

Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Children:

UNICEF update on real-time monitoring efforts in East Asia and the Pacific Islands



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Introduction

The significant impact of the 2008-2009 global economic crisis on the economies and societies of East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) has been undeniable. Expectations that “decoupled” East Asian economies, supposedly not tied to the fortunes of western economies anymore, would emerge unscathed from this downturn did not materialize¹. While there are variations in the impact across countries², the crisis was an unpleasant reminder of the flip-side of the export-led growth models which most countries had adopted in the region. As it came on the heels of the food and fuel price crises, the economic shock magnified the impact on poverty and social development. Food prices still remain considerably higher than their pre-crisis levels more than two years ago³, and the price of oil has continued increasing.

Rationale

Against this backdrop, it is important that the impact of the multiple crises on the social sectors is monitored and assessed. The paucity of data on social indicators from the 1997 crisis, confirmed during the January 2009 conference that UNICEF convened in Singapore⁴, was a timely rejoinder about the importance of tracking any effects in vulnerable populations as the current crisis has evolved. This brief is the first update⁵ on some of the real-time monitoring schemes underway in East Asia and the Pacific Countries in which UNICEF has led or played a key role in. As such, it is not a comprehensive overview of the full array of the important work being done by all UNICEF Country Offices (COs) to protect children from the worst of the crises.

For UNICEF the importance of such data collected from lightweight monitoring initiatives that are not time and resource heavy cannot be overstated. There are two reasons for this. First, all information collected in real-time will be useful in contributing to UNICEF’s evidence based advocacy efforts to persuade governments to work on creating effective social protection measures that shield children from the worst effects of the crises. Second, in many cases, governments and the International Financial Institutions have undertaken monitoring efforts that focus narrowly on macroeconomic impacts and their implications. It is important that indicators measuring outcomes for children are included in such efforts.

Monitoring the effects of the crises on children in EAPR

In February 2009, UNICEF EAPRO’s Social Policy and Economic Analysis Section produced a concept note on monitoring the impact of the crisis on children in real time⁶. Consisting of simple but effective indicators in health, education and child protection – to be collected in sentinel sites – as proxies for measuring educational attainment, the health status of children and governmental commitment to social sector expenditures, this idea was shared with UNICEF COs and governments throughout the region. It was presented at conferences

¹ The World Bank estimates that Developing East Asia excluding China will only experience a meagre 1.1 % growth rate in 2009 and 4.5 % in 2010. Please see the World Bank’s EAP update from November 2009 for more details at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEAPHALFYEARLYUPDATE/Resources/550192-1257239343493/update_nov09_fullreport.pdf

² *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Children in EAP One Year On: A UNICEF Perspective*, draft paper, November 2009, Samman J. Thapa and Dr. Mahesh Patel

³ <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/FoodPricesIndex/en/>

⁴ http://www.unicef.org/eapro/activities_10418.html

⁵ UNICEF EAPRO hopes to produce a mid-year update in July 2010

⁶ *Monitoring the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Children*, by Dr. Mahesh Patel in *Global Social Policy*, Volume 9 Supplement 2009

in Lao PDR and Indonesia, and shared with governments in Mongolia, the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and Cambodia among others. It has been received positively by government counterparts who have requested UNICEF's technical assistance in devising country specific methodologies to monitor vulnerabilities precipitated or exacerbated by the crisis on children and women.

Country Offices have responded by producing or contributing to methodologies that aim to do this. The details of country specific monitoring will be summarized in the next section but all of these efforts have a number of features in common:

First, they are not meant to produce nationally representative survey data like the MICS and DHS do. They are intended to monitor possible transmission channels through which the economic crisis can affect children and populations particularly vulnerable to the economic and food price shocks like migrants and food insecure communities. The sentinel sites and/or communities in focus are, however, selected based on existing information that can show which parts of the country/population are most at risk. These are also the areas where the potential for children being affected by adverse coping strategies is highest. Existing poverty maps, data from MICs surveys etc thus are useful in this way and also serve as baselines.

Second, they are meant spot alarm signals to trigger further investigation. They aim to track indicators – such as falling attendance in schools – that would suggest a potential deterioration of the well-being of children. This needs to be followed up with more detailed analyses to assess where such outcomes have any linkages to the crises and how families are coping. Such data/information will not be comprehensive pronouncements on what accounts for the fluctuations of the indicators but will inform policymakers where to focus in channeling efforts to protect children as they contemplate and enact responses to the crises.

