

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

Best practice

UNICEF continues to address the issue of gender based violence in stable and unstable situations at its Headquarters and field office level through a mix of strategies such as: advocacy and media campaigns, support to change legislation and law enforcement, counselling and services for women and girls. Fifty-five country offices reported that they worked in partnership with communities, NGOs and other UN agencies in support of programmes to address gender-based violence. In October 2001, UNICEF co-sponsored together with Rockefeller Foundation, an international conference on "Working with men to end gender-based violence: An interchange for global action" with CSO, NGO and Inter-Agency participants from all regions. The participants issued "The Bellagio Statement" which will be used as an advocacy tool by all participating institutions. Many countries have concrete programmes to combat and prevent all forms of gender-based violence and innovative approaches have been reported from among others Bangladesh, China, Laos, Pakistan, Peru and Viet Nam.

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Recent policy statements

In the context of preparation for the General Assembly's Special Session on Children (May 2002) and the initiatives to build a Global Movement for Children, UNICEF emphasized a focus on women in UNICEF's work, which included, but went beyond mothers, and promoted a stronger alliance between child rights and women's rights organizations, since women's rights are fundamental for the fulfilment of children's rights particularly girls.

In the outcome document from the 56th session of the General Assembly, "A World Fit for Children", both the strong links between women's human rights and those of children and the importance of addressing the changing roles of men to achieve gender equality are stated. Paragraph 23 states: "the achievement of goals for children, particularly for girls, will be advanced if women fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to development, are empowered to participate fully and equally in all spheres of society and are protected and free from all forms of violence, abuse and discrimination."

Paragraph 24 states: "we also recognize the need to address the changing role of men in society as boys, adolescent and fathers, and the challenges faced by boys growing up in today's world. We will further promote the shared responsibility of both parents in education and in the raising of children, and will make every effort to ensure that fathers have opportunities to participate in their children's lives."

To reach both the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the goals defined in the Outcome Document from the Special Session on Children, UNICEF has developed a Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2002-2005, which clearly commits to the rights of women and girls. This Plan focuses UNICEF's work in five priority areas: Girl's education, HIV/AIDS, Immunization plus, Integrated Early Childhood Development and Child Protection.

To secure the gender perspective in the MTSP, a tool has been developed consisting of checklists with strategic gender dimensions/issues for each of the five priority areas. These will be made available to field offices to support programme planning.

Efforts have also been made to ensure attention to gender issues in all major programme guidance and training materials for UNICEF's field offices. This includes the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual and the Programme Process Training Manual, which integrates attention to the rights of women and girls.

Operational activities

During the General Assembly 27th Special Session on Children, UNICEF and DAW organized a well-attended supporting event: "Women's rights and children's rights: from international law to national realities". The panellists included the Chair of CRC, a CEDAW member and representatives from Governments. The Panel showcased best practices in adapting international law for women and children to the country level.

During the past year, a revision of UNICEF's internal Consolidated Interagency

Appeal (CAP) guidelines were conducted and the gender aspect was highlighted as a cross-cutting issue for the CAP process.

In the West and Central Africa Region, UNICEF played a strategic role to support an inter-agency regional effort to strengthen the gender aspect in the CCA/UNDAF process through a consultancy study of the CCA/UNDAFs in twelve West and Central African countries and hosted a seminar in Abidjan in June 2002, to discuss findings and propose future actions.

UNICEF Country Offices are taking steps to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender within Country Programmes and to promote an increase in focus on gender issues within the UN system. An increasing number of countries, including Egypt, Guyana, Nepal and Nigeria reported gender mainstreaming in their Country Programmes. As a key strategy to promote gender focused planning, UNICEF continued to support the increased availability of sex-disaggregated data through surveys (including Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys) and other information collection tools.

Other recent activities

UNICEF continues to support elimination of harmful traditional practices, specifically FGM and early marriage. Fifteen Country Offices, mainly in Egypt, the Horn of Africa and West Africa support activities to combat FGM. UNICEF is also active in advocacy and awareness-raising against early marriage in nine countries.

Gender dimensions have proven to be both central to and a challenge in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Young women and girls are now recognized as being the most vulnerable group. Field offices are increasingly reporting an integration of the gender dimension in the efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. A multi-country pioneer project co-ordinated and led by UNICEF Headquarters is using participatory methodologies involving the youth to show ways of reducing the vulnerability of young women. Another Headquarters initiative will use a methodology to work with men and boys in five pilot countries to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls.

For a better understanding of the issue of early gender socialization within UNICEF's support to Integrated Early child Development (IECD), studies were conducted in seven countries, Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco and Nepal. These case studies will be used to develop a set of recommendations on ways to strengthen and enhance the issue of gender socialization in UNICEF supported IECD programmes.

Although many country offices report on efforts to mainstream a gender perspective and to promote women's and girls' rights in programming, human and financial resources to carry out this work is still a challenge for both UNICEF and its partners in many countries. The lack of sex-disaggregated data and especially lack of analysis and use of the results for programming, is still one of the major obstacles for effective programming to achieve women's and girls' rights and gender equality. ■