

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys for the Mid-Decade Goals

Executive Directives (CF/EXD/...)

Document Symbol/Series: **CF/EXD/1994-011**Date: **14 November 1994**Country: **Global**Language: **English**

Attachment(s):

Related Links:

[Detailed information \(click on the twistee to see more\)](#)

Executive Summary:

Document Text:

To: Regional Directors

Representatives

Assistant Representatives

Division Directors/Section Chiefs

From: James P. Grant

Executive Director

Subject: Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys for the Mid-Decade Goals

My first Executive Directive of this year, (CF/EXD/1994-001) **Reporting on Progress towards the Mid-Decade Goals**, set out UNICEF's internal reporting requirements to track progress towards the mid-decade goals and gave you a checklist of action required of country and regional offices to support national partners in their reviews of progress. I expect those actions to now be in place.

With this Directive I ask you to focus your efforts on the steps required in 1995 and 1996 to obtain current, statistically robust, and nationally representative estimates of the primary indicators agreed upon for reporting on the mid-decade goals. It is imperative that we assist national partners in generating measures that are acceptable to both governments and the international community, as part of their own reviews of progress. National statistical offices are key partners, as are the intersectoral agencies established in National Programmes of Action for monitoring progress towards the Summit goals. Results from surveys conducted in early 1995 can help adjust and strengthen programmes in the coming year. Surveys conducted in early 1996 will

-to meet reporting needs. The surveys will, in most settings, complement and strengthen existing reporting systems and fill information gaps for seven of the mid-decade goals.

Recommendation of the WHO-UNICEF Intersecretariat

There is widespread consensus that focused, practical steps to obtain up-to-date, nationally representative indicators of status on these mid-decade goals are both necessary and possible. Information gaps persist in almost all countries. Without new surveys many of these gaps will remain through 1995, thus limiting any objective assessment of progress against quantified benchmarks. It has been demonstrated that good national estimates of goal indicators can be obtained using modified cluster surveys. They are intended to reinforce, not replace, monitoring systems that are already in place.

This September the WHO-UNICEF Intersecretariat for the Joint Committee on Health Policy recommended that

"Where data are lacking or out-of-date, ...WHO, UNICEF and other international agencies...collaborate across all sectors in assisting countries to monitor progress, using wherever appropriate and feasible multiple indicator surveys".

and

"all international agencies...give special attention in 1995 to supporting national efforts to monitor and report on progress to policymakers for the mid-decade review. This collaborative support should bring together all sectors in the shared emphasis on collecting internationally comparable data on the essential indicators agreed upon between governments, WHO and UNICEF for reporting, making certain that these measurements reinforce programmatic action on all levels and contribute to policymakers' taking corrective measures and management actions that build and sustain progress."

Multiple Indicator Survey Methodology

A collaborative effort involving many participants, both within and outside UNICEF, has now produced a standardized survey instrument for goal measurement. It is based on a modification of the EPI and CDD cluster survey approach that has been used so successfully all over the world. It uses a series of questionnaire modules designed to provide data for most of the primary indicators of mid-decade goals, as agreed to by both WHO and UNESCO, including those relating to vaccine coverage, vitamin A status, salt iodization, ORT use in diarrhoea, malnutrition, educational attainment, and the availability of water supply and sanitation facilities (See chart 1) It can be easily

variety of country situations.

Action at Country Level

A concerted effort is required in 1995. This directive requires all UNICEF offices, as part of their current work planning for 1995,

1. to review current status on availability of data on mid-decade goals and identify for each of the goals the source of data that will be used to report at mid-decade. Recall that my earlier directive (CF/EXD/1994-001) underscored the need to give **priority to methodologies that yield nationally representative results that meet international reporting standards**. It is important, therefore, as part of this review, that the input and agreement of technical counterparts and the Central Statistical Office be obtained on data sources and methodologies.

2. on the basis of this review, to decide how they may use multiple indicator cluster surveys in 1995 and 1996. **Each representative should fax to me by December 15th (Fax: 212-303-7959) the completed checklist on goal reporting included with this executive directive, specifying which methods will be used by government to report on the seven mid-decade goals measurable with cluster surveys**. The survey questionnaire, with its optional modules, and a planning aid accompany this executive directive to enable you to review choices with national partners. Full technical guidelines for those managing and conducting surveys will go to all UNICEF offices in December.

3. to initiate surveys, wherever appropriate and feasible, in the first quarter of 1995, in order to use the results for policy adjustment, improved programme delivery, and social mobilization in 1995. As required in my earlier directive (CF/EXD/1994-001) results should be reported to headquarters as and when they become available with a full annual update due with the 1995 CRING report, to be received at headquarters and the regional offices by 31 May.

