

Introduction

In November 2006, Childwatch International, together with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the Child and Youth Research and Training Programme at the University of the Western Cape, the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town and Kenyatta University hosted a regional colloquium in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss the state of child research in Africa and the desirability and feasibility of forming a regional Child Research Network in the continent.

Forty participants from 13 different countries in Africa participated in the colloquium (Appendix A). In preparation for the talks, three discussion papers were commissioned to provide the context for the colloquium and to help shape the content and direction of discussions. The papers were (1) *Perspectives and Approaches in African Childhoods Research*, by Stephen Arojjo and Rebecca Nyonyintono; (2) *Mechanisms and Priorities in Child Research Funding in Sub-saharan Africa*, by Maureen Mweru and John Ng'asike; and (3) *Institutional Analysis of Child Research in Sub-saharan Africa*, by Kelvin Nwaba.

The deliberations over the two days provided extremely useful responses to the issues raised in the papers. The subsequent discussion informed suggestions on how an African research network might be shaped and function. The colloquium ended with a practical 'agenda for action' that was to be taken forward by a task team of volunteer representative of different geographical regions across Africa. Members of the Task Team are listed in Appendix B.

The colloquium report covers the following:

- A brief history of the origins and rationale for the colloquium;
- The colloquium rationale, aim and objectives;
- A summary of the key points raised by each paper;
- A summary of key discussions on each paper;
- A summary of overall discussion on the desirability and feasibility of forming an African Child Research Network;
- A summary of final conclusions and action plans;
- Appendices A and B, containing full names and contact details of participants and list of task team members; and
- The full text for all three papers (included in the report as Appendices C 1, 2 and 3).

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

A Brief History of the Colloquium

This colloquium is an initiative of Childwatch International (CWI) and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) as part of their effort to support the formation of an Africa Regional Child Research Network, just as CWI is developing it in other regions.

Childwatch International was established in 1993 as a non profit, non-governmental network of institutions engaged in research for children. The network seeks to strengthen child-centred research to contribute towards real improvement on children's well-being. Childwatch International was founded as a response, from the research community, to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention serves as a common global agenda for improving children's living conditions, well-being and participation. CWI is primarily funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), but its funding base has expanded in recent years. It has a ten-member board that meets annually.

The child research institutions which are members of Childwatch International are called Key Institutions. These meet every three years. Key Institutions are selected on the basis of their commitment to the realisation of children's Rights through interdisciplinary child research and commitment to working within a framework of international cooperation.

CODESRIA was established in 1973 as an independent Pan-African research organization with a primary focus on the social sciences. It is recognized not only as the pioneer African social science research organization but also as the apex non-governmental centre of social knowledge production on the continent. Over the years, the different elements that make up the CODESRIA Research Programme have come to be classified into 'Core Programmes', 'Special Initiatives', and 'Collaborative Initiatives'. This classification serves mainly as the basis for the organization of the research work of the Council. The Child and Youth Programme was adopted in 2001 as a core activity following a resolution of the Council to invest more in the study of child and youth questions in the light of the demographics of the African continent; Child and youth research as an area of preoccupation in CODESRIA programming first began in October 1995 when a planning colloquium was hosted by the Council in Dakar in collaboration with Childwatch International (CWI). Although more than half of the population of most, if not all, African countries fall within the category of "children" as defined in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (ICRC), social science research on childhoods in Africa remained generally weak and fragmented. Redressing this lacuna is the aim of this programme.

Child Research in Africa

However, ongoing support to institutions and researchers poses a huge challenge. One mechanism of ensuring the ongoing support and mobilisation of researchers and institutions has been the formation of Regional Child Research Networks around the globe. Through regional activities, the network mobilizes groups of researchers in all stages of their careers. Presently, regional networks exist in the Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; Middle East and North Africa (MENA); and Central and East Europe.

At the Childhoods 2005 Conference held in Oslo Norway, discussions took place to explore the establishment of a sub-Saharan Africa region. At the conference members from African institutions that were key within CWI at the time came together to explore ways of engaging colleagues from across the Continent about the idea of an African Child Research network. A small planning committee was formed with representatives from CODESRIA, Kenyatta University's Department of Educational Psychology, the Child, Youth and Family Research Centre at the University of the Western Cape and the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town - both latter institutions are located in Cape Town, South Africa. The committee that was responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the colloquium included a member of the CWI secretariat in Norway. CODESRIA offered to host and provide the secretarial and administrative support for the event; and so, the colloquium took place in Dakar, Senegal on 21-22 November 2006.

The Colloquium Rationale, Aim and Objectives

The colloquium was based on the premise that good quality, reliable and timely evidence can play a significant role in shaping policy and practice and thus improving the lives and well-being of children. However, the gap between research and policy is substantial. On the one hand, policy-makers and practitioners do not always have good evidence at hand to shape their policies and programmes and often do not have the time, resources or inclination to extract evidence that can support or shape their imperatives. On the other hand, research findings are often not accessible, unavailable and of insufficient quality to be of use to policy makers. Recognising the challenges that face researchers and their institutions, and the existing gap between policy makers and researchers, a colloquium was convened in Dakar, Senegal to explore the establishment of a network of child researchers and institutions across Africa that can strengthen the quantity and quality of child research on the continent. A further goal was the forging of a closer relationship between researchers, decision-makers and practitioners, with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for children.

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

The aim of this continental meeting was for researchers to get together and evaluate the child research potential in Africa; examine the feasibility of establishing a permanent exchange network and conduct an assessment of the capacities and existing research on the status of children in Africa. The meeting was also to assess the available research resources, in particular the technical skills of African researchers and available financial resources. From the outset, it was paramount to strive towards engaging a spectrum of role-players, in particular researchers, child protection practitioners, decision-makers and donor institutions, in the colloquium.

Deliberations were intended to:

- Consider more effective ways of increasing the child research capacity in the region;
- Promote greater engagement between policy makers and researchers;
- Promote relevant and accessible child research for governments and organizations working towards the realization of children's rights and well being.

This was based on the understanding that:

- Research can play a crucial role in supporting government and agencies to protect children from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect;
- A strong evidence-based approach can inform initiatives aimed at redressing children's rights and improving their objective conditions;
- Assessment of vulnerabilities, needs and the root causes of children's difficulties can be significantly enhanced through sound research;
- Research can assist in directing appropriate interventions.

The objectives of the Colloquium were to:

- Interrogate the current child research capacity in the region;
- Demonstrate the potential of African research, especially for the promotion of children's rights through policy and practice;
- Work towards closing the research-policy/practice gap;
- Establish a more permanent forum for linking research with policy development;
- Strengthen institutional relationships of child research centres across Africa.

The Colloquium: Opening Session

Dr. Carlos Cardoso of CODESRIA welcomed the NGOs, international organisations and research institutions present, and highlighted the fact that the organisation of this meeting corresponded to CODESRIA's goals of creating synergy between researchers, decision-makers and child protection practitioners.

Child Research in Africa

In her capacity as a board member of Childwatch International, Professor Rose September presented the goodwill message of the board and expressed its support for the work in the region. She stressed the importance and significance of the Colloquium for the continent's children. Recognising the ineffectiveness of child rights, despite the firm commitments undertaken by all actors, she observed that colloquiums such as these have the potential to strengthen the links between Rights, Research and Practice. More importantly they provide a joint platform to affirm the commitment to work together towards outcomes which are "in the best interest of African children". Researchers bring imperative skills and competencies to this crucial development agenda. But then, there is the need to know who are working in this field, where are they, how to build connectedness to make a significant impact. This colloquium was a first step in this direction.

Mr Jean Baptiste Zoungrana, Chair of the African Union's Expert Committee on children, acknowledged the importance of the Colloquium for the African continent and thanked the organising committee. He noted that, despite the decisive breakthroughs made by the international community and the existence of research institutions, research does not influence policy decisions and, as a result, there is no significant progress in the status of African children.

With these insightful preliminaries, presentations of the commissioned papers and discussions on them kicked off.



Discussion of the Commissioned Papers

Three discussion papers were commissioned prior to the colloquium to provide a theoretical and practical take off for the deliberations.

The three papers were:

- Perspectives and approaches in African childhoods research;
- Mechanisms and priorities in child research funding in sub-Saharan Africa; and
- An institutional analysis of child research in sub-Saharan Africa.

The format of this section of the colloquium was as follows:

- The authors of each paper presented the key issues emanating from the paper;
- A discussant responded to the paper, after which discussions were opened up for general discussions on issues raised by the paper, the authors and the discussant, as well as related issues that emerged;
- Specific issues/suggestions were to be followed up by the authors and the papers amended accordingly. The papers that appear in this report are the amended papers that took into account suggestions and advice from the colloquium participants.

It is important to note that:

- The authors had a limited time to produce the papers and none of the papers is all-inclusive. Authors were only able to include the 'units of analyses' for which information was readily available, as time did not permit primary data collection;
- The papers were intended to provide the background and stimulus to colloquium discussions rather than dictate the 'final word' on the subjects covered;
- All the three papers have the potential to become 'living papers' and thus be updated from time to time;
- Some aspects of the papers are overlapping, given the inter-relatedness of their subject matter;
- All the three papers had been amended, based on technical reviews from the organizing team, and colloquium participants' input and suggestions.

The following section provides a summary of the key points highlighted in each paper, a summary of the main recommendations/challenges put forward after each paper, followed by the full text containing the amendments.

1. Perspectives and Approaches in African Childhoods Research

This paper analyses existing published literature on African children of the past decade (1996-2006). Its focus is on the perspectives from which child research was conducted, as well as the perspectives on African children that emanated from the research. In addition, the paper highlights the various methodological approaches that were employed in child research for the period specified. A very useful institutional case study was provided at the end of the paper, outlining practical challenges faced by a typical research institution in production and publication of research.

A total of 113 articles were reviewed, majority of these being in the health domain. Of note was the substantial increase in the number of articles in years 2003-2006, compared to earlier periods. Majority of the articles were co-written with European and/or American researchers – many of the first authors being non-African. Very few of the papers were produced by African authors exclusively and each scenario brings its pros and cons.

Research covered a wide range of topics, with a preponderance of health-related research – this might be indicative of health being imminently more fundable than other areas of research. Most of the studies focused on the younger children, i.e. under five years of age. Hardly does any of the studies involve children in a true child-participatory methodology, though children were usually the research subjects.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Paper

Firstly, the all too familiar phenomenon of ‘problematizing’ African children and focusing on their being vulnerable, sick, abnormal or disadvantaged is challenged by the authors. The authors argue that “the concerns for African children should not be confined to the disadvantaged position of Africa but rather extended to search into “the virtues of their (the children’s) cultural heritage, historical background and values of the African civilisation as the basis for reflecting on the rights and welfare of the child”. There is need to invest in understanding the unique and rich socio-cultural milieu in which African children are raised and how that makes them the people they are and are capable of becoming”.

Secondly, the yet again familiar issue of stereotyping children’s status and position in society as dependant and “in the process of becoming” rather than “being” and recognised as human beings in their own right, is highlighted.

Child Research in Africa

Thirdly, this being perhaps the most challenging assertion in the paper, is the lack of clear consensus on what the definition of the African child is, both in terms of age and sociological construct. A standard definition will provide a uniform point of departure for researchers on this continent.

Fourthly, the perspectives on the African child are shaped by a multiplicity of factors that include both the worldview of the researchers, donor priorities and pressures, as well as what will 'sell' better in peer-review journals. As indicated earlier, little work has been done with children as equal participants in research – this poses a particular challenge to the African research community.

The paper concludes with a number of recommendations on the definition and construction of children and childhood in the research process and methodology. It suggests ways to strengthen future research and collaborations and the potential role of children in research.

Key Issues that Emerged from Discussant and General Participant Inputs

1. There is need to avoid generalisations and particularising the African children in ways that invariably portray them in an unfavourable light;
2. Characteristics that are exclusive or particular to African children need to be identified (if these exist) and these should be focused on;
3. The socio-economic and political context in which children live must be highlighted as these are the primary reasons why children experience certain phenomena;
4. It would be useful if the paper highlighted the regions covered by the research;
5. More combined methodologies are required, in terms of qualitative studies to complement the invariable quantitative methodologies;
6. There is need to explore ways of involving decision-makers in the research process and getting them to invest more in research;
7. The 'normality' of the African child must be the focus;
8. A limitation was that the review only sourced English journals and yet much of the literature from West and North Africa are published in French. Moreover, some of the literature from Southern Africa might be published in Portuguese;
9. African researchers face many constraints in terms of time, opportunity, huge teaching workloads and limited resources, that render them unable to conduct as much research as they would like to (at the time of the colloquium a number of colleagues were on strike as wages in certain universities were unacceptably low);
10. Getting articles into international journals is not always easy.

Main Recommendations

- The need to define the concept of “African child”. See whether the African child has specificities and, if necessary, use the comparative approach to highlight them;
- The need to identify and address current gaps in research;
- The need to use appropriate methodologies and to have a research monitoring mechanism;
- The development of a peer review and support system, in order to encourage more publications and to make available and visible the research findings, must be explored. Being part of the international community, the need to identify the barriers as well as finding ways of overcoming them is essential.

In addition, participants felt that:

- The paper was not complete, some issues were not dealt with and additional data will have to be incorporated;
- Child rights research is still a challenge. The specificities and context of each country should be taken into account;
- The issue of methodology is fundamental. The comparative approach should be central to conducting joint research;
- It is necessary to further reflect on the impact of research: what is the relationship between research and policy?;
- There is need for genuine “policy research” that entails networking and collaboration of all the actors involved in research, tapping and publication of the results.

2. Mechanisms and Priorities in Child Research Funding in Sub-Saharan Africa

This paper outlines the results of a scan done on the status of child research funding priorities and mechanisms in sub-Saharan Africa. In its introduction the paper recognises that, given the relative poverty of many African countries, funding research from governmental coffers is very unlikely and, therefore, most research in Africa is reliant on external donor funding. On the positive side, the plethora of international instruments and treaties that aim to improve the lives of children world-wide, and given that African children live in some of the worst social, economic and health circumstances, funding in recent years has been channelled to research and address the circumstances and potential mitigating factors against children in Africa.

Child Research in Africa

The paper addresses the following areas:

- Inventory of existing institutions and agencies funding child research in SSA;
- A documentation of the funding mechanisms and priorities of the agencies funding child research in SSA; and
- Trends in the availability and allocation of resources by institutions, governments and external sources.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Paper

- Funding came from a wide range of sources, including foreign governments (mainly Western Europe, Scandinavia, UK and the USA), international agencies, private donors and internal fund-raising efforts by research organisations. Funding in the year prior to the survey ranged from 42 million to 580 million dollars by individual governments or donors;
- Funding was provided through a number of different mechanisms, ranging from direct funding to research projects and more indirect funding through sponsoring conference attendances, etc;
- Funding had been provided to a range of research and academic institutions, NGO's and individual researchers.

Whilst a range of research areas received funding, health again seemed to be the predominant area of choice, with an expected emphasis on infectious disease such as HIV and malaria.

The paper concluded that child research funding in SSA depends to a great extent on international bodies because African institutions do not have strong economic capabilities. Furthermore, the issues addressed in child research funding do not cover all aspects of child development in SSA. The funding trends seem to follow a general global agenda on children and may be driven by the declarations of the United Nations. Nevertheless, there are opportunities that can be exploited to enhance healthy development of children and, regardless of whether research is dependent on external assistance, of importance is that the issues facing African children are brought to the attention of the global community for action.

Key Points Raised by the Discussant and Participants

The paper lacked a deeper political analysis that links the *modus operandi*, hence funding priorities of donors to the realities of researchers on the ground. A more in-depth knowledge of what the donor discourse is at present, where opportunities lie, what researchers could do better or more to access funding,

and what the practical barriers are that need to be overcome in order to access more funding require further exploration.

