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Research Workshop Report

Supporting Dialogue on Children and Work

Florence, Italy, Feb. 19-21 2018

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Workshop Organising Team**

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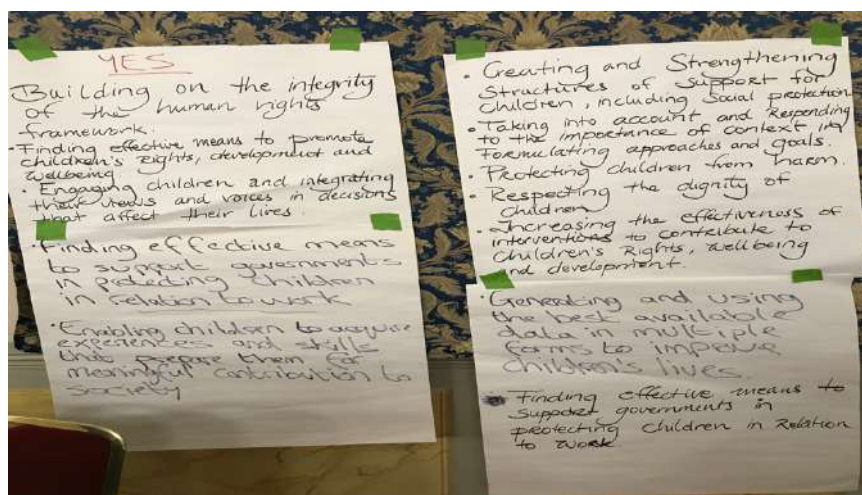
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Background and Logic

The field of actors working on children's work and child labour is highly diverse. It includes international NGOs, UN agencies, academic institutions, bilateral donors, labour unions, faith-based organisations, and movements of self-organised working children. All are broadly united by a shared desire to advance children's rights and wellbeing. Yet the strategies they adopt are often different, and at times these spill over into debates that can hamper effective collaboration. This workshop sought to transcend these debates by bringing together a select group of key actors within the field from around the world in order to explore common ground and establish a future research agenda. To this end, it was guided by specialists in Convergent Facilitation, which is a process that supports people to build trust and mutual understanding by identifying the underlying shared goals hidden within their seemingly irreconcilable positions. This report documents the results of that process, including the key strands of research and advocacy to emerge from it. It outlines the common principles that participants agreed were important and the set of policy-relevant research questions that they wish to see guide future work in the field¹.

The workshop was organised by the Children and Work Network and received generous funding from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and the Jacobs Foundation. The UNICEF Office of Research kindly agreed to host it.

Draft Common Principles



Although many successful collaborations already exist in this field, we were aware that building trust among such a diverse group was likely to be a fundamental first step in enabling productive conversations across differences about existing data and future research. This was achieved through Convergent Facilitation, by helping participants to collectively identify key common principles that all hold to be important, notwithstanding their personal or institutional backgrounds. Below are the results of that process.

¹ The report has been authored by the Workshop Organising Committee and represents their views rather than those of the funders, hosts or participating institutions.

Draft Common Principles

“In our approach to research, policy, and practice regarding children and work, we are committed to*:

1. Building on the existing human rights framework;
2. Taking into account and responding to the importance of context in formulating approaches and goals;
3. Taking into account and responding to the importance of gender in formulating approaches and goals;
4. Engaging children and integrating their views and voices in decisions that affect their lives;
5. Finding effective means to promote children’s rights, development and wellbeing;
6. Protecting children from harm;
7. Respecting the dignity of children;
8. Increasing the effectiveness of interventions to contribute to children’s rights, wellbeing and development;
9. Creating and strengthening structures of support for children including social protection;
10. Finding effective means to support governments in protecting children in relation to work;
11. Engaging with all stakeholders in addressing issues relating to children and work;
12. Promoting and protecting decent work for all;
13. Acknowledging the importance of researching children’s work for policy and program design.
14. Generating and using the best data in multiple forms to improve children’s lives;
15. Enabling children to acquire experiences and skills that prepare them for meaningful contribution to society;
16. Promoting full access to quality and relevant education”.

*Although many participants engaged in this process as representatives of their institutions and with institutional mandates in mind, none spoke formally on behalf of their institutions. The purpose of the activity was to imagine what each individual and relevant institution *could* accept as a shared set of principles that truly integrates all concerns. Inevitably, with further consultation, these principles will be revised and added to. For instance, Principle 3 could be followed by a new Principle explicitly naming race and caste.

