

Office of Global Insight and Policy

Update on the context and trends

The emergence of the polycrisis, particularly the war in Ukraine, and the third year of the Covid pandemic drove the agenda of the work of the Office of Global Insight and Policy (OGIP) in 2022. The combination of the war, the emergence of the world from the pandemic to face an economic crisis, ongoing effects of climate change and the associated food insecurity, energy shortages, and inflation created unprecedented challenges for children. A record rise in child poverty, setbacks to progress on routine vaccinations, disruption to education for an entire generation as an unintended side-effect of the world's efforts to manage the Covid crisis is believed to have been set back progress towards the SDGs by years for some indicators and decades for others. Covid has been a uniquely dis-equalizing crisis with lopsided access to vaccines, learning losses have been greatest among poorest children, and job losses have been disproportionately borne by women and youth.

UNICEF clearly needs to understand the implications of the emerging situation to be able to adapt programmes and approaches effectively to achieve the objectives of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, especially that of aiding recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating efforts toward achieving the SDGs. OGIP, therefore, directed much of its work toward supporting UNICEF internally with analytical products to inform efforts at all levels of the organization.

Digital remained a critical topic as the pandemic effects left hundreds of millions of learners on the wrong side of the digital divide thus falling behind as they were not able to access remote digital learning opportunities. Those who could also spent more time online than ever – bringing both benefits and risks. OGIP's digital efforts included a focus on better understanding digital personalized learning, how to increase digital equality for children, and mitigating the risk of increased cyberconflict on children.

Climate impacts continue to worsen and spread. 2022 saw its fair share of severe storms, floods, wildfires, and drought. Mobility is a complex concept and while it is difficult to ascertain the number of children that move precisely because of climate change, we know that in 2020, nearly 10 million children were displaced because of weather-related events. These numbers are projected to rise between now and 2050. This is why OGIP decided to develop the Guiding Principles with partners. There was a gap in the climate mobility sphere in regard to children that needed to be filled. Additionally, the cries for climate justice by children and young people over the last several years have only gotten louder. It was important to take a step back from the marches and the speeches and listen and learn about what young people really want and how can we support them in this goal of climate justice.

Besides, for years there's been a recognition that governments, intergovernmental institutions, civil society, and the private sector need to engage young people in better and more meaningful ways. For all the progress in the space of youth, there is still a long way to go to ensure youth perspectives and rights to participate in governance and policy making are fully realized. It's more important than ever to find ways of supporting and elevating young people to access spaces of influence for them to contribute to their community, society, country, and the future they wish to be a part of.

Internally, the Office of Global Insight and Policy merged with the UNICEF Innocenti Office of Research to become UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (UNICEF Innocenti). The process of the merger consumed much staff time and attention to make sure that the new entity that emerged would be efficient and effective.

Major contributions and drivers of results

OGIP filled a gap in UNICEF's existing capacity by providing UNICEF with intelligence on external issues with implications for children and its work; scanning the horizon for frontier issues and ways of working; and generating analytical insights and policy ideas that enable UNICEF to engage prominently in global debates that shape our world and to place children at their center.

Under its intelligence function, OGIP produced ten Deep Dives in 2022 on wide-ranging topics like populism; economic sanctions against Russia; effective altruism and trust-based philanthropy; young people, protest movements and the war in Ukraine; the Russia-Ukraine war and the destabilization of global energy markets; modern warfare and children; second order effects of the Ukraine war; microplastics; lead poisoning; and the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda.

The team organized a Climate Justice and Children roundtable and summary document which was featured in Programme Group's report on Child Sensitive Climate Policies for Every Child. Follow-up on some of the recommendations are planned for 2023.

A landscape review of digital personalized learning examined the design and implementation of digital personalized learning in low- and middle-income country contexts. Dissemination of the findings will continue in 2023 along with a collaboration with the Digital Personalized Learning Community of Practice to develop policy-oriented resources.

An analysis on potential implications of cryptocurrencies and blockchain for children lead to further work with the Finnish government on the theme.

A rapid analysis on Protecting Children during Cyberconflict informed the work of the UN Open Ended Working Group on ICT and Security and was launched with the Government of Finland as a side event of that inter-governmental process. Policy advocacy on the development of safeguards for children during cyberconflict will continue in 2023.

A dashboard to track vulnerability to the second-order effects of the crisis was used by EMOPS to prioritize emergency preparedness and funding.

Under its foresight work, the UNICEF Outlook for Children 2022 was published in January, while the development of Global Outlook 2023 report began toward the end of the year, expanding partnerships with external institutions and UNICEF technical teams. The launch of the Outlook and other products supported regional and divisional leadership to interpret trends and explore implications for their offices and future planning.

