

**Questionnaire to the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations**

**UNICEF**

***Note:***

*This completed questionnaire does not present an exhaustive list of UNICEF activities; it contains a selection of practices pertaining to UNICEF's interventions at global and field-level, including as they relate to the ways in which the organisation is responding to the recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.*

At its fourteenth session in 2015, the Permanent Forum will review the following: (a) Outcome of the high-level plenary also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; (b) Post-2015 Development Agenda; (c) Youth, self-harm and suicide.

**1. Please provide information on how your agency is working with these important issues in the seven socio-cultural regions of the Permanent Forum<sup>1</sup>. Where possible, please include information on the situation of indigenous women in your responses.**

**(a) Outcome of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

As the 2013/2014 Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, UNICEF played a key role in coordinating inter-agency inputs to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Most notably, it led the development of nine inter-agency thematic papers, which helped inform the outcome document of the Conference. In follow-up to the Conference, UNICEF disseminated the outcome document among its country offices and is providing inputs to the development of the system-wide action plan via its active membership in the IASG.

**(b) Post-2015 Development Agenda**

UNICEF – along with other child-focused organisations<sup>2</sup> - believes that children are at the heart of sustainable development, and that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should place the rights and needs of all children, including indigenous children, as central to its goals.

UNICEF Country Offices have continually supported the participation of indigenous children and communities in consultations on the Post-2015 Development Framework. At the global level, UNICEF is firmly committed to ensuring that children remain at the centre of the next development agenda, and that there is a clear and explicit focus on 'leaving no one behind'. Specific measures for prioritizing and accelerating progress for the poorest and most vulnerable children, and to address discrimination, should be pursued to ensure the new Sustainable Development Goals are met equitably. Thus, all targets must be measurable to ensure equitable results for all children. In addition, disaggregated data will be essential for monitoring equity gaps, strengthening social accountability and ensuring that the gaps between the most and least advantaged groups

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<sup>1</sup> UNPFII's seven socio-cultural regions are Africa; Asia; Central and South America and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific.

<sup>2</sup> Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, World Vision; see joint communication 'Recommendations for a Post-2015 Development Agenda, Recapturing the vision of a 'World Fit for Children''.

are narrowing. Data should be disaggregated by all grounds of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law.

**(c) Youth, self-harm suicide**

At the global level, UNICEF completed and launched in May 2013, in collaboration with UN Women, UNFPA, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), ‘Breaking the Silence on Violence against Indigenous Girls, Adolescents and Young Women’. The study provides a deeper understanding of the magnitude, nature and context of violence experienced specifically by indigenous girls, adolescents and young women. Drawing on examples from Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America, the study finds that violence against indigenous girls and women is heightened because of, among others, the history of colonial domination, dispossession of indigenous peoples, economic and political exclusion and the lack of such basic services as healthcare, schooling and birth registration. The study explains that this violence contributes to trauma, low self-esteem, poor health and poor school performance, and is often associated with high incidences of depression, alcohol and drug abuse, **self-harm and suicide**. While critical gaps in knowledge and data on violence against indigenous girls, women and adolescents are exposed, the report offers a set of guiding principles – to accelerate progress and action to protect and prevent violence against indigenous girls and women in all its forms.

As previously reported, in collaboration with the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), UNICEF completed a study on teenage suicide among indigenous peoples in Latin America. The research consists of three case studies providing comparative descriptions and analysis of suicide among young indigenous Awajún (Peru), Guarani (Brazil) and Embera (Colombia) peoples. The research, which was coordinated by IWGIA, focused on working directly with indigenous adolescents at the community-level, and represents a starting point for future research to be conducted by indigenous peoples themselves on this painful issue.

Recent relevant activities of UNICEF Country Offices are listed below.

UNICEF Colombia has provided individual counseling to 1,885 people and group counseling to 377 indigenous families of the Embera Dobida community which are settled on the banks of Catrú and Dubaza Rivers, in the department of Chocó. Since 2009, this community has suffered fourteen cases of suicide and 54 cases of suicide attempt, eight of them among women between 14 and 31 years. Among the causes of this serious trend identified by the community are: i) the food crisis caused by the loss of animal and plant species that were previously found in the rainforest and rivers, ii) domestic violence and iii) alcohol consumption. Targeted children received psychosocial care through the ‘Return to Happiness’ strategy developed and monitored by 26 community volunteers assigned to the project. The main resulting lesson learned is that primary prevention should include health and social policy that improves the quality of life of indigenous peoples in all dimensions.