Shared Research Questions

Having built common ground in terms of these guiding principles, the workshop moved on to identify shared research questions that all considered to be of importance for the advancement of the field over the coming years. This list does not purport to be comprehensive, nor to exclude or replace other questions that participants and their institutions may already be working on or plan to work on in the future². Its importance, however, lies in the fact that its generation contributed to trust and mutual understanding, while the list itself establishes parameters for potential future collaboration among groups who had not previously managed to collaborate around research or policy. Again, Convergent Facilitation was crucial.

1. How can we insert education into work and work into education?
2. How can policies and programs support unsupported children?
3. What is the short- and long-term effectiveness of programs tackling the root causes of children's work?
4. What is working and what is not working in addressing child labour?
5. What are the different ways of learning through work?
6. Where minimum age laws exist, under what conditions can they be implemented in ways that benefit children and families?
7. Where children are working, how can we make their work safer?
8. What are the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of children's work? (including various variables e.g. skills)?
9. What are the impacts of complex interventions?
10. What policy levers can benefit children's work?
11. How does the changing world of work affect children's work and education?
12. How are the skills that children are learning at work preparing them for the changing nature of future work?
13. What are the patterns of access to education, work and play experiences that prepare children for the future of work?
14. What constitutes harmful work for children?
15. How do children understand harmful work?
16. How is children's work affected by the interplay between sociocultural, political and economic factors?
17. How can policy measures related to work and education be sensitive and effectively respond to specific contexts and gender considerations?
18. How and why do households rely on children as coping mechanism in settings of humanitarian crises and shock?
19. What policies and programs can protect and support the wellbeing of children affected by humanitarian crises and shocks?
20. Which social protection policies are effective in reducing harmful child work?
21. How do various business practices directly and indirectly influence children's work?
22. How do government private sector promotional programs affect children's work?

² Clearly further questions can and will be added to this list as the participants in the conversation change and expand. One suggestion for an added question is 'What are the short-, medium, and long-term outcomes of abandoning minimum ages?'

23. How do economic development policies, including the actions of International Financial Institutions, influence children's work?
24. What is the influence of working children's views and voices in policy-making and implementation on children's work?

Group Discussions Around Potential Future Actions

Florence was and is the beginning of a process; the principles and questions above provide a starting point. The intention of the organisers and many of the participants is for the conversations begun there to continue over the months and years ahead. Below are a series of actions that were discussed by the various working groups in Florence. The individuals named at the end of each section will seek to take these forward. And the hope is that other interested parties will join in collaboration.

Advancing Shared Common Principles

Establishing common ground between the various different participants was unquestionably one of the highlights of the meeting. This was achieved by listing the core positions that each participant held, in particular those which were a source of conflict with others. Then, with the support of the facilitators, the group dug 'inside' these statements in order to identify other non-controversial statements, which both captured the essence of the original statements and were worded in terms agreeable to everyone. For example, the statement 'We are opposed to policy dogma' can be rephrased as 'We want policy to be evidence-based and responsive'. This is non-controversial and its identification as something shared by all is a crucial step on the path to genuine trust and collaboration. It is no exaggeration to say that participants from all backgrounds found this engaging, inspiring and full of potential for generating greater shared purpose across the field.

In light of this, a working group has been established to continue conversations around it. Convened by Neil Howard (University of Bath), Olivia Lecoufle (Save the Children), Samuel Okyere (University of Nottingham) and Edward van Daalen (University of Geneva), this group will work with interested parties to expand, refine, and capitalise both on this list of shared principles and the Convergent Facilitation process of generating them. It will seek to include those not present in Florence in the process (for example the UN CRC Committee, labour representatives, working children themselves), to refine the list, and to build popular support for a collective statement. Various institutional fora are being explored as momentum-building targets for this process (notably the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which in 2019 will focus on SDG 8) and conversations around it have already begun. Funding is being sought from universities, donors and international civil society groups. Interested parties should contact Neil at neil.howard@eui.eu for future conversations.