Again, a regional breakdown of funding and funding areas would be useful, as significant differences exist between different geographic regions in Africa. In addition, a more detailed breakdown of funding areas is required together with the factors that determine funding priorities. Without such analyses, it will be very difficult for researchers to engage proactively with donors and, in so doing, help shape the funding agenda.

The dictate of donors should have been highlighted at the beginning of the paper. It would have been best to describe the conflict between researchers and donors from the start. For example, the tendency of donors to decide on the relevance of themes is a challenge which may threaten the independence and relevance of research. Therefore, it would have been more interesting to give a more political analysis of research financing. The authors should have told us what researchers should do, and what is conceivable for governments and donors to take researches seriously.

The paper presented does not identify the problems of current research. It should have indicated a number of difficulties that hamper research and inhibit financing: the content and quality of the training received, the difficulties faced by younger researchers in written communication, the disconnection of researchers from the realities of the environment, etc.

Challenges

- The quality of research should be the first concern;
- Creativeness and reflexivity are needed in the process of producing researches that are not a full reproduction of the views of donors;
- Empiricism is essential;
- Increasing publication and dissemination of research, especially to non-academics is a challenge. Researchers must fully play the role of intellectuals and assume their political responsibilities as members of civil society.

3. An Institutional Analysis of Child Research in Sub-Saharan Africa

The essence of this paper was the identification and characterisation (type, practices and agenda) of child research institutions in Africa. The paper covered only those institutions where information was readily available and accessible via a website.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Paper

The results indicated that while there has been a growth of organizations conducting child related work in sub-Saharan Africa, most of these organizations are largely concerned with advocacy and service provision. In contrast, there are relatively few organizations that focus on child research per se. The latter, which are academic or institutional research organizations, state that they are also committed to education, advocacy, training, publishing and dissemination of information, and monitoring and evaluation regarding child issues. It is concluded that these institutions need to be strengthened in order to attain an adequate database for child well-being and child rights in sub-Saharan Africa that will promote and impact child well-being policies. It is recommended that there should be more investment in the child research and training of child researchers, wider dissemination of research findings, and more collaboration among researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

Child research institutions across Africa are numerous and varied. The characteristics of the organizations vary from academic organizations with full-time multidisciplinary teams of experts to community-based non-government organizations that combine practice with research on children. Some research institutions are part of international organizations engaged in child research while others are regional organizations.

The author offered the following typology by which to classify African child research institutions:

- Dedicated academic institutions;
- Non-dedicated academic institutions;
- Non-academic research institutions;
- Community Based Organisations; and
- National Coalitions.

The paper provides examples of each of these institutions. Institutions cover a wide range of research areas and activities. Activities cover the entire spectrum and include research, training, advocacy, education, technical support, monitoring and evaluation, publication and dissemination, and working directly with children. Institutions differ in their emphases.

The paper concludes by recommending the following:

- Increasing training of researchers in child research;
- Sourcing more funding for child research in particular from governments;
- Increasing collaboration among researchers in different disciplines and also collaboration among researchers, practitioners and policy makers;

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

- Increasing regional collaboration across the continent; and
- Increasing dissemination and publishing, especially to non-academics so as to raise public awareness and understanding of child issues.

Key Points Raised by the Discussant and Participants

- The typology of institutions is not exhaustive. This needs to be explored further and expanded;
- There is a need to include new forms of institutions;
- There is need for comprehensive thinking on the status of research on child rights in Africa;
- Certain strategies need to be refined, in order to make effective and fruitful the collaboration of research institutions between them on the one hand, and with other international institutions and NGOs on the other hand;
- Ideally, an in-depth study of the impact of research should be done, as this would help to shape institutional forms and agendas, as well as the orientation and training of researchers.

General Summary of Key Points

The Colloquium had four objectives, namely:

- to question the research capacities;
- to demonstrate the research capacities;
- to demonstrate the research potential both in practice and in policy-making and to establish a permanent network.

There were very useful and dynamic discussions based on the three papers presented. A rich exchange of experience and knowledge ensued.

The participants recognised that there are a number of challenges. These, however, are not unique to Africa. The main thrust of the challenges is how to bridge existing research and relationship gaps. Participants resolved to pool competencies and create synergy between researchers in Africa through the establishment of a child research network. The international context, the context of their respective countries and the institutional context will have to be taken into consideration.

A key conceptual point of departure could be the definition of the African child, without which it would be difficult to construct a coherent and relevant research programme. In addition, the perspectives from which African children are viewed require review, so as not to only “problematise” African children but also to reflect normality as it exists in various contexts throughout the continent.

Child Research in Africa

Participants recognised the multiple constraints faced by African researchers, both in the existing capacity to conduct good quality research, as well as the ability to publish and disseminate research in formats that are useful in various contexts. While the participants unanimously acknowledged the need for greater dissemination of the results, they found that publication supposes means. A firm recommendation was that the three background papers continue to be enriched, in particular by including data provided by Francophone journals. The three papers are fundamental for the work in the network and must become reference papers.

While the institutional analysis showed that there are many institutions conducting child research, these institutions are varied and do not necessarily work together. The participants considered it necessary to find mechanisms that will make it possible to represent the African continent as a whole. As a starting point, the participants recommended that the division between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa be eliminated, for Africa is one.

The establishment, strengthening and ongoing nurturing of relationships between researchers and users of research, in particular policy-makers and practitioners dominated much of the discussions. This was seen as a critical success factor in the implementation of evidence-based policies and programmes, these, in turn, being critical in improving the overall well-being of children. The colloquium recognised the relative absence of decision-makers in relation to researches, but welcomed the key figures that were present at the colloquium.

A fundamental flaw, identified by papers and participants alike, is the dearth of child participation in the research process. Given that children are the ultimate beneficiaries of child research, a progressive child rights approach where children are recognised as human beings in their own right, with the potential and capacity to contribute significantly to the development of solutions for the challenges they face, is paramount. This is worthy of an entire colloquium on its own.

The participants pondered about the potential nature and function of the network to be established. "Will it be a network of researchers, of institutions, or of best researchers in the continent? What will be the scope of this network? Which are the activities to be conducted? Will it be a network for improving research, establishing collaboration between researchers, setting the research agenda, disseminating research findings, or a network that will serve as a bridge between researchers and non-researchers?" These were but a few of the questions raised. These issues will have to be grappled with and resolved over several follow-up discussions.



The Colloquium Closure

Vote of Thanks

On behalf of CODESRIA, Dr. Carlos Cardoso expressed satisfaction that the goals set by the participants were achieved. Energetic discussions and debates took place where, indeed, the capacity and potentialities of research in Africa have been questioned. The participants managed to set up a consultation structure that would enable researchers to exchange ideas and provide a mechanism for peer review.

With regard to the major goal of bringing researchers, decision-makers, NGOs and donors around the same roundtable, a good start was made.

Dr. Cardoso thanked all the partners who devoted their time to supporting the colloquium. He specifically identified Mr Jean Claude Legrand from UNICEF, Mr Guy Massart from Plan International, Mrs Gisèle Mitton from the ILO and Mr Jean Baptiste Zoungrana, chair of the African Union's expert committee. He also thanked participants who made the effort to come to Dakar, namely the representatives of Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Uganda, Chad, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Benin, Mali, South Africa and Sierra Leone. He particularly thanked Prof. Rose September and Dr. Maylene Shung King from South Africa, for having worked on the idea of this colloquium for a considerable period of time. Finally, he thanked the authors of the discussion papers for their hard work and invaluable contributions to the colloquium. He stressed that none of this would have been possible without the financial support and close collaboration of Childwatch International, CODESRIA and UNICEF.

On behalf of the African Union's Expert Committee, Mr Jean Baptiste Zoungrana welcomed the idea of the Colloquium on child rights research in Africa. He found the themes relevant and the debates very rich. Likewise, the end-results are very promising. He expressed his deep gratitude to the Colloquium's organising committee. He wished the fledgling network well and promised to go to Addis Ababa and report to the Expert Committee. He promised increased support to the Network and indicated that the representatives of Network could attend the meetings of the African Union's Expert Committee as observers.

Conclusions

Exchange, self-criticism, discussion, conclusions and orientations were, in a nutshell, the components of the pan-African Colloquium on child rights research, organised in Dakar on 21-22 November 2006. The Colloquium has indeed been an appropriate forum for African researchers to discuss, criticise and decide on how to work towards assuming their responsibilities in the transformation of the African continent, especially the role of researchers in shaping the destiny of her children. The analytical reflections and critiques have resulted in a synergy of commitment and energy to overcome the barriers set against applied research on child issues and ultimately work towards better implementation of the rights of the African child.

Three interactive papers served as levers to the deliberations of the Colloquium: the prospects and approaches of child research, the institutional analysis of research, and the mechanisms and funding priorities of child rights research in Africa.

The two first themes of the Colloquium provided some introspection into the African Child Research platform. The group, which was more or less representative of Africa, objectively evaluated the realism, relevance and usefulness of child research in Africa – a welcome opportunity to peer-review the current child research scenario. The group recognised that, unless we as researchers put our house in order, we could scarcely lay all the blame at the door of policy-makers and practitioners for not implementing sound, evidence-based policies and programmes. The third theme, namely the issue of research financing, was a continuation of the previous debates since the participants recognised that the release of funds depends on the quality and usefulness of the research, but that this is also strongly influenced by political discourse, and donor bias and orientation.

Thus, after thorough debates, the Colloquium decided to:

- maintain permanent consultation between researchers, the general public and the international community through “peer review”;
- think of new types of child research institutions, taking into account the present contextual data;
- intensify training of African researchers and incorporate new research approaches;
- seek permanent dialogue with politicians, international organisations and donors;
- build the partnership between African research institutions and research institutions outside the continent;

Child Research in Africa

- seek ways to interact with the African Union Institutions on the child research agenda; and
- take initiative and adopt a proactive approach.

These resolutions led to the unanimous conclusion that the setting up of an African Network of child researchers was indeed justifiable and that this forum should take the next steps towards this end.

Action Plan

The participants unanimously decided to create the *African Child Research Network* with the following aims in mind:

- Build research capacity;
- Promote dissemination and dialogue;
- Encourage collaborative research;
- Dialogue and partner with key actors; and
- Find mechanisms to influence the continent's decision-makers.

The participants recognised that network creation and sustenance will require a lot of energy, as it involves the whole continent. Linguistic barriers and financing problem are likely to exist. Inclusiveness is vital and the first step is to draw in colleagues from North Africa who were unfortunately not present at the colloquium.

The proposed way forward was to start with a small reference group that would kick-start by defining the vision of the network and to develop an action plan on how to take it further.

The initial group of 10 people was composed of: Tatek Abebe, Marthe Atangana Abolo, Meheret Ayenew, Carlos Cardoso, Félicité Sodjiedo Hounton, Rita Moussa Sissoko, Rebecca Nyonyintono, Rose September, Almon Shumba, and one representative of North Africa (to be designated).

Dr. Carlos Cardoso accepted the proposal that the secretarial work and coordination of the Network be done by CODESRIA.

The participants agreed on the work programme outlined below:

1. Write a summary report that provides an overview of the Colloquium and circulate to all participants;
2. Complete discussion papers;
3. Draw up the statutes of the Network;
4. Draft policy papers;
5. Define the Network's membership criteria and develop criteria of representation;

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

6. Draw up a Work Plan for the Network;
7. Identify potential donors for the activities of the Network; and
8. Convene, through CODESRIA, a meeting of the steering group within the next six months.

The working group met immediately after the closing session of the Colloquium and set a date of March 2007 to coincide with the Uganda child protection conference.

Appendices

Appendix A: Colloquium Participants

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Child Research in Africa

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Appendix C (1)

Perspectives and Approaches in African Childhoods* Research

Steven Arojjo O. O.

Rebecca M. Nyonyintono

Summary

Many studies on African children continue to be characterized by a pre-occupation with problems facing children. These areas are often the ones that receive research funding, making it easier to publish work from such sources. This is probably not surprising, given the general discourses concerning the continent as a whole. The picture is slowly changing as the rights of children are better understood by more and more stakeholders in African research and child interventions. The emergence of new research methodologies, emphasizing the centrality of children in child research, has also contributed to this change. As a consequence, more and more publications on African children are being published in international journals, ensuring that they inform discourses on the child. Most research on African children emanates from universities and research related institutes/organizations. Research collaboration among these stakeholders has the potential to broaden our understanding of child rights and concerns of children. Various kinds of methodologies have been used in child research. However, much remains to be done in terms of clarity in research design, methodologies and methods/techniques used in these studies. Standardization in terms of issues that need to be tackled in research and how they are to be presented remain critical in strengthening research on African children. There is a need for "dialogue" between qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Introduction

Background

The history of the children's rights movement in Africa is recent, dating back to the early 1990s. Over the years, it has become very clear that children occupy an important place in Africa. Their population size and human rights concerns are responsible for this. The most important instrument internationally for children's rights is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. In a

* The fact that childhood is a social construct means that it is possible for us to have multiple childhoods.

bid to standardize global responses to child protection, a specific definition of childhood was adopted. A number of international conventions define children as all human beings under the age of 18 (UN Geneva Conventions; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; The African Charter on Rights of the Child). Instruments like these have provided the framework within which researchers have done work in a number of fields. But at the same time, it is important to note that these international laws on child rights are predominated by a perception of children in opposition to adulthood and as “people in the process of becoming rather than being”. Having been portrayed as dependent, immature and incapable of assuming responsibility and therefore best left in the security of the home and school, the stage was set for adults to speak for children.

For decades, studies have been done in many fields related to the African children, in most cases as part of other concerns. However, there has not been much concern with regard to children as a substantive field of study in Africa and much of the Third World. The rise of child rights discourses and many legal instruments to protect children is directly related to their increasing involvement in conflict as combatants, willing accomplices, conscripts and victims. At the same time, the scourge of HIV/AIDS has left millions of orphans.

These studies appear disjointed, therefore research that puts all these studies together serves the purpose of enabling us to assess what has been done and where gaps exist. It is only when this is done that African child research can be enriched and reinforced.

This paper focuses on one of the three key areas, namely, perspectives and approaches in the research on African children, and uses publications in the public domain. The other two studies are on institutional and funding mechanisms for research on African children. The second part of this research is a case study of one child research institution, namely Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC) in Uganda, which is also included as an in-depth analysis of the capacity to publish research work done by an African institution in sub-Saharan Africa.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to analyze research on African children that has been published on sub-Saharan Africa in the last ten years (1996 to 2006), present the state of the art of child research in the region, covering the following aspects:

- Research design;
- Methodological approaches;
- Perspectives on the child; and
- Trends in child research studies.

Child Research in Africa

The preamble to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – now the African Union (AU) – has highlighted the case for the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (CRWC) as a necessary supplement to the U N Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in a way that seems to justify even other attempts to address the uniqueness of the situation and experience of African children, including justification for research on the African children in its own right. It is noted in the preamble, among other things, that “...the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances...” These and related factors, though universal, combine in unique ways on the African continent. The final result is a unique social reality for children and this must be studied in its entirety in order to find relevant ways of providing for the needs of children in those circumstances.

The concerns for African children should not be confined to the disadvantaged position of Africa, but rather extend to search into “the virtues of their (the children’s) cultural heritage, historical background and values of the African civilisation as the basis of reflecting on the rights and welfare of the child”. There is need to invest in understanding the unique and rich socio-cultural milieu in which African children are raised and how that makes them the people they are and are capable of becoming. Research on the effect of the rich, natural heritage and civilisation on the cognitive and personality development of African children should enrich sources of information and knowledge on childhoods lived in the diverse cultures and civilisations of Africa.

As attention shifts to the rights approach to children’s issues, there is realisation that children’s issues have tended to be appended on adult concerns rather than meriting their own focus. This concern should permeate research on African children and inform the development of child-centred research methods that can be used in meaningful ways in research on children in Africa.