UNICEF Brazil organized with the National Parliament a hearing in the Human Rights Committee with indigenous adolescents and youth from the Amazon, to raise the main challenges faced by indigenous groups that live in that geographic area, especially regarding access to culturally sensitive and adequate health, protection and education

services. The adolescents raised as their main concern the high rate of suicide among indigenous peoples.<sup>3</sup>

**2. With respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum addressed specifically to your agency:**

**(i) What are some of the obstacles your agency has encountered in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, including those addressed specifically to your agency?**

UNICEF Country Offices recently reported the following obstacles in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum (the relevance of which vary based on country context):

- lack of knowledge and dissemination of the recommendations
- invisibility of indigenous peoples' rights in the development priorities of a country
- lack of disaggregated data on indigenous peoples
- lack of knowledge and expertise on indigenous peoples' rights on the part of the duty bearers for children's rights
- limited financial resources to meet the multiple needs of indigenous communities and the high costs related to the difficulty in accessing remote indigenous communities
- institutional weakness
- dispersion of indigenous organizations
- lack of support and commitment of all government institutions, as well as with the leadership of indigenous organizations
- lack of coordination of actions at national level
- lack of coordination and cooperation with local indigenous authorities

**(ii) What are some of the factors that facilitate your agency's implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, including those addressed specifically to your agency?**

UNICEF Country Offices recently identified the following as factors that assist in the implementation of the Permanent Forum recommendations:

- political will
- Forum recommendations that are directed at national authorities
- country visits and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples
- inclusion of indigenous issues in regional and national fora
- national consultation frameworks that facilitate the convening of key stakeholders
- expanded strategic partnerships among UN agencies under the authority of the Resident Coordinator; joint UN programmes
- catalytic funding for indigenous peoples' access to essential services
- progress in legislation and regulations, such as constitutional reforms, institutions that are committed to the compliance with indigenous peoples' rights etc.
- documentation of evidence as credible advocacy base

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Indigenous Missionary Committee (National Organization), in 2013, 56 suicides were reported, of those 36 were committed by adolescents between 13 and 21 years old (CIMI, 2013).

- the major objective of UNICEF country cooperation programme being to address equity gaps and promote social equality

**3. Given the Forum’s recommendation for the adoption of policies on indigenous peoples’ issues, please specify whether your agency has:**

**(i) A policy or other similar tool on indigenous peoples’ issues;**

UNICEF is integrating principles and programme guidance on indigenous and minority children into on-going processes, most notably into its Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES), enabling real-time monitoring of bottlenecks and barriers in programmatic work. MoRES is helping UNICEF and its partners to improve policies and systems and to better target interventions that will lead to improved results for the most disadvantaged communities, including indigenous peoples. This framing will ensure that the guidance is incorporated into UNICEF programming rather than operating as a standalone document.

**(ii) Recent programmes on indigenous peoples’ issues;**

UNICEF has been active at country level, with various programmes and activities specifically designed to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, and projects ranging from bilingual and intercultural education, culturally sensitive health services, to birth registration and the fight against violence, abuse and exploitation.

The UNICEF Country Office in the Congo, led by its Child Protection Section, has continued to strengthen its focus on the indigenous population, which is considered to be the most vulnerable population in the country. A mobile approach is being applied for the provision of services to indigenous children, especially those hardest to reach. In the department of Likouala, sanitation and safe drinking facilities were installed to benefit 5.000 Bantu and indigenous residents, among which 2.280 indigenous and 251 indigenous pupils from ORA schools (schools applying the “observer, réfléchir, agir” or “observe, think, act” (ORA) method) of Modzaka, Enyelle, and Akolo<sup>4</sup>. In 2014, UNICEF also actively supported the organisation of a parliamentary day that assessed progress in the implementation of the national action plan (2014-2017) for the improvement of well-being of the indigenous population and the progress for strengthening the legislative framework for the protection of their rights. Participants included parliamentarians, government representatives, representatives of the indigenous population, civil society organizations, UN agencies and members of the United Nations Indigenous Peoples’ Partnership (UNIPP).

In Cambodia, UNICEF continues to support multilingual education to address equitable participation in education by children from indigenous minorities who live in remote, sparsely populated and least developed provinces in Cambodia. The programme started as a pilot in six schools in Rattanakiri in 2002, and has since also expanded to the provinces of Mondulkiri, Stung Treng, Kratie and Preah Vihear. From 2010/2011 to 2013/2014, 3,332 children benefited from learning in their mother tongue, representing an increase of 34 per cent. Repetition rates declined in all five provinces, ranging from one percentage point in Mondulkiri to six in Rattanakiri, compared to a decline in national average by only 0.5 percentage points, to 4.8 per cent. It is noted, however, that rates of 13 per cent in Stung

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<sup>4</sup> The UNICEF Country Office in the Congo supports schools applying the “observer, réfléchir, agir” or “observe, think, act” (ORA) method, a bilingual and intercultural education method based on an active pedagogy.

