



★ European ★ Network of ★ National ★ Observatories on ★ Childhood

Drafting guidelines on data collection and monitoring child abuse in European countries

Lisbon, November 2007



European Network of National Observatories on Childhood

ChildONEurope

European Network of National Observatories on Childhood

Web site: www.childoneurope.org

Officially set up on **24 January 2003**, after two years of preparatory works in the context of the Intergovernmental Group *L'Europe de l'Enfance*



European Network of National Observatories on Childhood

Membership

Members: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain

Associated Members: Austria, Check Republic, Germany, Greece, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, the Netherlands and United Kingdom

In the process of: Bulgaria

Not yet decided: Malta and Romania



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Aims

exchange of knowledge and information on laws, policies, programmes, statistics, studies, research, best practices regarding childhood and adolescence

exchange of knowledge on **methodology and indicators** in order to obtain comparability of information

comparative analysis on specific subjects



Origins of the Guidelines:

- Review on national systems of statistics and registration on child abuse (concluded in 2007)
www.childoneurope.org
- Working group composition: experts coming from the ChildONEurope Partners
- Relation with EU context:
 - ChildONEurope is the scientific support of the permanent Inter-governmental group *L'Europe de l'Enfance*
 - Official member of the EU Forum established by the EU Commission Communication on a new EU strategy on children's rights (4 July 2006)



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Why do we want data on child abuse?

Institutional obligation derived from legal instruments adopted at an international level, for example:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) asks for monitoring of children – including child abuse
- Optional CRC protocols
- Council of Europe Convention for the protection of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, adopted in July 2007
- Engagements for the EU countries in order to fulfil the aims of the recent EU Commission Communication on children's rights

Guidelines Index

INTRODUCTION

1. Defining the aims of the document
2. Child abuse as part of the analysis of well being
3. The scope of a national system of data collection and monitoring on child abuse
4. The obligation for data collection in the framework of national and international commitment for the implementation of children's rights
5. The contextual requirements for establishing and maintaining data collection system
6. The process of building up a data collection system and monitoring: the basic steps

I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISSUE

1. Child abuse as social problem; social definitions, social data, implications for monitoring
2. Child abuse as legal problem; legal definitions; judicial data implications for monitoring

II. THE ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

1. Centralized approach
2. Decentralized approach
3. Criteria for evaluating available organizational options
4. Available resources;
5. Economical and financial issues and the impact on the all system

Guidelines Index cont.

III. THE METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1. Issues relating to data collecting
2. Technical considerations relating to records and operational information systems
3. Processing and analyzing data
4. Presenting data according to target groups
5. Monitoring and evaluation of data collection system

IV. DISSEMINATION AND USE OF DATA

1. Different levels of interest: national, regional , local
2. different users: policymakers; professionals; NGOs; national authorities; international organizations, researchers
3. Uses for different purposes
4. Sensitization of population for awareness raising
5. Integrate official data with data coming from other resources

Drawing up European guidelines we are facing four key challenges :

- Improving existing statistics
- Developing new data collection systems
- Developing policies, plans, programmes and services based on scientific evidence
- Defining child maltreatment cases and outcome indicators using international norms and behavioural definitions from well-tested instruments

The process of building a child abuse data collection system has four parallel and mutually influencing aspects:

- **Institutional**: International and national legal frameworks require data collection systems, but is there a legal basis in domestic law? What is its governance framework?
- **Cultural**: How do we define abuse, who is the child? which characteristics?
- **Organizational**: e.g. data sources? Organizing data flows? Processing data?
- **Methodological**: How do we collect data? Case information or survey?

How do we handle these in the guidelines project?

II. Institutional interests, which can be identified in:

- **Administration**
- **Planning**
- **Policy evaluation**



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Administration

To help governments assess and monitor the condition, circumstances and trends of children's well-being; the social impact of public expenditure and policies for preventing child abuse.

To determine whether the policy goals and objectives are being accomplished in a timely and orderly fashion, and whether the resources are being used efficiently and effectively.



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Planning

To know:

- how many children are victims of child abuse (incidence)
- characteristics of the violence they suffered
- conditions in which they live
- characteristics of their family
- characteristics of perpetrators

To know which kind of services are delivered to victims of child abuse (and maybe perpetrators) in order to improve:

- help for children abused/ill – treated
- help for children at risk and their family
- implementation of the laws

To have good data to support evaluation of policies, cost – benefit analysis, participative planning, strategic planning etc

Policy evaluation

To look for changes over time and the impact of specific actions eg.
Longitudinal monitoring and analysis of policies

To understand the link with changes in more general social conditions that generate, maintain, decrease or increase its rate and shape its form and nature (eg education, health, general crimes, unemployment)

(Possibly) To compare data between countries

II. Cultural

- ✓ **Child abuse as social problem: social definitions, social data, implications for monitoring**
- ✓ International definitions
- ✓ Classification of category of violence/context/perpetrators
- ✓ Broader definitions of child abuse
- 9. Operational definitions
- 10. Which cases?
- 11. The relationship between data collection at a local and national levels
- 12. Reporting: advantages and disadvantages of mandatory reporting

II. Cultural cont.

B. Child abuse as Legal problem; legal definitions; judicial data implications for monitoring

5. Present existing legal definitions at an international level
6. From the international to the national dimension
3. Which available sources and which kind of data
4. The desirable data: how to get data collected but not used

III. Organizational dimension

3. Legitimacy to collect data: the protection of child identity (Professional confidentiality), which information can be collected and legitimacy of the purposes of the system
5. Usefulness of data for professionals providing information
7. Organizational approaches
 - ✓ Centralized approach
 - ✓ Decentralized approach
9. Criteria for evaluating available organizational options
11. Economic and financial issues and the impact on the system

IV. Methodological dimension

A. Issues related to data collection

1. Deriving statistical data from administrative activities
2. Aggregate and unit record approaches to data collection
6. Issues relating to use of data

B. Technical considerations relating to records and operational information systems

C. Processing and analyzing data

IV. The methodological dimension: some critical technical issues for consideration:

- ✓ choice of objectives
- ✓ definition of phenomenon and units of observation (children, reporting...)
- ✓ institutional competences
- ✓ level of coverage: eg. space, time, acts
- ✓ organization of data
- ✓ nature of data collection: survey or analysis of administrative data
- ✓ ultimate use of data



Contacts

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