

#02 MICS NEWSLETTER

JUNE/JULY 2016

Multiple
Indicator
Cluster
Surveys



FROM THE GLOBAL COORDINATOR

The second issue of our newsletter comes at a time when we are intensifying our efforts to finalize the new generation of MICS questionnaires and survey tools for the sixth round of MICS. At this point, the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators are almost final. Changes in the standard MICS questionnaires are mostly to align MICS content with the SDGs and beyond. As introduced in this issue, we are about to conduct the global pilot survey of MICS6 in Costa Rica. After a summer of intensive work to finalize the standard questionnaires and related tools, we will start to roll out the programme in October with a series of survey design

workshops, beginning in Eastern and Southern Africa.

In the meantime, we are constantly striving to update and modernize MICS resources and improve their public accessibility. Users can now request to receive alerts when new MICS datasets or reports become available on our website. A [new page](#) on our website showcases various publications using MICS. In peer reviewed journals and otherwise, secondary analysis of MICS data has increased dramatically over the last decade. The page may not contain a comprehensive list of all the publications using MICS data, but it is a good representation of the extent to which MICS data are used to generate more information on children's well-being. If you happen to know of publications that are not listed here, please share them with us. We believe that the more data are used, the more we can help contribute to the knowledge base on children's lives.

The SDG era started with strong discourse on partnerships, collaborations and cooperation – all

with the goal of joining forces to improve data. The MICS programme is currently in key partnerships with other household survey programmes. In May, we organized, at UNICEF premises in New York, the third meeting of the DHS-MICS-LSMS Collaborative Group. We are now also one of seven members of the management group of the [Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys](#) (ISWGHHS). The group, established recently by the UN Statistical Commission, aims to foster coordination and harmonization of household survey activities.

Last but not least: A word of thanks to everyone who sent congratulatory remarks about the first issue of our newsletter, which reached over 6,000 readers. We welcome your continued feedback as we keep you abreast of recent developments from the MICS programme.

Until next time,
Attila Hancioglu

DID YOU KNOW

You can now sign up for alerts and receive an email whenever a new MICS dataset or report is released – once a week maximum. It's simple and fast, just [update your email preferences](#).



SURVEYS, REPORTS AND DATA

Since our last issue, three surveys have joined the MICS programme. We also posted five new datasets, one key findings report and seven final reports on our website. You can access them [here](#).

New surveys

- ▶ Argentina 2017
- ▶ Lao People's Democratic Republic 2016-17
- ▶ Pakistan (Gilgit Baltistan) 2016-17

Datasets

- ▶ Algeria 2012-13 MICS4
- ▶ Mongolia 2013-14 MICS5
- ▶ Sao Tome and Principe 2014 MICS5
- ▶ Sudan 2014 MICS5
- ▶ Thailand 2012-13 MICS4

Key findings reports

- ▶ Mali 2015

Final reports

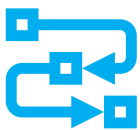
- ▶ Kenya (Bungoma County) 2013-14
- ▶ Kenya (Kakamega County) 2013-14
- ▶ Kenya (Turkana County) 2013-14
- ▶ Mongolia 2013-14
- ▶ Nepal 2014
- ▶ Pakistan (Punjab) 2014
- ▶ Sao Tome and Principe 2014



EVENTS

We organized and participated in several meetings, workshops and consultations so far this year. A selection of these are listed here:

- ▶ WHO/UNICEF JMP Task Force on Monitoring Inequalities in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, 8-10 Feb, Geneva, Switzerland
- ▶ Protection In Early Childhood (regional thematic meeting), 1-3 March, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean, Havana, Cuba
- ▶ MICS Data Processing Meeting: Digital Data Collection Application for the Upcoming Guinea MICS Survey, 4-8 April, UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Dakar, Senegal
- ▶ Partnering for Progress: Building Statistical Systems That Get Us to 2030, PARIS21 annual meeting 2016, 5-7 April, OECD, Paris, France
- ▶ Second Joint Technical Session on Child Deprivation Profiling, 6-8 April, UNICEF, UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand
- ▶ 49th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD49) side event: The Data Revolution in Action: National and International Experiences with Microdata Dissemination and Public Use, 11 April, United Nations Population Division, New York, USA
- ▶ MICS5 Data Interpretation, Further Analysis and Dissemination Workshop, 18-25 April, UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
- ▶ Age Data Disaggregation Across the Full Lifecycle, 3 May, DFID, London, UK
- ▶ Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on Employment and Decent Work for Poverty Eradication, in Support of the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), 4-6 May, United Nations Population Division, Bangkok, Thailand
- ▶ Measurement and Monitoring of Health Inequities (sub-regional workshop), 17-20 May, A Promised Renewed, Latin America and the Caribbean, COMISCA, REDLACSIS and PAHO, San Jose, Costa Rica



METHODOLOGICAL WORK

Measuring social protection indicators is part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda under target 1.3. The aim of these indicators is to estimate the coverage of programmes that aim to prevent, reduce and eliminate poverty. Social protection programmes are a key focus for UNICEF, which supports 232 such programmes in over 100 countries. However, a cross-nationally comparable module that captures the coverage of social protection is not available for use in household surveys.

