

Meeting report

#TransMonEE30 **ANKARA**
01-02 NOV 2022

Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity **30**

Data for Decisions on Children

Taking stock and growing stronger towards a
comprehensive child rights monitoring framework

This report summarises the discussions and results of the 2022 TransMonEE meeting and does not commit participants. It does not necessarily represent the views of individual participants or of UNICEF.

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About the meeting

TransMonEE is a three-decade-old regional partnership initiative among the National Statistics Offices (NSOs). It aims to strengthen the coverage, quality, disaggregation, accessibility, and use of data on children, across a breadth of areas relevant to children's rights and well-being, aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The TransMonEE partnership seeks to enhance the generation, comparability, systematisation, and integration of statistics and indicators on children and adolescents, as they are instrumental in improving the planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programmes.

After a pause of three years, the 2022 TransMonEE network meeting took place in Ankara, Türkiye, on 1-2 November. Specific objectives of the meeting were the following:

- to review the recently adopted [Guidance of the Conference of European Statisticians \(CES\)](#) for improving statistics on selected vulnerable groups of children,
- to take stock of the application of the new list of minimum child protection indicators in the region and specifically explore good practices related to the generation of statistics on children in alternative care,
- to discuss and reach a broad consensus on [a regional monitoring framework for child rights](#).

Around 115 participants of the meeting included representatives of NSOs, relevant government ministries, child rights coordination bodies, partners, researchers and representatives of UNICEF and other UN agencies.

The following countries were represented in the meeting: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Latvia (online), Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Other organisations also attended the meeting, the Central Statistics Office of Ireland (online), the Economic and Social Research Institute of Ireland (online), Eurochild, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Statistics Canada, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

On the first day of the meeting, participants reviewed the recent developments in the data landscape on children, explored the proposed Europe and Central Asian regional monitoring framework for child rights, and discussed the recently adopted Guidance of the Conference of European Statistics (CES) on improving statistics on children. The second day of the meeting focused on data on children in alternative care as a follow-up to the previous discussion on regional child protection indicators.

All documents from the meeting are available at the [event's site](#).

Introductory session

Erhan Çetinkaya, President of the Turkish Statistical Institute, and **Afshan Khan**, Regional Director of UNICEF Europe and Central Asia (UNICEF ECARO), opened the meeting. **Carlos Acosta**, UNICEF ECARO, outlined the objectives for the 2022 TransMonEE meeting and introduced the agenda, emphasising the importance of statistics for policymaking and referring to 30 years of monitoring child rights and inequities by the TransMonEE initiative. **Siraj Mahmudlu**, UNICEF ECARO, provided an update on the TransMonEE revisioning initiative following the discussions and agreements of the [2019](#) and [2018](#) TransMonEE meetings in Vienna and Astana, respectively.



Session 1: CES Guidance on the improvement of statistics on children

Session chair: **Majda Savicevic, MONSTAT**

Kristen Jeffers, UNECE, gave the background and described the work of the CES Task Force, focusing on its output - *The Guidance on Statistics on Children*. She outlined the Guidance's spotlight on children with disabilities, children experiencing violence and children in alternative care.

Dafna Kohen, Chair of the CES Task Force (Statistics Canada), familiarised the participants with the details of recommendations of the Guidance, referring to Canada as a case in point, when applicable.

Regarding violence against children (VAC), the Guidance on Statistics on Children recommends that (a) NSOs and line ministries responsible for producing data on VAC receive a clear mandate and necessary resources (which should be allocated towards strengthening administrative data and implementing regular surveys on VAC); (b) countries see SDG indicators as a good starting point to collect data focusing on improving VAC related indicators; (c) countries coordinate efforts to develop a VAC collection and monitoring system at the national level following rigorous methods and ethical standards.

For children with disability, the Guidance recommends that (a) NSOs lead intersectoral efforts to collect data systematically as per the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and promote national and international comparability of data; (b) countries harmonise the current basic administrative data on disability; (c) countries use the UNICEF-Washington Group Child Functioning Module (CFM) for international

statistics on disability prevalence; (d) countries collect reliable data on prevalence and outcomes that can be disaggregated by age and sex.

The general recommendations of the Guidance are (a) countries elaborate national indicators plans and invest in the production and dissemination of internationally comparable data on children and youth (b) NSOs consider designating a national focal point for child and youth statistics; (c) countries include children related data in regular data collection processes, including through child-focused surveys; (d) countries increase and promote the visibility of data on children and youth; (e) UNICEF, OECD and Eurostat improve their efforts coordinating the improvements in the collection and dissemination of data on children.