The research agenda for African children has tended to be driven by crisis and external donor concerns and interests, in the past. As a result, the stock of knowledge on hand is on the vulnerable, sick, abnormal or disadvantaged African children. International agencies like the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, and NGOs that deal with children have been hard-pressed to spend on crises, with little or no funds for research on the lives of children living in normal circumstances. It is important to shift the balance and invest in understanding the lives and situations of the normal African children in order to establish standards of well-being that have relevance and meaning in the context of the African child.

Over and above that, the universal concerns on research on children in their own right apply equally to the children in Africa. Elsewhere in the world, there

is recognition of childhood as more than a biological construct and focusing on the social realities of children as meaningful actors and creators of their social reality and thus valuable members of society. African children have a recognised place in the productive life of the family, depending on age and ability. That is why the CRWC goes beyond the rights of the child to talk about the duties of the child as an active member of the family, community and society (Article 31 of the CRWC).

Furthermore, there is a move to break away from earlier practice where the issues and concerns of children have been appended to those of adults, to focusing on issues and problems as they affect the child. In the case of Africa, children's issues of poverty, underdevelopment have been subsumed under those of adults or children have been excluded; and yet the lives of children are complete in themselves and the impacts of poverty, HIV/AIDS, and even positive events like a good harvest or stability in the country impact on them in their entirety. It is therefore necessary to create a niche for research on children as an end in itself for the purposes of addressing the issues that are unique to children. This does not do away with research on children in multiple contexts but rather supplements or bridges the gap created by earlier approaches that excluded or subsumed them under adults.

Methodology

Using a key word search on a variety of academic search engines namely: 1) EBSCO Host; 2) Blackwell Synergy; 3) British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC), British Library web; 4) Emerald Publishing Group Limited; 5) Gale (Thomson Learning) -Academic ASAP and Health andWellness Resource Centre; 6) Oxford University Press; 7) Oxford Journal; 8) Science Direct. From the searches, 113 entries were identified. These form the raw data for the present analysis. The key words used included; "methodology", "approaches", "research", "design", "perspectives", "child", "trend" and "study". This means that this review has not captured studies outside the electronic search engines above. This therefore is the main limitation of the study.

The data used in this analysis is therefore based on research that is in the public domain. The case study, on the other hand, brings to attention the fact that there is a lot of research information, especially by Africans, that is not published but is available to limited circulation by those who physically access and use the institutional libraries, reading rooms or resource centres. Furthermore, research done in Africa but published in non-African journals or other academic outlets does not easily feedback into the African countries and clients from whom the data was collected or who host the foreign researcher.

Child Research in Africa

The data on studies was analysed according to the themes of the study like “methodology”, “perspectives”, “trends” and “perspectives”, among others. A more detailed analysis of themes like: “sample size”, “analysis”, “unit of analysis”, “sampling”, “data collection”, “ethics”, “training” and “future research” was also done.

Results

Aims and Objectives

Research on African children has focused on themes like: investigations into health, migration, nutrition and AIDS-related factors impacting on children. They also include concerns like: child soldiers, child disability, malaria, child care givers, refugees, oral health and school attendance, utilization of health care and child morbidity, orphans, street children, child trafficking, child poverty, school attendance, child justice, sex abuse.

The aims of these studies can be broadly categorized into four. Some studies aim at exploring certain issues or providing an understanding of a phenomenon. Other studies are part of studies originally intended for intervention purposes. In this category, we can also include Demographic and Health Survey data that have been used to analyze certain issues. The third category includes studies aimed at validating or replicating research instruments. The last category includes studies aimed at clinical interventions and trials.

Given the differing aims and objectives of these studies, it implies that the methodologies used will inevitably differ. Data collected from studies aimed at interventions can serve as baseline information that can be utilized in order to triangulate data. This has been done by; using Demographic Health Survey data from Kenya to supplement their research work. It is much more difficult to work from exploratory studies to panel studies/surveys in terms of resource requirements. The limitations of data from panel studies/surveys lie in the fact that they are focused to the intervention or survey objectives. In that sense, the data is considerably inflexible. But the issues that are not well explained through such studies can become the focus of studies aimed at understanding issues more clearly or validating study instruments.

Perspectives and Approaches of Child Research in Africa

How children are constructed in research

An important methodological aspect of child research is that of “child in his/her own right”, “child as having agency worthy of study” and “childhood as structural from in the succession of the generation”. It is possible to categorize some

studies reviewed here falling within the first category, in the sense that children are portrayed as having little or no agency. These studies are of a health/morbidity nature and most of the investigations were of a clinical nature. Issues of constructing meaning about the world do not apply here in these studies. All these studies were institutionally funded by other organizations. Another sub-category of studies which present children as a legitimate area of study are those which use data drawn from Demographic and Health Surveys as well as other surveys carried out as part of larger projects. All these studies were also institutionally funded.

The second category of studies approach children as possessing agency worthy of study, they are taken as actors who construct meaning just like adults. These studies dealt with issues like migration, living situations, and experiences of bereavement and challenges of orphanhood. Five of the above studies were institutionally funded and four were not institutionally funded. One of them was part of an evaluation of the outcome of a participatory action research.

The third category views childhood as a structural form in the succession of the generations. It takes into consideration the position occupied by children in the social structures which places them in a subservient position due to their minority age. "Evidence suggests that participation by children and young people is limited by adult control over who may participate (to those most "adult like" in age and ability to articulate issues), adult control over the content (issues important to adults) and manner of participation". Indeed, scholars have highlighted the "power differentials in adult-child relations and conceptualize different approaches to participation, illustrated by a continuum of the adult-child power structure as it shapes different forms of participation by children and youth". They have also come up with a collaborative model that recognizes the importance of adults, realizing that they possess more power than children and endeavouring to develop ways of enabling children to participate without inhibition by adults. Several studies reviewed fall under this category. These cases show that children occupy a particular position within a broader social structure and, with time, they will move on to occupy other positions. In a study on children's work in northern Nigeria, it was shown that social structure of the Muslim Hausa views children as competent economic agents in the rural society.

The Distribution of Developmental Stages/Age Groups Across Studies

Childhoods are socially and culturally constructed. But at the same time, this is legally defined. In most African countries, majority age begins at 18 years. The age range of the respondents in the studies is 0 to 22 years. The studies dealing with clinical cases tend to have the youngest respondents 10 - 36 months, 1½ - 8 years and 1 week - 59 months.

Child Research in Africa

It is clear from the studies that some of the respondents can be more appropriately categorized as youth rather than children, even when the cultural considerations are made for these cases. Other studies did not provide any information on age. It is instructive to note that two of the studies, with respondents who are above 18 years, were originally done as part of contract work for non governmental organizations (Save the Children Fund and World Vision respectively). The possible reason for the inclusion of the third study as “teenage orphans’ experience” is the ethnographic methods of data collection which were used to get information from households for the case studies. Some of the households with respondents above 18 also had respondents below 18 years of age.

The confusion over childhoods has implications for the interpretation of research findings. To lump infants together with older persons as children can be misleading. This is particularly true as far as interpretation of the responses from these “children” is concerned. The infants have very limited “cognitive competences and experiential backgrounds, children are likely to have more difficulties in understanding the research process; the younger they are, the greater the difficulties”. It is also easier to neatly categorize respondents as children or adults using data from panel/survey research compared to ethnographic information for instance. In ethnographic studies, the narrative concerning the household is constructed using information from household members below and above 18 years, thereby making it difficult to separate issues raised by children alone. But at the same time, ethnographic studies offer a better opportunity for the multiplicity of childhoods to be portrayed, and indeed for the disparity between national legislation and local understanding about childhood to be captured. It is important for researchers to be clear on the age of respondents by indicating whether they are infants, juveniles or children.

Characteristics of the Research Context

Institutional Characteristics

Institutional affiliation is very important in research because of the support researchers receive. These include grants, comments on drafts, mentoring and review mechanisms like boards and seminars/conferences. Funding is substantively covered by the paper on child research funding. In this paper, we focus on institutional affiliation with a view to encouraging networking in publishing. Institutions from which the authors came were in Europe, North America, Africa, China and Australia. Many of the joint authors were from one continent, but there were others from more than one continent as well. Authors from African institutions made up 20/64 of the studies which had declared

institutional backgrounds. Seventeen of the twenty studies from authors affiliated to African institutions were not institutionally funded. Four of the twenty studies in this category were institutionally funded from African sources. Thirty of the total number of studies was authored by scholars from European, Australian, North American or Chinese institutions. Fourteen of these studies were not institutionally funded. Sixteen studies authored by individuals affiliated to European/North American institutions received institutional funding of different forms. Five studies received other forms of institutional support. These included institutional support that is not specifically mentioned, comments from conference participants; comments from DPhil Supervisor, secondment to the institution for purposes of the study, and comments from seminar participants.

Thirty studies were authored by scholars from European/North American and African institutions. The advantage of north-south collaboration is that it brings together scholars with different resource endowments that can be harnessed to improve African child research – collaborations involving academic research funders, medical research funders and foundations that support child welfare (all European), health and academic research assistance (African and European), foundations and research centres (Canadian and American), a ministry of international cooperation, an international educational organization and two universities (African and European), American health research institutes, a health research and development organization (European). Virtually all these studies were funded by North American or European institutions. In all these cases, nationals from these countries are one of the scholars who participated in the studies. However, not all the studies involving researchers from the north were institutionally funded. The funding support from Northern countries is critical in promoting research on children.

Most of the studies, whose institutional affiliation was declared, were carried out by individuals from universities and research organizations, like medical research centres. Universities have a range of disciplines, so there are a number of methodological approaches used by university researchers. These include ethnographic, clinical and case control studies, surveys, cross sectional and even case studies. This is followed by collaborations between university researchers and researchers from other organizations, for instance health centre and regional referral hospitals; Ministry of health and private practice; high court. Here, the methodologies used are according to the issues under investigation. In certain cases where a baseline is important for the study, a cross sectional study was carried out to obtain a baseline for evaluating an intervention.

Child Research in Africa

Randomized controlled trial made use of a longitudinal community-based intervention data. Others are authored by individuals solely from hospitals and from non governmental organisations.

There is need to work out frameworks for collaboration among the different stakeholders involved in research on African children, which will bring together researchers from different institutions and facilitate more research work on African children.

Disciplinary Background of Researchers

As with institutional affiliation, disciplinary orientations of scholars can influence their involvement in child research and even their research orientation. Certain disciplines or sub-disciplines are closely linked to children, like Paediatrics, while others may appear to be far removed from child related issues. Some authors provided information regarding their disciplinary backgrounds while others did not. Among those who provided this information were individuals engaged in: Psychology, Special Needs, Environmental Education, Epidemiology, Haematology, Gastroenterology, Sociology, Geography, Psychiatry, Political Economy, Social Work, Pharmacology, Refugee Studies, Public Health, Law, Demography, Dentistry, Anthropology, Medicine, Medical Technology, Health Policy, Applied Social Science, Medical Microbiology, Community Health and Public Health. Other authors did not indicate their disciplinary backgrounds but rather their institutional background. So, it was difficult to establish the former. The institutional background provided by these authors included the World Bank, Shelter Afrique, Global AIDS Programme and WHO, among others.

The involvement of individuals from different disciplines in child research provided an opportunity to make use of different insights on African children and also on research more generally. This development is positive since it means that African children are being studied from different disciplinary angles. The combined effect of all these is a better understanding of African children. It highlights the importance of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary studies. However, it also presents challenges of understanding child research from different perspectives.

Where Research in Africa Gets Published?

Only 11 out of the 66 journals that published the studies are devoted to children, namely: *CHILDREN and SOCIETY* (three articles) *International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* (four articles), *Journal of Tropical Paediatrics* (one article), *Maternal and Child Nutrition* (two articles), *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* (one

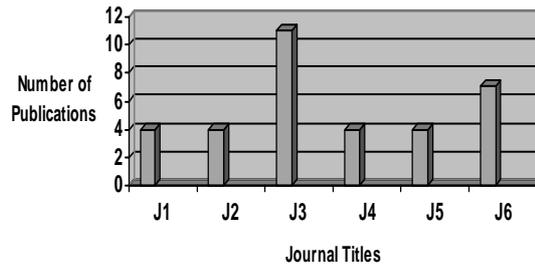
article). *Child Abuse and Neglect* (four articles), *Child and Family Social Work* (one article), *Childhood* (three articles), *Child: Care, Health and Development* (four articles), and *Paediatrics* (one article) and, *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* (all these journals are published in Europe or the United States of America). This shows that international journals with a child focus have been involved in the publication of research on African children in the last ten years. But it also shows that issues concerning African children have not been confined only to particular journals. They have been mainstreamed in different international journal publications. Of the 66 journal titles with publications on African children, seven specifically focus on Africa: *Journal of African Economies*, *African Sociological Review*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *African Studies Review*, *Africa*, and *Journal of Contemporary Southern African Studies*. All these journals had an article each in the search that was done. The journal with most articles on African children was not dedicated to research on African children, but rather tropical medicine and international health. Twenty one of the sixty one journals deal with health related issues.

Much as the expansion of research on African children to non-child-focused journals should be celebrated, it is also important to constructively critique child research from these publication outlets. This will help in avoiding a situation where child research is devoid of the “voices of children”, but exists only in form.

Distribution of Research Over the Past Decade

The number of publications shown on Table 1 indicate that research on African children is increasingly penetrating international journals. From the review, we can observe that from 2003 there has been an increase in the number of studies on African children published in international journals. The possible explanations of the above are to be traced to the increasing awareness of the effects of war, HIV/AIDS and violence on children. As a result of a number of studies that have revealed the vulnerability of children to the above issues, many other researchers have increasingly sought to understand African children in view of such changes. Another explanation is to be found in the increasing sophistication of the methods used to study children. Whereas in the past we mainly learnt about children from adults, there is now an increasing concern about the relevance of some of these approaches. The tendency over the years has been to adopt child-focused, child led or more generally child sensitive methodologies. These changes have made it desirable to go back to the old findings and use new methodologies in studying the same phenomena. These changes are partly explained by the emergence of the New Social Studies of Children and Childhood (NSSCC) paradigm.

Figure 1: Journal Titles and Articles Published



Notes: J1 Child Abuse and Neglect, J2 International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry, J3 Tropical Medicine and International Health, J4 Social Science and Medicine, J5 Child: Care, Health and Development, J6 Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

Table 1: Publications by Year

Year	Publications
1996	9
1997	6
1998	5
1999	8
2000	9
2001	6
2002	4
2003	15
2004	15
2005	20
2006	16

Methodologies Used in Child Research

Participation of Children in the Research

Epistemological issues are critical in every field of study. Failure to utilize the appropriate epistemological tools can render a piece of research work less useful. The nature of the subject in child research i.e. dealing with persons whose skills and competences and power differentials disfavour, requires researchers to adopt innovative methodological approaches to understand children's realities. Children's participation in the research process can be framed as a continuum. The first degree of participation represents the least participation, while in the last category, children have the most participation:

- a) Research *on* children;
- b) Research *about* children;
- c) Research *with* children; and
- d) Research *by* children.

In research on children, children are researched as objects with little agency. In this category of research, 27/83 studies were approached as having little or no agency. These studies were mainly of a clinical nature, but they also included studies containing interventions that deal with malnutrition (Alderman *et al*, 2005), the protection of children from violence, mediating the impact of conflict and protection of child rights and child abuse and the orphan crisis in Africa. In some instances this approach to looking at children is unavoidable especially when dealing with clinical issues that do not require an input from the child.

Research about children involves the exploration of children's issues with adults speaking on behalf of the children. In up to 24/83 of the studies, adults provide the information that is used in the studies on behalf of the children. Some studies utilize literature on child labour to re-interpret the same phenomena. In one case, crime and urban renewal are explored using mainly newspaper reports. Several studies of a policy nature adopt the same approach. From the above, it is evident that certain kinds of studies will have to utilize this approach due to different reasons. Also, if the information one is utilizing for research has already been compiled as is the case with newspaper reports, it becomes the only available source of information a researcher can access.

