

Terms of Reference

Inventory and assessment of existing tools and methods to collect data on violence against children

▪ **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this TOR is to invite proposals for a mapping of self-report data collection instruments in the area of violence against children that are being used or are under development¹. This mapping will include both an inventory and a technical assessment of existing tools and methods. The assessment will cover the scope and content of the instruments (including questionnaire design and indicators selection), aspects related to the implementation of the data collection (including where applicable sample size and design, selection and composition of the field team, content and length of the interviewers' training), reporting mechanisms and dissemination/use of the results, and compliance with ethical standards. As assessment of the quality of the data in the surveys' findings will not be part of the assignment, but may be required at a later stage for a selection of surveys identified on the basis of the mapping exercise. It is expected that the relevant information will be gathered through key informant interviews at global, regional and country-levels, and a structured document review.

This mapping exercise is meant to be part of a series of activities that are expected to lead to development of standard guidelines on data collection on violence against children from children. These guidelines are meant to assist in the development of data collection protocols, tools and methodologies to produce statistically valid results and strengthen the evidence base of the sector. The guidelines are also aimed at ensuring the ethical implementation of the data collection and at minimizing the risk of potential harm resulting from the data gathering process. The inventory and assessment of the surveys will be prepared as background to this task and are expected to provide an overview of major areas of progress, gaps and challenges in the development of such tools.

▪ **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In response to weaknesses in child protection monitoring, evaluation and research, UNICEF and Save the Children hosted a meeting at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy from 21-22 July 2010 to establish a global Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CP MERG). An agreement was made at the meeting to establish Technical Working Groups to take forward the activities of the CP MERG. Violence against children was identified as one of the key areas of work for the CP MERG given the general lack of data in this area and momentum created

¹While there are many definitions, violence should be interpreted here as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (Krug, E.G., L.L. Dahlberg, J.A. Mercy, A. Zwi and R. Lozano (editors), *World Report on Violence and Health*, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2002). By this definition, violence includes acts that result from a power relationship, and may include threats and intimidation. They also include neglect and acts of omission. Violent acts can be physical, sexual or psychological in nature.

by the UN Study on Violence against Children². The Technical Working Group (TWG) on Data Collection on Violence against Children was created to produce outputs that will guide and support the collection of reliable, useful and ethically sensitive data on violence against children³. The goal is to support, facilitate and coordinate the development of harmonized international guidelines, standards and tools for the collection of data on violence against children (in developmental and non-emergency settings) at global, regional and national levels.

Reliable data on violence against children are scarce and inconsistent, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Limited evidence exists on the extent, impacts, risks and protective factors of violence, and on the underlying social norms that perpetuate its existence. Robust data (both quantitative and qualitative) are needed to develop evidence-based programmes and policies that can prevent and respond to violence, to establish baselines and monitor progress, and for advocacy. Such data are also needed to inform the development and improvement of campaigns, laws, regulations and services that contribute to children's protection and overall well-being.

The last five years have witnessed a proliferation of different measurement efforts aimed at filling the existing gaps, often using large-scale population-based surveys. Initiatives have been undertaken by or with the support of international agencies, international and local NGOs, government institutions and research actors. These activities have often been developed and implemented in solo and many of them remain unknown to the broad child protection community, especially those developed in non-English speaking countries. Moreover, the questionnaires and tools used vary extensively in terms of scope, target population and design. No standard categorization of the different forms of abuse exists from the operational point of view, although there is some consensus on the need to adopt a broad definition of violence, including its different manifestations (physical, psychological and sexual). Additional challenges include the use of diverse protocols and methodologies. The type of questions asked, the sampling frame, the questionnaire design, the length and content of the interviewers' training, as well as the profile of the field team members and the quality of the field work supervision have all proved to be fundamental in determining the reliability of the findings. The adoption of a variety of procedures and approaches with regard to these aspects of the data collection process raises legitimate questions on the quality of the different initiatives and limits the comparability of research results. Finally, due to the absence of internationally recommended/agreed upon ethical guidelines on the collection of data on violence against children, different standards and practices have been followed for ensuring protection of respondents and interviewers, and regarding the need to provide follow-up support to victims⁴. The combination of these factors has often led to the collection of unreliable,

²"States [should] improve data collection and information systems in order to identify vulnerable sub-groups, inform policy and programming at all levels, and track progress towards the goal of preventing violence against children. States should use national indicators based on internationally agreed standards, and ensure that data are compiled, analysed and disseminated to monitor progress over time. States should develop a national research agenda on violence against children across settings where violence occurs, including through interview studies with children and parents, with particular attention to vulnerable groups of girls and boys." *UN Study on Violence against Children (A/61/299 August 2006)*.

³Currently the TWG includes the following institutions: European Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU-FRA), ICF Macro, ILO, Population Council, Save the Children, Plan International, ChildFund, UNICEF, USAID, and WHO.