In a follow-up to the CES recommendations on general issues for statistics on children, selected countries shared their experiences. **Evrin Sultan**, Turkstat, offered an overview of the Official Statistics Programme of Türkiye, the Institute's work and products on children, especially the Türkiye Child Survey. **Vladica Jankovic**, Statistical Office of Serbia, shared how the country organises data on children via DevInfo databases and disseminates data through several channels like the DevInfo visualisation tool and Open Data Portal, but most notably via the National Reporting Platform on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **Apostolos Kasapis**, ELSTAT, reviewed the implications of the lack of disaggregated data and the role of NSOs and presented the example of Greece regarding the inclusion of the CFM in the Health Interview Survey.

Siraj Mahmudlu, UNICEF ECARO, elaborated on the rationale for the proposed Framework for Monitoring Child rights in Europe and Central Asia (ECA CRM). The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) consistently recommended that countries improve their national data systems on children. Yet, a comprehensive framework for monitoring child rights indicators was missing. Hence the ECA CRM framework, linked to the CRC and SDGs principles, has been proposed to constitute the fundamentals of the TransMonEE database and potentially other regional and national efforts related to data and analysis on children. The framework includes the following domains: (a) child rights landscape and governance; (b) health and nutrition; (c) education, leisure and culture; (d) family environment and protection from violence and harmful practices; (e) participation and civil rights; (f) poverty and social protection; and (g) cross-cutting dimensions/groups (early childhood development, disability, gender, environment and climate change, risks and humanitarian situation). An initial list of indicators has been mapped against each sub-domain of the framework, prioritising child-related SDG indicators but will require

further consultations and reviews. The framework is regional, and uptake by countries is voluntary.



After the presentation of the framework, participants carried out a group session to review it. The participants **Aigul Aubakirova** (Kazakhstan), **Qendresa Ibra Zariqi** (Kosovo, UNSCR 1244) and **Vera Brecani** (Albania), presented the results of this group work. Although proposed as a regional framework, the

participants found the ECA CRM Framework relevant to all countries as it can be a potential tool for structuring and optimising data collection systems at the national level. The groups proposed to make the set-up of the framework flexible and to allow further change after adoption, to define a core list of standard indicators while leaving other indicators as optional. They also proposed to develop a standardised methodology for indicators. The groups noted the need to determine a focal point at the national level while assigning responsible ministries to report on specific indicators. Finally, the countries requested capacity development for their national partners if the country would implement the framework.

Session 2: Updates on the data landscape and data sources on children

Session chair: Dinara Soorombaeva, National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan

Claudia Cappa, UNICEF HQ, provided an online update on the progress made regarding the International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC), which is expected to be discussed and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2023.

A panel delivered updates on child-focused surveys in the region of presenters. **Attila Hancioglu**, UNICEF HQ, provided an update on UNICEF's flagship household survey programme, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), with a particular focus on the preparation of round 7, which will begin in 2023 and will run until the end of 2026. Unlike previous rounds, the survey will include base questionnaires and complementary modules covering



new topics such as bullying, domestic violence, and refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs). His presentation was followed by **Paata Shavishvili**, GEOSTAT, who elaborated on Georgia's experience with MICS+ and coupling periodic surveys with more frequent data collection. He also covered the challenges that COVID-19 brought to the survey implementation and the lessons learnt from that experience. **Bridget Hearne**, Ireland Central Statistics Office, provided a brief overview of a panel survey called "Growing up in Ireland", funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). It has been carried out by a consortium of researchers led by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin – the survey will be moving to the Ireland Central Statistics Office in 2023. This survey covers two cohorts: '98 (the survey started when the participants were nine years old and interviewed them again at the age of 13, 17-18 and 20 years) and '08 (started with 9-month-old participants and followed them at the age of 3, 5, 7, 9 and 13 years) - it aims to describe the lives of children and young people in the country, chart their development over time, establish the impacts of early childhood experience on later life, provide evidence for the creation of effective government policies, and identify any persistent adverse effects that lead to social disadvantage. **Eoin McNamara**, ESRI, concluded the presentation on the "Growing up in Ireland" survey by outlining the obstacles in fieldwork that arose because of COVID-19 and how they adapted the survey's pilot testing and primary fieldwork to meet these challenges.

