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GLOBAL STATISTICS ON CHILDREN'S PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Violence. Child labour. Trafficking. Sexual exploitation. Female genital mutilation/cutting. Child marriage. Lack of official recording of births. Millions of children worldwide experience the worst kinds of rights violations. Millions more children, not yet victims, are inadequately protected against them.

UNICEF uses the term 'child protection' to refer to prevention and response to violence, exploitation, and abuse of children in all contexts. This includes reaching children who are especially vulnerable to these threats, such as those living without family care, on the streets or in situations of conflict or natural disasters.

A key UNICEF goal is to ensure that government decisions are influenced by an informed awareness of children's rights and by improved data and analysis on child protection issues. Children subjected to violence, exploitation and abuse are at increased risk of poor physical and psychological health,

HIV and inadequate education. Sadly, these violations are widespread, under-recognized, and under-reported. Solid data are crucial to break the invisibility of child protection violations, to capture the true scale and extent of these phenomena, and to identify risk and protective factors. Reliable data are also needed to specify priority areas and support government planning and budgeting for effective child protection interventions and services; to inform the development and implementation of policies, legislation and actions for prevention and response; and to ensure a robust and ongoing monitoring process to assess results and impact, and to address challenges.

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This document summarizes some of the main global monitoring activities in which UNICEF has played a lead role. Many other initiatives have been undertaken or are under way at the regional and country levels to improve data availability on child protection, including surveys on various child protection issues, support to child protection information management systems, qualitative research, and indicator development related to child protection and child protection systems. A number of these are described in the UNICEF Global Thematic Reports on Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse.

COLLECTING DATA

UNICEF supports the collection of nationally representative data on child protection through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). This international household survey programme was originally developed in response to the 1990 World Summit for Children as a way to measure progress towards an internationally agreed upon set of mid-decade goals. The first round of MICS (MICS1) was conducted around 1995 in over 60 countries, and at that time child protection issues were not covered. For the end-decade assessment (MICS2, 2000), in addition to indicators on child and maternal health and mortality, nutrition and education, MICS included a few questions on birth registration, child disability, child labour, and female genital mutilation/cutting. Since then, MICS has developed into one of the world's largest sources of internationally comparable data on child protection, both in terms of the range of child protection issues covered, as well as the number of countries with available data. MICS has enabled many countries to produce statistically sound estimates on a wide range of child protection issues. Data are collected through specific survey modules developed by UNICEF in consultation with relevant partners.

MICS standard modules for Child Protection include **birth registration**, which is defined as the official recording of a child's birth; **child labour**, which examines the types of work a child performs, whether paid or unpaid, and hours spent, along with the hazards children face at work; **child marriage**,

which is defined as marriage or cohabitation before the age of 18; **attitudes toward wife-beating**, which offers clues about the social acceptance of violence; and **female genital mutilation/cutting** (FGM/C) among girls aged 0 to 14 years and women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years). MICS also collects data on **child discipline**, from non-violent forms of discipline to severe physical means of punishing children, as well as beliefs about the use of physical punishment to discipline children.

While large scale household surveys are important sources of data on child protection, they are not suitable to monitor the prevalence and incidence of certain particularly sensitive or illegal issues, such as sexual exploitation. Additionally, these data sources do not provide information on children living outside households such as street children and children living in institutions. While these children often represent a minority, their living arrangements may put them at increased risk of exploitation and abuse and are therefore at the core of child protection concerns. Data gained through other means, such as qualitative studies and ad-hoc surveys, are necessary to provide relevant information to help contextualize the numbers. Monitoring sensitive child protection issues present serious methodological and ethical challenges. Further research and validation studies are the essential prerequisite to explore methodologies and data collection instruments to fill existing gaps.



ANALYZING DATA

UNICEF's work in the area of data analysis for child protection seeks to highlight trends, emphasizes patterns found within the data, and suggests how these data can be used to strategically inform programmatic efforts. Where possible, data are disaggregated by geographic areas, residence (urban/rural), sex, education, age, wealth, ethnicity/religion, marital status and other stratifiers. UNICEF also promotes the advancement of research through the development of joint projects and collaboration with academic institutions and other agencies working at the international and national levels in the area of child protection.