Research with children here refers to a process where children play a significant role in the making of data for the research. This level of participation recognizes that children do have, and indeed can contribute to the generation of knowledge concerning their own circumstances. Children in this case are asked questions or made to contribute to the reality being constructed. Twenty of the

Child Research in Africa

studies can be categorized as falling under this level of participation. A range of studies adopted this approach to child participation in research, looking at child poverty, studying child sexual abuse and analyzing children's work and young careers. This approach is also used in a variety of studies like blood pressure, children's migration, gender differentials, young AIDS migrants, militarization of children, self-esteem, the psychological impact of war, narrative exposure therapy and ill health geography, among others.

Research by children is a level of participation where children actively participate in the data collecting process. Children actually drive the research process by directing what kind of methods they will use to obtain the information that addresses the concerns of the study. This approach is used where children were actively involved in the selection of methods to collect data.

Research Design

The studies utilized a range of research designs like: longitudinal studies in all its different forms namely trend studies, cohort studies, panel studies and cross-sectional studies. Most of the studies representing more than 70 per cent (n=76) of the studies whose research designs were presented, used the cross-sectional design. The main limitation of the cross-sectional design is that it cannot capture social reality beyond the time of the survey. "Typically, their aim is to understand causal processes that occur over time, but their conclusions are based on observations made at only one time". But given the fact that some of the studies were exploratory in nature and some lacking institutional funding, the cross-sectional design was the most appropriate.

About 30 per cent used the longitudinal design of which 6/21 were panel types, 4/21 were the trend type and 2/21 cohort. Nine studies out of the twenty one were just classified as longitudinal by nature of design. The advantage that this design has is its capability of capturing processes as they unfold. The problem however is that longitudinal studies are often expensive in terms of both time and finances. Indeed, most of these longitudinal studies 16/21 were institutionally funded; it was not clear in the case of four of them whether funding was provided, since they acknowledge "assistance" from organizations or individuals. In only one study was it clear that there was no institutional funding provided, as it was not mentioned in the acknowledgements.

Unit of Analysis

The children, parents/guardians who double as household heads and caregivers in institutions, and teachers were the main respondents in most cases. A number of studies made use of different sources of information, which had different

units of analysis. There are several units of analysis, namely individual, household, institutional and community. In cases where individuals are the units of analysis, individuals are studied in the context of their membership of social groupings like families. An individual may be described as belonging to poor family or as living in a low-crime area. Household refer to a group of persons who normally live and eat together. At the community level, the community is viewed as impacting on the children; therefore, the community is the basis of analysis. The institutional level looks at institutions as important in explaining the nature of the reality in question. The use of different units of analysis is important because the individual, household, community level and even institutional level perspectives inform individual perspectives and actions. The unit of analysis can roughly be said to be influenced by the disciplinary background of researchers. This is very clear in the case of individual unit of analysis, which tended to be used mainly by psychologists. Haematologists, dentists, psychiatrists, paediatricians, pharmacologists and medical micro-biologists also use the individual as the unit of analysis. The other units of analysis were used by researchers with different disciplinary backgrounds. For instance, economists, geographers, sociologists, anthropologists and social workers view their reality as shaped by broader social forces and emphasize these in their analyses. It should be noted that the individual unit of analysis is more congruent with the perspective that takes children as "objects" and, to some extent, that which views children as "subjects". The units of analysis that take into consideration the power of broader social forces in shaping social reality allow for the consideration of children as active agents whose participation in society is provided for by the social structure and nature of power relations vis-à-vis adults.

Sampling

A range of sampling methods was employed in the studies. Firstly, there is the option of recruiting respondents via a health or demographic surveillance system. Secondly, sampling involved selecting the respondents from the population of interest, for instance street children. In many instances, this involved snowballing. The third approach involved enlisting the help of NGOs, CBOs, schools and community leaders, selecting respondents from those households or individuals that are part of their care, support programs or utilize their services. The fourth approach involved utilization of data collected from other research projects and data from Demographic Health Survey, World Fertility Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

Sampling approaches that target facilities have inherent selection bias. By sampling respondents that access particular facilities, one, by definition, excludes

Child Research in Africa

those that are not able to access these services and support mechanisms. The adoption of this sampling strategy however may be due to funding issues. In this case, the experiences of the small samples of respondents that are normally included in studies of this nature should not be taken to be representative of the experience of the larger population.

Sample Size

The sample size of the studies ranged from 6 respondents included in a study to 3,149 respondents interviewed in a survey in South Africa. Most of the studies with information on the sample size were large, with 100 or more respondents. Thirty seven out of forty eight of the studies whose sample sizes were provided had more than 100 respondents each. The studies with fewer than 100 respondents had a maximum of 93 respondents. Up to 41 per cent of the studies had samples greater than 500, with nine of the surveys interviewing more than 1000 respondents. Smaller sample sizes characterize studies of an exploratory nature and also studies without institutional sources of funding. The larger studies are often outcomes of panel data collected as part of the preparations for an intervention or data from Demographic Health Surveys.

Methods of Data Collection

The particular type of information collected and how it is collected depends on the focus of the specific study. In cases where the focus is very narrow, such as one that focused on attitudes towards gender analysis, studies tend to opt for specific techniques that will meet their data needs, e.g. personal interviews. When the focus is on investigating certain wider aspects of health, such as mortality trends in children under 5 years old (1950-2000), one is generally expected to utilize Demographic Household Survey data with information on dates of birth, age at death and live births among others.

It is possible to discern a distinction between three main approaches to data collection in these studies. In many studies, structured questionnaires (i.e. printed questionnaires including a set of standardized questions put to all respondents) administered through personal interviews were employed as the only data collection method. In some cases, these structured questionnaires were self-administered but still the fact remains that structured questionnaires were the only techniques. This is especially the case in studies that utilize Demographic Health Survey data or more generally panel data which have been collected as part of baseline data for interventions. It should also be noted that studies of this nature often take the household as the unit of analysis. In other studies, structured questionnaires are used in combination with interviews with key informants,

focus group sessions, record reviews, observations, recall, drawings, spider diagrams, resource mapping, seasonal calendars, photo diaries and other data collection tools. Nineteen of the studies reviewed here employed the first approach. Twenty six studies primarily used a combination of data collection techniques, in the process collecting information from a variety of role players and on a variety of issues. The third category of data collection approaches (12) involved the use of structured questionnaires as well as laboratory tests, studies focusing on health and morbidity dominated this category. The last category (11) included studies that primarily used secondary data sources and addressed policy, laws, ethics and child rights.

The Use of Field Workers

Field workers play an important role in the research process. But as with methodology, which was not provided by some researchers, most of the studies do not provide any information about the field worker(s). It is often assumed that field workers are well trained. The question about where the field workers are recruited from is important. Answers to this question are of far reaching effect as regards the findings.

Only eight of the research – based studies provide information about the training of field workers. Of the above, one simply points out that field staff were trained in the techniques for the study. Four of the studies however, were more elaborate, including the topics covered in training, duration of the training and even the institutional origin of the trainers. Other researchers go even further to include the output of the training, which was until there was agreement of practice results of surveyors and study investigators to greater than 90 per cent. Other researchers also provide information about the participatory nature of training adopted for the field workers, showing how the field workers discussed the findings from trial interviews with the trainer. Improving reliability of results was the reason for carrying out skills improvement training among laboratory technicians. One study utilized Demographic Health Survey data sets as well as its own interviews. Because of that, it was possible to provide information on only the training done as part of the field work preparations for their own data collection. On the other hand, it was not possible for authors of studies using data sets from Demographic Health Surveys and policy analyses to provide any information about field worker training in view of the nature of data they were using.

There are reasons to suggest that local people may make better field workers than those from outside the community: they often have more time available to do the actual research in comparison to the researchers, they are better at observing things since they have insider information and, finally, using local

Child Research in Africa

field workers ensures that the community will understand the reasons for the research more clearly. None of the studies provided any information with regard to whether the field workers were from the local community or not. The only study that alludes to the origin of the field worker is one where they indicate that the reason for carrying out training of field workers was to improve on the skills of the laboratory technicians.

Nevertheless, employing local field workers may be counter productive. This is especially true in sensitive studies that require confidentiality. Such field workers who are not well trained can cause stigma and even discrimination against certain individuals in the community. Interviewers are also likely to fill in responses on the basis of their understanding of the situation. Expediency in many cases leads to the use of local field workers in total disregard of the dangers enumerated. Child research by definition involves those who are vulnerable and do not wield much social power, it is therefore very important that field workers are well trained in issues like confidentiality. Only then will field workers be able to handle the challenges posed by interviewing children and not hurting/harming them in the process.

For certain studies, especially those which utilize survey data, and those which use secondary data sources like court reports, it is not possible for the researcher to comment on training of field workers if the information was not provided.

Ethical Concerns

Closely related to training of the field worker is the issue of ethics in research. Most of the studies do not mention ethical concerns at all, moreover one of these studies was dealing with psychosocial adjustment of former child soldiers where issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality are central. The second category of studies without ethical issues mentioned deals with constitutional matters affecting children, child abuse, mortality trends in children under five. These studies were written using secondary data sources.

Ethical issues were covered to varied extents by the studies. Some of the studies mentioned the obtainment of ethical clearance with written permission from ministries, local administration and school authorities and finally verbal as well as written informed consent from caregivers. Another category obtained ethical clearance at the level of informed consent by the parents of the children, national ethical review boards and institutional review boards. Some studies only obtained parental consent. Others obtained institutional clearance only. Some researchers obtained ethical clearance from the institution and written informed consent from the parents. One of the ways of dealing with consent is

seeking and obtaining it from parents of eligible children, locally active auxiliary health workers and community leaders. Some researchers obtained ethical clearance only at the national level. Some studies involved researching on a project that had already received ethical clearance by the national ethics body, and therefore the researchers only had to obtain informed consent from parents.

Failure to handle research ethically can hurt participants and make it difficult for other researchers to subsequently obtain access. Apart from the national institutional ethics review bodies and institutional review committees, researchers need to be sensitive to the district and community level. At these levels, the researchers need to explain the purpose, methods, benefits and risks of the study to the population. In cases where written informed consent is difficult to obtain, for instance due to illiteracy, verbal consent should be obtained instead. At the level of the respondents, emphasis should be on voluntary informed consent, not simply informed consent. It is also important to assure respondents in the study of confidentiality and anonymity. In many cases, permission is not sought to interview "captive" respondents, but it is very important to obtain this permission. It is also important to arrange support services from psychologists, psychotherapists in case they are needed in some cases for instance where the research is to do with previous violence against a child.

In cases where the study has used secondary data sources like court record and data sets issues like informed consent and clearance of the research do not arise. The ethical questions here are of a different nature, like anonymity and confidentiality in some cases. It is important that the researchers indicate how these have been dealt with where they occur.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Most of the studies reviewed made use of statistical analyses of one type or the other, more than 50/104 studies fall in this category. The more rigorous analyses were in studies that make use of Demographic and Health Surveys as well as different kinds of longitudinally collected data. Others make use of simple quantitative analyses. Such data can more easily be used in such analyses due to the sample sizes involved. The choice of methods of data analysis depends on the kind of data available which in turn depends on the methods used to collect data.

A large number of studies do not provide any information with regard to the nature of analysis used. More than thirty out of seventy five studies fell in this category. These broadly fall into two categories. The first are studies that are based on reviewing literature with a view to attempting different approaches in explaining issues. Others were research-based but they did not provide any information on the type of analysis used in the study.

Child Research in Africa

More than ten studies analyzed the findings along lines of themes. These were largely ethnographic studies. The sample sizes in such cases tended to be small.

There is a need for studies to clearly indicate the analyses that have been used to produce the findings that are being put across. Studies will undoubtedly utilize different analyses dictated by the nature of reality that they attempt to explain. However, these need to be clearly highlighted so that other researchers can attempt to replicated or carry out similar studies.

Methodological Challenges for Future Research

In looking at potential areas for future research, empirical gaps are excluded and we focus on methodological gaps. We have two broad types of research: the quantitatively inclined and the qualitatively inclined researches. In the first category, we have normally large samples of respondents and rigorous analyses can be done with the data, including modelling. Related to the above are studies that generally use scales to assess different issues like trauma, self-esteem, psychological adjustment. The limitation of these instruments is the fact that they do not take into account the local or indigenous constructions of social reality. Therefore to capture the realities of children, there is need to make use of methods that take into account the fact that reality is constructed differently by children and methods used to access this reality need to enable this to occur. Some methods that give children space to express themselves have been used in some studies. These include focus groups, storyboards, case studies, role play essay writing, etc.

The qualitative type provides a rich source of information that enhances our understanding of issues. The sample sizes in this type of research are generally small. However, they provide us with a context within which human behaviour occurs and the intricate things that shape human behaviour. It is therefore important that we use both types of researches or data. They are a product of different research approaches but serve the same purpose of enabling us understand social reality better and influence issues to our benefit. In a Malawian study, a very useful way that researchers can utilize both types of data or researches is offered. The study uses an essentially qualitative approach in its work. However, it proposes the use of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data to empirically test the findings in her work. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa regularly carry out DHS and this provided a wealth of data that can be used to empirically test findings from ethnographic or qualitative research. Where the quantitative studies have been carried out, it would be important to carry out ethnographic/qualitative studies.

Two things can be done to begin with: first working with researchers to bring studies that are not in the public domain into the public domain through initiatives to have these studies published in international journals; secondly, encouraging the utilization of data in Demographic Health Surveys that relate to the children in order to empirically test some issues that have emerged in ethnographic studies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These observations and recommendations follow from the review of research on African children in the past ten years:

- Research on African children has presented the child in three ways: as “child in his/her own right”, “child as having agency worthy of study” and “childhood as structural form in the succession of the generations”. In some studies, it is inevitable to look at children simply as young beings. This is particularly true of studies of clinical or biological nature. It is in social studies where children are expected to have their own perspectives that researchers need to adopt methods that are child-centred or child led in order to bring out these perspectives.
- The outcome of research can be critically shaped by the degree of participation of children in the research process. There are four broad levels of involvement of children in research. These are in the form of a continuum from least participation to the greatest degree of participation: Research on children, research about children, research with children and research by children.
- Publications on African children research are not confined to journals concentrating on child related issues; they have found their way to journals dealing with broader concerns.
- There is a need to encourage collaboration between researchers from the north and the south. It is equally important to encourage and facilitate university and research institutions-based researchers to work together with researchers from non-governmental organizations. This will broaden their perspectives beyond immediate implementation concern and also help capture perspectives from CBOs, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- Samples are an important part of any scientific investigation, since they give an indication about the logic being followed by the researcher. In more than 40/104 studies, samples were not provided and, in many of them the sampling designs are not given.

Child Research in Africa

- Methods used for data collection need to be spelt out clearly. Again some studies do not provide this information.
- Ways in which analyses have been carried out are very important. They provide the justification for making knowledge claims that researchers make. A number of studies do not provide any information on how the analysis was done.
- There is a need for researchers to provide information on age. It is not enough to state that the study is on children without any indication of age.
- Qualitative studies need to be carried out to complement quantitative studies that have been carried out on children.
- Quantitative studies/ data sets should be used to complement qualitative studies that have been carried out.
- Researchers need to weigh the pros and cons of employing local field workers. There is need to provide information about the training of field workers as well whether they are local or not.
- Ethical concerns and how they have been dealt with need to be spelt out more clearly. This will help in the protection of both the researchers as well as the researched.

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Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

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Case Study: A Description of an Africa Research Centre and The Issues and Problems of Publication of Research Work

The Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC)
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P.O. Box 6717, Kampala, Uganda

This is a descriptive case study focusing on the Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC) of Makerere University Medical School in Kampala Uganda.

The problems to focus on in this case study are formulated in relation to the concerns of the colloquium, namely:

- Interrogate the current child research capacity in the region;
- Determine the potential for the promotion of child rights through policy and practice;
- Close the research policy / practice gap; and
- Build the Childwatch International Research network in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis, however, goes beyond the issues and challenges of research per se and raises issues of publication of the researched work.