Towards an Integrated Research Agenda

Based on the common principles and shared research questions that were adopted, a sub-group discussed the development of an integrated common research agenda on

children and work. Members of the sub-group included Richard Carothers (Children and Work Network), Tara Collins (Ryerson University), Karl Hanson (University of Geneva), Benoit Tessier (Canadian Government), John Hepburn (CIFAR) and Olivia Lecoufle (Save the Children). Richard, Karl and Tara decided to make use of the ideas generated during the workshop to develop a more robust proposal over the coming months for an integrated common research agenda that can be used to guide future discussions.

Participants in the sub-group agreed on a set of overarching concepts that can help shaping the overall structure of this agenda. It was found useful to refer to three different kinds of knowledge – target, systems and transformation knowledge – to organise the research questions³.

- a) *Target knowledge* groups questions that are directed at clarifying and prioritising norms and values in relation to the common good; the key common principles that have been identified during the workshop express the kinds of target knowledge aimed at.
- b) *Systems knowledge* refers to research questions that deal with the understanding and interpretation of real-world problems, including their origins and consequences. Many of the research questions that were listed during the workshop concern system knowledge, for instance ‘What are different ways of learning through work?’ or ‘What are short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of children’s work?’
- c) *Transformation knowledge* deals with research questions about the various instruments for action and their impact on transforming existing situations into desired ones; for instance, ‘What is working and what is not working in addressing child labour?’

In addition, the group discussed the relevance of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model⁴ for human development to arrange the content of the research questions. In doing so, the research questions can be organised in function of the kind of knowledge asked for as well as in relation to micro-, meso-, exo- or macro-systems and the chrono-system. The sub-group also reflected on the prioritisation of the research questions by developing a list of criteria. We think that the following criteria can help here: knowledge gaps, urgency, feasibility, alignment with institutional mandates, centrality (or ‘fundamentability’), competence, children’s views, temporality, transformative potential, uniqueness and collaboration.

# FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE	SYSTEM	TARGET	TRANSFORMATION
WORK, EDUCATION & PLAY	5, 8	17	1, 17
FUTURE OF WORK	11, 12	2	2, 13
STAKEHOLDERS	9, 15 16, 21, 22 23, 34	2, 6, 17	2, 10, 17
INTERPLAY	10	3, 17	3, 17
HAZARD & SAFETY	14, 15		7, 20
SHOCKS & CRISES	18		19
EFFECTIVENESS			4

³ See: Christian Pohl, Gertrude Hirsch Hadorn, Translated by Anne B. Zimmermann (n.d.), *Principles for Designing Transdisciplinary Research*, Proposed by the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, http://www.transdisciplinarity.ch/td-net/Publikationen/Publikationen-td-net/mainColumnParagraphs/08/text_files/file2/document/knowledgeforms_principles.pdf

⁴ Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, U.S.

In addition, a monitoring and evaluation system should be included to ensure the follow-up of the common research agenda.

By way of conclusion, the group believes that an integrated common research agenda can become the starting point for building a Knowledge Platform that brokers research on children and work. Such a platform could either be hosted as the sub-section of an existing knowledge brokering platform (e.g. www.norrag.org or that related to Alliance 8.7) or as an independent platform aimed at bringing together policy and research on children and work that is relevant for a wide range of stakeholders. Karl Hanson is taking responsibility for taking this forward; please contact karl.hanson@unige.ch for further information.

Research: Safety in Agriculture

In the subgroup on harmful/hazardous work, Deborah Levison (University of Minnesota), Andrew Clayton (DFID), Charita Castro (USDOL), Olivia Lecoufle (Save the Children Canada), Edward van Daalen (University of Geneva), Alberto Posso (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), Antje Ruhmann (Terre des Homme), Juanita Stephen (York University) and Simon Sommer (Jacobs Foundation) decided to focus on agriculture.

The line between ‘decent’ and ‘indecent’ work is difficult to draw, in particular when globalised notions of what is acceptable or not, fail to correspond to notions which are meaningful in different local contexts. With this in mind the following key questions were identified:

- What constitutes harmful / hazardous work in agriculture?
- How can children’s perspectives on whether their work is harmful / hazardous inform this question?

For exploring these questions in future research, several processes of data collection were suggested:

- The use of examples from prior work to create a model of how to address such questions.
- The use of quality case studies to glean lessons from others sectors about, e.g., how much a 17-year-old can carry.
- The use of existing labour force / household / child labour surveys to identify clusters of child workers. What crops are they working on?
- The use of participatory work with children and their communities to identify meaningful local conceptions of harm.

