

Institution: University of Bristol
Unit of Assessment: 22 - Social work and social policy
Title of case study: Improving global efforts to reduce child poverty and deprivation: the impact of the Bristol Approach and its contribution to identification, measurement and monitoring.
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research conducted by the Centre for the Study of Poverty and Social Justice (CSPSJ) led to a new way of assessing child poverty in developing countries. This novel method (termed the Bristol Approach) resulted in the United Nations General Assembly's adoption, for the first time, of an international definition of child poverty (2006). It also underpinned UNICEF's <i>Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities</i> (2008-10), which was run in over 50 countries. In the last ten years, the CSPSJ's work has put child poverty at the centre of international social and public policy debates. Its researchers have advised governments and international agencies on devising anti-poverty strategies and programmes that specifically meet the needs of children, and have significantly influenced the way child poverty is studied around the world. The Centre has developed academic and professional training courses for organisations like UNICEF on the issues of children's rights and child-poverty. Our work has also spurred NGOs such as Save the Children to develop their own child-development indices, and so has had a direct and profound impact on the lives of poor children around the planet.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The CSPSJ team consisted of Professor David Gordon (Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research, appointed 1989), Dr Shailen Nandy (Research Fellow, appointed 1999), Dr Simon Pemberton (Senior Lecturer, appointed 2004), Ms Christina Pantazis (Reader, appointed 1993), Dr Michelle Kelly Irving (Research Associate, appointed 2001) and the late Professor Peter Townsend (Professor of Social Policy, appointed 1985).</p> <p>The aim of the research was to develop and implement a means of assessing the extent of child poverty in developing countries. No reliable estimates had previously existed for the number of poor children in such countries, which limited the impact of international organisations like UNICEF. This lack of data on children's living conditions was both problematic and unnecessary, and something the Bristol Approach was designed to address. The Bristol Approach entailed the development of policy-relevant, non-monetary indicators of child deprivation of basic needs (e.g. shelter, education, health care and nutrition), which are now used around the world to assess child and youth poverty. Funding was provided by UNICEF (~£150,000) and the UK Department for International Development (~£212,000), and the work was conducted between 2001 and 2009. It involved the development of a conceptual framework [1, 5], extensive reviews of the international literature on child poverty and child rights [4], and secondary data analysis of household-survey micro data from over 75 countries.</p> <p>The Bristol Approach produced the first scientific global estimates of child poverty in 2003 [2]. It revealed that over one billion children were severely deprived of at least one basic human need, and identified where these children lived and the pattern of deprivations they experienced. The research, which has received over 300 academic citations, has allowed organisations like UNICEF and Save the Children to advocate more forcefully for the rights of children around the world. The work was identified as an example of best practice by the international Rio Expert Group on Poverty Statistics and included in its <i>Compendium of Best Practices</i>.</p> <p>The outputs of the work included a better conceptual understanding of child poverty as a distinct issue, the development of child-relevant indicators of deprivation and valuable, policy-relevant, actionable data on the patterning of child poverty in countries which hitherto lacked reliable information on children. It detailed the extent and persistence of gender, social and spatial disparities, enabling campaigning organisations such as Plan International and UNICEF to advocate for resources and services for children.</p> <p>In 2008, in the face of the international economic crisis, UNICEF launched its <i>Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities</i> in over 50 countries, including China, India, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Mexico, which contain most of the world's one billion-plus poor children. The Bristol Approach is a core part of the <i>Global Study</i>, underpinning each of the country studies</p>

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conducted. Selected outputs of the CSPSJ's work and the Bristol Approach include:

- (i) The development of a new measure for assessing aggregate child undernutrition, the Composite Index of Anthropometric Failure (CIAF) [3], which researchers have used in over a dozen countries, and most recently in a major Gates Foundation-funded, multi-country research project on the links between anthropometric failure and child mortality (McDonald et al, 2013, *Am J Clin Nutr.* 97(4):896-901);
- (ii) The running of national, regional and international training workshops/conferences for UN, NGO and government staff on conceptualising and measuring child poverty, statistical data analysis and the use of data for public-policy development. Since 2008, the research team has contributed to workshops/conferences in Abidjan, Addis Ababa, Amman, Bishkek, Brasilia, Dhaka, Kathmandu, London, Mexico City, New York, Odessa, Southampton and Tashkent;
- (iii) The importance of the round-trip time taken to collect water has been proposed by WHO/UNICEF as one of the new, post-2015 Millennium Development Goal indicators (Target indicator 2.2a). This was a direct result of the assistance provided to the WHO Joint Monitoring Project by Professor Gordon and Dr Nandy as part of their work for UNICEF;
- (iv) The establishment of an international, one-year postgraduate Diploma in Public Policy and Child Rights, run for education, social work and other professionals across the Arab world in conjunction with the Universities of Cairo and Assuit (Egypt), the Hashemite University (Jordan) and the University of Jordan, and with UNICEF's Middle East and North Africa regional office, funded by the EU's TEMPUS Programme. To date, about 30 students have completed the course, with similar numbers enrolled for next year. The Egyptian and Jordanian governments funded 15 scholarships for students doing the Diploma.