Session 3: Data on children in alternative care: situation and prospects

Session chair: **Murat Kapikiran, TurkStat**

Aaron Greenberg, UNICEF ECARO, gave a snapshot of the child-care reforms on deinstitutionalising children and transitioning to community- and family-based care in the region. He highlighted the importance of monitoring progress made by countries and across the region in policy implementation and the outcomes for children. TransMonEE is one of the few international efforts to



capture data on children in alternative care. He emphasised that UNICEF is committed to supporting countries in the region in improving data availability, comparability and quality and strengthening data systems on children in alternative care as one of the flagships of UNICEF's work in the region.

Flavio Bianconi, an expert, discussed the availability and quality of data on children in alternative care in the TransMonEE database and offered his reflections on the 2022 data collection process. Among the challenges, the lack of availability of aggregates and data disaggregation, and poor coverage and quality of data, were cited. At the same time, he outlined the progress made in 2022 data collection with an (a) improved understanding of the data collection template; (b) improved data availability; (c) better implementation of validation rules and quality; (d) reasonable submission rate in comparison with last year.



Maria Herczog, Eurochild, gave an overview of the results of mapping alternative care data systems across the EU and the UK within the DataCare initiative. DataCare is a joint project of Eurochild and UNICEF ECARO that aims to identify recommendations and steps to agree on comparable benchmarks and indicators on children in alternative care across Europe and strengthen existing data systems to produce quality data for these indicators

in support of advancing key EU-wide priorities. The project's key findings are (a) no internationally accepted standard definitions or classifications for statistics on children in alternative care, whereas national definitions and classifications vary and reflect the diversity of alternative care systems; (b) the alternative care population is not fully captured in all countries; (c) there are commonly used disaggregation variables, but they are not standardised nor consistent across countries; (d) all countries are collecting data on stock; most countries collect data on residential and family-based care; (e) much more data collected than published with the primary data source being administrative data; (f) issues are recognised, and countries have high interest in data reform.

Joanna Rogers, an expert, provided the participants with an overview of the situation of children in alternative care in Europe and Central Asia. She presented the preliminary results of an in-depth analysis of TransMonEE data and data from other sources on children in alternative care. She highlighted key challenges, e.g., gaps in data measuring the results of efforts made by child welfare systems to prevent children from being placed into formal alternative care. Her preliminary analysis indicates that the rate of children in residential care has generally been reducing in many countries in the region with some notable exceptions but that the population of children in formal alternative care overall has not changed significantly. And while data suggest a noteworthy transition from residential to family-based care in several countries in the last 10-15 years, more work on data quality improvement is needed. She also stressed that more information is required about the profile of children in alternative care due to the lack of disaggregated data.

Dafna Kohen, Statistics Canada, elaborated on CES Task Force recommendations regarding improving children in alternative care statistics.

The Guidance recommends that (a) countries develop and adopt standardised definitions and classifications for alternative care for the two main types of alternative care (residential and family-based care) and for sub-types of family-based care and residential care (e.g., institutional care); (b) countries consider collecting and reporting data beyond stock and flow to measure other critical aspects of alternative care; (c) NSOs assess the quality of national surveys and administrative data for coverage of children in alternative care and to decide whether and how children should be included; (d) countries adopt an indicator framework, including a standard set of disaggregation variables.

Based on her experience, she summarised that the Canadian population census provides information on the number of foster children aged 0-14, representing a vital effort to produce point-in-time counts of the number of children in alternative care.

The subsequent panel discussion focused on countries' progress in improving the availability, quality and disaggregation of data on children in alternative care. The panel started with **Vera Breçani**, INSTAT Albania, who informed the participants that in early 2022 the National Programme of Official Statistics recognised the need to improve data on children in alternative care. The technical workshops, supported by UNICEF Albania, were organised for NSO and the State Social Services. A methodology was agreed upon based on the national legislation and TransMonEE guidelines. As a result, 26 indicators were published on INSTAT's dashboard. **Tanja Zaja**, Ministry of Labour, Pension Fund, Family and Social Policy in Croatia, and **Marijana Salinovic**, UNICEF Croatia, presented the social welfare management information system, SocSkrb, which the Government

introduced in 2012. During the ten years of its existence, the system collected several million datasets and regularly exchanged data with the Tax Administration, Employment office, Ministry of Justice, Birth and Death Registrar, and other important institutions. Among the problems faced and effectively tackled during this time, the presenters outlined the failure to enter data by reporting units. **Evelina Miron**, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in Moldova, gave a summary of the statistical report "CER 103", published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection on an annual basis and focused on children at risk and children separated from their parents. At the same time, **Ana Ceban**, National Bureau of Statistics in Moldova, continued with an overview of how data is disseminated through various channels and platforms. **Ida Kolinovic**, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro, presented the Social Welfare Information System (SWIS) that covers data on children in alternative care (residential care and foster families) and case management. The last intervention in the panel was from Tajikistan, by **Solehzoda Aziz**, Executive Office of the President of Tajikistan, and **Mahmadzoda Jumakhon**, Agency on Statistics of Tajikistan. They described the regulatory framework and data collection process that spans several ministries and functional levels.



