries*, which was covered by the media and used for advocacy purposes in 40 countries.

■ Publication of an edited volume, *Children of Austerity*, with Oxford University Press, which documented the impact of the financial crisis on children in rich countries.

We expanded and leveraged our international research networks and partnerships, including those relating to longitudinal research, evaluations of social protection, and child rights in a digital age. Our networks facilitate data collection and collaborative research, as well as providing avenues for sharing expertise, consulting and influencing, and disseminating results.

TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE:

■ Widely disseminated our research findings that challenge common perceptions or 'myths' associated with cash transfers, thereby helping to overcome bottlenecks to the adoption and scaling up of social protection programmes.

■ Expanded our multi-country research network, Global Kids Online, from 4 to 15 countries, thus generating evidence on how children in low- and middle-income countries use digital technologies that can inform programming and policy on both opportunities and risks for children.

2017 HEADLINE RESULTS

Some exciting new **evidence synthesis products and research methodologies** support UNICEF staff and the broader community that undertakes research on children and adolescents. These include: an instrument for measuring stress and mental health in adolescents validated for low-income settings; a series of methodological briefs on doing research about and with adolescents; frameworks for understanding youth participation; and guidance on ethics in evidence generation and use.

WE SUPPORTED UNICEF STAFF THROUGH:

- A successful Introduction to Research Management and Methods course, which is in high demand and is being implemented in all regional offices and various country offices.
- The development of an Evidence Gap Map on Adolescent Well-being, together with materials synthesizing research findings and methods related to adolescence that can be useful for programming.

The Office of Research – Innocenti acts as a convening centre, facilitating dialogue around the evidence for policies and programmes affecting children. The Office hosted several **international research and policy meetings**, in addition to strengthening communication and dissemination of our own research. Our print and digital research publications have been supplemented by stronger investment in web platforms, blogs, podcasts and videos, which are accessible to a growing audience.

KEY EVENTS AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- Co-hosting of the International Symposium on the Contributions of Psychology to Peace, which brought together experts to share evidence on the important and timely topic of young people and conflict.
- Meetings of UNICEF staff including the Adolescent Network meeting and training on Public Finance for Children.
- Expansion of our suite of digital communication channels to include research webinars.

HOW INNOCENTI RESEARCH CONTRIBUTES TO RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

The unique position of the Office of Research – Innocenti, as a research centre embedded within UNICEF, enables us to bring academic research and rigorous evidence to address programmatic questions faced by UNICEF staff; and to use experience on the ground to guide research undertaken by Innocenti staff or the broader development research community. Within UNICEF, we provide a space for exploring emerging, forward-looking and strategic issues that may inform future programme, policy and advocacy priorities.

Research and evidence-related activities conducted by the Office of Research – Innocenti can have a range of direct and indirect impacts, within shorter or longer time frames, and may include:

- Research and evidence that contribute directly to changes or improvements in policies, programmes and practices of UNICEF, national governments and partners;
- Research that informs and influences the policy discourse, debate and advocacy on child rights, well-being and development;
- Activities that strengthen the capacity for evidence generation and use within UNICEF and among partner organizations;
- Partnerships, networks or strategic alliances that are brokered to improve the generation and use of knowledge and evidence on behalf of children; and
- Research that contributes to the scientific knowledge base on child rights, well-being and development, and on methodologies for doing research on and with children, thus contributing to a global public good.

> **"As a knowledge-based organization, UNICEF needs a forward-looking research centre which serves as a source of information on the overall climate in which children are growing up today; as a source of best practices on child well-being and to facilitate interchange of experiences ... the Office of Research – Innocenti can identify new and emerging issues and concerns and illuminate good examples of how such situations are being handled elsewhere."**
>
> *External partner, Innocenti brand survey respondent*

Some brief examples serve to illustrate the diverse impacts of our activities in 2017. These include impacts on programme, policy and advocacy; on research methods, conceptual debates and knowledge sharing. They have affected a wide range of stakeholders: UNICEF and other humanitarian and development agencies; child welfare and advocacy organizations; policy makers; practitioners; and academics. More in-depth examples are developed throughout this report.

- A staff member with **expertise on the Rohingya** provided culturally- and context-sensitive guidance to inform the early humanitarian response and interventions for Rohingya children and their families in Cox's Bazar.
- Research on **how children use the internet**, through our Global Kids Online initiative (in partnership with the London School of Economics), generated evidence that has been used by policy makers and legislators in countries including Argentina, Brazil, Montenegro and South Africa, as well as providing the empirical basis for UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2017*.

HOW INNOCENTI RESEARCH CONTRIBUTES TO RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

- A rigorous assessment of the **impact of social protection interventions in sub-Saharan Africa** though the multi-partner Transfer Project is informing the design and scale-up of government programmes. For example, Zambia has drawn upon findings to guide a significant public investment in social protection programmes now benefitting over 700,000 households with children. Tanzania has used the findings to expand its cash transfer programmes and pilot 'cash plus' interventions aimed at improving adolescent well-being outcomes. UNICEF Innocenti is now evaluating the impacts of the pilot programmes.
- UNICEF Innocenti worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to generate the first **global estimates of food insecurity** among households with children under age 15, thus providing baseline evidence on child hunger and a methodology for measuring SDG 2: End hunger.
- A rigorous impact evaluation of the **No Lost Generation** programme in Lebanon is highlighting the potential and limitations of cash-based programming for education in the context of large-scale displacement. UNICEF Lebanon has used the results to advocate for increased school supply, and expansion of the programme to other regions in the country.
- The first **estimates of child poverty for the Arab region** were produced in collaboration with UNICEF Innocenti, drawing on our expertise and methods in the measurement of multidimensional child poverty. The results provide baseline measures for analysing progress towards SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- A comparative analysis of **legal and procedural safeguards for asylum-seeking and refugee children** in five Nordic countries was undertaken with the National Committees in these countries. It provides evidence of good practice as well as protection gaps that can inform governments and the international community in the implementation of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

CHILD POVERTY, EQUITY AND WELL-BEING

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CHILDREN IN RICH COUNTRIES: EDITED VOLUME

UNICEF Innocenti and Oxford University Press published an edited volume entitled *Children of Austerity: Impact of the Great Recession on child poverty in rich countries*. This was the first international study of the impact of the Great Recession on children in rich countries. The analysis gives a detailed account of recent changes in monetary child poverty rates, government policies, and political discourse around child poverty in 11 high-income countries. It shows that several countries experienced cuts in spending on health, education and other public services that hurt families with children in ways that income poverty statistics have not captured. The Welsh Assembly convened a round table discussion, chaired by Michael Sheen (actor and UNICEF UK Ambassador), which provided an important opportunity for civil servants and civil society groups in Wales to discuss anti-poverty strategies.
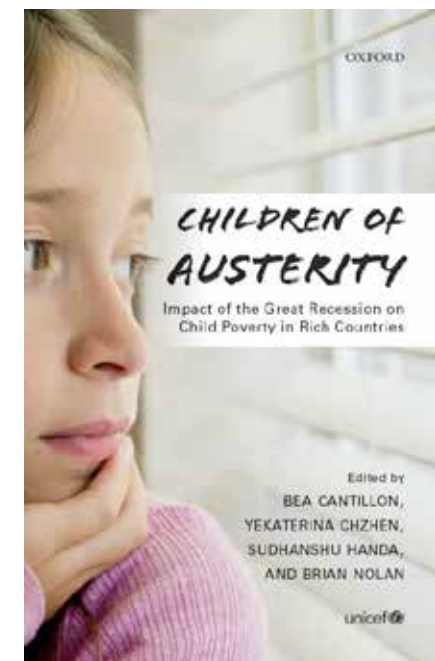
> **"The research on impact of austerity on children is outstanding."**
>
> *External research partner, Innocenti brand survey respondent*

CHILDREN AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN RICH COUNTRIES: ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE

Innocenti Report Card 14, *Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in rich countries*, received coverage in the international and national media across more than 40 countries. National Committees for UNICEF have used the findings to engage with national policy makers and other stakeholders on how their countries should monitor and track progress towards the SDGs affecting children. In Canada, the Foundation of Greater Montréal incorporated the methods and indicators from Report Card 14 into its annual Vital Signs report, producing a version for Canada's regions.

> **"Congratulations to the Office of Research – Innocenti team for achieving this great milestone. The Tanzania Child Poverty Report is a model for our region."**
>
> *Jean Dupraz, Regional Advisor, Social Policy, UNICEF ESARO*

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

DEEPER DIVE

Measuring child poverty in the Arab region: Evidence to support SDG implementation

UNICEF's commitment to equity for children focuses on overcoming multiple deprivations facing disadvantaged children. The measurement and tracking of multi-dimensional child poverty are key elements in supporting this agenda.

In 2017 UNICEF Innocenti edited a special issue of the journal *Child Indicators Research*, highlighting how multidimensional child poverty (MDCP) can be defined and measured in different contexts.

As more countries develop multidimensional child poverty measures, many of them are using the UNICEF Innocenti Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA). About 50 countries around the globe have now developed such multidimensional measures. In some cases, the method has been adopted as a regular component of national reporting: in 2017 Tanzania updated its MDCP data, based on work initiated with UNICEF Innocenti in 2015, and produced new estimates for both the mainland and Zanzibar.