3. References to the research

Outputs

- [1] Townsend P. & Gordon, D. (Eds.) (2002), *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy*, Bristol: The Policy Press. ISBN 9781861343956 [Can be supplied upon request].
- [2] Gordon, D., Nandy, S., Pantazis, C., Pemberton, S.A. & Townsend, P. (2003), *Child Poverty in the Developing World*, Bristol: The Policy Press. ISBN 1 86134 559 3
[http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/65636e2e7a707261766f64616a737476/Child_poverty.pdf]
- [3] Nandy, S., Irving, M., Gordon, D., Subramanian S.V. & Davey Smith, G. (2005), 'Poverty, Child Undernutrition and Morbidity: New Evidence from India', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 83(3): 210-216.
[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2624218/pdf/15798845.pdf]
- [4] Pemberton, S.A., Gordon, D., Nandy, S., Pantazis, C. & Townsend, P. (2007), 'Child Rights and Child Poverty: Can the international framework of children's rights be used to improve child survival rates?' *PLoS Medicine*, 4(10): 1567-1570. Doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0040307
[www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.0040307]
- [5] Gordon, D. & Nandy, S. (2012), 'Measuring child poverty and deprivation', in Minujin, A. and Nandy, S. (Eds.) (2012), *Global child poverty and well-being. Measurement, concepts, policy and action*, Bristol: The Policy Press. ISBN 9781847424815 [Can be supplied upon request].

Funding awards

In the years since the original awards, CSPSJ staff have been successful in securing further funds to develop its work. Selected examples include:

[6] In 2011, Gordon and Nandy secured £167,000 from the Swedish Research Council as part of a three-year joint project (*Good governance and child poverty*) with colleagues at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, to examine the relationship between child poverty and deprivation and good governance. This project builds on the CSPSJ's work on child poverty, bringing the Bristol Approach to a much wider audience of academics, policymakers, anti-poverty advocates and campaigners.

[7] In 2011, Gordon and Nandy secured Canadian \$125,000 (~£80,000) from the Canadian Institute for Health Research as part of a research consortium including colleagues from Canada, Peru, India, South Africa and the USA. The three-year project (*Examining the Impact of Social*

Policies on Health Equity) examines the impact of social and economic policies on child and maternal morbidity and mortality.

[8] In 2012, Nandy was awarded a £209,000 ESRC Future Research Leader grant to extend the Bristol Approach to adults, with a particular focus on countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The work will contribute to international debates about the measurement of poverty and anti-poverty policies.

4. Details of the impact

The CSPSJ's work and research has had a major international impact. In 2006-07, UNICEF successfully used it to lobby the UN General Assembly to adopt a new, international definition of child poverty which reflects the needs and rights of children. It noted: "*According to this new definition, measuring child poverty can no longer be lumped together with general poverty assessments which often focus solely on income levels, but must take into consideration access to basic social services, especially nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, education and information*" [a]. UNICEF made the Bristol Approach a core part of its *Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities*, conducted in 54 countries [b] since 2008. Team members advised over 40 individual UNICEF country and five regional offices, ran training workshops, and guided NGOs and national governments (e.g., Mexico, South Africa) interested in developing and applying the Bristol Approach. The *Global Study* has improved national, regional and global awareness of how appropriate social and economic policies can eradicate child poverty. UNICEF stated in 2009 that "*...the research...transformed the way UNICEF and many of its partners both understood and measured the poverty suffered by children.... [it] has exposed policy-makers all over the world to a new understanding of child poverty and inequalities. As a consequence, children are more visible in poverty reduction policies and debates*" [c].

