

Assessing and Monitoring Child Friendly Communities and Cities

Supporting advocacy and capacity building in local governance

Amman, January 13-14, 2010

Workshop report and Update on the Child Friendly Cities Research

Prepared by Children's Environments Research Group (CERG)
and the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)



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I. Introduction

This brief report documents the main outcomes and conclusions reached at the workshop “Assessing and Monitoring Child Friendly Communities and Cities: Supporting advocacy and capacity building in local governance”, held in Amman, Jordan, on January 13-14, 2010. The workshop is a repetition of a similar event held in Rome in November 2009, and is framed within the Child Friendly Cities Research Initiative. The Amman workshop was organized to benefit two countries (Jordan¹ and Sudan) in the MENA² region that had not been able to join the first meeting in Rome. Its objective was to ensure that the two countries become familiar with the CFC research protocol and tools and exchange experience and practice on CFC. Nevertheless, to take advantage of the training opportunity and forum for discussion that the workshop provided, three countries joined in, based on their expressed interest. Overall, the workshop included participants (UNICEF offices, researchers and central as well as local government officials) from 5 countries: Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, Syria and Turkey. The workshop was also partially attended by staff members of the UNICEF Regional Office, the UNICEF Office for Iraq and delegates from the MENA Child Protective Initiative³, which promotes and advocates for Child Friendly Cities in the region.

II. Child Friendly Cities (CFC) and the CFC research initiative

Child Friendly Cities (CFC) are cities of different sizes that are committed both at the community level and within and the municipal administration to become a place “fit” for children by fulfilling their rights. In the last two decades, cities and communities have experimented with different ways of meeting the CRC obligations by promoting a wide variety of initiatives addressing children’s rights. The CFC Initiative was launched in 1996 at the UN Conference of Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, to orient and strengthen a common voice advocating for the role of local authorities in the implementation of children’s rights and for ensuring that children are heard in decision making processes. Throughout the years, there has been a continuously increasing interest in Child Friendly Cities, which is rooted in several factors such as the high pace of urbanization, a world-wide trend of governmental decentralization, a recognition of the effectiveness of community initiatives toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the need for a rights-based, integrated approach that stimulates participatory civic engagement in the enhancement and realization of children’s rights at the local level. Gradually, there has been recognition that communities should be explicitly acknowledged under the CFC label.

In the year 2000, a Secretariat of the Initiative was established at the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) in Florence to provide a reference point and hub for knowledge management within the CFC Movement. Based on the documentation of a wide variety of experiences, in 2004, the Secretariat produced the

¹ Only the staff member of UNICEF Jordan was able to join the meeting.

² Middle East and North Africa.

³ An initiative of the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) with the support of the World Bank.

“Framework of Action” which highlights nine key components that feature the process toward becoming “child friendly”.

After more than a decade of the CFC initiative, it was clear that more efforts were required to bridge the knowledge gaps on how cities and communities assess themselves in terms of dimensions of child friendliness. To help bridge this gap, a Child Friendly Cities research initiative was undertaken by the Innocenti Research Centre, in partnership with Childwatch International, a network of research institutions involved with children's rights, and with other offices of UNICEF, including the Adolescent Development and Participation Section in UNICEF headquarters. The research is being coordinated jointly by IRC and the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG) based at the City University of New York. The Bernard Van Leer Foundation is helping support the initiative.

The Child Friendly Cities and Communities Research Initiative aims to improve the conditions of children living in urban settings by enabling communities and cities to **better assess the degree to which they are fulfilling children's rights** and to **look self-critically at the governance structures and processes that are designed to support families and their children**. Concretely, the research is intended to yield a package of participatory tools which, through a comprehensive set of rights-based indicators, will contribute to expanding the breadth and quality of data on children's conditions and will improve the cities' and communities' assessment and monitoring capacities. The tools are universal templates designed to be adapted to the specificity of different local contexts. There are two main components, for assessing: a) the nature and degree of cities' and communities' child-friendliness (community tools); b) the appropriateness of local government structures and processes to the fulfilment of children's rights (governance tools).

III. Main outcomes of the workshop

The workshop met its objectives and led to the following key **results**:

- As for the workshop held in Rome in November 2009, the Amman meeting enabled an exchange of on-going activities on child friendly cities and communities in the participating countries within the MENA region. The discussions have enabled an understanding of existing assessment and monitoring mechanisms in place to assess child friendliness at the local level, including current efforts in countries participating in the research. To some extent, the countries involved have developed some tools and mechanisms and have reflected on how to combine the newly developed assessment tools with current methods.
- The workshop allowed for a full understanding of the CFC research protocol. The action component of the CFC research initiative was stressed and acknowledged throughout the workshop. In addition to improving the breadth and quality of data collection on children in cities and communities, the research protocol and process allow for the identification and strengthening of priorities for programme actions, such as the development of new local plans of actions and tailoring of existing

policies for children, the changes in structures and processes responding to children's needs and rights, an increased awareness of children's rights among local government and community stakeholders and the mobilisation of communities.