Treng and 9 per cent in Preah Vihear remain high despite overall progress. It is understood that the multilingual education programme contributed to the observed positive trends.

In Viet Nam, with technical support from UNICEF, a report on multidimensional child poverty and vulnerability among ethnic minority children was recently finalized. Key results were presented at high level policy fora on sustainable poverty reduction and ethnic minority policies, including an international conference on ethnic minority development. UNICEF also supported the Committee for Ethnic Minority in the integration of ethnic minority children perspectives into the Master Plan of Ethnic Minority Human Resource Development 2020 (with a direction towards 2030). Further, in partnership with World Vision, UNICEF supports capacity building and placement of midwives in hard to reach ethnic minority villages in Dien Bien. In 2014, two training courses were completed for 39 ethnic minority midwives and one training is ongoing for 19 ethnic minority midwives.

A substantial number of UNICEF good practices with indigenous peoples continue to emerge from the Latin America and Caribbean region. A selection of recent activities of UNICEF Country Offices in this region are listed below.

Over the past few decades, child mortality has been significantly reduced in Brazil. Despite the progress, the rates among indigenous children remain high.<sup>5</sup> To address this, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to improve the Feed and Nutrition Vigilance System in four of the nine Amazon states; and to strengthen the indigenous Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) in three of the nine states. In Sao Gabriel da Cachoeira, the most populated state by indigenous groups and with the highest inequality in Brazil, UNICEF and partners organized a ‘Baby week’, promoting child registration, vaccination campaigns and breast feeding among other activities.

In an effort to strengthen the community health system, UNICEF Guyana supported the scale-up of programmes for routine HIV testing of pregnant women in primary level antenatal care settings. As a result of expanded coverage, 95 per cent of pregnant women now have access to quality ‘prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV’ or PMTCT services which contributes to risk reduction of mother to child transmission during pregnancy, childbirth and within the post natal period. Significant progress was also made in the implementation of the Sports and Culture for Development programme, a joint initiative of UNICEF and the Caribbean Sports and Development Agency. Designed to support the Government of Guyana national strategy to reach adolescents in remote communities, the programme was carried out in seven dormitory schools in all interior areas, one juvenile detention center and two communities with significant challenges.

In El Salvador, UNICEF supported development of the National and Local Social System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; a range of programmes to prevent violence at a family, school and community levels; and programmes for educational reintegration and retention of out of school children. In Nicaragua, UNICEF joined forces with UNFPA, FAO and UNDP to support the development of a comprehensive, multisectoral Human Security Program in the Alto Wangki region bordering Honduras. This is a coordinated effort with the Indigenous Government, where the majority of the Miskitu and Mayagna population live.

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<sup>5</sup> According to SIM, Ministry of Health 2011 data, the mortality rate among indigenous children was 49.1 percent per 1000 live births as opposed to 14.9 percent at a national level.

**(iii) Budgetary allocations for indigenous peoples' issues;**

UNICEF does not track budgetary allocations for indigenous peoples' issues at the global level on an annual basis. Relevant information by UNICEF Country Office is available upon request.

**(iv) Projects/activities on indigenous peoples' issues,**

*In order to facilitate the quantification of data by the Forum, please indicate the number of programmes and projects/activities devoted to indigenous peoples issues in the past year.*

In Bangladesh, UNICEF continues to support the government's decentralization efforts via an integrated community development project in the three Chittagong Hill Tracts districts. The project has delivered basic services through a network of 3,800 village centres in highly inaccessible areas. Run by a trained community worker, these centres provide early childhood education and basic health and nutrition services in addition to awareness building in the communities.

In Peru, UNICEF has supported efforts to strengthen public policies on health and nutrition aiming to address chronic malnutrition, anaemia, and Hepatitis B among indigenous peoples. Community health care interventions with a focus on pregnant women and children in the Kukama communities of the Parinari, Urarina and Santa Rita de Castilla districts reached 50 communities.

UNICEF is also providing support for the design and implementation of the National Intercultural Bilingual Education Programme, both in Andean and Amazonian areas. The objective is to strengthen the decentralized management processes of the programme, related to educational procedures for development and validation of the curricula. This includes the knowledge of indigenous peoples; educational material; tools for the evaluation of learning in native tongues; tools for strengthening teachers' training; and disbursement of a scholarship programme for indigenous youth. In addition, diverse participation spaces are being strengthened for indigenous organizations and federations and for children, adolescents, and community leaders.