Third, all of these schemes will be routinely collecting data in regular intervals. The social impact of an economic crisis takes time to transmit and regular monitoring will ensure governments spot alarming trends in child well-being before things get worse. As the lag in social recovery is usually even longer, this tends to be overlooked after economic revival. Lessons from past crises – including those of the 1997/98 crisis which have been chronicled in an extraordinary issue of the academic journal *Global Social Policy* commissioned by EAPRO⁷ – demonstrate that the risk of governments getting complacent once the economy is on the upturn is very real⁸. These efforts will also help UNICEF advocate against losing sight of the impacts on the social sector during this crisis.

Country Offices are exploring ways to feed in the data generated by these initiatives to the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) run from the Secretary General's Office, which aims to collate and share real-time data/information from all UN agencies⁹.

Summary of in-country monitoring efforts

UNICEF initiatives in EAPR to regularly monitor developments in the social sectors began when food prices spiked in the middle of 2008. A number of Country Offices – including

⁷ Children and the Economic Crisis in East Asia: http://gsp.sagepub.com/content/vol9/1_suppl/

⁸ Poverty figures took a long time to get back to 1997 levels in many EAP countries after economic recovery. Also see World Bank paper on “*Avoiding a Human Crisis during the Global Downturn*” at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NEWS/Resources/AvertingTheHumanCrisis.pdf>

⁹ Please see <http://www.un.org/sg/GIVAS/backgrounder.pdf> and <http://www.voicesofthevulnerable.net/> for more information

DPRK (amidst an already difficult situation), Timor-Leste, Indonesia, China and Malaysia – were tracking food price levels and assessing their effects on malnutrition. This is understandable given the importance of nutritional security to the physical and intellectual development of children. Other efforts began after the onset of the economic crisis. UNICEF has played a key role even in the initiatives it has not led by ensuring that social indicators, particularly those that measure the impact on children, are included in these efforts.

Indonesia

In 2008, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) successfully developed and piloted a system to monitor the impact of high food prices at the household level in Greater Jakarta, East Java, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), and Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB). The Government appreciated this system and adopted its methodology. In June 2009, a Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMS) at the household level was established in Indonesia. It is expected to be an important tool for the government for early warning and timely response planning. The FNSMS is led by the Central Food Security Agency (FSA) based at the Ministry of Agriculture, which also functions as the Secretariat for the Food Security Council (FSC). The FSC is chaired by the President of Indonesia.

The FNSMS is implemented by the Food Security Offices of four provinces (East Java, Nusa Tenggara Timur or NTT, Central Sulawesi and West Kalimantan provinces), covering 20 more vulnerable districts (5 per province) selected based on the 2005 Indonesia Food Insecurity Atlas. In each province, 250 households living in 10 villages (5 urban, 5 rural, and 25 households per village), amounting to 1,000 households, are periodically monitored. Data on household food security are collected on a quarterly basis while data on nutritional status of children under-five and their mothers are collected twice a year. Four quarterly provincial and consolidated FSNMS Bulletins will be produced during the pilot phase (May 2009 –May 2010) of the FNSMS.

The Pilot is jointly supported by UNICEF, WFP and ILO. It also benefits from technical advice from the National Statistics Agency (BPS), SEAMEO TROPMED, University of Indonesia and Bogor Agriculture University¹⁰.

Snapshot of progress

The FNMS produced its first bulletin in June-July 2009 and some of its noteworthy findings were as follows:

- Overall, 14% of all surveyed households were food insecure, 30% vulnerable and 56% food secure. More food insecure households were found in rural (20%) than in urban areas (8%). The highest proportion of food insecure households was observed in NTT (19%) while the lowest was in East Java (2%).
- Unemployment was observed in 7% of households. It was higher in urban (10%) than in rural areas (4%). School absenteeism was found among 21% of households with at least one school-age children, and this was higher in rural (26%) than in urban areas (16%). Around 1% of households engaged school-age children in income earning activities, mostly in household chores.
- 56% of all households (rural: 52%, urban: 60%) experienced difficulties in the last three months, mostly due to the lack cash, high food prices, health expenditures, agriculture/fishing related difficulties, debt payment and the increased cost for social events. The highest proportion of households experiencing such problems was in West Kalimantan (70%) while it was lowest in Central Sulawesi (38%).