In 2017 UNICEF Innocenti provided leadership and oversight for production of the first-ever estimates of child poverty for the Arab region using the same methods. A comprehensive report, encompassing 11 countries, concluded that 29 million children in the region suffer from acute deprivation, while approximately half of the children in the region suffer from moderate deprivation. This report is a key resource for understanding child poverty in a region deeply affected by humanitarian crises, and which often lacks official monetary poverty numbers. The report provides important information and guidance to policy makers and practitioners for developing and implementing plans to achieve SDG 1. The report demonstrates how MODA can be adapted to produce estimates of child poverty at a regional level, offering a valuable tool in tracking progress towards SDG 1.

MEASURING MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHILD POVERTY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Few European Union countries have official national indicators for multidimensional child poverty, making it difficult to monitor progress towards SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. A paper *SDG 1.2: Multidimensional child poverty in the European Union* introduces a child-specific multidimensional poverty measure using data from material deprivation modules of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) 2009 and 2014. The proposed measure can be used both for national and EU-wide SDG monitoring without replacing either national or EU-wide indices of material deprivation.
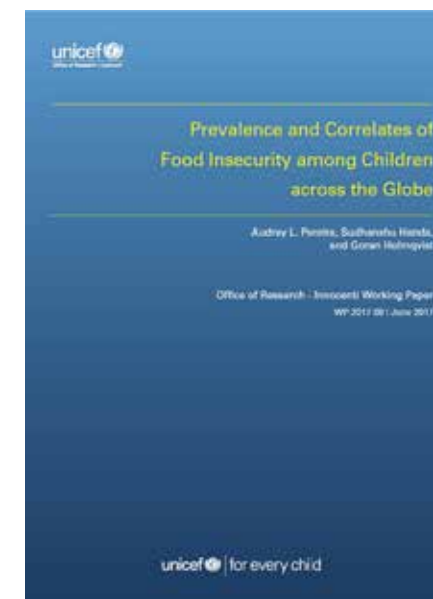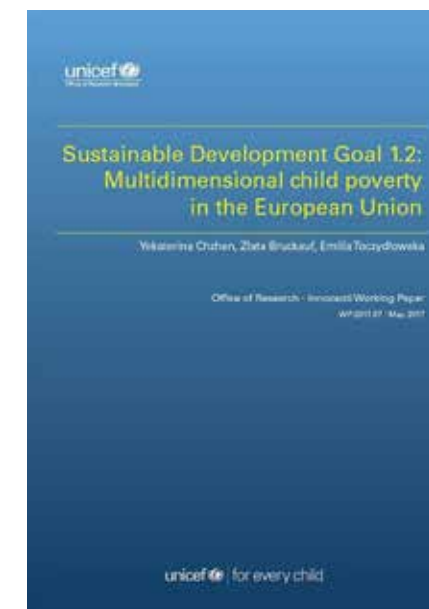
FIRST GLOBAL ESTIMATES OF FOOD INSECURITY IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

The paper *Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity among Children across the Globe* presents the first global estimates (for 147 countries) of the share and number of children below age 15 living in a food-insecure household. This is a major step towards a measure that can track progress towards SDG target 2.1: End hunger in all its forms. Our Report Card 14 uses FAO's Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) to measure moderate and severe food insecurity in combination with data from the Gallup World Poll. The resulting measure finds that 41 per cent of children worldwide – some 605 million children – live in a household with moderate or severe food insecurity. This provides the best available baseline for measuring changes in child hunger and food insecurity.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

SOCIAL PROTECTION

DRAWING ON A DECADE OF EVIDENCE TO CONFRONT COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CASH TRANSFERS IN AFRICA

A new paper, *Myth-busting? Confronting Six Common Perceptions about Unconditional Cash Transfers in Africa*, summarizes evidence gathered from eight rigorous evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa, representing over 1 million households, on six common perceptions associated with unconditional cash transfer programmes: they induce higher spending on alcohol and tobacco; they create dependency; they increase fertility; they are fiscally unsustainable; they induce community-level inflationary effects and others. The paper marshalls evidence to refute these common 'myths' about unconditional cash transfers. The findings have been widely used to advocate for initiating and scaling up cash transfers in Africa and beyond via policy briefs, blogs, videos and presentations to policy makers. An infographic summarizing the findings has been translated into eight languages, including Malagasy, so it can be posted in rural villages to support evidence-based learning on cash in Madagascar.
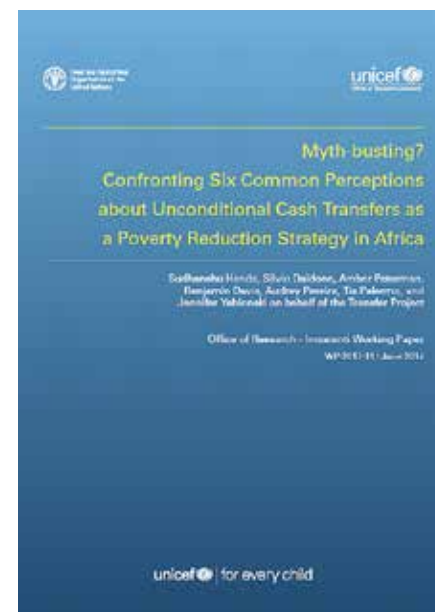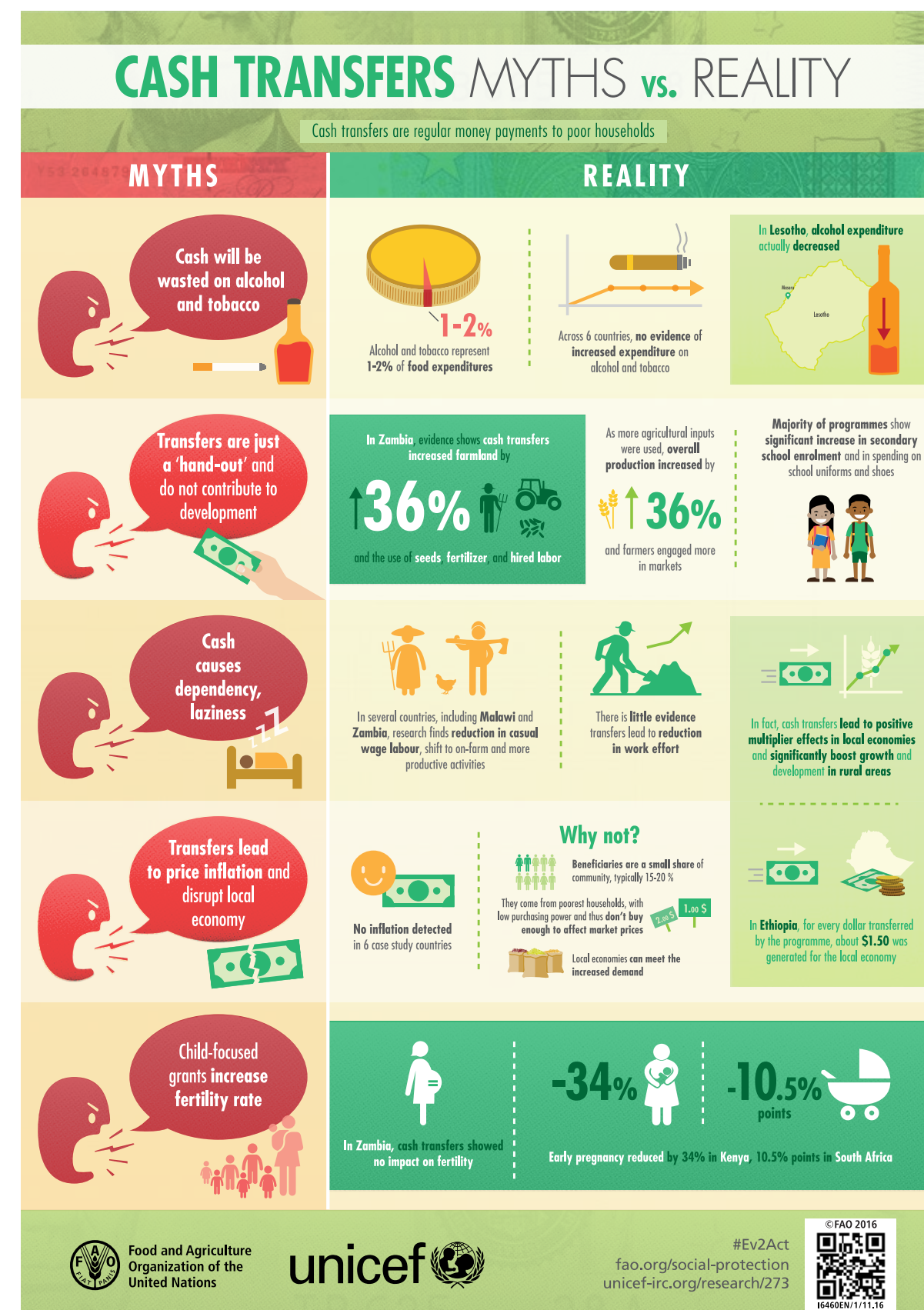
> "Evidence coming from the Transfer Project is among the highest quality of evidence ever produced by UNICEF for four reasons: the broad scale of the programming in host nations; the use of gold standard research techniques such as randomized control assignment into beneficiary and control communities; large research budgets allowing abundant and sophisticated data collections; and cooperation among agencies (FAO and others) to pool expertise in research and analysis."
>
> *Evaluation Office report to the UNICEF Executive Board, 2015*

SHARING EVIDENCE WITH AFRICAN LEADERS: THE ANNUAL TRANSFER PROJECT MEETING

UNICEF Innocenti, together with partners in the decade-long Transfer Project, convened policy makers, researchers and staff from UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across the African continent, in Dakar, for its annual meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to share evidence from evaluations, including lessons on the design, implementation and impacts of cash transfers as an effective mechanism for social protection in sub-Saharan Africa. Cash transfers have rapidly expanded as a key social protection tool for reducing chronic poverty and hunger and in this context, the annual conference has provided a forum for dialogue and learning among policy makers, researchers and other development partners, supporting the case for governments to invest resources for scaling up social protection programmes.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

DEEPER DIVE

A decade of evidence and policy influence: Taking social protection to scale in Zambia

The Transfer Project is a multi-country research initiative that examines the impact of large-scale national cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. UNICEF Innocenti collaborates with the University of North Carolina and the American Institutes for Research to provide oversight of the project. Transfer Project research programmes are owned and implemented by national governments, with emphasis on dissemination of results among national stakeholders, in order to facilitate local learning and swift uptake of evidence for policy development.