For the past two years, the MICS programme has been working on the development of such a module, which has now been field-tested in four countries: Kenya, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Belize. These field-tests served as a means of assessing the ability of respondents to answer questions

on social protection programmes, examining the flow of questions and assessing the level of customization needed at the country level. In Vietnam, the survey data were compared against administrative data as a means of validation of the data collected through the module. The module is expected to be finalized and rolled out in the next round of MICS.

The module has already begun to attract attention. In May, UNICEF presented lessons learnt on the development of the module at the Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on Employment and Decent Work for Poverty Eradication, in Support of the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), where valuable feedback and support were expressed.

Further information on the module is available [here](#).

GLOBAL PILOT SURVEY

The global MICS pilot survey will be conducted in Costa Rica in July 2016 as a final test of the new MICS6 questionnaires and survey procedures. The pilot survey will provide a unique opportunity to understand the performance of new questionnaires, and generate further evidence on how survey tools and procedures can be additionally improved before the launch of the next round of MICS. Fieldwork

staff will be trained on topics in the questionnaires, interviewing techniques and on use of tablets for data collection. Fieldwork activities are planned to take place in urban and rural areas of San Jose province, targeting 400 households.

The pilot survey will be carried out from July 11 to August 6, 2016, in collaboration with the Costa Rica National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), the UNICEF

Costa Rica Country Office, and the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office. It will bring together the UNICEF New York MICS team, UNICEF Regional MICS Coordinators, UNICEF's Data and Analytics Section and Education Section staff members. External experts and staff members of the Costa Rica National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) will also be in attendance.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHT

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and UNICEF have a long history of working together. Since 1996, Kenya has participated in every round of MICS, from MICS1 to MICS5. The singularity of MICS in Kenya is that all surveys, with the exception of MICS2, have been conducted at the sub-national level (20 district-level surveys in MICS1, 13 district-level surveys in Eastern Province under MICS3, 6 counties in Nyanza Province and the Mombasa Informal Settlements surveys in MICS4, and 3 county surveys in MICS5). We interviewed Mr. Macdonald Obudho, Director, Population and Social Statistics, [Kenya National Bureau of Statistics](#) on the country's experience with MICS.

Why is MICS implemented at the sub-national level? Kenya is a big diverse country with major differences across geographic areas. National-level surveys in the nineties did not allow us to get data representative of places with very different population and socio-economic realities within one province (for

example, Turkana and Nakuru). That is why we decided to initiate MICS – to generate indicators representative at the sub-national level.

How has MICS contributed to the national statistical system? KNBS' mandate is to provide timely data that are useful for government planning. The support UNICEF has provided KNBS with the MICS surveys supplements what we need to do as the Government of Kenya. The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) provide data every 5 years which are mostly representative at the national level. In counties where we have MICS in between DHS surveys, MICS data helps us fill in existing gaps, validate data from other sources, look at the results of some government programmes and identify areas for intervention. MICS provides us with fresh information that is relevant at the lower government level where decisions are being made.

How is the data generated by MICS being used? The new Constitution of

Kenya that was promulgated in 2010 brought about counties as the geographical units of devolved government in 2013. The former 8 provinces became 47 counties, with full power and accountability in the areas of health, agriculture and some areas within education (such as early childhood development and vocational training). With these changes, data, which is representative at the county level, has become critical for county-level planning,

What are the future plans regarding MICS6? The Bureau is very satisfied with the way we have been collaborating with UNICEF and the MICS programme. With county-level MICS data it becomes very clear where the problems are, and the data helps guide county-level programming. We just completed a national-level DHS in 2014, and we plan to identify counties to participate in MICS6 on the basis of major data gaps or by looking at the 2014 DHS indicators that relate to MICS key modules.



SDGs AND MICS

In March 2016, two key events took place towards the finalization of the list of global indicators that will be used to track progress against the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs. At the UN Statistical Commission, member states approved the report of the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). The report included a list of 230 indicators, classified into 3 tiers: Indicators with widely accepted methodology and widespread data availability (tier I), those with widely accepted methodology but limited data availability (tier II), and indicators that need methodological work to develop robust methodologies for their estimation (tier III). The IAEG-SDGs then met in Mexico City, at the end of March, to discuss custodianship of the indicators and the tiers. In both meetings, UNICEF was represented as an observer agency.