¹⁰ http://www.vulnerabilitywatch.web.id/updateinfoview/34/files_default/

- Because food insecurity was associated with underlying factors such as irregular and low remuneration cash income, low livestock and assets, the situation was likely to be chronic rather than transitory.
- Households mostly adopted temporary, short-term coping strategies which were, so far, at an acceptable and non-depleted level to acquire food while seeking to protect their livelihoods. They mainly sought additional jobs, changed consumption pattern, and relied on credit to get food.

The second bulletin is due to be issued shortly and the entire first bulletin, with more details, can be found at www.vulnerabilitywatch.web.id/v1/

Lao PDR (LPDR)

The government of LPDR expressed its determination to take proactive measures to minimize the potential impacts of the economic crisis¹¹ on children after the national consultation the UNICEF CO convened on 20 February 2009 as a follow-up to the regional UNICEF conference. At this meeting chaired by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the Government of Laos (GOL) recognized the importance of establishing an early warning system that enables rapid detection of deterioration of social outcomes to respond quickly.

Following the Consultation, MPI sent out letters to the Ministries of Education (MOE), Health (MOH), and Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW), recommending them to establish such a surveillance system and collect and review existing data on the current situation of children to identify areas of concern and vulnerable groups. UNICEF was requested to provide technical support in facilitating the concerned ministries in taking the above actions. The CO followed up by producing a concept note on monitoring the impact of the crisis on children in LPDR in the areas of health, education and child protection using sentinel sites.

This note, which has been endorsed by the government, proposes that a small number of ‘sentinel sites’ be selected, and that information is routinely collected on a weekly basis at grass roots level, in schools and health centres, which can be more systematically and more frequently passed upwards through the system and reviewed centrally.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is already collecting consumer price data, including food prices, in eight sentinel markets in different areas of LPDR. This is compiled by the Department of Statistics every month and could serve as a useful alarm signal that nutritional status needs to be investigated in case of another food price spike or a significant deterioration of household income.

For education, attendance is collected daily in many schools. The numbers of children attending school is perhaps the most useful single alarm signal available, and monitoring of changes would not require a large sample of schools. The MOE suggested that it had capacity to collect this information, and maybe other indicators, monthly from at least one primary school per province, passing up the information by fax to both the provincial government and the MOE.

¹¹ *Potential Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Children in Lao PDR and Options for Responses (Preliminary Assessment)*, UNICEF Lao PDR, February 2009

For health, the MOH suggested that appropriate coverage can be achieved by collecting data monthly from nine provincial hospitals, one district health centre and two to three health centres in each of these nine province (18-27 health centres, in total, nationally). The most easily collected indicators for tracking changes in the functioning of a provincial hospital are total weekly or monthly outpatient visits and total ante-natal care visits. At a health centre, due to the small number of attended births, it is probably only meaningful to track total outpatient visits.

In child protection, MOLSW is co-ordinating Child Protection Networks (CPNs) in over 120 communities in 9 provinces. At village level, CPNs are already collecting data on child protection issues such as the number of street children and number of children from village in orphanages. Changes in these and similar indicators would be of considerable social significance in monitoring social effects of the crisis. These data are reported periodically by selected CPNs and compiled and monitored by MOLSW centrally.

While the health and education monitoring methodology is being finalized, the child protection section, working with a local NGO called Friends International, has already collected some primary data from a focus group of street youths and parents to assess the impact of the food price and financial crises on this vulnerable segment of the population. Sentinel monitoring is within the capacities of sectoral ministries and would not incur additional costs. Initial technical support for establishing the surveillance system and drafting of the operation manual is being provided by UNICEF. A consultant will be commissioned to oversee the development of the pilot phase of this process early this year.

Mongolia

Mongolia's effort to initiate a real-time monitoring scheme has been led by its Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), an attendee at UNICEF's January 2009 Singapore Conference. UNICEF is providing technical and financial support in the development of the indicators, qualitative and quantitative information collection, and assisting with the scheme's development and monitoring implementation. The EAPRO concept note was modified to make it more suitable to Mongolia's unique situation in the development of this system. The pilot – which has just been completed in December 2009 – was run from the DPM's office. The cabinet secretariat has been charged with the role of coordinating this effort among the ministries involved, namely the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, and the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.

The pilot focused on two major channels of data collection. First, the sentinel sites selected (15 sites covering 250-280 households) consolidated information on the indicators selected through existing administrative systems. Mongolia's administrative data is very thorough, which rendered the establishment of a separate mechanism for primary data collection unnecessary. Second, a pulse survey of households explored the impact of the crisis on some 200 households *vis-à-vis* changes in their incomes, food intake, status of loans, changes in health and education expenditures etc. This has been complemented by focus group discussions with children and young people as well as in-depth interviews with key informants such as relevant policy makers and service providers.