Cumulative evidence produced in Zambia by the Transfer Project on the effectiveness of unconditional cash transfers has been utilized by government to scale up a national social protection programme nationwide _ from under 20,000 households in 2007 to over 700,000 households planned in 2018. What started as small, donor-financed pilots are now approximately 70 per cent financed through national budgetary allocations totalling some 55 million USD in 2017. Key factors influencing the uptake of findings include the rigour of the evaluations, and the close partnership throughout the evaluation process between UNICEF Innocenti, the Country Office and other research partners together with Zambian government officials.

The evidence produced in Zambia represents over a decade of collaborative efforts by international researchers and the University of Zambia. Findings have been disseminated in over 15 journal articles, working papers, briefs and presentations. As detailed in the volume *From Evidence to Action: The Story of Cash Transfers and Impact Evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa*, the sharing of findings at key junctures throughout the policy process was key to advocating for programme expansion and increased government financing, as well as to informing programme design. The strong evidence of positive impacts of cash transfers on the local economy and productivity, combined with evidence to dispel 'myths' that cash transfers lead to increased fertility, spending on alcohol and tobacco or welfare dependency, all helped garner policy support.

CHILD RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

DEEPER DIVE

Global Kids Online: A growing research network on children and the use of digital technologies

Global Kids Online (GKO) is a research programme led by UNICEF Innocenti in partnership with the London School of Economics. It brings together UNICEF country offices and national research institutions to generate evidence on children's online experiences, examining both opportunities and risks of digital use. GKO has designed and tested a robust research methodology and has provided tools, including the survey instrument, methodological guidance, qualitative protocols and impact reporting guidelines, to enable partners in the network to conduct quality research on children's online experiences. Findings are being used to influence global discussions about child rights and protection in internet regulation, and to inform national policies, advocacy and programming. Initiated as a pilot in 2015 involving 4 countries (Argentina, the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa), the network now includes 15 countries, with several more planning to initiate research in 2018. Research papers, blogs and other information are made available on the GKO website, with information downloaded over 5,000 times by visitors from 160 countries.

While multi-country evidence generated by the partnership has influenced global forums and debate, direct impacts generated by this research are illustrated through policy changes at the national level. In Argentina, UNICEF has conducted national surveys on child internet use using the GKO methodology and tools. The results have been used in working with a range of stakeholders to promote children's digital citizenship and literacy, and as a means of mitigating risks. Some tangible results included curriculum development and training of teachers, child protection and justice officers, and parents on 'digital co-existence'. In addition, UNICEF Argentina was able to influence Argentina's new 'Convergent Communications Law', which is intended to reform national telecommunication, cable and audio-visual regulations. Central to this was early engagement with the General Director of Culture and Education, the Provincial Agency for Children and Adolescents of the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Justice of the province of Buenos Aires. Research findings from the GKO project have supported policy development as well as a comprehensive public communication and outreach campaign.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017:
SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

REVIEW OF EVIDENCE ON THE IMPACT OF SCREEN TIME ON CHILD WELL-BEING

Few child well-being issues are so widely discussed with so little evidence brought to bear as the impact of children's time spent online. Our new paper, *How Does the Time Children Spend Using Digital Technology Impact their Mental Well-being, Social Relationships and Physical Activity?*, provides a review of existing evidence across three dimensions: mental, social and physical. The paper formed the basis for chapter four of the 2017 edition of UNICEF's global flagship *State of the World's Children*. The evidence reviewed is largely inconclusive with respect to children's physical activity, but indicates that digital technology can have beneficial impacts on children's social relationships. While the long-term impact on children's mental well-being remains uncertain, the few robust studies that exist suggest the relationship is U-shaped, where no use and excessive use can have a small negative impact on mental well-being, while moderate use can have a small positive impact. More and better research is needed to understand not only how digital technology directly impacts children's well-being, but also what other activities it may crowd out.

CHILD RIGHTS AND 'BIG DATA': SETTING THE AGENDA

An Innocenti working paper, *Children and the Data Cycle: Rights and Ethics in a Big Data World*, provides an urgently needed framing of neglected issues related to the protection of children's rights in a world where personal data are increasingly accessible. The paper highlights the lack of rigorous debate on how to adapt traditional (offline) ethical standards and mechanisms for review of research to those involving data collection using children's online activity and to a 'big data' environment. To date, the child rights community has not typically been involved in such discussions. The authors argue that, given the potential for severe, long-lasting and differential impacts on children, a child rights perspective needs to be integrated in global debates about ethics and data science. The paper was accepted by the Bloomberg Data for Good Exchange and re-printed in Cornell University's open access 'ArXiv' science server, and subsequently became the topic of an MIT Technology Review 'Emerging Technology' write-up.

> **"We wanted to share with you an update about the launch of Argentine Kids Online report.
> The repercussions were extremely positive at government level. It triggered initiatives with different counterparts, wide media repercussion and civil society engagement with results of the study."**
>
> *María José Ravalli, Head of Communication and Social Mobilization, UNICEF Argentina*

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

DEEPER DIVE

Understanding drivers of violence affecting children

Research on the drivers of violence affecting children analysed the interplay of structural, institutional and interpersonal factors that shape everyday violence in children's homes, schools and communities. Among the lasting impacts of this multi-country study carried out in Vietnam, Peru, Italy and Zimbabwe has been a greater commitment to use of existing data by policy makers and national researchers. In the case of Peru (see case study on page 21), this has contributed to new policy and legislation.

The study team partnered with Young Lives at Oxford University to analyse their longitudinal data on children from Peru, Vietnam, Ethiopia and India. This has provided a deeper understanding of adolescents' experiences of violence and the early-life factors that shape it. The findings demonstrate a direct relationship between physical violence and bullying experienced in early childhood and adolescents' self-esteem and learning outcomes.

The research approach to analysing drivers of violence has been replicated in another 10 countries where UNICEF has programmes. At the global level, it fed into the development of UNICEF's Violence Against Children (VAC) 'theory of change' and contributed to the work of the Know Violence in Childhood learning initiative as well as the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and included in the Solutions Summit held in Stockholm in February 2018.

ASSESSING RESEARCH IMPACTS: A CASE STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN PERU

An assessment of the impacts of the Peru case study within the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children project was undertaken in 2017 and published in a University of Edinburgh paper, *Changing National Policy on Violence Affecting Children*. The paper documents the impact of the project on national policy and programming in Peru, and specifically how research uptake and use contribute to policy and practice change in a particular setting.

The assessment found that, "the multi-partner, relationships-driven approach of the Multi-country Study helped to maximize impact in Peru". It also documented the clear benefits of the study's partnership strategy in Peru, which helped to ensure that evidence generated was relevant and useful in the local multicultural, social and political context. Local research teams were empowered to take ownership of data generated through the study. By using this approach, the Multi-country Study contributed to policy and programme changes in Peru, including the passage of a law banning corporal punishment in all settings.

> **"Thanks for sharing the experience of Peru. We look forward to 'plagiarizing' it as much as we can. The report will certainly help us galvanize government actors and civil society to address the issue of protection in a systemic way rather than as a group of programmes (with little or no connection between them)."**
>
> *Representative,*
> *UNICEF Paraguay Country Office*

## PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR STRENGTHENING PARENTING OF ADOLESCENTS

Over the past four years UNICEF Innocenti, in partnership with Oxford University, has pioneered research on family and parenting support in low- and middle-income settings. Initial research helped identify parenting of adolescents as a neglected area. A study of parenting practices in six eastern and southern African countries (2016) helped to inform the development of a new intervention: the Sinovuyo Teen Parenting Programme. A rigorous evaluation of this programme found positive post-intervention outcomes, including a reduction in corporal punishment and abusive parenting, and an increase in positive and involved parenting. The programme was generally seen as acceptable to local communities, with positive impacts on the child and youth care workers trained to deliver the programme, on parenting practices, and on relationships between adolescents and their caregivers. Recommendations were also made for embedding the programme in regular service delivery. (Final qualitative reports are expected in April 2018). This research stream led to engagement with Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, as well as several UNICEF regional offices, on research, planning and monitoring of parenting programmes to prevent violence. At the global level, the study has informed one of the seven strategies to end violence against children within the World Health Organization's INSPIRE package.