The groupwork discussed the main enablers for implementing the CES recommendations on improving data on children in alternative care. It focused on (a) identifying a national institution that would be best placed to lead the process of developing and adopting standardised definitions and statistical

classifications on children in residential or family-based care; (b) key stakeholders to be engaged and an established mechanism to be used to support these processes; (c) the most significant barriers to collecting and reporting data on children in alternative care in an internationally comparable way, and (d) a roadmap towards implementing the recommendations made in the Guidance.

The first two groups (reported by **Dimitar Kolev**, Bulgaria and **Joanna Rogers**, Expert) identified the line ministries to be the lead for defining alternative care definitions. At the same time, NSOs would produce statistics and manage data quality, while UNICEF, other international organisations, CSOs, and academia – would provide technical support. Among various prerequisites for success, political will at the country level was considered of utmost importance. The latter two groups (reported by **Kalafateli Myrsini**, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Greece and **Klea Troka**, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Albania) found the recommendations relevant but general. One of the groups stressed that implementation guidance would be helpful and that significant financial investment

may be needed to operationalise the recommendations. The roadmaps presented by the groups seemed to revolve around the following main steps: setting up a coordinating/implementing mechanism (including NSOs) or building upon existing data improvement processes, conducting a comparative analysis of international and national definitions, assessing the data landscape and data systems to identify gaps and areas to improve, developing an action plan including timeline, resources, and roles and responsibilities.

In his concluding remarks, **Aaron Greenberg**, UNICEF, provided final reflections on policies for children in alternative care that must be monitored. This requires reliable, comparable and available data. Furthermore, day 2 of the meeting showed how much progress governments had made since the last TransMonEE meeting in this area. Further international work is crucial despite the absence of reporting obligations and international standards for statistics on children in alternative care, which could be founded on the CES recommendations. UNICEF will support the preparations for the planned expert meeting in 2024. At the regional level, UNICEF and its partners will keep advocating to integrate the recommended core indicators on children in alternative care into the European Child Guarantee monitoring frameworks at the EU and country levels. Work is also required at the national level. Over the next two years, UNICEF will support several countries in the region in strengthening their alternative care data systems.

Results and actions from the 2022 TransMonEE meeting

Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Guidance on the improvement of statistics on children

Results

The TransMonEE meeting took note of the CES Guidance, appreciating this good collaboration between the Conference, its Task Force chaired by Canada, TransMonEE/UNICEF, and UNECE. The meeting reviewed three country examples in response to the CES guidance general issues for statistics on children.

Actions

- *Country delegations* will further review the Guidance, discuss its implications for the work of the NSOs and other NSS actors, and identify areas for support from UNICEF and other actors.
- *Countries* will discuss upon return and share their interest (with Canada Statistics, UNICEF, and UNECE) in taking an active part in further steps following the adoption of the Guidance, including the planning of the joint CES Expert Group-TransMonEE meeting in 2024.

Europe and Central Asia Child Rights Monitoring Framework

Results

The proposed framework is endorsed for use for TransMonEE (with possible slight revisions) and is found relevant and helpful at the national level.

Actions

- *UNICEF* will review and consider the suggestions made by the TransMonEE meeting to further refine the indicator list and related documentation and share the revised version with countries for review by the end of 2022.
- *Countries* will provide any additional feedback on the framework to UNICEF Regional Office by 31 March 2023.
- *UNICEF* will conduct data-gap analysis in the region (for information), considering the latest list of indicators by the next TransMonEE meeting and sharing with countries in advance.

TransMonEE revisioning

Result

The TransMonEE meeting took note of the revisions to TransMonEE that took place since the last meetings in Vienna and Astana.

Actions

- *UNICEF* will finish harvesting/establishing automatic data linkages with other data sources in line with the ECA CRM framework by Q2 2023 and share the results at the next meeting.
- *UNICEF* will share the revised TransMonEE website and dashboard by early 2023 and seek the feedback of countries.
- *Countries* will revisit all the historical data for the continuing indicators of the TransMonEE template and reach out to UNICEF for any clarifications or corrections by Q2 2023.

Updates on the data landscape and data sources on children

Result

The TransMonEE meeting took note of the endorsement of the ICVAC by the UN Committee of Experts on International Classifications. The meeting noted the plans for the next round of MICS and the experiences of Georgia and Ireland, with frequent (MICS+) and panel (Growing up in Ireland) surveys, respectively.