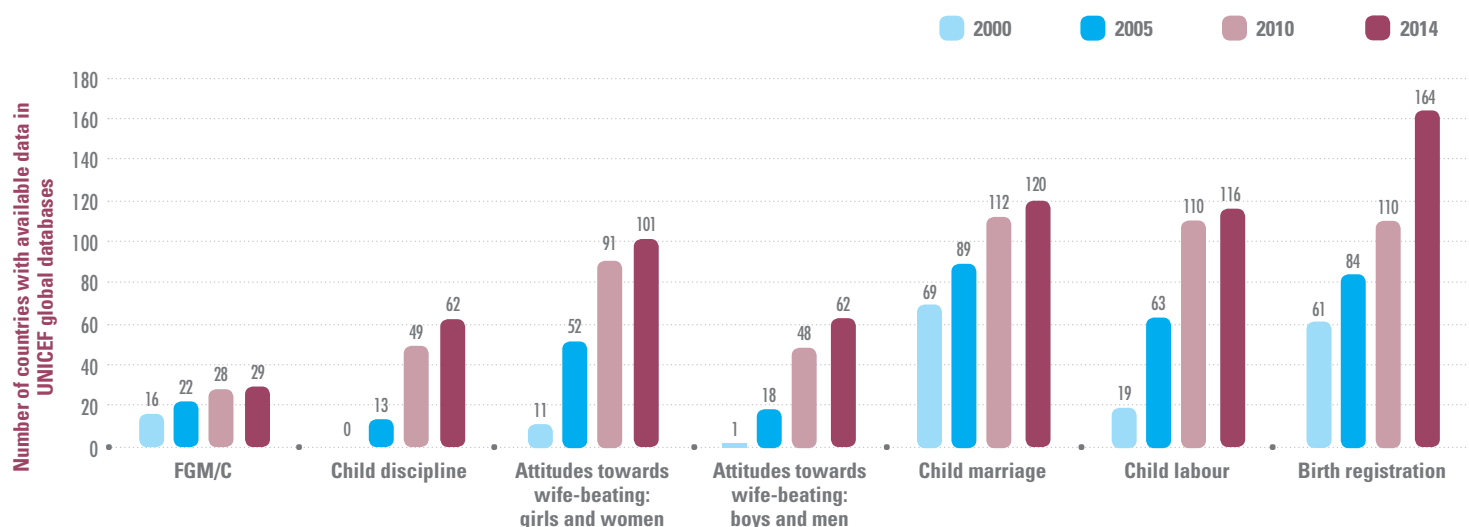


COMPILING DATA: UNICEF GLOBAL DATABASES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

UNICEF maintains global databases on key child protection indicators. The main sources of data include nationally representative household surveys, such as the MICS, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS) and AIDS Indicator Surveys (AIS), as well as other national surveys, censuses, vital registration systems

and other administrative records. These databases are updated annually through a process that draws on data maintained by UNICEF's network of country offices. As demonstrated by the table below, the number of countries with available data on child protection has significantly increased in the past eight years. New databases are currently under development.

Number of countries with available data in UNICEF global databases for a selection of child protection indicators (2000-2014)





METHODOLOGICAL WORK

UNICEF plays a key role in the development of new data collection and monitoring tools in the area of child protection. This includes the development of questionnaires, indicators and methods for gathering relevant information and reporting on child protection violations. Examples of recent methodical work include the development a new survey module on child labour consistent with existing international standards. UNICEF is also working on a new methodology for the collection of data on children living outside of family care.

In response to the gaps and challenges in child protection monitoring, evaluation and research, Save the Children and UNICEF, together with other partners, established a global inter-agency coordination body, the Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CP MERG) in July 2010. This interagency group was created to ensure that child protection receives sufficient recognition and support as an integral component of child well-being, based on high quality evidence. The work of the CP MERG aims to strengthen the quality of monitoring and evaluation, research and data collection through the development of standards, ethical guidelines, tools and methodologies which are relevant to realities in the field. Further information can be found at www.cpmerng.org.

DISSEMINATING DATA: WHERE TO FIND CHILD PROTECTION STATISTICS

Data collected, compiled and analysed by UNICEF on child protection are disseminated in a variety of ways including through the organization's flagship publication, The State of the World's Children, and in a number of thematic data-driven publications and brochures and statistical country profiles.

All of the publications, global databases and other resources for child protection statistics can be found on UNICEF's dedicated website: data.unicef.org. The site contains up-to-date global and regional summary analyses and graphics of key results. MICS modules on child protection can also be found here. Another important tool is the MICS Compiler (available at www.micscompiler.org), which allows the use to access data from all MICS surveys and display them in the form of tables, graphs and maps.

Selected UNICEF data-driven publications on Child Protection (available on data.unicef.org)