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING
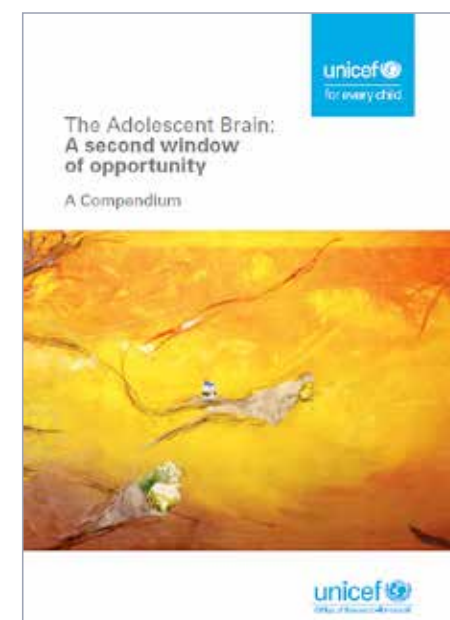
THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN: EVIDENCE FOR POLICY AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

UNICEF Innocenti edited a compendium of articles by eight experts in adolescent neuroscience, which summarize scientific and programmatic evidence based on presentations at a symposium held at UNICEF Headquarters. The publication highlights how programmes and services can maximize the potential of adolescents during a period of opportunity and vulnerability sometimes referred to as the 'second window of opportunity'. The commentaries reflect what is known about adolescent brain plasticity, and factors that have a positive or negative impact on brain development, including the effects of poverty, violence, stress and technology. Using accessible language, the compendium aims to increase communication between adolescent service providers and the scientific research community, providing evidence to foster optimal adolescent development across many domains.

DOING RESEARCH ON AND WITH ADOLESCENTS: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

■ Several **research synthesis and literature review products** contributed significantly to global tools and knowledge for conducting high-quality research on adolescence in low- and middle income countries. These included:

– A series of **adolescence research briefs**, developed with Columbia University and experts from the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing, provides concrete guidance on best practice research methodologies for undertaking research on or with adolescents in low- and middle-income countries. Topics include: indicators and data sources, ethics, research with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, participatory research, measurement of the social and structural determinants of adolescent health, and adolescent economic strengthening interventions. The findings were widely disseminated to UNICEF staff through a webinar that proved extremely popular.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017: SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

– UNICEF's first **Evidence Gap Map**, produced in collaboration with the Bassiouni Group on the topics of adolescent protection, participation, and financial and material well-being and summarizing global evidence from impact evaluations and systematic reviews in this area, was finalized in November 2017. A working draft was showcased at the Global Evidence Summit, South Africa, at the 3ie London Evidence Week and at the Adolescent Lives and Wellbeing conference organized by UCL in London. There has been widespread interest both in the methodology and in the final output, with a special issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health* featuring a summary of gap maps looking at adolescence interventions being proposed across several partners in early 2018 and further promotion planned. The interactive tool, study protocol and report of findings are available on the Innocenti website, as is a podcast and a video tutorial on how to use the Evidnece Gap Map.

– **Innocenti Research Digest on Adolescence**, a quarterly review of global evidence, resources and events on adolescent well-being. It meets growing field-level demand for updates on evidence and synthesis of findings for development and policy communities. Content is selected by potential for scalability, innovation and policy relevance. Topic areas reflect UNICEF's Adolescent Country Tracker (ACT) indicators in protection, health and well-being, education and learning, transition to work, participation and engagement.
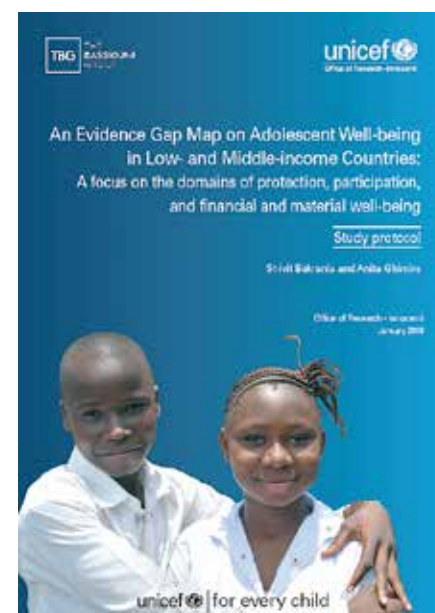
DEEPER DIVE

Reframing the narrative on adolescence: From concept to practice

An emerging body of Innocenti research demonstrates that adolescence is a critical 'second window of opportunity' for improving the life chances of young people and mitigating deleterious life circumstances in early childhood. This period of physical and sexual maturation intersects with profound neurological and emotional changes that make adolescents particularly receptive to social and emotional learning. In contrast to young children, adolescents' expanding sensitivity to peer influences, social interactions, and the culture and norms that surround them combine with the developing structures and wiring in the brain to create an intense period of opportunity and risk.

Evidence from adolescent neuroscience demonstrates that events and interventions in this phase of life can have long-lasting consequences. The research has demonstrated the remarkable plasticity of the adolescent brain, reflecting the extensive structural and functional changes that occur. It is well-established that individuals exposed to famine in early childhood are more likely to be stunted as adults. New research is suggesting, however, that exposure to famine during adolescence can also have significant negative impact on growth potential. The research underscores the link between early life circumstances and later outcomes, the importance of timing, and that adolescents have a second window of opportunity for catch-up growth.

UNICEF Innocenti is playing a significant role in expanding critical understanding of the adolescent life stage. Emerging findings are important in solidifying baseline assumptions and strategies for catalysing a concerted research effort to support knowledge on this crucial period in the life course for which the evidence base, especially for low- and middle-income countries, is extremely thin.

Innocenti has been working with key partners to reframe the narrative about adolescence, as a period in life where attention, support and investment matter. A number of international forums, co-convened and/or co-organized by UNICEF Innocenti, have brought together leading thinkers to work towards a common agenda for adolescents framed by a positive narrative that recognizes their potential. For example:

■ With the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health, a set of research methods briefs describe how to gather evidence with and for adolescents.

■ With the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR), a round table brought experts to Florence to discuss emerging evidence on the effects of famine and other shock events on adolescents' growth, survival and education.

■ With the Society for Research in Child Development, a co-edited volume *Adolescent Development Research and its Implications for Global Policy* will be launched in 2018.

■ With the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence programme at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a summit on research impact for adolescence was co-hosted by UNICEF Innocenti.

■ With No Lost Generation members, an Innocenti presentation at the Evidence Symposium hosted in Amman, Jordan, stimulated discussion among donors about the importance of evidence to drive programming for young people.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017:
SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES
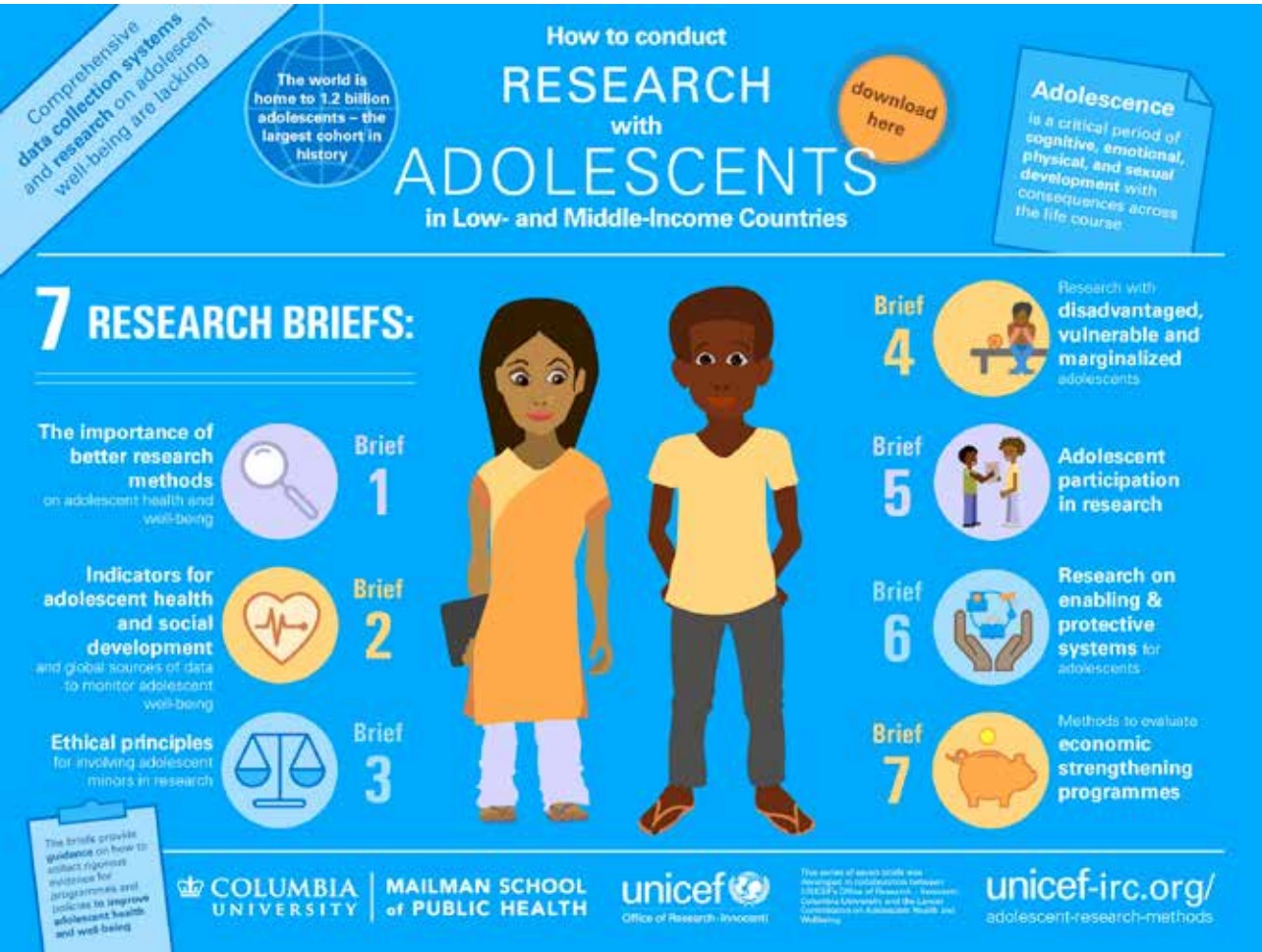
■ The paper **Gender Socialization during Adolescence in Low- and Middle-Income Countries** provides a review of contributions from psychology, sociology and biology that can inform our understanding of what influences gender socialization processes and outcomes in adolescence.