Actions

- *UNICEF* will organise training on the new classification by Q3 2023 if/once it is adopted by the UN Statistical Commission next year.
- *UNICEF* will organise a MICS regional survey design workshop for the next round by Q2 2023.

Data on children in alternative care: situation and prospects

Result

The TransMonEE meeting noted the presentations on data quality and disaggregation, appreciated the examples of countries sharing the process and challenges with alternative care data, and discussed the follow-up to the recommendations of the CES Guidance on children in alternative care.

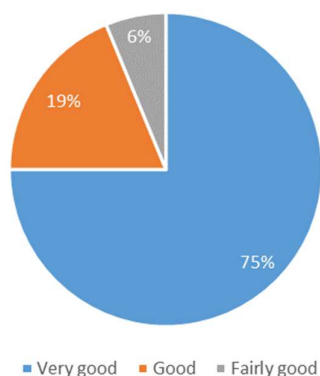
Actions

- *UNICEF* will finish drafting the analytical TransMonEE piece on children in alternative care by the end of 2022 and share it with countries for feedback.
- *UNICEF* will support a group of countries in 2023-2024 willing to develop/implement action plans to improve data on children in alternative care. Four countries (Greece, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan) have already volunteered to participate in this initiative.
- *Countries* will reach out to *UNICEF* for any additional technical support that may be useful to move the agenda at the national level.
- *UNICEF* will update the Statistical Manual on a Core Set of Child Protection Indicators for the region in 2023, which informs the TransMonEE data collection.

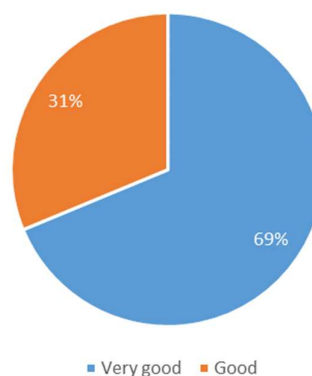
Assessment of the meeting and main takeaways

The participants who contributed to the meeting evaluation assessed the meeting content and organisation as 'good' or 'very good'. All sessions were helpful, and participants particularly appreciated group work, allowing countries to share experiences and brainstorm in smaller groups.

Evaluation of meeting's content



Evaluation of meeting's organization



The main takeaways from the TransMonEE meeting for **NSOs** included: (a) learning experiences of other countries, (b) taking stock of the work so far, (c) seeing a way forward in the shape of specific steps, (d) realising a need to strengthen cooperation, (e) understanding a need to make data on children publicly available, and (f) developing an understanding of children in alternative care in the region. Representatives from **line ministries and Child Rights Coordinating Bodies** stressed the necessity of (a) coordination, (b) actionable data, and (c) quality of data. **For UNICEF CO representatives**, major takeaways were related to the suggested ECA CRM framework: (a) underlining its benefits, (b) underscoring the need to present it to governments. Other takeaways included (c) enhanced cross-sectoral work as a prerequisite for quality data, (d) limited human and time capacities, as well as a clear reporting structure, as main challenges in the data field, (e) the necessity of standardisation of indicators for violence against children, (f) productive interaction with national stakeholders that took place during the meeting, and (g) potential follow-up with governments.

In terms of **support by UNICEF**, **NSO participants** would like UNICEF to support them by (a) playing an advisory, coordinating and intermediary role concerning institutions, providing administrative data, and those on the receiving/using side, (b) supporting the production of statistics on alternative care and assisting countries with building a complete architecture of data sources, indicators, metadata, stakeholders in the area of alternative care, (c) providing capacity building through workshops (both general and specifically on suggested ECA CRM framework) or sharing success stories of other countries. Representatives of **line ministries** stressed the need for financial support and technical and expert advice they would like to get from UNICEF.

Finally, participants from suggested the following **topics to be considered** for the next TransMonEE meeting: (a) successful stories and experiences of countries, (b) progress made with the ECA CRM framework, (c) understanding the situation of Roma children, (d) collecting data on children-orphans, (e) examining the situation with children with disabilities, (f) learning practical tools and instruments for suggested best practices, (g) providing practical exercises and discussions with regards to indicators, errors in data collection and, consequently, skill building in this field, with a particular focus on violence against children, children in alternative care, and children with disabilities, (h) exploring examples of administrative data measuring violence and successful practices presented by law enforcement agencies, (i) outlining mechanisms of improving cross-sectoral data collection and reporting on child protection indicators.