CHDC is a multidisciplinary research and training institution. It was established in 1989 within the faculty of Medicine of Makerere University to conduct:

- Applied and basic research;
- Training;
- Outreach; and
- Consultancy work.

The mission of CHDC is to build capacity to take university expertise to the people for health and social development.

Specifically, the CHDC conducts applied and academic research in partnership with the public and private sector, so as to inform policy and offer training for capacity building. The objectives of CHDC include:

- Promoting university-community-government collaboration to develop and evaluate community-based strategies for health improvement;
- Promoting interdisciplinary and inter-sector collaboration for experiential training; and
- Promoting widespread proficiency in relevant operational research.

The CHDC human and financial resource base is the university since CHDC has the full support of the university in terms of staff and facilities. The core staff is

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

university graduates with professional qualifications in medicine, nutrition, social work and social administration, and other social sciences expertise. The structure includes a director who is both the academic and administrative head of the centre. There are three heads of sections, namely the heads of the research, training and community work. Technical support-staff include the library and information manager, statistician, administrative assistant, clerical officer, copy typist, personal secretary, drivers and guards. CHDC also gets staff seconded from collaborating university departments and thus work at the centre as associate staff of different disciplines. The centre has a mandate to co-opt other staff from any discipline at the university. Furthermore, the centre conducts research in partnership with the public and private sector for the purpose of informing policy and offering training for capacity building.

The centre, therefore, has a strong research base that rests on several factors including skilled staff with university posts. This ensures its sustainability since staff is on university terms of service. Collaborative links with local and international university departments gives the centre an opportunity to be a viable centre for networking in research and related activities.

The CHDC provides expertise in research design, implementation and data analysis in district specific priority areas that include:

- Child and maternal health;
- Health systems and decentralization;
- Public health and quality of care;
- Family management of health;
- Use of medicines;
- Sexual and reproductive health;
- STI/HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis;
- Malaria;
- Health reforms;
- Food security;
- Communication for health; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Over the years, the centre has done research in most of the districts in Uganda, stretching from Kampala city, central province and the capital of Uganda, to the remote districts like Nakalooke in Mbale district of Eastern Uganda and Nakapiripirit in the north-east. Table 2 shows the districts and regions where work was done in the last 10 years. CHDC has also carried out consultancy work within and outside Uganda, including work done in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The bulk of research in the last ten years is on medical and nutrition

areas, but work on the concept of a child, child labour and street children has also been done among others.

Table 2: Place, District and Region where the Research Was Done

Place	District	Region (Uganda)
Kampala	Kampala	Central
Nakalooke	Mbale	Eastern
Molo	Tororo	Eastern
Kwapa	Tororo	Eastern
Mukono	Mukono	Central
Nakapiripirit	Nakapiripirit	North Eastern

The research and consultancy work of the centre is presented in report form in temporary covers (spiral binding) and placed in the centre library documentary unit (the library) for public use. The library is housed in one room which is also the reading room although there are adjacent rooms that are available for reading if not in use for other purposes. It is not indicated in the information available how many copies of the research report one has to deposit with the library but the library has facilities for reproducing and binding the reports. Some of the reports are an only copy. The temporary covers require careful handling and replenishment from time to time. The library subscribes to both local and international journals and has a 24-hour internet access to online journals.

The centre is equipped with modern research and dissemination facilities. Some of these include computer laboratories with computer facilities and network connections for managing large databases, up-to-date software for both quantitative and qualitative data management. It maintains and regularly updates research databases and this enables it to identify researchers with relevant skills for its various collaborative research undertaking. There is a reprographic unit with facilities for bulk photocopying, in-house printing and binding.

The endowment with staff and facilities has enabled the centre to engage in local and international team-research and to attract local and international trainees and researchers. Table 3 gives an idea of the research work carried out. However, like other university institutions in Uganda, the centre is mainly a day-time working concern. The library operates during working days and hours, although staff can arrange for longer access hours, if need arises. Staff offices are fitted with computers and internet facilities and therefore have longer access hours than outside users.

Table 3: Some of the Research Done by CHDC by Theme, Sample, Method, and Data Analysis

No.	Research Area	Sample Size	Method	Data Analysis
1	Working children in Kampala	248 children.100 garage/148 domestic workers plus 42 key informants	Open-ended questionnaires plus observation	Text analysis Descriptive statistics
2.	Prenatal nutrition	Pregnant women + >45 yrs, TBAs/traditional healers. Key informants	Exploratory/qualitative FGDs and interviews	No details
3.	Nutrition/rabbit intervention baseline	117 households in 3 parishes	Cross-section study (caregivers)	No details
4	Quality of children's diet/rabbit intervention	No details	An evaluation study using survey method. Observation of households rabbit consumption	No details
5.	Educational integration for children with mental disability (M.A Thesis)	Parents at home Children at school	Observation at home and school	(Note: no clear indication of research methodology)
6	Health and education (Ph. D. Thesis)	No details	Ethnographic methods + questionnaires. Tests the action competence model	Explores a theme and context Relevant for understanding Sickness, health, healthEducation, schooling
7.	UNICEF 1999 Situation analysis for women, adolescents and children (1995-2000 country programme period)	This was focused on the health sector as a sub-set overall sample for the national situation analysis by UNICEF	Focuses on thematic areas, health, health systems strengthening, service delivery, early childhood, maternal well-being and malaria	Analysis at national, regional and district level for causes, magnitude and contributing factors, trends and current efforts in health sector to address problems, gaps, constraints and challenges
8.	Preliminary review of health of school-age children. Phase 1. document review	Study area; Mukono and Mpigi districts	Document review, key personnel interviews	Analysis to identify gaps and weaknesses in knowledge on the health of school age children.

Child Research in Africa

With regard to the objectives of the colloquium, the focus of the analysis turns to the potential for promoting child rights through policy and practice and how easily or otherwise CHDC can accommodate the research network.

In general, the centre has potential in all four areas, namely, child research capacity, promotion of child rights through policy and practice, closing the research/practice gap and networking but with a bias towards health and social development. The institutional linkages CHDC has have the potential to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice. CHDC has developed and maintained research networks and functional linkages with:

- Community and districts throughout the country;
- National and international universities;
- Government ministries;
- Technical support and access to a wide range of national health bodies and services; and
- Multi-lateral and bilateral international development agencies.

Furthermore, the services the centre offers to the districts in research design, implementation and data analysis in district specific priority areas overlap some key areas of child rights especially those on health and family rights of children and adolescents. Research in nutrition and food security embraces another broad spectrum of child growth and development rights.

The outreach mandate positions the centre for local and international research and publication. However, none of the search engines focusing on the last ten years identified publications by CHDC staff or collaborative partners, yet there is a wealth of high quality research reports and information that have been done over the years deposited at the centre library. Why, with all the good research that is going on at the centre, is there such an absence of published work? This concern forms the problem area for this case study.

CHDC has also done a number of national programme – health sector studies for various districts during the UNICEF national country programme situation analysis. It also did a consultancy on the National Nutrition Programmes of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This was a comparative analysis of the two programmes with regard to potential for self-sustainability beyond the project period.

Many institutions in Africa have capacity for high quality research but they end their work at the research report without going to the next level, i.e. publishing in a peer reviewed journal in the public arena. Some of the reports we came across at the CHDC include research, consultancy reports, thesis and dissertations and even colloquium reports. Most of the studies did not go on to become publications in any of the journals.

Our analysis of the trends in publications in the journals we accessed actually shows low levels of publication by African researchers. Nevertheless, there are relatively more publications by medical research teams, some of which include Africans on the team, usually one among many non-Africans. This has not happened for CHDC and yet CHDC has a strong medical bias and is affiliated to the Medical School as well as having capacity for collaborative research which should make publication with international teams possible. The rest of the case study opens up the discussion to highlight some of the constraints to publication by African researchers living in Africa in general and Uganda in particular.

There are a number of dilemmas that characterise research and publication in Africa. The researcher faces the dilemma of balancing earning a living and academic pursuits. The low remuneration and overload at place of work makes much progress in research and publication very difficult. Furthermore, the employer/client may only be willing to fund research work up to the report level. If the researchers had their own resources, they could negotiate for publication since they have the data. Under the circumstances, the road ends before the end i.e. the report but not the published article.

Constrained research infrastructure is another hindrance. For instance, the Ugandan researcher today is seriously curtailed by the intermittent electricity flow. Power is often off in the prime hours for reading, data analysis and writing, thus frustrating the research process. These hurdles can sometimes be overcome and one prepares an article for publication. However, there is the issue of where to publish. Where does an African researcher publish? A look at the published work we accessed shows that most researchers on Africa are actually publishing in non-African/international journals. African journals that exist are not in the public arena and we did not find them through the current search engines.

The researcher therefore faces the dilemma of choosing between a user-friendly African journal, with limited visibility and an unstable future, or a stiff, long process of publishing in an international journal, where the article might be rejected or take a long time to come out. Then there is the dilemma of doing research or consultancy work. On the one hand is consultancy work which often requires high levels of quality research. The work is time- and energy-consuming but highly rewarding. It is good for one's livelihood but then, consultancy clients often have conditions that rule out publishing such work. The good research efforts do not therefore lead to publication. On the other side of the coin, you might have clients who clearly discourage academic type of research and require the expertise for specific non-academic analysis. Again, the researcher is put in a position where time spent on this kind of work does not materialise into publication and dissemination in the public arena.

These are just a few examples to initiate a discussion on the absence of African research articles in the public arena.

Appendix C (2)

Mechanisms and Priorities in Child Research Funding in Sub-Saharan Africa

Maureen Mweru
John Ng'asike

Introduction

This paper outlines the results of a study carried out in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) on the status of child research funding priorities and mechanisms. The paper begins by a discussion of the background issues that stimulate the need for child research funding in SSA countries. The objectives and the methodology of the study are highlighted, which are then followed by the main findings of the study. The paper also presents a discussion on the various critical findings of the study and finally culminates in the presentation of the challenges, opportunities and recommendations for child research funding in SSA.

Background to the Study

Child research funding in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) might to a large extent have resulted from concern about the welfare of children in SSA. This concern has been demonstrated in international conventions, treaties, summits and declarations by the global community including African Governments (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1998, Borman 2004). Some of the major declarations that have influenced children's development in SSA include:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1989 and ratified into international law in 1990;
- The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990;
- The World Summit for Children held in New York in 1990;
- The 1992 Organisation of African Unions International Conference on Assistance to African Children;
- Carnegie Institute Task Force on meeting the needs of young children;
- World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, in which the delegates committed themselves to a number of goals for children; and

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

- United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002 which came up with the publications “We the Children” and “A World Fit for Children”. These documents contained the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Although African states have officially acknowledged that psychosocial, health, and education needs of children deserve priority (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1998), this may not be matched by their ability to provide funding in child research. The International Monetary Fund database (April 2006) shows developing countries especially those in SSA have some of the lowest Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) in the world. These countries therefore may not have the economic resources to carry out child research. To demonstrate the bleak economic situation in SSA, Bernard van Leer Foundation (1998) quotes a World Bank report (World Bank 1989) showing there has been a consistent decline in GDP per capita income in nearly all African countries. The World Bank reports further indicate that since 1990, Africa’s external debt has reached over US\$250 billion. In SSA countries the combined Gross National Product (GNP) is less than that of the Netherlands alone (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1998). Research funding in child development issues in Africa may therefore depend to a large extent on external donors.

Funding of child research in Africa is important since it has been proved that childhood is the most crucial stage in a human being’s development (Crow and Crow 1967). What happens in a child’s life can and does determine the child’s future potential. Funding research on children’s issues is therefore extremely important as research can help improve the quality of life of children. Child research increases our knowledge about the ways that development proceeds and the processes that may alter this progression. Information about child development therefore leads to helpful advice on a wide range of current issues affecting children (Hetherington and Parke 1986). In addition, during the last decades, the view has been accepted that human development differs across cultural contexts. Thus, it is important to carry out research and analyse the findings with respect to culture specific situations (Rabain-Jamin, Maynard and Greenfield 2003). This means that it is not enough to only carry out child research in developed countries, since findings from child research in developed countries may not be applicable in the African setting.

The knowledge obtained through research can be used to improve the lives of millions of children living in abject poverty in Africa. African children are the most disadvantaged in the world, with 43 per cent of them living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF 2002). UNICEF (2001a) estimates that 32 million children in SSA are malnourished while diseases such as pneumonia,

Child Research in Africa

diarrhoea, measles, malaria and HIV/AIDS all of which are preventable, cause more than 50 per cent of children's death in SSA (The World Bank 2001). African children therefore have very limited life chances since they are exposed to violence, HIV/AIDS infection, numerous diseases and malnutrition and are deprived of education (Pan-African Forum on the Future of Children, 2001). They live under the worst health conditions in the world; for example children in SSA have the lowest life expectancy, the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world and the highest under-five mortality rate (UNICEF 2001b, UNICEF 2002). In addition, majority of the children in SSA do not have access to clean water and proper sanitation (WHO 2001). Very young children in SSA are also sometimes forced to work due to the extreme poverty situations in their homes. Research shows that up to 24 per cent of the children in SSA work with over 120,000 of these children working as child soldiers (ILO 2002). The problem of child abuse is also rampant in Africa. Under the guise of tradition and poverty, African children continue to be exploited, oppressed and abused by so-called adults whose job it is to protect them (Ariyo 2001). African children therefore experience all forms of child abuse such as sexual exploitation and domestic child servitude.

Majority of the children in SSA therefore live under very harsh conditions, thus the importance of funding child research in SSA cannot be understated. It is only by obtaining data from research that intervention measures and policies can be put in place to improve the lives of these children. (SIDA/SAREC 2006) also acknowledges that research provides knowledge critical in fighting poverty. SIDA/SAREC (2006) further adds that countries which have developed strong research institutions have gained in the following ways:

- Have developed strong mechanisms for exploiting natural resources for the benefit of their people;
- Have the ability to engage in sustainable development programmes;
- Are able to choose and adapt appropriate technologies and quickly join the rest of the world in development; and
- Are able to negotiate internationally.

The issues outlined above, which have been identified by SIDA/SAREC, are also critical in the fight for the rights and welfare of children in Africa. There are therefore many reasons for carrying out research on children's issues, especially in the developing countries where children and young people constitute a growing proportion of the population. However, child research cannot proceed without funding. It is therefore important to analyse the current situation of

child research funding, especially in SSA, since the quality of life of children in SSA may to a great extent be dependent on the level of research funding available. This study therefore sets out to establish who funds child research in SSA and the child research funding priorities and mechanisms.

Study Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify institutions and agencies funding child research in SSA;
- To document and analyse the funding mechanisms and priorities of the agencies funding child research in SSA;
- To analyse trends in the availability and allocation of resources by agencies funding child research in SSA; and
- To derive policy recommendations in light of the study findings

Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a desk review of literature (internet search) and also incorporated a survey research design. The survey method involved use of questionnaires and interviews. To establish the validity of the questionnaires, experts in the area of child development and research methods were consulted.

Data collection involved conducting searches on the internet to obtain websites of organisations funding child research in SSA. Questionnaires were also sent via email to these organisations in order to obtain more information, and delivered physically to the offices of some of the organisations located in Nairobi. Scheduling of interviews was also done.

A content analysis of the information obtained from the websites, questionnaires and interviews was carried out and the information obtained is presented in the section that follows.

Findings

Presented in this section are findings as regards the sources of funding, the recipients of child research funds and the mechanisms and priorities of research funding in SSA.

Sources of Child Research Funds

It was not easy to obtain information on the sources of child research funds directly from the funding organisations. The researchers relied mostly on the data the organisations had posted on their websites. The following were

Child Research in Africa

identified as the sources of child research funds with those providing the most funds appearing first on the list:

- Industrialized countries' governments (a list of some of these governments appears in Appendix A);
- International institutions, that is, United Nations bodies and Non-Governmental organisations (a list of some of these institutions appears in Appendix B);
- Individual and private donations; and
- Fund raising activities such as telethons, membership fees and sale of publications.