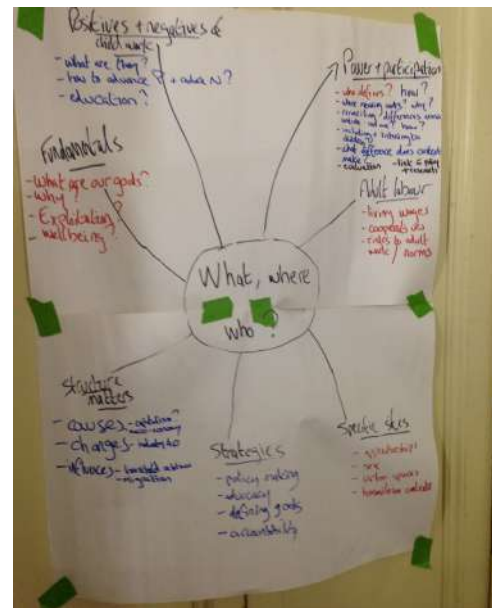
The group agreed that further in-depth analyses per crop are crucial, with an emphasis on the use of qualitative research methods with working children (to learn from their perspectives on their work) and the use of medical / public health measures. Assumptions should be made where knowledge is limited but where implications are potentially serious, especially regarding contact with toxins (pesticides, herbicides). Regarding alternatives to children’s work, the group suggested that it was important to consider where these possibly make children worse off. Research results should be disseminated broadly, including via the media (e.g. videos, cartoons). Alberto Posso

has taken ownership of advancing this work stream; please contact alberto.posso@rmit.edu.au for further information.

Research: Causal Factors and Impacts

The sub-group working on the structural cause factors underpinning children's work and influencing its impacts included Elena Camilletti, (UNICEF Office of Research) Furio Rosati, (Understanding Children's Work), Jacobus de Hoop, (UNICEF Office of Research), Jo Boyden, (Young Lives, University of Oxford) Larry Aber, (New York University), Samuel Okyere, (University of Nottingham), Sarah Cook, (UNICEF Office of Research) and Sumaira Chowdhury (UNICEF). The group agreed that there was an urgent need to expand the existing evidence base on the dynamics of children's work through three key questions:

1. What is the interplay between social, cultural, economic and political factors that affect children's work?
2. What are short, medium and long term causal impacts of children's work on their well-being, development and rights outcomes?
3. What are the separate and combined impacts of social protection on children's work and outcomes?



In its discussion, the group proposed a multi-country longitudinal study focused on the impact of micro- (individual child and family dynamics) and macro- or structural (community, local and national dynamics, global socio-political and economic measures, interventions and policies) factors on children's work, lives and rights outcomes. A multi-disciplinary mixed methods research design comprising qualitative interviews, focus group discussions, biographic narratives, randomised control trials and experiments was suggested for this large-scale project. Given the ambitious nature of the project and amount of funding that will be required, a diverse and transdisciplinary cohort of academics, agencies and other actors will be necessary to give it life. Samuel Okyere is coordinating the group's post-workshop activities, starting with a meeting to be convened at the end of May 2018 to identify potential collaborators and funding schemes. Please contact Samuel for further information: samuel.okyere@nottingham.ac.uk.

Research: Learning and Work

Recent research in psychology shows that much learning takes place through doing rather than through instruction. There is, therefore, scope to develop experiential learning as an important element in young people's development and education. Work can provide a significant component of experiential learning: in learning many established work skills, in acquiring useful social skills and values, and in developing new skills for the technological age. Moreover, Article 6 of ILO Convention 138

provides an interesting link around work and learning that could be further explored. Research is needed to explicate the different kinds of work situation in which learning can usefully take place, the various learning and other long-term outcomes that can result from work experience, and at the same time how to encourage work experience without harming children or hindering the overall development of young people.

As a first step, Tatek Abebe (University of Trondheim) will initiate qualitative research projects on this theme and lead a sub-group to broaden this area of research, which will include Samuel Okyere, (University of Nottingham), Victor Karunan (Thammasat University) and Michael Bourdillon (University of Zimbabwe). Tatek will apply for a small grant from his University in early 2019 to hold a workshop with members of the group to discuss the ideas around 'learning through work', with a vision of developing a grant proposal. The workshop will also enable the group to concretise research design as well as explore possible other sources for funding. In the meantime, Tatek will be on the look-out for potential sources of funding via the Research Council of Norway and/or Nordic Council of Humanities and Social Sciences. Interested parties should contact tatek.abebe@ntnu.no.