Together with the youth engagement team, the Foresight and Policy Team established a youth foresight fellowship programme which is seeking to model, explore, and learn how best to promote intergenerational dialogue around foresight. It contributed significantly to the Outlook 2023 report. 2022 also saw the launch of Innocenti Youth Network, which is envisioned to form a youth-centered platform for young people engaged in our work and who have an interest in remaining engaged beyond project-based and event-based opportunities. This youth-centered network will scale UNICEF Innocenti's potential for distribution of work, and access to young people and youth partners to meaningfully engage and deliver on shared goals.

The Foresight and Policy Team also co-lead the High-Level Committee for Programme's (HLCP's) Duties to the Futures working group and the production of an inter-agency Discussion Paper on intergenerational equity and a resulting workplan.

The team also continued to build the anticipatory policy function based on the foresight and intelligence work carried out throughout the year. Some examples include:

- Guiding Principles for Children on the Move in the Context of Climate Change launched in July jointly with IOM, UNU-CPR and Georgetown University's ISIM to help policymakers and other stakeholders ensure children's rights are upheld as they move in the context of climate change. Their release gained widespread recognition via various news channels and social networks. They are a feature of the IOM-UNICEF Strategic Collaboration Framework and were presented at the IOM International Dialogue on Migration in October. Additionally, they were the subject of two side events at COP27.
- Data governance Manifesto though published in 2021 impacted the development of the MyData4Children consortium of 100 organizations and data for children stream at the MyData Summit in 2022.

Emerging areas of work

OGIP introduced several new areas of work in 2022. It developed a future-ready, child-centred framework for digital equality and are using it to conduct a review of digital inclusion policies and programmes around the world to provide recommendations towards greater digital equality for children. And a rapid analysis of the metaverse, applications of extended reality and children will be released in 2023.

Accelerating green school-to-work transitions for young people report will come out early 2023. The report examines what policymakers can do to accelerate green school-to-work transition pathways; spotlights some of the most promising approaches to supporting young people into green livelihoods; explores the key challenges to creating better green school to work transition pathways; and offers a series of policy recommendations. A draft for peer review is expected in mid-January 2023.

The Foresight and Policy Team produced a rapid analysis examining the value of social contract framings that have emerged in recent years and whether children feature in these. The paper identifies several core themes that are common across the framings used by other development organisations, such as the World Bank and UNDP, and explores how they can be applied to children and youth.

Lastly, a rapid analysis on the potential for using taxation as a driver of results for children will be issued in the first half of 2023. This is the first paper of the "taxation and children" series, which will highlight the importance of different aspects of taxation for the realization of children's rights. Two other areas that will be analyzed include Carbon Taxation and Taxation of Digital Platforms and transactions involving children's Data.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Managing a merger: The merging of OGIP and OoR consumed considerable time and energy throughout the year, creating uncertainty and impacting the morale of many staff. OGIP leadership acknowledged staff burnout and provided sufficient space and time for colleagues to process organizational challenges.

Coping with resource constraints: Resource constraints - particularly for intelligence work that informs UNICEF and shorter deliverables with faster turnaround time and secondary data – proved not amenable to external fundraising. Meaningful engagement with youth or any other partners also took time and resources. OGIP secured adequate internal allocation for each stream of work and made sure that the team did not spread itself 'too thin' and chose outputs carefully to deliver on a small number which have significant impact. OGIP also made good use of small-scale funding agreement instead of institutional contracts and developed long term relationship with external partners to reduce the

administrative burden related to contracting and build true partnerships when working on knowledge-based products.

Building cross-sectoral collaboration: The work on foresight requires collaboration of different work streams as the challenges the world is facing are interconnected: climate, geopolitics, economy, etc. Most of our products are a collaborative effort that include not only the contributions of policy experts but also those of technical teams from within the organization (EMOPS, PG, ICT, Innovation, and other HQ Divisions and regional offices) and external experts. Some of the issues that the team works on have a strong innovation or frontier lens such as the work on digital innovations, climate change, and warfare, driving the discussion about the next generation of issues. We also use innovative approaches to our work such as developing technical working groups and soliciting input into policy products through open and public consultation. Striking the proper balance between providing products that are interesting and useful to colleagues in the field, while not drifting too far into guidance/programming remained a challenging but important approach.

Sustainability and transitioning away from topics: Sustaining attention on any issue area long-term is challenging given the need to keep one eye on the horizon and introduce new topics. Not all issue areas, however, can be readily handed off to another part of UNICEF without proper consultation and planning. For some issues, there is a need to review priorities and phase out.

Investment in youth engagement: Youth-centered approaches requires capacity and investment which will be critical to sustain and scale this work in ways that are truly meaningful and impactful with, and for, young people and youth partners.