⁴Among the available resources in this area, it is worth mentioning the publication *"Ethical Approaches to Gathering Information from Children and Adolescents in International Settings: Guidelines and Resources*, published in 2005 by the Population Council. While relevant, this document aims at providing guidance in the planning and implementing of any type of information gathering activities involving children. Data collection on sensitive issues such as violence implies additional challenges and potential risks, which require the development of specific recommendations. Another relevant resource is the 2004 report produced by the International Save the Children Alliance *"So you want to involve*

inconsistent or partial data and also raised important questions as to the risks -including ethical issues-associated with the data collection process.

The first meeting of the TWG took place at UNICEF headquarters in New York on 5 April 2011. The objectives of the meeting were to: define the scope of the work and agree on a list of deliverables; agree on the principles, functions, membership criteria and structure/working procedures; and agree on next steps to initiate the work. One outcome of the meeting was an agreement to invite proposals to conduct a task to map and assess existing self-report survey tools and methodologies in the area of violence against children, as outlined in this TOR.

▪ **SCOPE OF THE WORK**

Objectives

- To identify existing self-report survey tools that are being used or are under development in the area of violence against children. This includes looking across instruments developed and used by governments and research institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, national NSOs, etc.in different parts of the world.
- To provide a detailed description of the different instruments in terms of: type of surveys; coverage and geographical area where in use (countries, national/subnational level, etc.); responsible institutions and implementing agencies; purposes of the surveys and scope of the questionnaires (including types of violence covered, range of risk/protective factors addressed, inclusion of attitudinal questions and questions related to individual or collective empowerment, indicators' selection and definitions);age of children targeted for interview; methodology (including sampling);stage of development of the tools and methodologies (e.g. pilot testing; finalization, etc.); field implementation (including pre-testing and validation studies, selection and composition of the field team, content and length of the training);response rates where available; ethical protocol/procedure; availability, clarity and comprehensiveness and of survey documentation; costs; and dissemination/use of the findings (i.e. main users and how the findings have been used for advocacy and policy/programme planning/implementation).
- To provide a critical assessment of each survey using agreed-upon criteria to highlight strengths and limitations.
- To identify knowledge gaps.
- To lay the foundation for the identification of a subset of tools for which a more in-depth data quality assessment will be conducted.

Expected Results

children in research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children". This toolkit aims to encourage meaningful and ethical participation by children in research related to violence against children, and address the ethical concerns related to the collection of data in this area. However, this toolkit, as well as the guidelines published by the Population Council, are not systematically followed, and there is a consensus among many policymakers and researchers on the need to update them based on new experiences, types of surveys and lessons learned. It is also worth highlighting the existence of ethical guidelines for data collection on violence against women, *Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women*, which were developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2001, and widely adopted. These guidelines were originally developed - and are intended to be used- in data collection efforts involving women of reproductive age and do not address the specific issues related to the involvement of children.

1. A concept note on how the assignment will be approached, including the scope, analytical framework that will be used for the assessment, selection criteria, type of information to be collected, methods/sources for collection of the relevant information and appraisal criteria⁵.
2. Collection of actual tools and any existing documentation on their use, in electronic format⁶.
3. Analysis of pre-identified tools that meet the selection criteria in line with the parameters mentioned in the previous section (under objectives) and synthesis of the information on each tool into a matrix.
4. A detailed report (in English) summarizing the outcomes of the inventory and assessment, major gaps, strengths and limitations of the tools, and recommendations for further work. The report will also include a description of the analytical framework used for the assessment and a comprehensive overview of the different methodologies (including description of the basic characteristics and objectives) to collect data on violence against children.

DURATION OF CONTRACT

The period of the contract will be for approximately 12 weeks, starting from the 1st of August 2011.

DUTY STATION

Work will be conducted from the consultant's base, with regular conference calls. Travel may be required for approximately 2-3 days to present the results of the assessment.

SUPERVISION OF THE WORK

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the TWG Chair with inputs from the TWG members. Weekly calls will be scheduled with the consultant to monitor the advancement of the work.

KEY SKILLS, TECHNICAL BACKGROUND, AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

- Postgraduate degree in statistics, demography, or a related social science
- Previous experience in data analysis and data collection (large scale population-based surveys) in the area of violence against children
- Analytical, methodical and precise style of writing
- Excellent command of English required; fluency in another UN language (particularly Spanish) would be considered a strong asset

APPLICATION

⁵It is expected that the relevant information will be gathered through key informant interviews at global, regional and country-levels, and a structured document review.

⁶It is expected that the mapping will cover a broad range of tools and key informants, including those which are produced in non-English speaking countries, to the furthest extent possible.

Interested consultants are asked to provide a cover letter, full CV, duly completed UN P-11 form, and a proposed budget for completion of the task to Claudia Cappa (ccappa@unicef.org) with copy to Nicole Petrowski (npetrowski@unicef.org) no later than the 15th of July 2011. Submissions should also include the proposed framework and criteria for the assessment of the survey instruments, and an explanation of the suggested methods/sources for collection of the relevant information, in line with the tasks described above.