Over the past few years UNICEF has been exploring the strategic use of SMS technology to improve access and coordination in the delivery of services for the most marginalized and excluded populations. In Brazil, for example, UNICEF assisted government counterparts in strategy design to improve birth registration for indigenous populations in several Amazonian states, including Roarima and Maranhao. The experience suggests that performance monitoring of local registration centres, free text messaging provided by mobile providers and established links between community centres and national authorities helped to significantly increase the number of registered births. In Manaus the provision of birth registration was also linked to better access to basic health and protection services.

Innovations and the real-time monitoring approach have also been put to use to enhance the quality of the education, protection and water and sanitation systems in the Alto Wangki and Bocay regions of Nicaragua. For example, in 2014, twenty schools applied innovative and socio-culturally adapted technology to improve sanitation through rural ecological toilets; harvesting, storage and use of rainwater; and recycling of waste water. In addition, UNICEF Nicaragua piloted the real time monitoring of indicators of WASH, education and protection

at school level using SMS. UNICEF also supported training in building and plumbing for adolescents that are at risk of social exclusion. The initiative focused on strengthening resilience through development of social skills and entrepreneurial competencies.

### **The situation of indigenous children in industrialized countries**

UNICEF National Committees continue to increase their efforts to promote and protect the rights of indigenous children.

In late 2014, in partnership with the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law and Plan International Australia, UNICEF Australia held a symposium on *Achieving Universal Birth Registration in Australia*. The symposium focused on the situation of indigenous peoples in Australia who have not had their birth registered and lessons from overseas in improving birth registration. In mid-2014 UNICEF Australia released a hip-hop video with accompanying resources as an education and engagement tool for indigenous rights education in schools and communities. The video was developed through a workshop with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who communicated what rights in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) meant to them through the performance of a song.

UNICEF Canada has been participating as a member of a research advisory committee with a number of other partners including the Centre for Research on Children & Families at McGill University, the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Paediatric Society, and the Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres. Research has been published to evaluate the implementation of 'Jordan's Principle', an approach to ensuring equitable services for First Nations children living on-reserve as opposed to non-Aboriginal children, to reduce disparities in the continuity of services for these children. UNICEF Canada promotes awareness of the international, legally recognized human rights of indigenous children including through dissemination of the youth-friendly version of the UNDRIP and child-friendly posters of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in several indigenous languages; through public speaking events (e.g., Prairie Child Welfare Symposium) and in the media. UNICEF Canada collaborates with a number of indigenous organizations to share information and strengthen advocacy, including for the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing allegations of inequitable funding of services for indigenous children, and various court cases affecting them. Further, UNICEF Canada trains governments, independent human rights institutions for children and non-governmental organizations including those specifically serving indigenous children on using a child rights-based approach to policy, legislation and programme design, which includes recognizing explicitly the rights of indigenous children.

UNICEF New Zealand continues its advocacy for the rights of Maori children in submissions to parliament and government, in work with news media, and in its work with other non-governmental organisations. In recent years, UNICEF New Zealand prepared a version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in te reo Maori (the indigenous language of New Zealand) and published a book about children's rights in both English and te reo Maori. In 2014, rangatahi Maori (Maori youth) were involved in the UNICEF New Zealand Youth Congress, which was held on a marae (Maori meeting house), providing an opportunity for some of the participants to experience a traditional Maori meeting place and formal Maori greeting for the first time. Rangatahi Maori also participated in the UNICEF New Zealand Youth vs MPs debate held at Parliament in the lead up to the election. UNICEF New Zealand is working to extend the Just Play programme, which is currently operating in 11 countries in the South Pacific, so that children in New Zealand can participate in it. Initially, the

programme will be operating in parts of the country with a high proportion of Maori students and UNICEF will be working to ensure that the programme is relevant to local needs, including those of tamariki Maori (Maori children).

UNICEF New Zealand is also actively involved in systemic advocacy on issues of poverty and the disparities experienced by Maori children. The New Zealand Government will lodge its written periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in May 2015 and UNICEF New Zealand is working to enable public comment on the draft report, as well as participation by Maori and children in the development of the alternative (or 'shadow') report to the Committee. Finally, UNICEF New Zealand is represented by two very talented young Maori Youth Ambassadors. These young ambassadors have connected UNICEF New Zealand with other Maori youth and promoted the importance of a right to practice their own culture, and to learn in the language and customs of their culture (Article 30 of the CRC). The ambassadors developed videos to promote the importance of 'Treasuring our Tamariki' as part of Children's Day, and a video to promote the importance of te reo Maori and Tikanga Maori as part of Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori (Maori Language Week).