- Within the region, in addition to Sudan and Jordan, Morocco has joined in the research process. All three countries have a clear plan on how to fit them into their current programme efforts. UNICEF Turkey will consider participating in the research or at least using the assessment tools at a later stage. Syria, in particular the Municipality of Aleppo, which is at the initial stages of building CFC, will apply the tools out of the IRC/Childwatch research effort, but it will seek IRC's technical advice and will provide feedback in parallel to effort currently undertaken with 11 countries at IRC.
- Thoughts were shared on how to best adapt the community tools to the local contexts in the region. As far as the governance assessment tool is concerned, considering the high level of centralization of governance in the region, a different approach was suggested for the administration of the tool. It was recommended that there be first a one-to-one interview with stakeholders from each sector to collect information and to then organize a group discussion to validate the information.
- Participants felt it would be very valuable to hold a workshop at the end of the research process to allow for exchange of methods and experiences.
- The CFC assessment toolkit has potentials to be used in the Child Protection Initiative's training and technical support to the cities and mayors from the MENA region.

IV. Summary of the individual sessions

4.1. Welcome remarks and introduction to the research

Nasser Moeini welcomed participants to Amman and thanked IRC and CERG for undertaking the initiative. He provided a summary of the history of the CFC Initiative and highlighted the importance of the assessment process to improve policy and programming efforts. Dora Giusti from IRC thanked the Jordan UNICEF Office for their support in organizing the logistics of the workshop and stated that the workshop should offer an opportunity for exchange of experiences but also for understanding of the research methodology and tools.

A brief summary of the goals and objectives of the research was provided. The action component of the process was emphasized as a tool for programming and advocacy. It was highlighted that the research does not aim to collect data by relying on rigorous statistical methods but rather to enable a participatory process in which children and caregivers assess their living conditions in addition to the level of response to their needs and rights in their community.

4.2. Meeting the cities

The session aimed to exchange experiences on Child Friendly Cities and Communities in the participating countries. Highlights of these initiatives are summarised below:

Jordan – The City of Amman is an example of CFC in the MENA region. In 2005, a Child Friendly City Executive was established, and in consultation with 700 individuals, a policy document was developed. The document aimed to improve the quality of life of children; foster participation, strategic partnerships and capacity building. Its goals were organised around five core themes: health, informal education, child safety and protection, child built environment and participation. The initiative started in 4 districts, with the elections of child district councils, which involved more than 28,000 children. Activities, including child district councils have now been extended to 9 of the 27 districts of Greater Amman. Efforts have included: rehabilitation of parks, libraries, opening of community spaces, support to educational programmes for drop-outs, campaigns against violence and abuse, and the creation of IT centres for deaf people. Recently, the Municipality has established a new Directorate for Social Services to more effectively monitor and implement CFC programmes.

Sudan – The CFC approach has been applied to the community level (an area of 5 km) in rural settings. It is an initiative promoted by UNICEF and is implemented in partnership with line Ministries. After a first phase from 1993 to 2001, the strategy was revisited and the Child Friendly Communities Initiative (CFCI) was launched based on new targets and criteria. The objective is to improve the conditions of children through capacity building for community planning and management. The strategy is based on a multi-sector approach promoting synergy between different partners and ensuring the community's involvement and empowerment. Based on key indicators agreed with on line ministries, the most vulnerable communities within the most disadvantages localities and states are identified. These communities are then supported to implement actions to improve the delivery of services in the areas of health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, child protection and finance. Committees are established at the community, state and federal level to accompany and monitor progress. Based on performance against the pre-set indicators, communities are awarded the 'child friendly' label and may graduate from the programme. By the end of 2009, 834 out of 2,328 communities were part of the initiative.