The sentinel sites themselves were chosen based on UNDP's poverty mapping. The poorest provinces and districts were selected in each of the country's five regions, including Ulaanbaatar. In each selected district/province, a sentinel school, dormitory, FGP and/or

health center, police station and convenience store/kiosk was identified. The 15 indicators monitored, classified by category, are as follows:

1. **Health:** Number of out-patients; number of children under age of one who had decrease in their weights; number of children aged 13 with decreased MUAC and number of people newly diagnosed with mental disorders.
2. **Education:** Attendance among children of the 1st, 5th and 7th grades; number of children living in dormitories who had visits to and/or from their households and/or received food, money and others from their households.
3. **Changes in livelihoods:** Number of people newly registered as unemployed; number of people approached their respective administrative centres for certification to obtain small bank loans; number of people residing at garbage sites.
4. **Protection:** Number of crimes; number of domestic violence cases.
5. **Market price of some food and non-food items:** Retail price of meat; retail price for flour (sort II); fuel price (AI-80); price of sheepskin; goat down price.

The results from the pilot are currently being analyzed to assess how to move forward.

The Pacific Island Countries (PICs)

UNICEF helped initiate and is playing a leading role in the joint-UN monitoring scheme underway in the PICs. A number of key ministers and vice-ministers from the PICs – including the Finance Ministers of Kiribati and Vanuatu – had attended the Singapore conference and expressed their interest to undertake a scheme to monitor the cumulative effects of the crises on the wellbeing of children and women. The PICs also bore the brunt of the food price and fuel crises due to high transport costs and a sharp spike in the price of imported food, whose consumption has increased due to changing diet patterns.

Responding to these requests, UNICEF alongside other UN and regional agencies has initiated a real-time social impact monitoring of the current economic crisis to identify the most vulnerable children and women before they are exposed to further risks that will affect their well-being and to inform just-in-time policy formulation and program action. Eight PICs – Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) – are partaking in this (FSM and RMI will join in 2010). A monitoring framework was proposed to identify adverse changes happening at the community level with a focus on the most susceptible groups across health, food and nutrition, education, and other social dimensions¹² (child abuse, child labour etc). The framework captures the health and social effects of economic crisis by looking at the micro-economic impact of macro-economic factors such as the decrease in remittances and exports or the increase in food and fuel prices. The negative impact of these factors on services is translated into increased risk behaviours which in turn lead to negative health and social outcomes.

¹² See http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Pacific_GEC_children_and_women_final_edition_one.pdf, Annex 1 for more details

The strategy involves establishing 2-3 sentinel monitoring sites in the most vulnerable areas of each country covered including both urban and rural settings. Within each different sentinel site, services and communities will be assessed. The impact on education, and health services and incidence of crime and violence will be monitored through facility based surveys and Key Informant Interviews at schools, hospitals, health centres/clinics, pharmacy outlet, food markets and police posts serving the concerned communities together with administrative data already collected at the national level. The impact at the household and the communities will be assessed through simple monitoring instruments such as small-scale pulse household survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which covers 30 households within the most vulnerable communities served by the facilities. Therefore, 60 to 90 households per country will be monitored throughout the cycle of data collections, which will be conducted on the quarterly basis and last at least for two years throughout 2009-2011.

Sentinel site selection is driven by a National Steering Committee (NSC) headed by government focal ministries. A national consultant will support this committee, through provision of data, in determining the most vulnerable communities within the provinces or area that are selected as most vulnerable. Vulnerable areas in countries are defined locally and determined by comparative concentrations of some of those already considered to be facing hardship across most Pacific Island countries: (i) the young; (ii) the old; (iii) people living with disabilities; (iv) those who had no source of regular income; (v) those with no access to adequate land on which to grow food for consumption and/or sale; (vi) households headed by women and the elderly¹³.

Snapshot of Progress

UNICEF is funding work in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu; Tuvalu is funded by UNDP; and RMI and FSM by UNFPA. WHO has also funded an international consultant based with UNICEF. NSCs have been officially set up in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands and they have also discussed and endorsed the sentinel sites in these countries. Tuvalu and Tonga have started data collection from December 2009. Vanuatu (utilizing the MDGi), Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Fiji are set to follow suit in early 2010.