At present, UNICEF is now identified as the custodian agency for 10 indicators and a co-custodian agency for 6 indicators. Custodian agencies will be responsible for developing indicators and estimation methods, maintaining global databases and providing data for the UN Secretary-General's annual SDG progress report. Among these indicators are several that have been developed by the MICS programme over the years, such as the early childhood development index and physical punishment/psychological aggression against children.

A recent analysis that we have completed on the list of global SDG indicators shows that data can be generated from household surveys for around 30 per cent of the indicators. Of these, about a quarter can be generated by the current MICS questionnaires of the fifth round. An additional one-quarter of the indicators are now

being developed or included in the sixth round MICS questionnaires, which means that the MICS programme will be a leading source of data for monitoring the SDGs in years to come. MICS will generate information on multi-dimensional poverty, malnutrition, birth attendance, under-5 mortality, early childhood development, pre-school attendance, early marriage, safe water and sanitation, child labour, birth registration and other key indicators on children's well-being. The MICS programme will also cover new areas such as social protection, victimization, learning, use of clean fuels and technology, and key data for disaggregation by disability and migration status. We will also continue to develop other SDG indicators for inclusion in future MICS surveys. We will keep you updated on SDG indicators and MICS in our next issue, with a more detailed list of indicators captured in MICS.



THE INNOVATION CORNER

The digital revolution presents new opportunities for capturing high quality data and providing quick turnaround for results. Advancements in mobile technology and a significant reduction in the cost of mobile devices make digital data collection a preferred alternative to paper-based surveys. MICS began mobile electronic data collection in 2011. Close to three-quarters of MICS surveys are now administered on tablets, with a target of more than 90 per cent in MICS6.

The MICS Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system is entirely digital. It includes three main pillars: interviewers, supervisors and central office. The system is efficiently

customized and maintained by the survey teams, ensuring quick data availability, high data quality and enhanced data security.

To further leverage mobile technology advancements and continue success in providing data processing support to MICS surveys, the MICS programme is currently developing an improved custom software for CAPI data collection. New data collection and fieldwork monitoring systems will be used in the upcoming sixth round of MICS.

The envisioned platform will utilize the latest software and hardware technology, provide more efficient project administration, an intuitive user interface on mobile devices, cloud-

based data synchronization and real-time reporting on the progress of data collection and data quality. Considering that the content of MICS in each country is quite variable, the new CAPI system will be more responsive to and flexible for country-level customization, easier for multi-language applications, and improved for the minimization of human error. Such an approach will significantly reduce errors in the field, as well as training times for field personnel. In tandem with real-time data transfer, the new system will be equipped with advanced reporting and project administration tools which survey managers can better harness to ensure that data are high quality.



FEATURED PUBLICATION

UNICEF/UN07288/Tremeau



The Lancet Series on Breastfeeding (Victora et al. 2016) released earlier this year, indicated that breastfeeding makes the world

healthier, smarter and more equal. According to the series, the deaths of 823,000 children and 20,000 mothers could be averted each year if all women adopted optimal

breastfeeding practices. The series confirms the benefits of breastfeeding include fewer infections, increased intelligence, probable protection against overweight and diabetes and cancer prevention for mothers. Authors drew on UNICEF's global databases which are heavily populated with MICS data. In the discussion of the paper, authors point out that high income countries lack data on standardized indicators for breastfeeding. This situation is sharply contrasted with that of low- and middle-income countries which are data-rich for this area of work due to the regular implementation of household surveys such as MICS. The publication can be accessed [here](#).



TEAM UPDATES

Teuta Halimi and Laura Buback, who were supporting the Regional MICS Coordinators in the Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) and the Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WCARO) respectively, have moved on to different positions. Regional MICS Coordinators in two regional offices have also left the programme. Augustine Botwe, Regional MICS Coordinator since May 2014, left the Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO) in May 2016, and Rhiannon James, Regional MICS Coordinator since October 2008 in Bangkok and Kathmandu, will have left UNICEF by the time of the publication of this newsletter. Recruitment of new colleagues in these two positions is in progress. We wish colleagues all the best in their new

endeavours, and thank them for all their contributions to the MICS programme over the years.

In the meantime, Hrayr Wanniss was recently appointed as the new Regional MICS Coordinator in Amman for the Middle East and North Africa, and will start his new role in July.

Bo Pedersen, household survey expert in our New York office, left UNICEF as a staff member, but continues to work with the MICS team as a consultant. Nassim Benali, on the other hand, stays in our New York office to work as a Program Officer in the Data & Analytics Section, moving from the MICS position that he held since September 2014.

To view the current members of the Global MICS Team, visit the About page of our website: mics.unicef.org.