Morocco – The precedent of the CFC pilot initiative in Morocco is the local planning effort, aiming to strengthen capacities of local governments to plan actions in health, education, protection and participation. UNICEF supported the planning exercise in 100 communities in 2007-8. In 2009 the UN joint proposal "Youth in Action" was initiated by UNICEF and UNFPA in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports and Home Affairs. CFCs are now being piloted within this framework in 5 communities with the objective of mainstreaming children in local policies and of developing a model that can be replicated on a large scale. Preparations for the launch of the pilot initiative were undertaken in 2009 and included a study visit to France to familiarize with the CFC example; the development of a feasibility study; the adaptation of the CFC Framework and the 9 "building blocks"; and the formal commitment of the communities. To become 'child friendly', communities commit to: a) mobilize a range of stakeholders to implement the plan of action for children; b) promote children's citizenship and

participation; c) improve access to education, health, culture and recreation; d) promote children's rights; e) and report on their progress on a yearly base. The process envisions: a) an initial diagnosis; b) comparison with CFC standards and identification of gaps; c) development of a plan of action; d) implementation of the plan; e) final diagnosis; f) evaluation; f) appointment of community as 'child friendly'.

Syria – The city of Aleppo is in the process of starting a CFC initiative. In July 2009, the city hosted the 5th Conference on Youth and Children in MENA, which was combined with a training course on CFC, conducted by the CPI Initiative of AUDI. A consultation with children was then held to collect children's views on their city. The results of the consultation - to be followed by one with parents – will contribute to the development of a Strategy for a Child Friendly Aleppo (2010-2025). The steps envisioned for the process are based on the 9 'building blocks' and include: implementation of pilot projects and participatory research; advocacy and communication; networking; development of guidelines (indicators and standards); capacity building of different stakeholders including children; legislation and legal reform; and monitoring and evaluation.

Turkey – The UNICEF office mentioned that CFC activities had been supported in the previous programme cycle and although these efforts continued in the pilot cities, UNICEF's support and engagement had not continued. Nevertheless, there is now an interest to revamp the CFC strategy to promote decentralized efforts for the implementation of the CRC.

The Child Protection Initiative (CPI) – AUDI – CPI is hosted by the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) and is supported by the World Bank. It works with 400 cities of different sizes in the region to raise awareness of Mayors on children's rights and CFC. They have published a resource book and a training manual but are in the process of improving them to make them more accessible. They conduct training workshops in the region to promote CFC.

4.3. Monitoring and assessment mechanisms

A state of the art of current methods of monitoring and assessment at the local level were presented and discussed. A key point raised was that CFC assessment is constrained by limited availability of data at the local level. The range of methods reviewed and described included: official data, surveys, census, focus groups, community workshops, mapping, rating scales, checklists and participatory research. The pros and cons were highlighted for each method analysed. It was stressed that two key elements are needed: assessing the full breadth of the UN CRC and identifying other community priorities together with children through a bottom-up approach. The CFC toolkit aims to address these needs.

The three countries that will be engaged in the CFC research initiative have already planned how they will use the research and assessment tools in their programme efforts:

- a. Jordan will implement it in 3 districts to then refine the methodology to bring it to scale with the objective of identifying needs and gaps and collecting data with children's perspective;
- b. Sudan envisions that the assessment process will contribute to strengthening their monitoring and assessment methods, including the revision of the baseline, the indicators for "awarding" CFCs as well as for awareness raising.
- c. Morocco will administer the assessment tools in both the initiation diagnosis and the evaluation stages of 'child friendliness' of communities.

4.4. Summary of experiences from piloting the Child Friendly Community Assessment tools

The assessment tools were pre-tested in two pilot countries (Brazil and the Philippines). Lessons learnt and recommendations for future application of the CFC assessment tools were presented in addition to key differences in the methodologies of administration of the tools. While the Philippines carried out individual interviews as well as focus groups with children and mothers in two communities of Metropolitan Manila, Brazil administered the assessment tools in 6 communities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo through focus groups with children and caregivers. In this case, the individual approach was ensured by letting children respond to the questionnaire and having a facilitator collect their anonymous sheets to then tabulate the results and present them to the group for discussion. A feature in the Brazilian methodology was the use of adolescent facilitators in the sessions. Both countries agreed on the effectiveness of the methodology and the tools to ensure genuine participation of children and communities. However, they both raised a concern about the length of the instruments and flagged the importance of preparing the ground properly before conducting the assessment process. It was highlighted that the current version of the assessment toolkit has benefited from the piloting in several ways including:

- a. The development of a detailed facilitator's guide to support the training of researchers and facilitators in the application of the methodology;
- b. The rewording of certain items to avoid creating uneasiness and to ensure clarity;
- c. The inclusion of visuals in the tools and of suggestions on how to conduct the sessions;
- d. The reduction of a rating scale from 4 to 3 categories for younger children for easier comprehension;
- e. The design of an approach that combines the individual and group strategy (from Brazil) and that also enables basic quantification of the data collected (Philippines).

