MONITORING WELL-BEING AND INEQUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN URBAN CONTEXTS

Local Assessment for Lima and Recife

2016

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Executive summary

This report presents the results of an assessment of resources, individual expertise and institutional capacity, carried out in the cities of Lima and Recife, as an initial stage in the creation of a system for measuring and monitoring well-being and inequality in early childhood in urban settings.

The proposed monitoring system is founded upon the conceptual and methodological validation of a strategy developed in seven cities (each a member of the Latin American Network for Fair, Democratic and Sustainable Cities and Territories). The strategy calls for advocacy work both in government settings and within civil society, with the aim of establishing a child-centered perspective as a parameter for the analysis of quality of life in urban contexts.

The scope of this assessment covers the first stages of the monitoring strategy, which lay the foundations for its implementation, through the establishment of a number of teams tasked with identifying resources and potential settings for advocacy.

Furthermore, it provides a solid platform for the positioning and implementation of the Urban 95 initiative, exploring the possibility of incorporating a number of different measurement tools into the monitoring proposal. It aims to evaluate the provisions offered by cities for safeguarding the well-being of children under three years of age, and to increase the prominence of early childhood within the urban policy agenda.

This report provides a summary of the work that has been carried out based on dialog with key individuals, institutional analysis, contextual information and evaluations of potential partners and proposals for collaborative work. The report concludes by proposing a number of key areas for future work, as well as specific suggestions to support the positioning and consolidation of the Urban 95 initiative on a regional scale.

1. Key actors and opportunities for collaboration

In order to identify potential partners, able to offer advocacy capacity, institutional sustainability and high levels of expertise, around 100 documents and institutional publications and details of more than 50 local initiatives were compiled and reviewed. Beyond a schematic but in-depth mapping of the relevant actors, this review allowed us to formulate the following recommendations for developing collaborative relationships for the purposes of implementing a monitoring system in these two cities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lima</th>
<th>Recife</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Lima Cómo Vamos.²</td>
<td>- The Recife Observatory.⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Center for Research and Education Services (CISE) / Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUC).³</td>
<td>- Dom Helder Camara Center for Studies and Social Action (Cendhec).⁵</td>
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<td>- Research Group on Child and Adolescent Policy (GECRIA) – Federal University of Pernambuco.⁶</td>
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¹ http://redciudades.net/[Spanish and Portuguese]
² www.limacomovamos.org/
³ http://cise.pucp.edu.pe/cise/
⁴ www.observatoriodorecife.org.br
⁵ https://www.facebook.com/cendhec.ong/
⁶ https://www.facebook.com/GecriaUFPE-718585704928949/
2. **Sources of information and evidence**

Another necessary step towards the development of a monitoring strategy was an analysis of existing information and resources in relation to the living conditions of young children in the cities in question. Drawing on this analysis, we can put forward a number of recommendations for formulating indicators for this segment of the population:

- In order to develop a system for monitoring living conditions in early childhood, it is essential to be able to access information that is updated on a regular basis. Indicators should be recalculated at least every two years; otherwise the measurements obtained run the risk of passing over entire generations of children under the age of three.

- It is recommended that indicators for early childhood be based on statistics derived from official sources. Information released by official bodies is more likely to make an impact on public policy, since such data, having been compiled by the government offices, is less open to dispute by the authorities.

- This search for resources and official data must be aimed at discovering what information is available from entities at various levels (national, regional and local), in order to obtain spatially-disaggregated data which allows us to draw conclusions about the lived realities of young children in the region and the intra-urban inequalities that they face.

Within this framework, it was found that for both cities the majority of openly accessible information derives from national studies which suffer from limitations in both topicality and level of disaggregation.

- Studies repeated on a regular basis, which offer more scope for local disaggregation and are openly accessible, are generally based on censuses which are carried out every five or ten years.

- Data compiled by official (generally administrative) bodies at the local level could potentially offer a greater degree of spatial disaggregation. However, such data is not made openly available on a regular basis.

- Previous efforts to measure quality of life, rights and well-being in early childhood have not made significant advances in terms of analyzing and monitoring local, disaggregated and up-to-date information. Such efforts have restricted themselves to examining publicly available data from surveys and national censuses - limiting both their potential to offer insights into the living standards of urban children and their effectiveness in advocating for improvement.

The circumstances described above reveal a number of obstacles to our understanding of the real local living standards of children in early childhood, and point to some significant gaps in our knowledge. They also, however, open up a window of opportunity for new proposals in this area.

The strategy to be taken forward must incorporate procedures for gathering disaggregated data at the national, state and local levels. The measures suggested by the proposed monitoring strategy reflect this requirement. Such measures also feature in the work being carried out by the potential local partners we have identified, although they have not been specifically developed with the early childhood population in mind.

[7] Both initiatives (Lima Cómo Vamos and the Recife Observatory) have taken advantage of transparency legislation to access performance and quality of life indicators for the two cities:

mind. This approach makes it possible to draw evidence for living standards in early childhood from disaggregated data at the district (Lima) and microregion (Recife) levels.

3. Institutional Context and Local Policy

Finally, this assessment included an analysis of the institutional context and of local policies, with the aim of identifying potential venues for advocacy with respect to the monitoring and evaluation of quality of life in cities from an early-childhood perspective.

In this respect, we can see that, based on the responsibilities of local governments and the commitments that they have made, there are some significant weaknesses in terms of policies and interventions designed to have a positive impact on the lives of very young children. However, we can also identify various forums where there is an opportunity to contribute, in an evidence-based and socially accountable manner, to urban programs which benefit the quality of life of the general population by safeguarding the rights and well-being of children in early childhood.