The organisations and governments named above also indicated that they had allocated amounts ranging from 42 million to 528.03 million dollars to research in the last financial year.

Recipients of Child Research Funding

The findings of this study were that various organisations and individuals received funding for child research. These included:

- Universities and research institutions;
- Individual researchers;
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

Child Research Funding Mechanisms

The various mechanisms the researchers identified as being used to fund child research in sub-Saharan Africa were:

- Research grants;
- Students visiting fellowships; for example, postdoctoral research training;
- Funds for colloquiums, conferences and congresses; for example, FORD Foundation in 2005 provided funds to Children First which is a South African organisation so that a regional conference could be planned in order to pool resources and knowledge with respect to the case of orphaned and vulnerable children;
- Allocation of travel grants for example for researchers to travel to industrialized countries for purposes of research and collaboration. Travel grants were also given to researchers to attend conferences; for example, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) provided funds to researchers to attend the XVI International AIDS Conference in 2006; and

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

- Funds for research project equipment were also provided. Research units and research facilities were also funded for scientists in SSA to advance in their work, for example in university departments or research institutions.

Child Research Funding Priorities

Most of the child research funding organisations seemed to focus their funding in the following areas:

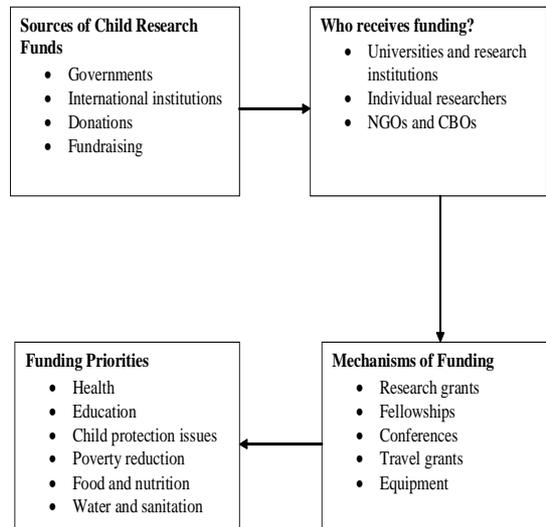
- a) **Health related issues.** These included:
 - HIV/AIDS for example research on paediatric HIV/AIDS care and treatment, clinical and laboratory research in HIV/AIDS, prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, AIDS vaccine research and research on impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of orphaned children;
 - Malaria research;
 - Reproductive health; for example, research on adolescents' sexual health and female genital mutilation;
 - Other health issues included vaccination research; tuberculosis; paediatric infectious diseases; disability; trachoma; haemorrhagic fevers; blood flukes; arbovirus diseases; sleeping sickness; and general maternal, neonatal and infant health.
- b) **Education;** for example, researches in science, maths, social science education, on children's access to education, retention and drop-out rates.
- c) **Child protection and care research** that included research on child labour, researches on children affected by armed conflict and violence, on sexual abuse and on children's rights. Also included was research on survival strategies for children and young people.
- d) **Poverty reduction and development oriented issues,** which included issues aimed at contributing to solving the problems of the developing countries; for example focusing on needs of the poor. Research in this area focused on poverty reduction and examined the understanding of poverty dynamics, particularly the nature of childhood poverty, causes and remedies of chronic poverty, including what poor people do to try to escape poverty.
- e) **Food and nutrition issues** which included research on ways to reduce child mortality through nutrition.

Child Research in Africa

- f) **Water and sanitation issues** which included research on ways of providing clean water and sanitation services; for example, the United Kingdom-based Department for International Development (DFID) Central Research Department Programme aims at determining how better financing can provide more sustainable water and sanitation for poor people in Ethiopia and the Nile region.

Examples of studies that have been funded in the areas mentioned above are provided in Appendix C.

Summary of Findings



Discussion

The main child research funding bodies were found to originate from developed countries. These included governments and international institutions, specifically those of Western European countries, Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom and the United States. Quite a number of these international organisations were found to be based in the United States. This might imply that the United States is providing quite a bit of the funding for child research in SSA. However, this is a contentious issue since some of these developed countries

may have fewer organisations that fund child research in SSA. It was a bit difficult to establish which governments or international institutions provide the largest funding since not all the organisations/governments had indicated on their websites the amount of financial aid they allocate for child research in SSA.

Another finding of this study was that agencies, organisations and governments in SSA did not contribute much in terms of research funds, perhaps due to lack of resources in SSA. In addition, African countries have high incidences of poverty, civil conflicts and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. This could affect the priorities of African states, thus research funding is most likely not considered to be an area of great concern.

The fact that a greater portion of the funds for child research in SSA comes from developed countries may imply that some, if not most, of the child research carried out in SSA is determined by individuals in the North and this also has great implications on the direction in which research in Africa is taking. This, for example, can be seen in instances where students receive scholarships and/or funds to conduct research for their projects or theses on condition that they focus their research work on the funding agencies' earlier or ongoing areas of research interest (Pence and Marfo 2004).

There is also the possibility that research issues individuals in the North find more interesting are being focused on at the expense of other issues that may also be of importance or of significance to those living in SSA. In addition, it has been observed that many of the scientific works carried out by researchers in African countries have largely been ignored by scientific communities in developed countries (Yapi-Diahou 2005). The only exception is when these research works have been carried out on instructions from individuals in the North.

On the other hand, although research funding bodies in the North may determine the areas to concentrate research on, they also seem to focus their research funding priorities around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). For example, most of them provide funds for research on issues of health, especially HIV/AIDS and malaria (MDG number six and Article 24 of the CRC), education (MDG number two and Article 28 of the CRC), poverty reduction and nutrition (MDG number one) and child care and protection issues (Article 19 of the CRC). Their focus on MDGs may perhaps be because they wish to improve the living conditions in the developing world. It is only by investing in areas such as children's education, health and nutrition that there can be more rapid, efficient and sustainable development (Psacharopoulos 1995).

Child Research in Africa

Children's health and nutritional status is of great importance, as children who receive a nutritious balanced diet have been found to perform better in school. A healthy diet is especially important during the first two years of life when brain development is most rapid (Colletta and Reinhold 1997). Malnutrition has also been identified as one of the major predicaments facing African children (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1998; Colletta and Reinhold 1997). It is therefore important that health and nutrition related concerns should attract the attention of the donor community.

The research funding bodies' decision to give priority to research on HIV/AIDS in SSA is not surprising, since more than seventy percent of the world's HIV positive people live in Africa. Ten million of these are aged 15 to 24 years while three million are under 15. About 1,700 children also become infected daily (UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID, 2004). More research in the area of HIV/AIDS is therefore urgently required.

Another area the research funding organisations focus on is education. Perhaps it was with the aim that these research findings could also be used to improve the children's education, since education has a relationship with health and life expectancy of individuals. It is through education that individuals acquire knowledge of healthier diets, behaviours and lifestyles (Becker 1994). Educating children, particularly girls, means they will be in a better position to make sound judgements about decisions affecting their lives. Gender inequalities in education have been found to compound the problems of children in Africa. Disparities in enrolment in primary and secondary schools for girls and boys remain very significant. In SSA, the ratio of boys to girls in secondary enrolment is ten boys to six girls. Illiteracy levels are also high in adults with women leading with 65 per cent against men with 40 per cent (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1998). This has impacted negatively on female fertility and child malnutrition knowledge in women. Education is also important as it helps reduce inequality, for example, children from poor backgrounds who receive education have a better chance of rising in the economic hierarchy.

African leaders have also shown strong commitments in supporting education in their respective countries and this, perhaps, has encouraged the international donor community to fund research in education. The leaders have actively participated in all the summits and declarations of children. The president of Mali for instance co-hosted the 1990 World Summit for Children with the Prime Minister of Canada (Borman 2004). African heads of states were also among the first world leaders to support the CRC and African countries have also initiated strong policies on Free Primary Education (Choi 2006; Kaga 2006). Early

Childhood Development policies have also been implemented for example in Kenya, Botswana and Senegal (UNESCO/OECD 2005).

This study also established that universities and research institutions have the highest likelihood of receiving research funds. Perhaps this is because universities are usually viewed as centres of research therefore the tendency to give them more priority in allocation of research funds. It is also possible that donors prefer universities because they are assured of receiving high quality research work and continuous service from universities. This also implies that other researchers not based in universities but who are willing to carry out research may be disadvantaged during allocation of research funds.

Challenges

This study has established that child research funding in SSA is largely dependent on donor funding from industrialized governments and international agencies. This has the implication that African countries may not be capable of establishing strong institutions for research in child development. African countries may also not be able to sustain their own research. Thus, research will be externally driven according to the interests of the international bodies.

Child research that is externally funded may be shifting focus from other child development issues that also need research, such as:

- The problem of street children in urban areas;
- Child prostitution in tourist prone areas along the coastal regions;
- Cultural practices and pastoralism; and
- Effects of migration and urbanisation on young children.

Research funding also determines who conducts research. Usually local experts are not involved in conducting research in their local communities, therefore attitudes of the external experts may lead to bias in the data generated on children. Sometimes, the tools used by these external experts to collect data are not based on the culture and experiences of the local people and this may affect the quality and authenticity of the data.

Experience with non-governmental organisations and local community-based organisations shows that most research carried out by these institutions are surveys and the staff involved in research may not be well trained to conduct scientific research. There is therefore a great loss in terms of the quality of data generated through surveys and use of unscientific procedures. Data generated by unscientific means may not be able to provide useful information.

Grants given to universities for child research may also not benefit children because universities use the research funds to fund PhD and Masters theses of

Child Research in Africa

students which then end up lying on the shelves of deans' offices. This possibly might be due to a lack of dissemination funds or perhaps because the students' theses are considered to be of poor research quality, lacking in creativity and reproductions of earlier works. Data generated by students is therefore never used to address SSA children's problems, thus research funds are wasted.

Child research funding in SSA is also not systematic. Individuals and organizations fund and carry out research according to their own needs, policies and interests. Some research like on HIV/AIDS and other health related issues are emergency driven. Thus, various forms of research are funded and conducted in various countries in Africa. It is possible therefore to find duplication and lack of prioritization.

Opportunities

The challenges enumerated above are surmountable, considering the enormous goodwill of the international community. This study established that international organisations provided between 42 million to 528.03 million dollars for research in the last financial year. There are opportunities for even more funds. For example, African institutions could obtain more funds by collaborating in research activities with international institutions.

African leaders have also shown commitments by ensuring that children are a priority in their countries. Experts and international bodies can use this window of opportunity to engage African governments to provide budgets for child research. Through the MDGs and CRC, African Governments can be engaged to fully develop strong policies on child research and one of the priority areas is investing in child research through adequate budgetary provision.

Child research data available in universities should also be used to address children's issues. In addition, funding allocation to universities for research should be increased to ensure that quality research is done both at PhD and Masters Levels. Perhaps part of the funds given should be for dissemination of the completed pieces of work. Dissemination of the findings could also be through use of multi-media means.

Recommendations

- Child research funding should be policy driven. Research should be used to solve or improve the welfare of children in Africa;
- Strong child research institutions need to be established in African universities. Universities and students' capacity to produce high quality work for various audiences should be increased;

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

- Child research funding should focus on a wider range of issues affecting child development in SSA. The findings of this study were that the studies funded by developed countries focus on areas that depict the African child as vulnerable. This image of the African child is distorted. There is therefore need to focus more of the funded research on other aspects for example, studies could be carried out on resilience of children in SSA;
- Further studies could be carried out to establish if the recommendations made in the research reports of agencies that have received funding have actually been put into practice. Such findings may help develop strategies to reduce the research-policy/practice gaps;
- Studies could also be carried out to find out how many research findings from studies that have been funded in SSA have actually influenced policy making and funding decisions;
- Additional studies could also investigate how funding priorities have influenced researchers' decisions on the areas to conduct research in.

Conclusion

This study has established that child research funding in SSA depends to a great extent on international bodies because African institutions do not have strong economic capabilities. It has also been established that the issues addressed in child research funding do not cover all aspects of child development in SSA. The funding trends also seem to follow a general global agenda on children and may be driven by the declarations of the United Nations. For example the current funding in child research is focused on the achievement of the MDGs and CRC related issues.

Although there are challenges in SSA child research funding, there are equally opportunities that can be exploited to enhance healthy development of children. These opportunities may give African children a brighter future. Whether research is dependent on external assistance or not, what is important for the African child is that the problems facing him or her are brought to the attention of the global community for action.

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Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

**Some of the Governments Funding Child Research
in Sub-Saharan Africa**

1. The Canadian Government
2. The Danish Government
3. Government of France
4. The German Government
5. The Italian Government
6. The Netherlands Government
7. The Norwegian Government
8. The Swedish Government
9. The Swiss Government
10. The United Kingdom Government
11. The United States of America Government

**Some Organisations and Agencies Funding Child Research in
Sub-Saharan Africa and the Location of Their Head Offices**

The Aga Khan Foundation

Location: Canada

The Allen Foundation

Location: United States of America

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

Location: Germany

BIPAI (Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative)

Location: United States of America

Carnegie Foundation

Location: United States of America

CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency)

Location: Canada

CCF (Christian Children's Fund)

Location: United States of America

The Coca-cola Foundation

Location: United States of America

CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa)

Location: Senegal

DAAD (German Academic Exchange Programme)

Location: Germany

DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency)

Location: Denmark

DFID (Department for International Development)

Location: United Kingdom

DFG - Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)

Location: Germany

Shung King, September, Okatcha and Cardoso

European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases

Location: United Kingdom

FORD Foundation

Location: United States of America

IDRC (International Development Research Centre)

Location: Canada

IRD (Institut de recherche pour le développement)

Location: France

JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency)

Location: Japan

Leverhulme Trust

Location: United Kingdom

MacArthur Foundation

Location: United States of America

National Institute for Health

Location: United States of America

Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development

Location: Switzerland

OSSREA

(The Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa)

Location: Ethiopia

Oxfam International

Location: Europe and United States of America

Research Council of Norway

Location: Norway

The Rockefeller Foundation

Location: United States of America

Save the Children Norway

Location: Norway

The Spencer Foundation

Location: United States of America

Child Research in Africa

TWAS (Third World Academy of Sciences)

Location: Italy

SIDA (Swedish Agency for International Development)

Location: Sweden

Support Africa International

Location: Germany

SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)

Location: Switzerland

UNAIDS (United Nations Aid and Development Support)

Location: United States of America

UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation)

Location: France

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (also known as International Child Development Centre)

Location: Italy

USAID (United States Aid and Development Agency)

Location: United States of America

Wellcome Trust

Location: United Kingdom

WHO (World Health Organisation)

Location: Switzerland

Winrock International

Location: United States of America

The World Bank

Location: United States of America

Some Child Research Studies that Have Been Funded in Sub-Saharan Africa

1. *Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)*. Research funded by DFID. Partners included the University of Education at Winneba in Ghana and the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) in South Africa.
2. *Implementing Quality Education in Low Income Countries*. Research funded by DFID. Partners included the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration at the University of the Cape Coast in Ghana; the Faculty of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania; Kigali Institute of Education in Rwanda; and the Education Policy Unit at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.
3. *Improving the Outcomes of Education for Pro-Poor Development: Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation*. Research funded by DFID. Partners included the Associates for Change in Accra, Ghana and the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi in Kenya.
4. *Team for Applied Research to Generate Effective Tools and Strategies – TARGETS Consortium*. Research aimed to build on more than a decade of DFID-funded research by consortium members into the control of tuberculosis and malaria. The research also intended to gradually extend to other communicable diseases including meningitis, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Funded by DFID and partners included the Ifakara Health Research and Development Centre in Tanzania; INDEPTH Network of Demographic Surveillance Systems in Accra, Ghana; Makerere Medical College and its Infectious Diseases Institute in Uganda; and ZAMBART, the Zambian AIDS-related Tuberculosis project in Lusaka, Zambia.
5. *Realising Rights: Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health for Poor and Vulnerable Populations*. Research focusing on populations in sub-Saharan Africa including girls and young women. Funded by DFID and partners included the African Population and Health Research Center in Nairobi, Kenya and INDEPTH Network in Accra, Ghana.
6. *Strategic Research to Develop the Evidence Base for Policy for Mother and Infant Care at Facility and Community Level*. Research funded by DFID and partners included Centre MURAZ in Burkina Faso; Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC), Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Services in Ghana; and Maimwana Project at Lilongwe Central Hospital in Malawi.