4. to plan for surveys in the first quarter of 1996, in order to generate data that are officially endorsed by national governments and can withstand international scrutiny, in time for reporting status at mid-decade. Final country office reports on all indicators needed for the mid-decade review are due in headquarters and the regional offices with the 1996 CRINGe report on 31 May 1996.

5. IMMEDIATE ACTION: country offices that decide on using data sources other than the multiple indicator surveys for those indicators which can be measured by the surveys should, by 15

Organization and UNESCO, in addition to guidance from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control, have helped build on country experience to prepare this survey instrument for the mid-decade goals. Under the guidance of the Planning and Coordination Office, all relevant technical clusters within UNICEF and the Evaluation and Research Office have also contributed to the modules.

The instrument developed in response to a clear demand by countries and field offices. In August of this year, a global workshop on the multiple indicator surveys was hosted by UNICEF Bangladesh in Dhaka, where an interagency team, supported by Bangladesh's Bureau of Statistics as well as regional and international centers of excellence, prepared all UNICEF regional advisers in monitoring and evaluation to put in place regional support for such surveys. Over thirty UNICEF country offices, from a wide range of countries with differing capacities, also went through hands-on training in Bangladesh in using this methodology.

Adaptations to Country Situations

As the end of 1995 approaches there are limited options available, beyond these simple surveys, for closing existing data gaps. Very few countries will be able to rely on the results of surveys by other agencies which, by chance, cover the same ground and also promise timely results. Routine systems, which now rarely produce data of adequate quality, will require longer-term support, and should continue to receive UNICEF's attention as part of building sustainable national monitoring systems for the year 2000 goals. Most countries are likely to find the multiple indicator surveys immediately useful both for goal monitoring and influencing, at affordable cost, policy, programme design and resource allocations to social priority sectors. Moreover, most countries can take advantage of a substantial national technical capacity developed as a result of extensive experience with cluster surveys.

Surveys can be adapted to each country situation. Recent surveys in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Cape Verde provide examples. I will be sharing with you examples of national reports from these and other countries as they become available.

Each UNICEF country programme is well placed to assess where the strongest entry point may be to help national counterparts. The challenge is to bring together different sectors, as has been done in Bangladesh and Kenya, to collaborate in the cost-effective use of a shared tool. What data are needed and how they may be used by policymakers, programme managers, communities and the general public should inform all planning decisions. Special opportunities for intersectoral collaboration exist, and should be reinforced, in those countries where National Programmes of Action have created interministerial commissions or councils for improved monitoring of the situation of children and women.

Action at Regional Level

The Bangladesh country office has offered to host additional training activities.

Regional offices are entrusted with preparing any immediate backup required to help country offices plan for their surveys. Regional and national centers of excellence and experienced individuals should be part of a shared roster for matching existing capacity with measurement needs. Regional offices have already taken various initiatives with WHO, UNESCO, PAHO and UNDP to provide support for reporting on progress.

The regional planning officers, health and education advisers, and monitoring and evaluation advisers form part of the technical support team for multiple indicator surveys. Special sessions or consultations may be arranged for further guidance and the sharing of experience. Strategies for social mobilization at regional and country levels, research design, sampling strategies, costs, and programme linkages are all subjects that will benefit from regional opportunities to share knowledge.

Presidential reviews, such as the ones led this October in Mexico by President Salinas and in the Philippines by President Ramos, have demonstrated the mobilization potential of effectively presenting recent results on goal status. Regional offices are playing a leadership role in multiplying the impact of these examples within and across regions. I expect all Regional Directors to keep me informed of regional developments and country progress on a monthly basis.

Headquarters Support

I have entrusted the Planning and Coordination Office at Headquarters with channeling additional guidance and technical support as needed. This is a shared effort with regional offices and with the technical clusters, the Evaluation and Research Office and the desks in New York to ensure adequate response to issues as they arise.

Requests for further information, a sharing of views or country examples may be faxed to: ACTION : FAX: 212-303-7959. Any message to a similar address on the UNICEF Internet gopher (action@unicef.org) will also be shared with an interagency core group coordinated by the Planning Office for swift, supportive action.

Proposals to global funds, on an exceptional basis, may help support regional networking and special needs in using this methodology.

We have only a small window of opportunity. It will soon close for those country offices that postpone strategic work-planning that would enable their counterparts to initiate surveys to strengthen monitoring of the mid-decade goals. These are not easy challenges, but they can be met. I wish you well in all your efforts to make 1995 a landmark year for children everywhere.