Conclusion

Supporting Dialogue on Children and Work achieved at least the following: 1) bringing together experts in the field to identify critical research gaps and lay the foundations for a future research agenda; 2) laying the foundations for a long-term research and policy network in relation to children's work and labour; 3) creating channels of dialogue between institutional actors where previously these did not exist; and 4) beginning the diplomatic task of identifying core principles according to which all actors within the field wish to operate. It is time to seize on these achievements and maintain momentum. Should you or your colleagues be interested in learning more about what was achieved in Florence, or in collaborating to take this work forward, please get in touch.

Appendix - List of Attendees



- **Tatek Abebe**, Associate Professor and Program Leader of MPhil in Childhood Studies at Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology.
- **J. Lawrence Aber**, Willner Family Professor of Psychology and Public Policy at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, and University Professor at New York University.
- **Michael Bourdillon**, Professor Emeritus at the University of Zimbabwe.
- **Jo Boyden**, Director of Young Lives, University of Oxford, UK.
- **Elena Camilletti**, Researcher, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Italy.
- **Richard Carothers**, Convenor, Children and Work Network, Canada.
- **Charita L. Castro**, Chief of Research and Policy Division at U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking.
- **Sumaira Chowdhury**, Senior Adviser and Deputy Chief of the Child Protection Section, UNICEF, New York.
- **Andrew Clayton**, Senior Social Development Adviser in the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).
- **Tino Clemens** – Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Sustainability Standards, Germany.
- **Tara Collins**, Associate Professor in the School of Child & Youth Care at Ryerson University, Canada.
- **Sarah Cook**, Director of the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti, Italy.
- **Edward van Daalen, Rapporteur**, PhD researcher in law at the Centre for Children's Rights Studies (CCRS), University of Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Bina D'Costa**, Head of Migration Programme, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti, Italy.
- **Jacob de Hoop**, social policy specialist, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Italy.
- **Karl Hanson**, Professor in Public Law and Deputy Director of the Centre for Children's Rights Studies at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.
- **John Hepburn**, CIFAR Vice-President, Research, Canada.
- **Neil Howard**, Prize Fellow, University of Bath; Founding Editor, *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery*, UK.
- **Victor Karunan**, Senior Lecturer in Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University; Human Rights, Peace Studies, Mahidol University and Social Policy and Development, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- **Olivia Lecoufle**, Child Protection Advisor, Save the Children Canada; Lead, Save the Children International task group on Children and Harmful Work; Chair, International Child Protection Network of Canada (ICPNC).

- **Deborah Levison**, Professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, U.S.
- **Sam Okyere**, Assistant Professor in Sociology and Criminology at the University of Nottingham, UK; Founding Editor, *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery*.
- **Alberto Posso**, Associate Professor of Economics at the International Trade and Development Research Group in the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia.
- **Furio Camillo Rosati**, Professor of Public Finance at the University of Tor Vergata, Rome in the Faculty of Economics; Project Manager of *Understanding Children's Work (UCW)*, Italy.
- **Antje Ruhmann**, Child Rights Officer, Terre des Hommes Germany; Lead, Core Group on Child Labour at Terre des Hommes International Federation.
- **Benjamin Smith**, Technical Specialist on Child Labour – Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Simon Sommer**, Head of Research, Jacobs Foundation, Switzerland.
- **Juanita Stephen, Rapporteur**, PhD Candidate at York University, Canada.
- **Benoit Tessier**, Executive Director of Employment and Social Development Canada's *Employer Liaison Services*.
- **Edward van Daalen, Rapporteur**, PhD candidate at the Centre for Children's Rights Studies of the University of Geneva, Switzerland.

Convergent Facilitation Team

- **Miki Kashtan, Lead Facilitator**, Co-founder of Bay Area Nonviolent Communication, and founder and Lead Collaboration Consultant at the Center for Efficient Collaboration, U.S.
- **Vérène Nicolas, Facilitator** - The Centre for Nonviolent Communication, UK.
- **Franca Onyibor, Facilitator** - The Centre for Nonviolent Communication, Nigeria.