Child Research in Africa

7. *Young Lives – A Longitudinal Research Project*. A longitudinal research project investigating the nature of childhood poverty in four developing countries. One of these countries is Ethiopia. Research started in 2000 and will continue until 2015. The research is funded by DFID.
8. *Case Study of Nomadic Education in Nigeria*. Research funded by DFID. Partners included the International Extension College and a team of Nigerian educationists. Research aimed at studying education for nomadic pastoralist groups and migrant fisher communities.
9. *Action Health (Yaba, Nigeria) to implement the National Sexuality Education Curriculum in Lagos State (over three years)*. Research funded by Mac Arthur Foundation.
10. *Action Health Incorporated (Yaba, Nigeria) in support of the evaluation of the implementation of a sexuality education curriculum in public schools in Lagos State, Nigeria (over three years)*. Research funded by Mac Arthur Foundation.
11. *Adolescent Health and Information Projects (Kano, Nigeria) in support of implementation of the Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education Curriculum in Kano State (over three years)*. Research funded by Mac Arthur Foundation.
12. *Calabar International Institute for Research, Information and Documentation (Calabar, Nigeria) to expand a comprehensive sexuality education programme to include young boys (over three years)*. Research funded by MacArthur Foundation.
13. *Integrated Malaria Control Interventions with Development Strategies (Kenya) Phase I and Phase II*. Recipient institution was the International Water Management Institute. Research was funded by IDRC.
14. *African AIDS Vaccine Program (AAVP)*. Research on HIV/AIDS Vaccine Development with laboratories in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. Also included more than 80 scientists being trained in laboratory techniques related to vaccine research. Research funded by CIDA.
15. *AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP)*. Partner countries include Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. The AITRP supports long-term post-doctoral training in HIV/AIDS research at Baylor College of Medicine for health professionals from partner countries. Also includes short term U.S training of South African health professionals usually in paediatric HIV/AIDS care and treatment, clinical research or laboratory research. Research funded by the Fogarty International Center of the U. S. National Institutes of Health through the Baylor International Paediatric AIDS Initiative.

16. *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education in Kenya, and the Potential for Using Education in the Widest Sense for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS.* Research conducted by Kenyatta University and University of Nairobi researchers/lecturers in partnership with UNICEF Kenya Office staff. Research funded by UNICEF.

17. *A Study on the Relationship between Achievement Motivation, Locus of Control, and Academic Performance of Class Eight Pupils in Bondo District.* Masters of Education thesis in Educational Psychology by Brenda Oliwa, at Kenyatta University, Kenya. Research funded by Kenya Danish Health Research Project/DANIDA.

18. *Research-based Empowerment Interventions and Outreach on Urban Youth Problems in Metropolitan Lagos, Nigeria.* Research funds for this were provided in 2005 to the Development Research and Action Network (Nigeria) by FORD Foundation.

19. *Research on Perception and Expression of Sexuality, Masculinity and Femininity in West Africa.* Research funds for this were provided to the University of Ghana by FORD Foundation in 2005. Funds were also provided for an urban youth HIV/AIDS prevention program in Ghana.

20. *Analysing Child Poverty in Mozambique.* Research funded by UNICEF Mozambique office. The research involved a comprehensive analysis of child poverty using both consumption and deprivation based measures.

21. *Voices from the Communities: The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Lives of Orphaned Children and their Guardians.* The research was funded by USAID and undertaken by Family Health International in Southern Africa. The research involved children aged 8 - 14 years and their guardians. It aimed at understanding better the children's psychosocial needs and also determining appropriate support mechanisms for these children.

22. *Problems and Prospects of the Non-Formal Route of Girls' Basic Education in South Wollo, Ethiopia.* Research carried out by Hussien Eshetu, one of the winners of the Social Science Proposal Writing Competition organised by OSSREA. Research funded by OSSREA.

23. *The Impact of Civil Wars on Basic Education in the Great Lakes Region (AGLR). A Case Study of Tanzania.* Research carried out by William Sambo, one of the winners of the Social Science Proposal Writing Competition organised by OSSREA. Research funded by OSSREA.

Appendix C (3)

Institutional Analysis of Child Research in Sub-Saharan Africa

Kelvin Mwaba

Summary

The last decade has seen a broadening of the discourse on children and children's rights in sub-Saharan Africa beyond the traditional disciplines of social welfare and law. The challenges facing African children include violence and armed conflict, child labour, and HIV and AIDS. While progress has been made with regard to enhancing child well-being in sub-Saharan Africa, a lot remains to be done. One area that shows promise is the recognition of the importance of conducting high quality research that will inform child policies, interventions and programmes. The need for evidence based practice has led to the growth of several research institutions engaged in child research. This paper presents the results of an analysis of institutions conducting child research in sub-Saharan Africa.

The aim of the analysis was to present an overview of institutions involved in child research in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of characteristics, research practice and agenda. The results indicated that while there has been a growth of organizations conducting child related work in sub-Saharan Africa, most of these organizations are largely concerned with advocacy and service provision. In contrast, there are relatively few organizations that focus on child research per se. The latter, which are academic or institutional research organizations, state that they are also committed to education, advocacy, training and education, publishing and dissemination of information, and monitoring and evaluation regarding child issues. It is concluded that these institutions need to be strengthened in order to attain an adequate database for child well-being and child rights in sub-Saharan Africa that will promote and impact child well-being policies. It is recommended that there should be more investment in child research and training of child researchers, wider dissemination of research findings, and more collaboration among researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

'The child occupies a unique and privileged position in African society and that ... the child should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding' (Preamble, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, OAU Document, 1990).

Introduction

Background

As far back as 1990, there was a recognition of the importance of child rights in Africa, as seen in the declaration by African member states of the then Organisation of African Unity regarding the welfare of the African child. The Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child adopted by the organization in 1990 stated that “the child occupies a unique and privileged position in African society and that the child should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding” (Preamble, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child, OAU Document, 1990). This declaration has recently been reaffirmed by the member states of the African Union as part of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

With this declaration, governments in sub-Saharan Africa have committed themselves to the promotion of rights and upholding the welfare of all African children. As a result many child-focused laws, programmes and policies (Claeson and Waldman 2000; Schulz 2002) have been implemented with the promise of improving the lot of African children, as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals. However, these advances notwithstanding, much remains to be done in order to fulfill the promise of the 1990 declaration that African children occupy a privileged position.

The challenges faced by children in sub-Saharan Africa include disease and poverty (Bhutta 2004; Streak 2002; Robinson 2003; Brookes, Shisana and Richter 2004), labour exploitation (Oosthuizen and Poswell 2003, Budlender and Bosch 2002) and orphanage (Foster 2000; UNICEF 2004). Child research can play a critical role in contributing to the resolution of the challenges facing children in sub-Saharan Africa. Research institutions are well placed to promote enquiry in the experiences of African children and to engage in the production of high quality research that addresses the challenges confronting the children. Equally important, research institutions are in a position to provide evidence practices, strategies and interventions that can alleviate the plight of African children (Sloth-Nielsen and Gallinetti 2004; Ehlers and Mathiti 2003).

This paper presents an analysis of institutions engaged in child research in sub-Saharan Africa. The focus of the paper is to analyse the characteristics, research agenda and research practices of institutions engaged in child research in the region. Thus, the paper aims to contribute to an understanding of child research in sub-Saharan Africa with regard to institutions that are engaged in child research.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide an institutional analysis of child research in sub-Saharan Africa. The study had the following specific objectives:

- To identify key institutions involved in child research in sub-Saharan Africa;
- To establish the characteristics and practices of the institutions; and
- To ascertain the agenda of the institutions.

Methodology

Data Collection

The methodological approach consisted of a desk review of relevant documents pertaining to institutions in sub-Saharan Africa that are involved in child research. The first phase of the project involved collecting background information about child research in sub-Saharan Africa. In the second phase, information was gathered about institutions engaged in African child research. Phase three involved collecting information about research practices and agendas of the institutions. The last phase consisted of obtaining information about the institutions' capacity for research and funding state. An outline of the methodology is shown below:

- Literature review of policy documents on African children rights and welfare;
- Literature search of institutions involved in child research in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Review of characteristics of the institutions; and
- Review of the research agenda and practices of the institutions.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the review of literature and policies on African child research was used as the basis for mapping and analysis of institutions that are currently involved in conducting child research in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the paper provides an overview of institutions engaged in child research, research practices and agenda, and characteristics.

Results

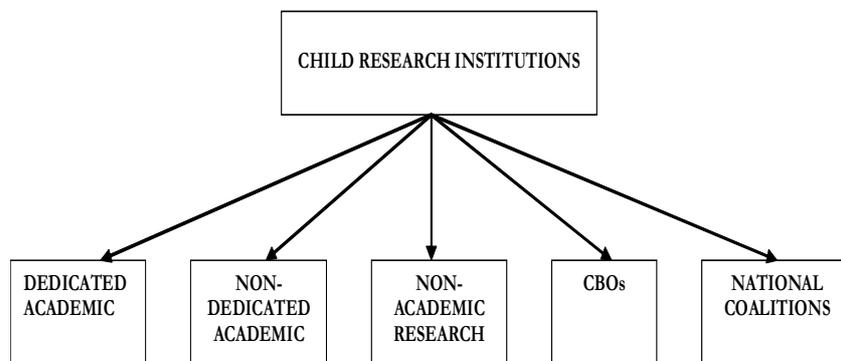
Research Institutions

The results of the analyses indicated that there are numerous and varied institutions engaged in child research in sub-Saharan Africa. In practically every country, there are several organizations engaged in child research of one kind or another. The characteristics of the organizations vary from academic organizations with full-time multidisciplinary teams of experts to community-based non-governmental organizations that combine practice with research on

children. Some research institutions are part of international organizations engaged in child research while others are regional organizations.

The results of this study indicated that institutions engaged in child research in sub-Saharan Africa can be grouped into the following:

- Dedicated academic institutions;
- Non-dedicated academic institutions;
- Non-academic research institutions;
- Community Based Organisations; and
- National Coalitions.



Dedicated Child Research Academic Institutions

The review of academic institutions in Africa indicated child rights and welfare have attracted the attention of numerous studies in sub-Saharan Africa. Scholars from different disciplines have investigated a variety of issues pertaining to African children such as poverty, sexual exploitation, child labour, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and violence, and child well-being (Abrahams 2006; September 2006; Sloth-Nielsen and Gallinetti 2004)

Although child issues are routinely included in research studies, only a handful of academic institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have dedicated programmes focusing on child research. The institutions described below are given as examples of academic departments or units with a specific agenda on African child research:

- Kenyatta University, Kenya: Department of Educational Psychology (Web: <http://web.ku.ac.ke/schools/departments>);
- University of the Western Cape, South Africa: Child and Youth Research and Training Programme (Web: <http://web.uwc.ac.za/dept/cyrtp>); and

Child Research in Africa

- University of Cape Town, South Africa: Children's Institute (Web: <http://web.uct.ac.za/dept/ci>).

A profile of these institutions is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Examples of Dedicated Academic Child Research Institutions

Institution	Research Agenda/ Practices	Characteristics of Institution	Research Capacity
Kenyatta University, Kenya: Department of Educational Psychology	Agenda: Teaching and Research on Children Issues Practices: Multidisciplinary Research on children issues: Child labour, Care, Fostering and Adoption; Living with AIDS, Health and Nutrition, Orphan Counselling.	Academic Institution in Faculty of Education	Staff Profile: Education, Psychology Statistics, Special Education, Guidance and Counselling.
University of the Western Cape, South Africa: Child and Youth Research and Training Programme	Agenda: Promote child well-being by conducting research and disseminating research-based information to inform intervention and policy development. Practices: Child Research, National Policy, Development, Evaluating and Monitoring Programmes and Policies, Training and Education.	Academic Institution in Faculty of Community and Health Sciences	Staff Profile: Experts in Education, Psychology and Social Work.
Children's Institute: University of Cape Town, South Africa	Agenda: Promote equity, realize rights and improve conditions of children; Research, Teaching, Technical Assistance and Advocacy. Practices: Child Rights, Child Health Services, CIV/AIDS, Child poverty	Academic Institution in Faculty of Health Sciences	Staff Profile: Experts in Education, Psychology, Anthropology and Paediatrics, Law, Journalism, Public Policy and Development, Social Welfare.

Academic institutions that have a dedicated focus on child research typically consist of a multidisciplinary team of social scientists in disciplines such as

sociology, psychology, social work and education. Research on child issues is designed not only to inform intervention and policy but also to raise public awareness about child issues by disseminating research findings. The institutions are also involved in monitoring and evaluation of programmes related to children, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The most common issues that these institutions are currently researching include children affected by HIV/AIDS, violence, sexual exploitation, and child well-being (Sloth-Nielsen and Gallinetti 2004; Abrahams 2006; September 2005).

Non-Dedicated Academic Child Research Institutions

While not focusing exclusively on African child research, some departments at academic institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have identified child issues as an important and integral part of their research practices. At these institutions, child research has attracted growing interest. Table 2 presents an example of these institutions located in Malawi, Zambia and South Africa:

- University of Zambia (Web: <http://web.unza.zm>);
- University of Malawi (Web: <http://web.unima.mw>);
- University of the Witwatersrand (Web: <http://web.health.wits.ac.za/>);
- Bunda College of Agriculture (Web: <http://web.unima.mw>).

Non-Academic Research Institutions

There are several organizations outside academia that are conducting child research in sub-Saharan Africa. Typically, these organizations take a multidisciplinary approach to investigating child issues as shown in the following examples:

- Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria): An independent Pan-African research organization conducting research on child issues such as child labour, poverty, conflict, violence (Honwana and De Boeck 2006; Obi 2006) (Web: <http://www.codesria.org>).
- Child Rights Information and Documentation (CRIDOC) Based in Malawi. This organization conducts research on child rights (Web: <http://www.cridoc.net>).
- Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC): Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, South Africa: Multidisciplinary Research on children issues such as Child labour; Sexual exploitation; Rights and Well-being; Poverty; Globalisation; Violence and Conflict; HIV/AIDS; Culture, Economy, Education (Shisana et al., 2005; Brookes and Richter 2001). (Web: <http://www.hsrc.co.za>).

Child Research in Africa

- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN): a Pan-African child rights organization concerned with the status of African children; has observer status with the African Union and African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples Rights; conducts situational analysis on the state and nature of child abuse and neglect in Africa (Web: <http://www.anppcan.org>).
- Medical Research Council (South Africa): A statutory organization focusing on multidisciplinary health research; conducts studies on child health such as alcohol and drug use, crime and violence, and malnutrition (Bradshaw and Nannan 2003; Schoeman et al., 2006), (Web: <http://www.mrc.ac.za>).

Table 2: Example of Non-Dedicated Child Research Academic Institutions

Institution	Research Agenda/ Practices	Characteristics of Institution	Research Capacity
University of Malawi: Department of Economics	<i>Agenda:</i> Understanding child labour, Teaching and Research <i>Practices:</i> Child labour, Complementary foods.	Academic Institution	Experts in Economics
University of Zambia: Department of Development Studies	<i>Agenda:</i> Teaching, Research <i>Practices:</i> Youth unemployment, Entrepreneurship, Child labour and Street children.	Academic Institution	Experts in Development Studies
University of Witwatersrand (South Africa): Department of Paediatrics and Child Health	<i>Agenda:</i> Teaching and Research <i>Practices:</i> HIV/AIDS Refugees, Orphans	Academic Institution	Multidisciplinary team of experts
Bunda College of Agriculture (Malawi):	<i>Agenda:</i> Application of socio-economic tools in child research, Teaching and Research <i>Practices:</i> Poverty alleviation, Illiteracy; Street vending.	Academic institution	Experts in Agricultural Economics and Development Studies

Table 3 presents the agenda, characteristics and practices of these institutions.