**4. Does your agency have regular or ad hoc capacity-building programmes on indigenous peoples' issues for staff, or a plan for capacity-building activities in this area, at headquarters or in the field?**

UNICEF continues to integrate principles and programme guidance on indigenous and minority children into on-going trainings and processes, mainly under the umbrella of Programme Excellence. For example, the UNICEF course Communication for Development (C4D) aims to provide UNICEF staff with relevant knowledge, skills and tools to address socio-cultural determinants of UNICEF programmes and humanitarian actions through C4D. UNICEF's flagship Programme Planning Process training includes a training session on a human rights-based approach to programming which is of particular relevance to UNICEF's work on indigenous issues, as it contains guidance on the development of a rights-based equity-focused situation analysis.

Related to this, UNICEF continues to regularly update its *Guidance on Conducting a Situation Analysis of Children's and Women's Rights*. This document contains guidance on the disaggregation of data and information, to the extent possible, by various characteristics of children as relevant in each context (such as area of residence (urban/rural), location (national, regional, community), ethnicity, race etc.). It underlines that analysis across different characteristics is important in understanding the multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion that girls or boys, including indigenous children, at different ages in their childhood, as well as women may face.

Finally, in Latin America and the Caribbean, each UNICEF Country Office has one or more focal points on indigenous issues, who are being continuously informed on news related to indigenous peoples. Training sessions on an intercultural approach to programming have been organized by UNICEF Country Offices in this region. UNICEF Peru, for example, organized for its staff in 2013 a workshop on intercultural approaches to the development of programmes and projects in indigenous communities.

In other regions, such as in Congo Brazzaville, for example, UNICEF staff recently participated in workshops for capacity building of UN agencies on a human rights-based approach and the protection of indigenous peoples' rights.

**5. Does your agency have a focal point on indigenous peoples' issues? If so, please provide the name and contact information of this person.**

The Human Rights Unit within the Programme Division at UNICEF headquarters acts as the focal point for indigenous issues at the global level.

Contact information:

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 Programme Division  
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At the regional level, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean is the only UNICEF regional office to have a focal point for indigenous issues. The regional office also has an internal network of focal points on indigenous issues, with each country office in the region having one or more focal points on indigenous issues. Contact information of these country-based focal points is available upon request.

**6. Please provide a list of conferences and other meetings organized or supported by your agency on indigenous peoples' issues for 2014 and 2015.**

Numerous meetings were supported and organized by UNICEF at the programmatic level in 2014. A selection of meetings is presented below:

**Congo:**

- Participation in the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (UNPFII) and side event on United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership (UNIPP) in New York in March 2014.
- Participation in the third edition of the International Forum of Indigenous Peoples of Central Africa (Impfondo, 4-7 March 2014).
- Facilitation of UNIPP field visit and monitoring activities at the country level (July 26 to August 12, 2014)
- Organisation of parliamentary day of awareness day on the rights of indigenous peoples (Brazzaville, July 29, 2014).
- Celebration of International Day of Indigenous Peoples (Sibiti, August 9, 2014).

**2015 :**

- Organization of a mid-term review of the National Action Plan on the Improvement of Quality of Life of Indigenous Peoples 2014-2017.
- Support for the celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9, 2015).
- Contribution to the validation workshop and dissemination of the study on social, cultural, legal and spiritual institutions of indigenous peoples in Congo.
- Launch of joint programme of the UN agencies in Congo on their contribution to the improvement of indigenous peoples' quality of life.

**Ecuador:**

- World Conference on Indigenous Peoples: as indicated above, UNICEF Ecuador supported the participation of the Vice President of the Confederation of Kichwa Indigenous Peoples – ECUARUNARI
- Two-day meeting in December 2014, where 50 children and adolescents of several Kichwa indigenous peoples shared their concerns on nourishment and nutrition issues through artistic presentations, and by interacting with their elders.

**Peru:**

- Workshop on the strengthening of intercultural policies, addressed to public sectors; in the framework of UN inter-agency cooperation. Lima, July 2015.
- Workshop on the formulation of a National Plan for the control of HIV in indigenous communities of the Amazonian area. Nieva, Amazonas. November 2014.
- National meeting of indigenous children, organized by the Ministry of Education with the support of UNICEF.
- National meeting of indigenous adolescents: educational policies with a gender approach through the voice of the girls, organized by the Florecer Network with the support of UNICEF.

**2015:**

- Presentation of the Ombudsman's Office Report on Intercultural Healthcare (January 2015)
- Preparation and presentation of the Ombudsman's Office Report on Intercultural Bilingual Education