(See also 'Developing a model for strengthening parenting of adolescents', page 22, and 'Emerging evidence on adolescent vulnerability to stunting during famine', page 30.)

CHILDREN IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

RESEARCH FOR ADVOCACY: RESPONDING TO ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN IN THE NORDIC REGION

In 2017 the UNICEF Innocenti migration programme worked with UNICEF National Committees in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to undertake a comparative analysis of the legal and procedural safeguards for accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children in these five Nordic countries. The analysis and conclusions of this research will be presented in the report *Protected on Paper? An analysis of Nordic country responses to asylum-seeking children*, to be published in March 2018. The report reviews evidence relating to the protection and implementation gaps in policy and laws applicable to this population. It examines difficult issues such as the determination of the best interests of the child, guardianship, children's detention, and forced return.
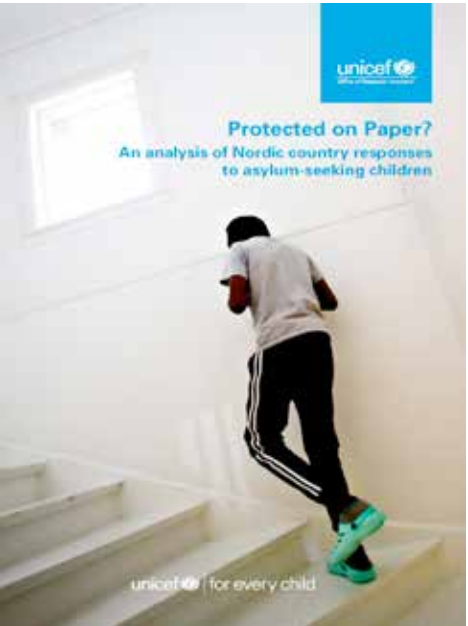
The report documents the challenges faced by children in accessing basic services such as health and education, and provides recommendations to ensure adequate safeguards specific to the five countries. The comparative analysis also identifies lessons and good practices that are relevant for other countries. The report findings are already shaping UNICEF Nordic National Committees' advocacy agendas with their respective governments. The report will be available for use by national and regional bodies to inform policy and practice. The research process has raised awareness of child rights and ethical practices in data collection and interviewing practices with asylum-seeking children. It is intended that the research will stimulate further dialogue between practitioners, service providers and local and national authorities and influence local and national practices.

PROGRAMME RESULTS 2017:
SUMMARIES AND DEEPER DIVES

DEEPER DIVE

Evidence to guide programmes: Impact evaluation of the No Lost Generation programme for displaced Syrian children in Lebanon

Under the No Lost Generation programme, UNICEF Lebanon supports school attendance of displaced Syrian children, in Lebanon. In collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF Lebanon implements a child-focused, humanitarian, pilot cash transfer and referrals programme – known locally as *Min Ila* – which reduces the need for households to rely on children for income generation, enabling them to attend school.

The Office of Research – Innocenti designed a quasi-experimental impact evaluation of the No Lost Generation pilot programme, to provide rapid insight into the programme's impacts on school participation as a basis for policy decisions around expansion or redesign of the programme. The initial findings highlight some potential strengths and limitations of cash-based programming for education in settings of displacement.

While school capacity has constrained additional school enrolment, school attendance among children already enrolled in school increased substantially. These results are being used by UNICEF Lebanon to advocate for expansion on the supply side (increasing school places) while promoting the replication of the No Lost Generation programme in new areas of the country.

The research will also contribute to a broader, emerging evidence base on the impact of such programmes on child well-being, including mental health and developmental outcomes in emergency settings. Currently this is one of only a few studies that provides rigorous evidence in a context involving large-scale displaced or refugee populations. Innocenti is building on this initiative in order to expand the evidence base on how to design and deliver effective social protection interventions in emergency and humanitarian settings.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ROHINGYA DISPLACEMENT

Children are being displaced around the world in record numbers, often as a result of violence and conflict. By the end of 2017, more than a million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar had crossed the border into Bangladesh. Sixty per cent were children. A key question for UNICEF is how to better respond to the needs of children in displacement/ humanitarian settings. UNICEF Innocenti contributed to UNICEF's emergency response by seconding its migration programme lead specialist with expertise on Rohingya refugees to the field. Field surveys and interviews were conducted in order to glean contextual, political and cultural information to inform the work of UNICEF's emergency response team.

This research built on previous work used as the basis for practical briefings and guidance notes to inform teams on critical issues relevant to the planning of culturally sensitive interventions:

- *Rohingya Situation: Brief Political and Socio-Cultural Context Relevant for Cox's Bazar Emergency Response* (now part of the essential 'Welcome Brief' for all UNICEF emergency staff); and
- Six Guideline Briefs on key topics: adolescent engagement, social norms and decision-making within the community, engagement with religious leaders, ethics in research and representation, nutrition, and gender-based violence (GBV).

The guidelines and briefs are valuable tools that could potentially be adapted and applied in other displacement situations. The use of evidence-based programming

has strengthened the credibility and recognition of the UNICEF emergency response. Innocenti's cooperative work with the emergency response teams demonstrated the value of research, evidence building and knowledge exchange even during the onset of an emergency. Due to its sheer scale, coupled with the current conditions in Bangladesh and continuing hostile conditions in Myanmar, the Rohingya emergency is likely to be become a protracted displacement. In this context, the broader, longer-term perspective guidance provided by Innocenti will continue to make an impact.

EMERGING EVIDENCE ON ADOLESCENT VULNERABILITY TO STUNTING DURING FAMINE

Experts met in Florence to discuss the effects of famine and other shocks on adolescents' growth, survival and development. The two-day workshop brought together leading researchers to analyse the existing evidence base on the vulnerability of adolescents to famine, with a view to building evidence for programming for adolescents in humanitarian disasters. Reflecting on the workshop, Laurence Chandy, Director of Data, Research and Policy, noted that, "Considered by UNICEF globally as the beginning of a wider process of study and expert exchange, participants explored new understanding of how stunting can occur at the onset of puberty, under conditions of famine and deprivation, with hugely important new implications for UNICEF programming."

EDUCATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS AND BASELINE DATA

In collaboration with the World Bank and the University of Roehampton (United Kingdom), a region-wide life skills surveying project represents the next step in building the evidence base for the life skills and citizenship education (LSCE) initiative in the Middle East and North Africa. The LSCE Initiative provides an integrated, transformative and lifelong quality learning agenda for the region, addressing the key questions of what to learn and how learning should take place, to foster a new generation that is resilient; shares responsibility to eschew conflict, discrimination and violence; and is prepared for positive engagement in lifelong learning and work. The initiative builds on a two-year conceptual and analytical mapping of existing life skills programmes (including content, coverage, outcomes etc.) across the region; a regional consultation to develop a conceptual and programmatic framework for LSCE in the Middle East; and a global review of existing instruments used to measure 12 core life skills. Initially, the survey instrument will be developed and piloted in Egypt, State of Palestine and Tunisia, targeting children in lower secondary school. The purpose of the survey is twofold: to set a baseline to understand the levels and trends in life skills development across countries in the region; and to facilitate the evaluation of existing and future interventions to promote LSCE by UNICEF and partners. These steps will contribute to building new data for evaluating the efforts of UNICEF and partners to introduce life skills programmes in the region, and set baselines to compare progress in skills development in MENA.
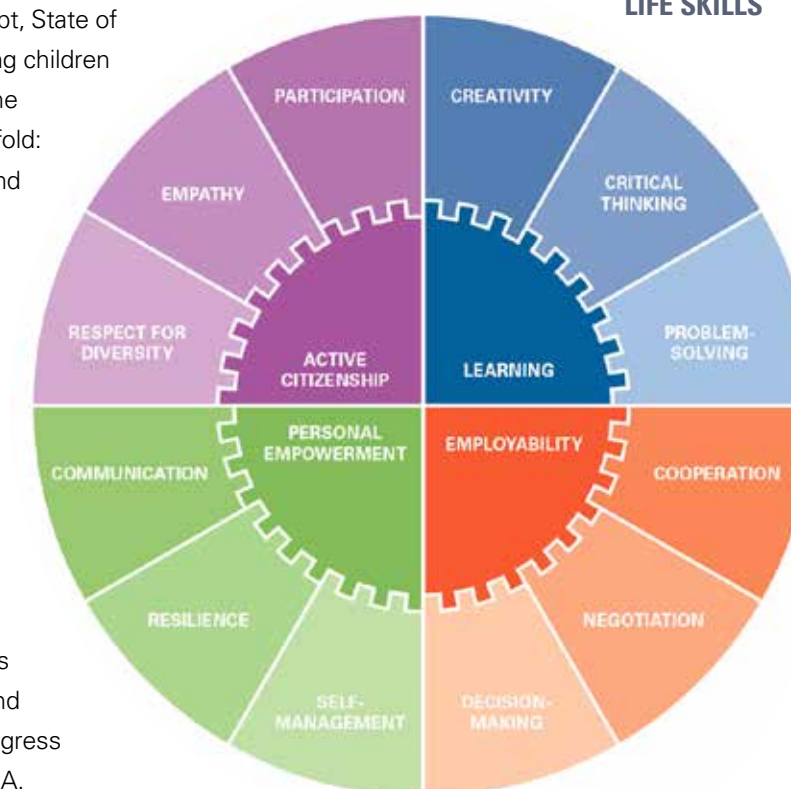
THE TWELVE CORE LIFE SKILLS