Table 3: Example of Non-Academic Research Institutions

Institution	Research Agenda	Characteristics of Institution	Practices
Child Rights Information and Documentation (CRIDOC): Malawi	Facilitation and promotion of multidisciplinary research and publishing.	Non-Profit Research and Professional Organisation	To provide access to information on child rights, To establish information centres, To initiate research into child rights.
Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC): South Africa	To promote human and social development through research.	Statutory Research Agency, mostly Government funded and Commissioned Research. Staff Profile: Multidisciplinary Team of Experts in Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology and Social Work.	Multidisciplinary Research on child rights and well-being, Threats to child development: Health care, Abuse, Substance use and Conflict with the law.
Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA): Senegal	Facilitation and promotion of multidisciplinary research and publishing.	Independent Pan-African research organization. Staff Profile: Economy, Education, Law, Sociology, Political Economy, and Anthropology.	Multidisciplinary Research on children issues: Child labour, Sexual exploitation, Rights and Well-being, Poverty, Globalisation, Violence and Conflict, HIV/AIDS, Culture, economy, and education.
African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)	Enhance prevention and protection of children from maltreatment.	Pan-African child rights organization Areas of expertise: Child labour, Children with disabilities, Physical and Sexual exploitation, Orphaned children.	Research, Education, Advocacy, Technical Assistance and Support.
Medical Research Council (MRC): South Africa	Improve the nation's health status and quality of life through health research.	Statutory Research Agency, Mostly Government funded, Commissioned Research. Staff profile: Multidisciplinary Team of medical and social scientists. Areas of expertise: Health systems and policy, Environment and development, Infection and immunity, Health promotion research, and Nutritional intervention.	Multidisciplinary Research on women and child health, Non-communicable diseases, Anxiety and stress, Alcohol and drug abuse, Crime and violence.

Child Research in Africa

Community-Based Organisations

Community-based non-governmental organizations are quite established in conducting child research in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These organizations combine research and practice by working directly with children in areas such as child neglect and abuse, child sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS.

The agenda of these NGOs is to improve the welfare of all children through child rights research and action, advocacy and practice. Examples of these organizations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Example of Child Rights Community-Based Organisations

Institution	Research Agenda	Characteristics of Institution	Practices
Center for Children's Rights (CCR): Kenya, Somaliland (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Child Rights Research and Action	NGO Independent Advocacy organization	Training and Research on child rights, Research on children, Work directly with children.
Cameroon Association for the Protection of the Child (CAPEC): Cameroon (Web: http://www.capecam.org)	Uplifting children's welfare	NGO Africa-based Independent Advocacy organization	Child labour, Children with disabilities, Sexual exploitation, Reporting and Monitoring CRC
The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF): Ethiopia (Web: http://www.africanchildforum.org)	Child advocacy	NGO Africa-Based Independent Advocacy organization	Research child rights, Child Labour, HIV/AIDS, Sexual exploitation, Orphans, Child neglect and abuse, Reporting and Monitoring CRC.
National Coalition for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child (NCPPRC): Sierra Leone (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Monitor and implement the CRC	NGO National Child Rights Coalition	Child Rights, Orphans, Child neglect and abuse, Reporting and Implementing the CRC.
Zimbabwe Council for the Welfare of the Child (ZNCWC) (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Advocacy and promotion of child welfare	NGO National Child Rights Coalition	Lobby Research child rights, Work directly with children, Provide education on child rights.
Christian Outreach Relief and Development (Zambia) (Web: http://www.cord.org.uk)	Working with orphans and vulnerable children	Community-based NGO Independent Advocacy organization	Training and Research, OVC, sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children, refugee children.

Table 4: (continued)

Movement of Action for the Prevention and Protection of Young People against Poverty, Destitution, Diseases and Exploitation (MAPODE)(Zambia) (Web: http://mapode.freewebsites.org)	Alleviate exploitation and prevent abuse of children	Community-based NGO Independent Advocacy organization	Research in poverty and risky lifestyle among children.
Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA) (Web: http://www.zamcivic.com.zm/)	Advocacy for children's rights	Community-based NGO Independent Advocacy organization	Monitoring children's rights, Corporal punishment at school and home.
Catholic Relief Services (Zimbabwe)(Web: http://www.crs.org)	Child literacy, environmental health and Child rights.	Community-based NGO Independent Advocacy organization	Child rights

National Child Rights Coalitions

Child Rights Coalitions exist in virtually all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These coalitions fund organizations that are involved in various aspects of child issues, such as training or education, advocacy, research, monitoring and implementation of the CRC and/or service provision involving children.

Table 5 shows the activities and expertise of selected Child Rights Coalitions that are documented in 25 sub-Saharan African countries.

Table 5: Example of National Child Rights Coalitions

NGO	Country	Aims and Activities	Expertise
Alliance l'enfant et la paix (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Angola	Child rights advocacy, child soldier issues.	Children in armed conflict
Coalition Nationale pour les droits de l'enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Benin	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Coalition au Burkina Faso pour les Droits de l'enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Burkina Faso	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Coalition Camerounaise des ONG pour les Droits de L'enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Cameroon	Advocacy for the implementation of CRC, Child health, education and justice.	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC

Child Research in Africa

Table 5: (continued)

Droits de L'Homme sans Frontieres (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Chad	Human rights, refugees, democracy.	Child labour, child education, health, armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation.
Alliance Congolaise pour les Droits de l'Enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Congo	Promote, inform and implement children's rights	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Groupe de Travail des ONG's pour les Droits de l'Enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Congo, DRC	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC)	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Coalition Ivoirienne pour la Defense des droits l'enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Côte d'Ivoire	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC)	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
National Plan of Action (Web: http://www.cpagambia.gm/plan.htm)	Gambia	Advocate child policies and laws, Child abuse awareness, Education and Training, Child research.	Child Rights
Ghana Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC) (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Ghana	Advocacy, Training and education, research child rights and work with children.	Child rights and practice
Coalition Guineenne Pour les Droits de l'Enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Guinea	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC)	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Coalition on Child Rights and Child Protection (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Kenya	Promote, inform and implement children's rights and child protection	Child Rights
National Coalition of Lesotho (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Lesotho	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Cherish the Kids Liberia (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Liberia	Protection development and participation rights of children	Child labour, education and health, sexual exploitation, monitoring CRC.
Malian Coalition for the Rights of the Child (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Mali	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC)	Children and citizenship
Groupement d'ONG pour l'Enfant (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Mauritius	Awareness raising and public education, advocacy.	Child rights

Table 5: (continued)

Rede da Crianca (Web: http://www.rededacrianca.org.mz/)	Mozambique	Training and Education on child rights	Child rights
National Coalition on Children's Rights (NNCCR)(Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Nigeria	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Coalition Nationale des Associations et ONG de l'Enfance au Senegal (CONAFE)(Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Senegal	Advocating for children's rights	Child rights
National Coalition for the protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child (NCP/PRC)	Sierra Leone	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child	Child Rights
National Children's Rights Coalition (NCRC) (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	South Africa	Advocacy, lobby, uphold children's rights.	Children and citizenship, children in conflict with the law; monitoring CRC.
Children NOW Network (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	South Africa	Research child rights	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Child Rights Forum (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Sudan	Training and Promotion of child rights.	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
National Council for Child Welfare (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Sudan	Monitor and implement Convention on Rights of the Child	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Tanzania Movement for and with Children (Web: http://www.tmc.kabissa.org)	Tanzania	Support and empower children	Child labour, citizenship, refugees, sexual exploitation, Reporting to and Monitoring CRC.
Collectif des ONGs de Protection des Droits de l'Enfant au Togo (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Togo	Monitor and implement CRC	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Forum des Organisations de Defense de Droit de l'Enfant au Togo (FODDET) (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Togo	Monitor and implement CRC	Reporting to and Monitoring CRC
Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (Web: http://www.kampala-city-guide.com/ngo/ucrn/)	Uganda	Monitor and implement children's rights.	Children and citizenship, Reporting and Monitoring children's rights.

Table 5: (continued)

Give Me A Chance (Web: http://www.crin.org/organisations)	Uganda	Reduce child poverty and crime, Promote community development.	Children and education, armed conflict, law, HIV/AIDS.
Children in Need Network (Web: http://www.chinorg.zm/)	Zambia	Child health, education and child rights.	Child rights

Research Agenda and Practice

The research agendas of the various institutions engaged in child research show that they share several aspects, namely, to promote the welfare of the African child by alleviating their plight through research, training, advocacy, education and technical support.

Research

Research Institutions are involved in clearly defining questions in specific policy areas relevant to African children. For example, debate around state support for vulnerable children entail conducting robust research that draws upon empirical data. Several academic institutions, such as the University of the Western Cape, Kenyatta University and University of Cape Town have established child research units.

Training

Training is considered to be an integral part of the work of several institutions engaged in child research. The institutions are engaged in postgraduate policy research training in child research. Given the multidisciplinary nature of the institutions, students are drawn from a broad range of disciplines. The institutions also offer short courses to civic and state organizations working with children.

Advocacy

They lobby governments by applying strategies that promote informed policy decision-making. They also disseminate information relevant to child policies and practices. Participate in and support civic and other organizations that promote child well-being. Provide evidence to organizations which are advocating for children.

Technical Support

They provide technical support and assistance to policy makers and practitioners in areas dealing with children. This is achieved by providing information, training and guidelines.

Education

They raise public awareness of child rights; provide information about child rights to all relevant stakeholders in the policy-making process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

They monitor and evaluate child well-being indicators, as well as report and monitor the Child Rights Charter.

Publications and Dissemination

Publish and disseminate child research findings, reports on children, policy documents on children; hold seminars, colloquiums and conferences on child rights.

Working with Children

Providing care and assistance to children in need: Orphans, abused and neglected children, refugees and children affected by HIV/ AIDS. Table 6 shows a summary of the institutions' research agenda and practices.

Table 6: Agenda and Practices of Child Research Institutions

Agenda	Practices
Research	Basic child research, Policy research on child issues, Interdisciplinary research, Secondary research and data sets.
Training	Policy research training, Teaching child policy modules, Delivering short courses on child issues.
Technical Assistance	Providing technical assistance to practitioners and policy makers, Supporting role players in child policy with information and guidelines.
Advocacy	Participating in and supporting social movements involved with child well-being.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of child well-being indicators.
Working with children	Providing relief and assistance to needy and vulnerable Children.
Publications and Dissemination of Information	Information dissemination, Producing relevant publications.

Discussion

This study sought to provide an analysis of institutions that are involved in child research in sub-Saharan Africa. Although the aim was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the institutions, lack of information about some institutions limited this. Thus, the approach to provide only examples, in some

Child Research in Africa

instances, of institutions engaged in child research. Notwithstanding this limitation, the analysis indicated that child research in sub-Saharan Africa is an area that is attracting growing attention among research institutions.

The nature of these research institutions varies from a few that are dedicated to conducting studies on child research to community-based NGOs that combine research with practice. The dedicated child research organizations institutions are located in academic institutions with a multidisciplinary team of experts in the social sciences and health fields. Because these organizations operate in an academic structure, their agenda includes teaching and training in the area of child research. In addition, the organizations also aim to use their research findings to inform intervention and policy development regarding children.

The second group consists of departments in academic institutions. While there are many similarities with dedicated organizations, the main difference is that non-dedicated academic departments do not focus exclusively on child research; rather, child research is only one of their research activities. As such, the staff include child research as a component of their respective research activities. For example, the Department of Development Studies at the University of Zambia conducts research on various aspects of development issues including youth unemployment and child labour. In these departments, the expertise tends to be in a single discipline, such as economics, rather than being multidisciplinary.

Outside academia, there are organizations that are also involved in child research. These non-academic institutions include statutory organizations that are funded by the state to promote a specific research agenda dealing with children. An example of this is the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa which has a dedicated unit known as Child, Youth, Family and Social Development Unit. The unit consists of a multidisciplinary team of experts in the social and health sciences, and focuses on issues such as child substance abuse, violence and health care.

The fourth category of research institutions are community-based non-governmental organizations which combine research with practice. These organizations are staffed mostly by practitioners who work directly with children that are in need of assistance. An example of this category of organization is the Center for Children's Rights in Kenya which sets its agenda as child rights research and action. This organization works directly with children in the community by providing assistance with education, health care and other needs. The Center is also involved in training and research on child rights in Kenya.

The last category of institutions is National Child Rights Coalitions which are found in virtually all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The coalitions do not

conduct child research directly but fund individual organizations, mostly community based non-governmental organizations, to conduct research on issues affecting children such as HIV/AIDS, violence, sexual exploitation, and child labour. The coalitions are also involved in child rights advocacy, training and public education regarding child rights.

What these different institutions share is their agenda which seeks to promote the welfare of African children by conducting research on child issues, training and education, advocacy, and providing care and assistance. As stated earlier, there are challenges facing African children, including poverty, illiteracy, disease, violence and sexual exploitation. In order to address these challenges, different organizations are working in areas of prevention, care and advocacy. The importance of research in ensuring that evidence-based practices cannot be overemphasized. It is on the basis of research findings that appropriate policies, interventions and programmes may be developed and implemented. Accordingly, there needs to be a more concerted effort to promote African child research by all the institutions interested in promoting the welfare of African children.

While dedicated academic and non-academic child research institutions seem well placed in taking the lead with regard to African child research, they face their own challenges in terms of limited financial and human resources. Other challenges have to do with limited scientific publication outlets in sub-Saharan Africa, resulting in many researchers struggling to get their research findings documented in publications that are mostly based outside Africa.

It must also be mentioned that the relationship between some African governments and community-based NGOs is not always harmonious, with accusations that these organizations seem to be promoting a political agenda. In addition, in some instances, there seems to be little consensus as to what constitutes child rights. As a result, the effectiveness of some organizations in promoting child rights and advocacy is limited by conflicts with the authorities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The last decade has seen a growing recognition in Africa regarding the promotion of human rights and the need to extend these rights to children. Accordingly, many countries in the region have adopted programmes and policies that are designed to protect African children from abuse and neglect. Other countries are considering adopting policies designed to enhance the welfare of children in Africa.

Concomitant with these developments, there has been a plethora of organizations devoted to the welfare of sub-Saharan African children through

Child Research in Africa

advocacy, training and education, research and practice. Numerous institutions have emerged in all sub-Saharan countries that focus on African children in the areas of prevention and intervention. Most of these institutions are community-based NGOs and focus mainly on providing services to children that are in need such as shelter, food, education and health care. Few of these institutions conduct basic child research; instead they tend to serve as documentation centers.

The bulk of child research emanates from the work of academic institutions and institutional research organizations which place research at the top of their agenda. For these institutions, child research constitutes a primary aspect of their activities. The research outputs of these institutions are primarily aimed at fellow academics and professionals while service providers and policy makers seem to be a secondary target.

Recommendations

This analysis of child research institutions in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that more and more institutions in sub-Saharan Africa are involved in numerous aspects dealing with child issues. The positive developments notwithstanding, there are several areas which may require increased attention if child research in sub-Saharan Africa is to realize its full potential:

- Increased training of researchers in child research: Given the demand for child research, it is clear that more needs to be done to increase the cadre of scholars and researchers specialising in child research;
- More funding for child research: Governments need to improve funding for child research in order to ensure that policy-making process affecting children is informed by evidence-based information;
- Increased collaboration: There is a need for greater collaboration among researchers in different disciplines and also collaboration among researchers, practitioners and policy makers;
- Increased Regional collaboration: More needs to be done to improve the collaboration of child researchers in the different regions of the continent;
- Dissemination and publishing: There is a need to increase the dissemination of research findings in the region. More publications are needed that are directed to non-academics so as to raise public awareness and understanding of child issues.

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