Concerns raised and corresponding recommendations made in this sessions included:

- Items on protection from abuse and violence will require sensitive handling, possibly rewording or different approaches to ask these questions. It was recommended including a clear message on the need for the facilitator to connect with support services before the focus groups takes place and to display contact details of these services at the venue.
- A recommendation was made to make reference to other guidelines on how to conduct focus groups in the facilitator's guidebook.

4.5. The Community Assessment tools – step by step

This session explored the process of application of the assessment tools. It enabled a detailed insight of the research protocol through a step-by-step interactive presentation. The contents followed the *Facilitator's Guide* for the community tools. Considering that an in-depth discussion of the governance tool had taken place in the previous session and that the governance tool requires further development, the presentation mainly focused on the community tools, which are more complex to administer to ensure democratic participation as well as appropriate preparations and follow-up.

Some of the key conclusions and suggestions that emerged from the discussions included:

- The educational dimension of the tools was emphasised. They are a means to promote rights awareness. It was suggested that preparatory sessions focusing on children's rights be organised so that respondents are more familiar with the discussion items. Even if pre-sessions are not organised, ice-breakers activities focusing on children's rights and the concept of 'child friendly' are recommended.
- In-depth additional readings on how to conduct focus groups were suggested to ensure that facilitators take a wide range of aspects and steps into consideration, including issues of transport to the focus group venue, safety and confidentiality. Suggested readings will be uploaded on the interactive web-page (wiki).
- A concern was raised with regard to the quantification of data collected. Given the small numbers of respondents and therefore the limited representativeness of the community by this group, it was argued that numbers may be inappropriate to describe the reality of the community. It was clarified that the purpose of the research is not so much to quantify data but rather to assess what a specific group thinks of the conditions in his/her community, on one hand, and to trigger a participatory approach and the engagement of children and community members, on the other. It was also explained that the same approach could be replicated on a large scale, for instance by working with all the schools in one or more communities.

4.6. Adapting the assessment tools – group work

Community tools

The two groups discussed how the Community Assessment tools could be relevant to their contexts; what kind of approach could be used for their administration and the possible challenges that might emerge.

Conclusions and recommendations put forward included:

- Tools were considered to be effective for children. As for parents, it was suggested that the individual approach might not be relevant. A group including caregivers of children of different age groups may be enough rather than holding separate focus groups.
- Some of the local adaptations that may be relevant in the context include: reduction of some indicators in the home environment (e.g. access to water); rephrasing of some questions on protection and reproductive health; exploring support received by families to children's education needs (e.g. time allocated at home to study for boys and girls); use of public spaces through a gender dimension) etc.
- Pre-testing of the tools might be a useful step in the process.
- Political and cultural sensitiveness of some items are issues that need to be taken into account both in the adaptation and administration of the tools.
- Translation might be a challenge, especially for those countries working with communities that have different tribal languages (e.g. Sudan).
- The use of materials and methods from the context and environment was recommended (i.e. Sudan proposed the use of sticks and rocks for the community meetings).

Governance tools

It was clarified that the governance tools had not been tested and that they were still being developed and complemented with more detailed guidelines and an additional mapping tool describing how to design an organogram defining institutional responsibilities and competencies vis-à-vis specific child rights violations. It was explained that the currently available core tool is envisioned as a discussion guide including questions that address different aspects of a child friendly municipality. As the toolkit is a universal template, and considering that countries have a diversity of contexts and are at different stages in terms of assessment of governance, the toolkit should aim to be a discussion resource which promotes reflection and thinking through a coordinated approach. Countries and cities will be able to use it freely and adapt it to their local context.

The discussions in the group and the plenary expressed concern for the centralisation of governance in the region and the limited responsibility that local authorities have in different sectors. In centralised systems, education, health and social services may not fall under the responsibility of municipalities. As a consequence, it may be difficult to administer the tool in a group discussion involving a wide range of sectors. In such context, municipalities would not be able to provide information on progress and gaps in different sectors. It was therefore recommended that a possible approach is to first conduct research and bilateral interviews with relevant Ministries in specific sectors to gather the required data and to then bring all stakeholders together for a discussion and validation.

4.7. Reporting and communications

To facilitate the carry-out of the research and maximise the exchange of experiences among the countries involved in the research, country teams were encouraged to keep a detailed log of the process. All

throughout the period of the research, the coordinators (CERG and IRC) may provide suggestions on how to involve various actors – children, parents, facilitators, officials etc. – in monitoring the process.

A structure for the final was shared and accepted by the participants. The deadline for the country final report is July 30th 2009.