DEEPER DIVE

Time to Teach: Understanding and addressing determinants of teacher absenteeism

Recent evidence shows alarmingly high rates of teacher absenteeism in the developing world. In some extreme contexts in sub-Saharan Africa, teachers' average time-on-task amounts to less than half of contracted teaching time. While governments recognize the need to combat teacher absenteeism, policy makers need a more detailed understanding of what drives the problem to develop appropriately targeted, effective interventions. To address this need, the Time to Teach project will explore the determinants of teacher absenteeism from a multi-faceted perspective – not only in terms of absence from school, but also in terms of teacher's absence from the classroom when they are at school, and absence from teaching to expected standards when present in the classroom. This multi-faceted approach allows Time to Teach to differentiate between the determinants of absenteeism in its various forms, and in turn to assess the extent to which different types of absence can ultimately have an influence on learning outcomes.

Using this evidence, the main aim of the project is to inform the development of policies to address absenteeism, to increase teachers' time-on-task, and contribute to improvement in learning outcomes. By reviewing existing teacher management policies in two comparative studies in east and west Africa and aligning these policies to the reasons teachers give for their absence, the study is specifically designed to promote cross-national learning. The project has generated enormous interest from ministries of education across Africa, with twenty countries agreeing to be part of the study. In each country, representatives from UNICEF, national and international partners, and education ministries collaborate in the national steering groups to ensure the necessary stakeholder engagement in the work, as well as to promote the influence and impact of the study. Funding for the project was secured from UNICEF offices in the regions, as well as from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and from the Gates Foundation.. In the case of Mozambique, harmonization with the World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators Study was also agreed – the first such cooperation agreement of its kind in the region.

EDUCATION IN MULTI-SECTORAL RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES
Education remains critically underfunded in humanitarian emergencies and is rarely part of the first stage of on-site responses. By reviewing and systematizing existing evidence on good practice in the sequencing and integration of educational services in a number of emergency settings, new research aims to draw attention to existing low levels of provision and to provide evidence for better mainstreaming education programming in emergency responses. In 2017 an initial desk review provided evidence on the effects of integration of emergency response services, including education, in school settings, on enrolment, attendance, learning and well-being outcomes (including mental health), for children in diverse settings. These findings will be published in UNICEF's 2018 *Global Education Monitoring Report.* Planned work will involve in-depth qualitative research in six countries affected by natural disasters and/or armed conflict, to identify patterns of policy sequencing and interactions between education and other complementary services, for example in the fields of protection, health, shelter, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY IN UNICEF TO GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE

Improving the quality of research undertaken across UNICEF, and building stronger capacities for the use of high-quality evidence by UNICEF staff, is a core part of the mandate of the Office of Research – Innocenti. This role is critical to the delivery of results through improved use of evidence, included as a change strategy in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and is an important part of UNICEF's role in supporting countries to meet their global commitments for children.

In this respect, the Office of Research – Innocenti plays a leadership role across the organization, with responsibility for research governance and oversight. It sets standards and provides guidance to support the generation of high-quality, ethically developed evidence and its use for programming, policy and advocacy. Innocenti also works to build capacity and provide ongoing technical advisory support to UNICEF colleagues, particularly in regional and country offices, linking closely with other evidence functions at UNICEF including data, evaluation, innovations, knowledge exchange and learning. By striving to improve the research capacities of UNICEF staff, as well as enhancing availability and accessibility of the latest research evidence, both the organization and its programme and policy partners are supported in their ability to use evidence to drive results for children.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND TRAINING

In 2017 the highly successful Introduction to Research Management and Methods training course was delivered in the East Asia and the Pacific region, and to the Tanzania and Zambia Country Offices. This course aims to strengthen skills in managing research projects and understanding good evidence, and uses research findings to inform programme design and implementation, advocacy and policy change.

Over 250 key UNICEF staff in research-related roles have been trained to date, with very positive feedback and an increasing demand for further training which will be extended to other regions and countries in 2018.

> **"The training was sharp on target, delivered in highly accessible ways and in a most intellectually stimulating atmosphere. Rarely do colleagues receive such a vast amount of knowledge – and an excellent mix of academic and practical programming guidance – organized and delivered so well and in such a relatively short time through an internal training."**
>
> *Karin Hulshof, Regional Director, East Asia and Pacific Regional Office*

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

UNICEF Innocenti's formal mandate for **research governance** across all of UNICEF has generated significant enhancement of the global organization's overall efforts to boost the quality of knowledge and evidence work. An array of important coordination, administrative and procedural developments are helping to deepen a research culture in UNICEF. Examples include:

- Chairing the Standing Committee of Research and Data as the body coordinating evidence functions across the organization;
- Leading a UNICEF-wide process to develop a new evidence framework for UNICEF, aligned with the 2018-21 Strategic Plan;
- Membership of the organizing committee for the annual DREAM meeting of UNICEF data, research, evaluation and monitoring staff;
- Provision of guidance for staff on external academic publishing;
- Support to regional offices (Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, and Middle East and North Africa) to secure long-term external research quality assurance and ethics review services;
- Collaboration with human resources, data and evaluation colleagues to develop a New and Emerging Talent Initiative (NETI) talent pool of 'evidence specialists' with core competencies across monitoring, evaluation and research ongoing; and
- Collaboration with the Headquarters Evaluation Office to develop a new, integrated Evidence Information System Integration (EISI), based on user-centred design principles, which will be launched in June 2018. EISI includes quality assurance and correct taxonomic categorization of key research outputs produced across the organization to enable quick and easy retrieval of research evidence and improved evidence-informed decision-making in future.

ASSURING ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

UNICEF Innocenti support on **ethical evidence generation** (including research ethics) continued to produce far-reaching impacts through the enhanced knowledge and capacities of UNICEF staff and partners in conducting ethical research involving children. In 2017, training was provided for participants at the Network Meeting of National Statistical Offices in Europe and Central Asia, and a workshop was held with End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT) on practical ethical considerations for involving children in research on child sexual exploitation. The working paper, *Children and the Data Cycle: Rights and Ethics in a Big Data World* was presented at the Bloomberg Data for Good Exchange, featured in the *MIT Technology Review* and was widely shared on social media.
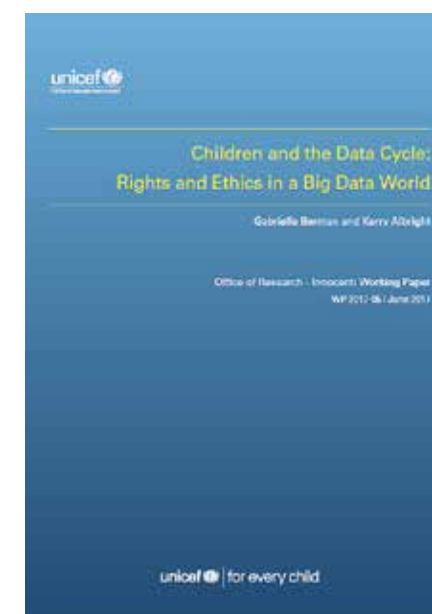
STRENGTHENING CAPACITY IN UNICEF TO GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE

A popular webinar series on Ethics and Research Methods considered the ethics of participatory research with adolescents, ethical considerations within household surveys and multiple indicator cluster surveys and the ethics of randomized control trials.

UNICEF Innocenti staff collaborated with the UNICEF Ethics Office in organizing UNICEF's first-ever Ethics Leadership Month, facilitating webinar discussions on the institutionalization of ethics in UNICEF and working with Programme Division to examine issues related to informed consent, publishing and contact tracing for HIV/AIDS cases.

> **"Regarding the ERIC framework… we will bring Innocenti's international scope and excellent research resources to the attention of Canadian ethics gatekeepers as the process unfolds and matures."**
>
> *Richard Mitchell, Brock University*

EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Innocenti work on **evidence synthesis**, summarizing the best global evidence on certain topics of likely interest to UNICEF staff, also continued to gather momentum in 2017. These have included:

- Innocenti Research Digest on Adolescence;;
- Evidence gap maps;
- Research methodology briefs;
- Expanded use of webinars on various topics; and
- Facebook live streams.

On the fifth anniversary of the annual Best of UNICEF Research competition, an organization-wide survey of lessons learned showed that the initiative is highly valued across UNICEF, particularly at country office level, and is one of the few institutional mechanisms to reward investment in quality and programme-relevant research. The twelve finalists featured in the 2017 report demonstrate the added value of UNICEF staff in the field identifying issues that are of relevance at national and local levels, but which also have widespread application and the potential to shape the agendas of academic and policy communities.

COMMUNICATING FOR RESULTS

UNICEF Innocenti undertakes communication and outreach activities to increase the visibility of research products and findings, and to deepen the engagement of key audiences in the work of the Office. Our digital engagement continued to increase in 2017, in some cases quite significantly.