The *Global Study's* 54 countries (listed at the end of this section) represent over 1.5 billion children – approximately 60% of the children in the developing world. Specific examples of the direct regional and national impact include:

China: UNICEF and the Chinese Government's Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development agreed to consider child poverty as distinct from adult poverty, conduct research to understand the child poverty situation in China, and design and pilot schemes that identify the dynamics of child-poverty alleviation at the local level. As a result, child poverty is now incorporated in the ten-year National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy 2011-2020 [d], which will benefit China's 322,000,000 children;

Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Region: In 2010, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) applied the Bristol Approach to produce the first-ever regional study of child poverty for the Americas [e]. In 2012 UNICEF's Senior Regional Adviser on Social and Economic Policy stated: "*...the study developed by the University of Bristol is quoted in the region, when child poverty is discussed...it is used to teach or improve interventions...it is in the core of policy discussions in the region*" [i]. CSPSJ research has influenced the design and content of a free, online, multilingual, multimedia training guide for estimating child poverty in the LAC region, to protect and promote child and adolescent rights [f]. This resource is available to the general public, and has been used by advocates for children's rights, journalists, NGOs and policy makers in the region;

East Asia and the Pacific Region: In 2011, the CSPSJ provided data for the first ever UNICEF Regional Report on Child Poverty in East Asia and the Pacific [g]. The report demonstrated high levels of deprivation of basic needs among children and provided governments in the region with policy-relevant data previously lacking;

South Asia Region: In November 2009 at a conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh (*Achieving Child Wellbeing and Equality: Towards a new understanding of child poverty and deprivations*) Prof. Gordon made presentations to a ministerial-level audience of policymakers from India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh;

Mozambique: In 2008, the Government responded to Bristol/UNICEF's work on child poverty by

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approving the Children's Act, and translating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into national child-rights legislation. It has since invested strongly in education and health, resulting in significant reductions in the proportion of children experiencing deprivation, and in 2010 introduced the Basic Social Protection Strategy, which includes child grants to alleviate child poverty. In 2013 UNICEF's Senior Social Policy Specialist reported that Bristol's research has helped the Government understand what exactly is needed to address the problem of child poverty, for example increasing the budget for programmes designed to deal with child poverty;

Ukraine: Advocacy around the *Global Study* resulted in the inclusion in 2009 of the child poverty rate as a national Millennium Development Goals (MDG) indicator and therefore part of the MDG achievement agenda. It also resulted in the Annual State Report on Children in 2009 focusing on child poverty;

Haiti: Research by CSPSJ provided the first ever estimates of child poverty in Haiti. The data were reflected in the 2008 Haitian National Poverty Reduction Strategy and UNICEF's 2009-2011 Country Programme Documents. Following the devastating earthquake of January 2010, our work was also used by UNICEF in its *Humanitarian Action Report 2010 Partnering for Children in Emergencies*.

In summary, these examples demonstrate the significant, international, social and policy-related impact of the Bristol Approach. Governments, UN organizations and NGOs around the world have adopted, adapted and applied it to child and youth poverty measurement.

UNICEF has also used CSPSJ's work in its *Socio-Economic Policies for Child Rights with Equity* training programme, which aims "to enhance the theoretical understanding of all professional level UNICEF staff on public policy and development issues, strengthen their ability to apply this knowledge in the design and implementation of policies and programmes and help build effective partnerships to promote children's rights and wellbeing" [h]. In 2013, UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre developed an online tool for conducting Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) in respect of children. This freely available, interactive tool acknowledges and builds directly on the work of the CSPSJ, and is used by researchers, students, NGOs and international organisations.

Note: Participant countries in UNICEF's *Global Study* include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Congo, Congo DR, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indian Ocean Islands, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[a] www.unicef.org/media/media_38003.html

[b] UNICEF, *Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities 2007-2008* (2007), New York <http://unicef.globalstudy.googlepages.com/UNICEFGlobalStudyGuide.pdf> (127 page book available on request)

[c] www.unicef.org/media/media_49993.html

[d] www.unicef.org/innovations/index_61207.html

[e] CEPAL, *Pobreza infantil en América Latina y el Caribe* (2010), UNICEF www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/6/42796/Libro-pobreza-infantil-America-Latina-2010.pdf.

[f] <http://dds.cepal.org/infancia/guide-to-estimating-child-poverty/introduction.php>

[g] UNICEF, *Child Poverty in East Asia and the Pacific: Deprivations and Disparities* (2011), Bangkok www.unicef.org/eapro/Child_Poverty_in_EAP_Regional_Report.pdf

[h] http://promotingchildrights.org/web/pdf/Module_3.pdf

[i] Factual statement: Interview with Regional Advisor, Social Policy, UNICEF Americas and Caribbean Regional Office, interviewed 22.11.2012.