A customized Wiki (interactive web-page) will be the main platform for sharing, using, and editing data. This will be the key communication tool. The wiki will allow users to post documents, pdfs, pictures and videos and create forums for discussing the process. They will access materials for the research and upload their reports. It will also be endowed with a word processing tool – similar to word - that allows users to make notes, add links, and create documents. The tool will also allow for online translation of the CFC website. In this stage, access to the wiki will be limited to the participants of the research as well as to experts and colleagues who may be connected to the process. The wiki is already online. Passwords for the participants at the workshop will be created.

Apart from the wiki, emails can also be used to communicate with IRC and the research team.

It is suggested that direct communications be maintained from UNICEF Country Office to IRC and vice versa; and from local research teams to CERG and vice versa. However, UNICEF focal point in the country, IRC and CERG should be copied in all communications.

V. Conclusions

The workshop offered an opportunity to exchange experiences and lessons learnt on CFC and related initiatives in the participating countries and cities. The country delegations were trained on the research protocol and the toolkit to conduct the “child friendly” assessment in cities and communities. Furthermore, countries not participating in the research initiative are interested to use the tools in their programming and advocacy efforts.

Overall, it was emphasised that the research initiative is an action-oriented effort and it was acknowledged that the tools and the co-related method of administration are powerful instruments to raise awareness of municipal and community stakeholders on children’s rights; to define priorities of action to address children’s needs and rights by cities and communities including through improved data collection; and to mobilise communities and children themselves in identifying and advocating for their priorities.

It was recommended that a workshop is held at the end of the research process to enable an exchange of different experiences in the application of the research methodology.

APPENDICES

Agenda

Assessing and Monitoring Child Friendly Communities and Cities

Supporting advocacy and capacity building in local governance

January 13-14, 2010

Amman, Jordan

Agenda

January 13

Morning

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome remarks

Nasser Moeini, Acting Representative, UNICEF Jordan

9:30 – 10:00 Introduction to the assessment process and the Research

Dora Giusti (IRC) and Pamela Wridt (CERG)

10:00 – 12:00 Meeting the Cities – Country teams

Presentations by the country team

Coffee break included

12:00 -13:30 State of Child Friendly Cities and Communities Monitoring and Assessment mechanisms

Introduction on existing mechanisms – *Dora Giusti*

Country presentations and discussion – *Country teams*

Countries will be invited to speak about the existing methods and the gaps they see in the current methods.

13:30 -14:30 Lunch

Afternoon

14:30 – 15:00 Introduction to the Child Friendly Community Assessment and Monitoring Tools – *Pamela Wridt*

The Community Assessment Tools are designed to assess to what degree cities fulfil children's rights by involving beneficiaries, in particular children and their parents.

15:00 – 16:30 Summary of Experiences from Piloting the Child Friendly Community Assessment Tools
– *Dora Giusti*

Coffee break included

16:30 – 17:00 Individual review of the Community Assessment Tools

January 14

Morning

9:00 – 11:30 Using the Child Friendly Community and Governance Assessment Tools – *Pamela Wridt*

This section will offer a step by step review and open discussion of the assessment process. It reviews the process to carry out the community starting from the selection of the community, methods for interviews, focus groups with beneficiaries and sessions with the municipal authorities, analysis of data, using data for a plan of action and advocacy work. It will be an open session in which participants can interact.

Coffee break included

11:30 – 13:00 Adapting the Child Friendly Community Assessment Tool – *Pamela Wridt*

Through an interactive session, a discussion will be facilitated on how to adapt and use the tools locally.

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon

14:00 – 14:30 Introduction to the Child Friendly Governance Assessment Tools – *Dora Giusti*

The Child Friendly Governance Assessment Tools test the pertinence of local government structures and processes to the fulfilment of children's rights. They are addressed to municipal officers.

14:30 – 15:45 Adapting the Child Friendly Governance tools to country contexts – *Dora Giusti*

Through an interactive session, a discussion will be facilitated on how to adapt and use the tools locally.

15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00 Documenting, Communicating and Reporting – *Dora Giusti*

- a) Methods for the on-going critical evaluation of the process

An introduction to ways of observing the process and for building evaluation into the community facilitation process and into the use of the governance tools

- b) On-going discussion and documentation of the process through the wiki -website

An introduction to tracking progress through the wiki space available on the CFC website; how to upload information

- c) Format for the final reports

A review of the reporting format for the preparation of the final country website.

17:00 -17:30 Opportunities, challenges and questions – open discussion

Facilitator: Dora Giusti

17:30 – 17:45 Summing up and closure – *Dora Giusti and Pamela Wridt*

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