The UNICEF Connect *Evidence to Action* blog series, jointly coordinated by UNICEF Innocenti and the Data and Analytics team of the Division of Data, Research and Policy, has continued to improve in terms of quality and quantity of posts as well as engagement with the research community. A total of 29 posts were published by UNICEF Innocenti in 2017, with several posts generating informed discussion and engagement among international researchers. The post, 'Famines and Stunting: Are adolescents hardest hit?' generated significant academic comment and interest, leading to convening of an international research seminar at Innocenti that brought global experts together to discuss the impact of catastrophic events on adolescent well-being.

The communications team successfully added email outreach and research webinars to its suite of digital communication channels in 2017, producing a quarterly e-newsletter and 28 short e-updates to a growing subscriber database of nearly 9,000. The inaugural webinar on social protection in humanitarian settings attracted 300 sign-ups and an

COMMUNICATING FOR RESULTS

CONVENING: MAJOR EVENTS HOSTED IN 2017
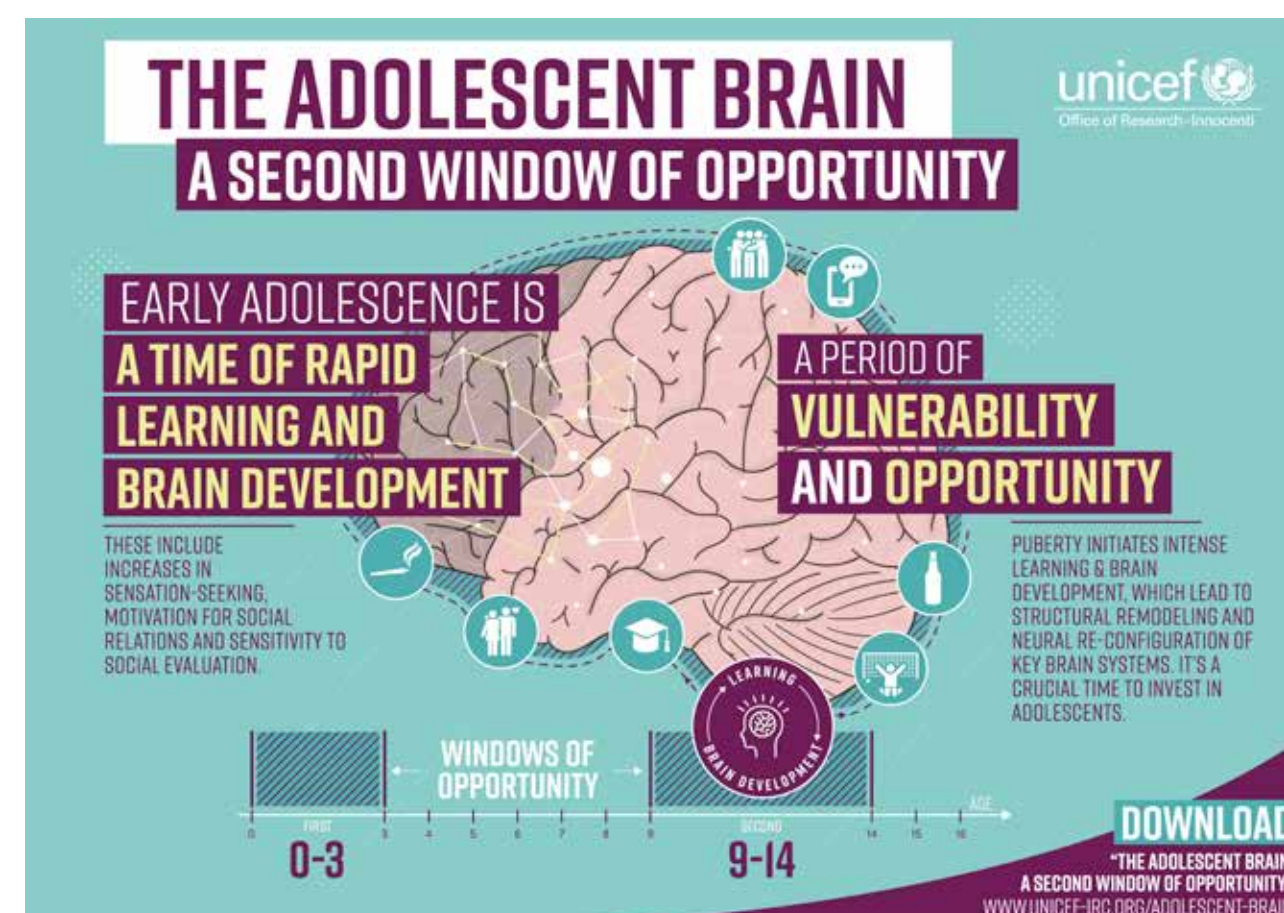
audience of 70 participants. A subsequent webinar on generating quality comparable evidence on global child internet use had an average of 85 participants over the course of a 90-minute global round table discussion.

The total number of Innocenti Twitter followers in 2017 increased by 28 per cent year on year, while total monthly impressions increased 700 per cent (38,000/mo. in 2016 to 271,000/mo. in 2017). In addition, link clicks on twitter posts increased nearly 1,000 per cent (167/mo. in 2016 to 1,400/mo. in 2017). These metrics indicate the sizable increase in the rate at which our social media followers are interacting with and linking with our research. The average daily reach of Facebook posts has increased by 35 per cent, and the total number of podcast downloads increased 2.5 times in 2017.

Twitter engagement trend, 2016–2017

The office increased commitment to production of high quality infographics and data visualization with key campaigns developed for the *Adolescent Research Briefs*, *Report Card 15*, *Drivers of Violence Affecting Children* and *The Adolescent Brain: A second window of opportunity*.
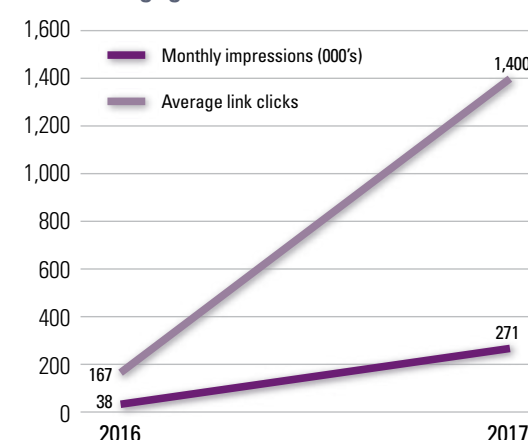
One of the key characteristics of the Office is the venue it offers for convening and promoting dialogue on knowledge and issues of relevance to children. Its location in the *Ospedale degli Innocenti*, a historic building in the heart of Florence and arguably the world's longest continuing institution of civic care for children, provides an exceptional environment – with both physical and symbolic significance – to strengthen UNICEF's reputation as a vibrant space for leadership and innovation in the ideas and evidence that will shape programming and policy for children.

> **"Innocenti's location ties it closely to an important historical 'moment' for children's rights – the first foundling hospital."**
>
> *External research partner, Innocenti brand survey respondent*

In 2017 a wide range of convening activities were organized, sponsored or facilitated both at the historic Innocenti institute in Florence, as well as in other centres around the world, contributing to important global knowledge dialogue and dissemination on issues of child rights and well-being. These included:

- **Global Symposium on the contributions of psychology to peace:** The 15th International Symposium on the Contributions of Psychology to Peace, hosted by UNICEF Innocenti and La Sapienza University of Rome, focused on applications of psychology to issues related to young people and conflict.
- **Global meeting of UNICEF adolescent development and participation network:** UNICEF's worldwide network of adolescence experts, specialists and programme managers met in Florence to discuss how to accelerate global results on the health and well-being of adolescents.
- **Emerging evidence on adolescent vulnerability to stunting during famine:** Experts gathered in Florence to discuss emerging evidence on the effects of famines and other shocks on adolescent growth, survival and education.
- **Forced displacement of children in Italy:** Data, media coverage and trends in foster care. The Office of Research organized and hosted a briefing session on the forced displacement of unaccompanied minors arriving in Italy through central Mediterranean routes, focused on latest data, citizen guardianship and media depiction.
- **Leaders from across Africa share evidence on social protection:** The Transfer Project and UNICEF Innocenti convened policy makers, researchers and staff from UN agencies and NGOs from across Africa in Dakar to discuss evidence and share experiences on social protection.
- **High-level global dialogue on social protection solutions in humanitarian contexts:** UNICEF, the Office of Research, the European Commission and other global humanitarian actors organized a high-level conference to share latest lessons and evaluate evidence needs related to the extension of social protection in humanitarian contexts.

CONVENING: MAJOR EVENTS HOSTED IN 2017

PARTNERSHIPS

The Office of Research – Innocenti relies on close collaboration with a wide range of partners both within and outside UNICEF. These partners are critical in enabling a small office to undertake research across a wide range of topics and settings, and to achieve programme and policy influence through its work.

During 2017 new memoranda of understanding were established with:

- The *University of Florence*, for closer engagement in research, advisory activities, student and intern engagement, seminars and other joint events;
- The *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)*, for potential collaborative research on issues relating to sustainable development, and particularly in francophone countries;
- *Campbell Corporation*, in support of development of Evidence Gap Maps on adolescent well-being and on child welfare; and
- The *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)*, on developing a conceptual framework to help assess the transformative potential of policies on children and youth.

Together with UNICEF's Programme Division, we oversee a UNICEF partnership with the University of Zurich's Center for Child Well-being and Development, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Projects were initiated with new research partners including the universities of Tulane (USA) and Bologna (Italy), and BRAC University (Bangladesh), and others.