Among the venues for advocacy identified in each city are:

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<td>- Metropolitan and district round tables</td>
<td>- Recife City Council⁸</td>
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<td>for action against poverty</td>
<td>- Pernambuco School Boards⁹</td>
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<td>- Council of metropolitan mayors</td>
<td>- Municipal secretaries</td>
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<td>- Local coordinating councils</td>
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<td>- Local/district mayors</td>
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Impact of the Assessment

In addition to local-level analyses, the activities carried out as part of this assessment have yielded significant results in terms of moving forward to the next stages of the proposal for monitoring well-being and inequality in early childhood in urban contexts.

Dialog with potential collaborators, both in the cities studied and in other Latin American cities, has allowed us to bring the issues and programs under consideration to the attention of key audiences.

In Lima, CISE-PUC has begun to put together a project for monitoring indicators for children, together with Lima Cómo Vamos. In Recife, the governing body of the Recife Observatory has approved the composition of a working group on childhood, which should lay the foundations for future collaborative work in studying the child population. Finally, through consultation with Nossa São Paulo, we received input and expressions of interest in relation to including São Paulo in a monitoring strategy focused on children, within the framework of the Brazilian¹⁰ and Latin American Networks of Sustainable Cities.

¹⁰http://www.cidadessustentaveis.org.br/
Recommendations for action

In these local contexts we find clear interest, capacity, settings and opportunity for developing the proposed initiatives. However, there is also a need for more joined-up action and improvements in institutional coordination, accountability and evaluation of local initiatives aimed at early childhood. Therefore, it is advisable that action be taken towards:

- Promoting the importance of well-being and equality in early childhood in the eyes of local government, in order to improve quality of life in cities.
- Producing evidence through which urban policy interventions aimed at improving the lives of children, their families and communities can be enhanced.
- Encouraging inter-sectoral coordination within local government.
- Strengthening local civil society by providing tools and methodologies that help build the resilience of initiatives in this sphere.
- Promoting collaborative relationships between different sectors at the local and community level.
- Leveraging local action to support regional initiatives, by consolidating the working group on indicators for children promoted by Equity for Children/Equidad para la Infancia within the framework of the Latin American Network of Sustainable Cities.
- Making a real contribution to the pursuit of global targets in relation to the objectives of sustainable development and the new urban agenda, by taking action to improve the living standards of children in cities.

The proposal for monitoring well-being and inequality presents us with an opportunity to make progress in these areas. Through the actions set out in this assessment, we have made progress in the initial stages of the strategy and laid the groundwork for it to continue.

Equity for Children/Equidad para la Infancia is committed to the Urban 95 initiative, and we hope to contribute to its development by drawing on our experience of monitoring processes in local contexts, on the basis of which we can suggest a number of different measurement tools. The new proposal from the Bernard van Leer Foundation could also benefit from the work we have carried out in cities and with teams forming part of the Latin American Network of Sustainable Cities, which has a key coordination role.

The following cities, based on the partnerships that we have established in each, can be regarded as forming a starting point from which to create a specific proposal for evaluating urban contexts from an early-childhood perspective:

- Colombia: Corona Foundation\(^\text{11}\)
  - Bogotá: Bogotá Cómo Vamos and Observatório sobre infancia UNAL [the Children’s Observatory at the National University of Colombia]

\(^\text{11}\) Three years of working with the Corona Foundation and the Colombian Cómo Vamos network have allowed us to influence both institutional objectives and the regular analyses of quality of life in the cities that make up the network; in order to ensure the incorporation of indicators relating to the circumstances of local children, to consolidate the proposal for monitoring well-being and inequality and to validate the conceptual and methodological model for intervention.
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- Manizales: Manizales Cómo Vamos and CINDE Manizales [International Center for Education and Human Development]
- Cali: Cali Cómo Vamos and Javeriana University
- Medellín: Medellín Cómo Vamos

- Brazil
  - São Paulo: Brazil Arcor Institute
  - Recife: Proposed partners: CENDHEC, Recife Observatory and academic groups
  - Salvador: Avante
  - Rio de Janeiro: Ciespi [International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood]

- Peru:
  - Lima: Lima Cómo Vamos, CISE-PUC

- Argentina: The Arcor Foundation
  - Buenos Aires. Pediatric Society
  - Córdoba: Nuestra Córdoba

- Mexico: Mexican Network of Cities, Alianza por la Infancia [Alliance for Children] MX, Save the Children
  - Mexico City: Cómo Vamos Mexico City
  - Guadalajara: Jalisco Cómo Vamos

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12 In the city of São Paulo, we discussed initial working proposals for constructing and measuring indicators for children. The Arcor Institute works directly with the Brazilian Network and with Nuestra Córdoba in the Latin American Network.
13 There is demonstrable interest in developing a monitoring proposal; initial consultations have been held and the first proposals have been made.
14 There have been expressions of interest in instigating a relationship and in the proposal for collaborative work with Nossa Salvador.
15 The relevant actors have already begun to work together in the context of this assessment.
16 The Arcor Foundation is also eager to monitor and improve well-being in early childhood. They have developed a tool called Educómetro, which is designed to help evaluate the living standards of children in smaller cities. They also share our interest in seeing cities from a child-centered perspective, drawing on the input and guidance of educationalist Francesco Tonucci, who has provided support to the Arcor Foundation and its activities in recent years.
17 In the city of Córdoba, we have already begun to share expertise and provide support for measuring living standards and inequalities in early childhood.
18 We have begun to build a relationship with the network and at least four cities have confirmed their interest in launching projects focusing on the child population.