Activities were undertaken with policy institutes or research think-tanks including the European University Institute, Chatham House, Policy Research for Development (REPOA), Tanzania, and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana.

Within UNICEF:

We continued to work with a wide range of UNICEF country offices on new or expanded projects including projects in Tanzania, China and India, while discussions are under way for activities in other countries including Turkey and Somaliland.

- Staff assignments or other exchanges took place with other divisions and offices including in New York (Data, Research and Policy; Office of the Executive Director), Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, Zambia Country Office, Cox's Bazar Emergency Response Field Office and Haiti Country Office;
- The UNICEF National Committees remain important partners on our major flagship report – the Innocenti Report Card – as well as in other projects, such as research on asylum-seeking children in Nordic countries.; and
- Other examples of close internal collaboration are provided throughout the report.

- **Building Evidence in Education (BE2):** An international meeting on the use of evidence for developing education policy looked at results-based financing, global donor coordination, policy round tables and enhanced donor research collaboration.
- **Global training on public finance for children:** 100 UNICEF staff gathered at UNICEF Innocenti for workshops on public finance for children. Issues covered included public budgeting and financial management to enhance publicly financed programmes for children.
- **Symposium on supporting educators for peacebuilding:** The annual Georg Arnhold Symposium co-organized by UNICEF Innocenti explored methods for supporting and empowering educators working in situations of conflict, widespread violence, and transitions from war to peace.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti continued to receive generous support from a range of international donors and foundations. Total contributions received during the quadrennial period of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017 amounted to US$32.7 million. Approximately one third of the total contribution came from the Government of Italy, which provides stable and flexible resources to the Office. The second-largest source of funds was UNICEF core and regular resources. Additional project funding came from the United Kingdom Government (DFID and the Home Office), the Swedish Government (Sida), the United States Government (USAID and the US Department of Labor), the UNICEF National Committees in Switzerland and several Nordic countries, the Oak Foundation and other foundation donors (see below).

TOP 10 DONORS (2014–2017)

No	Donor	Project description	US$
1	Italy Government	Regular Contribution	10,776,465
2	UNICEF	Including posts and regular resources	7,280,758
3	UK DFID	Adolescence Research programme	6,374,319
4	OAK Foundation	Cash Transfer project – Tanzania	1,877,354
5	USA DOL	Child Protection/Child Labour project	1,281,915
6	Global Thematic	Child Protection and Education	1,392,835
7	Sweden	Cash Transfer project	1,302,579
8	UK Government	Child Protection/ICT project	771,271
9	Swiss NC	Child Protection/Rights – Migration	741,669
10	USAID Ghana	Social protection and LEAP Ghana	554,948

In 2017 the total budget expenditure was US$7.3 million. Almost 80 per cent of the costs were on strategic research, knowledge management and communication activities (see pie chart opposite).

The estimated budget for Innocenti in 2018 is US$8.0 million.

2017 expenditure by area – US$7.3 million

- Communications 7%
- Operations 12%
- Director's office and operations 10%
- Research facilitation and knowledge management 9%
- Strategic research 62%

RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT WITH ITALY

In 2017 UNICEF and the Government of Italy renewed their long-term agreement on support to the Office of Research – Innocenti for a further three years (2018–2020).

STAFFING

In 2017 three new international professional staff – the Deputy Director, a Communication Specialist and a Junior Professional Officer from Italy – and one general service staff joined the Office, bringing the total number of research, support staff and in-house consultants to 48. The Office also hosted 6 Research Fellows and 2 interns in 2017 (see below).

Staff category	UNICEF funded	Project funded	Others	TOTAL
International Professional	8	11	1	20
General Service	0	11	0	11
Consultants	0	17	0	17
TOTAL	**8**	**39**	**1**	**48**

The staff and consultants came from 21 countries, adding diversity in terms of nationalities (including programme country representation from Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa). At the end of 2017, 75 per cent of staff were female.

OFFICE OF RESEARCH STAFF PROFILE, DEC 2017

	IP	GS	Sub-total	%	Consultant	TOTAL	%
Female	16	8	24	77	12	36	75
Male	4	3	7	23	5	12	25

PREMISES

Refurbishment of a new office space that started in January 2016, supported by the Tuscany Regional Council and our host institution, the *Istituto degli Innocenti*, has now been completed. Relocation to the new offices on the same premises will be complete by April 2018.

PUBLICATIONS

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Child Malnutrition, Consumption Growth, Maternal Care and Price Shocks: New evidence from northern Ghana de Groot, R., Handa, S., Ragno, L. P. and Spadafora, T. *Innocenti Working Paper* no. 2017-01 https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/889/

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Child and adolescent mental health key indicators of progress toward SDG targets Zlata Bruckauf, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-key-indicators-of-progress-toward-sdg-targets/

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Children bear the cost of extreme weather: New evidence from Mongolia Valeria Groppo, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/children-bear-the-cost-of-extreme-weather-new-evidence-from-mongolia/

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Do social services contribute to peacebuilding? Friedrich Affolter, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/social-services-contribute-sustaining-peace/

Do the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros need seven measures of child deprivation? Lucia Ferrone, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/do-the-seven-kingdoms-of-westeros-need-seven-measures-of-child-deprivation/

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The social realities of making evidence matter in development Sarah Cook, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/the-social-realities-of-making-evidence-matter-in-development/

We cannot end child poverty in Europe without measuring all of its dimensions Yekaterina Chzhen, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/we-cannot-end-child-poverty-in-europe-without-measuring-all-of-its-dimensions/

What can Harry Potter teach us about multidimensional child poverty? Lucia Ferrone, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/what-can-harry-potter-teach-us-about-multidimensional-child-poverty/

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Youth engagement as a pathway to peace Nikola Balvin, UNICEF Evidence for Action Blog https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/youth-engagement-as-a-pathway-to-peace/

EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

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Girl Effect

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Hewlett Foundation

International Federation for Family Development, Spain

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)

Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana

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Youth Power Learning, United States of America

PICTURE CREDITS

Page 12 ©UNICEF/UN050284/Shamsan
A family from Yemen's Muhamasheen community sit outside the door of their home in Sana'a, Yemen. In 2015 a Muhamasheen Mapping Survey (MMS) indicated that only 25% of all Muhamasheen have durable housing, compared with 54% of the general population.

Page 16 ©UNICEF/UNI85210/Christine Nesbitt
A woman buys seedlings for her vegetable garden in Lusaka, Zambia (2010).

Page 17 ©UNICEF/ARG2013-PCH_8040/Patrick Haar

Page 18 ©UNICEF/UN039731/Ashley Gilbertson VII
Boys play *Clash of Clans* in a shelter for refugees in Vienna, Austria, 2016. The family fled Basra, the southern Iraqi port city, in late 2015 and travelled through the Balkans to Vienna, Austria, to find safety and opportunities.

Page 19 ©UNICEF/UN017636/Ueslei Marcelino
A student uses a mobile phone in a classroom in the south-eastern state of Minas Gerais, Brazil (2016). Brazil currently has 21 million adolescents aged 12–17. With the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies, protecting children online is an urgent global priority.

Page 20 ©UNICEF/UN0124763/Boris Heger
When her mother died, this 9-year-old girl went to live with her aunt in the village of Odienné, in the north-west of Côte d'Ivoire, where she was abused physically. Her neighbours alerted the social services, who intervened. In Côte d'Ivoire, 20% of children are victims of violence so intense that it leaves permanent marks.

Page 21 ©UNICEF/UN0149643/Frank Dejongh
Centro Escolar Nuestra Senora Del Rosario in San Marcos, city of San Salvador, El Salvador (2014). The hands of a UNICEF child protection specialist hold those of a girl who has been targeted by a gang member. Her family has been threatened because she refused to be his girlfriend.

Page 22 ©UNICEF/UN0203604/ Proscovia Nakibuuka
An adolescent girl cuddles her 2-year-old baby. Pregnant at 12 and forcefully married off, she was subsequently rescued from a gruesome marriage via SAUTI, the Uganda Child Helpline Service supported by UNICEF – one of the mechanisms utilized to strengthen child protection systems in order to address violence against children in communities.

Page 28 ©UNICEF/UN0158358/ Hedinn Halldorsson
Syrian refugees' shoes lie covered in mud at the entrance of a tent in an informal settlement in Haoush Harime, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon (2018). With temperatures below zero degrees Celsius, the cold weather and flooding have had a huge impact on some of the 5,000 informal tent settlements of Syrian refugees.

Page 29 ©UNICEF/UN0147301/Patrick Brown
A 10-year-old girl stands among other Rohingya refugees queuing for aid at the Mainnerghona distribution centre, Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh (2017). There are 720,000 children among the new arrivals from Myanmar, existing Rohingya populations and vulnerable host communities who need urgent humanitarian assistance, including critical life-saving interventions.

Page 30 ©UNICEF/UN0161866/Bashir Ahmed Sujan
Three smiling boys hold the toy cars they made from discarded objects in a makeshift Rohingya refugee settlement in Ukhia sub-district, Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh, December 2017.

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Figure: The Twelve Core Life Skills. Available at < http://www.lsce-mena.org/>, accessed 4 May 2018.

Page 32 ©UNICEF
Participants in breakout group discussions at the Time to Teach project inception meeting, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, February 2018.

Page 33 ©UNICEF/UN0153995/Mackenzie Knowles-Coursin
Rohingya refugee children draw at a UNICEF child-friendly space in Balukhali refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh (2017).

Page 40 The historic *Ospedale degli Innocenti*, Florence, where the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti is hosted.