Initial results from Tonga are suggestive of the difficulties faced by PIC families and children: for instance, 60% of those interviewed in the first round there suggested that it has become more difficult for them to pay school-related expenses compared to last year. 77% of households also said that they face greater difficulty in meeting daily expenditures compared to this time last year. To cope, 75% of them sought support from friends and relatives and 23-24 % of them used savings or sold/pawned household valuables to meet expenses.

The first round of data collection in most PICs has been completed by the end of January 2010. In addition to Tonga, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu too have already issued preliminary results for this round. The second round of data is set to be gathered in July 2010 (with two further rounds scheduled in 2011). The data will also be complimented by media analysis and human interest stories gathered by NGOs. National workshops are planned at the end of each data round to consider policy and budget implications of the findings. Analysis of national budget allocation in relation to the

¹³ *UN Joint Initiative on Global Economic Crisis Sentinel Site Monitoring in the Pacific Island Countries – Orientation, Training and Standardization Workshop Manual*

economic crisis has also commenced through a partnership with ADB and the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC).

Viet Nam

The UNICEF Country Office in Viet Nam is a lead partner in the Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) that has been in operation since mid-2009. The Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), with substantial inputs from UNICEF and UNDP developed a concept note in April 2009 with four key objectives:

1. Obtain information on the social impact of the crisis by examining how it is affecting employment and, beyond, how it is hitting people's livelihoods and (intra) household welfare.
2. Learn about coping strategies by those groups of the population hit by the crisis.
3. See whether existing government safety nets are able to cope with and address the new needs to social assistance emerging as a result of the crisis.
4. Help in the formulation of policy initiatives that can effectively respond to new needs emerging as the crisis hits and unfolds in Viet Nam.

This built upon the rapid assessments that VASS had undertaken in February and March-April 2009, supported by Oxfam GB, Action Aid and the World Bank. The UNICEF/UNDP/VASS concept note helped expand the scope of these assessments using a more comprehensive approach and selection of sentinel sites, hence increasing the exercise's ability to detect the social impacts of the crisis.

The RIM exercise is being undertaken in 10 selected sentinel sites across the country. The sample includes five sites in rural areas and five in urban or peri-urban areas. The 10 locations also cover 2 industrial zones (one in the North, one in the South), 2 urban areas with a high concentration of construction workers (Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City), a rural/coastal tourism site, a craft village, a rural site with substantial out-migration, a rural site with agricultural production for export, an 'average' rural location, and a rural site with a high concentration of poor households.

Purposely sampling specific locations is a pragmatic and feasible way to directly access and obtain information from vulnerable population groups. Affected population groups are spread across the country but the 10 sentinel sites were selected for having particularly high concentrations of such groups.

The RIM exercises will be repeated at regular intervals of every 2-3 months. This will help policymakers identify trends and emerging issues among affected groups, especially in terms of how the crisis impacts them, how workers and households cope with the impacts, how they are supported in their response etc. This allows policymakers gain a better understanding of how current social security and social assistance measures cover the real needs of vulnerable groups as well as a bottom-up insight into the need for additional policy measures. It is also complementary to other layers of crisis monitoring information¹⁴.

¹⁴ *Concept Note on undertaking a series of Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) exercises of the impact of the global financial crisis in Viet Nam*

Snapshot of progress

VASS, with technical and financial support from the community of donors and international NGOs, including in particular UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, DFID, AuSaid, the Ford Foundation, Oxfam GB, Action Aid etc. has carried out two rounds of rapid impacts monitoring (RIM) during the March-early May and August-September 2009 periods respectively to collect up to date information about the impact of the on-going global economic crisis on firms, workers and households, in order to provide timely inputs into the policy making processes. Another round of RIM is scheduled for March 2010.

The final report detailing the findings from these two rounds of RIM has not been shared yet. But a preliminary copy has revealed a very impressive rebound in the labour market, which is beyond expectations of not only analysts, but of firms themselves as well. In the first round of RIM conducted in March and April 2009, unemployment or underemployment in the form of rotating shifts or short working hours were common, particularly among low-skilled workers. The opposite was observed in the second round: shortage of low-skilled labour prevails, be they migrant or non-migrant workers. Many export-oriented manufacturing firms are facing difficulties with recruitments for meeting new orders, which are now on the rise.

The results of another quick assessment that UNICEF did in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Family Department) and the Institute of Sociology (IOS – which is part of VASS) however has also shown discernable impacts of the crisis on the families of international labour migrants¹⁵. The data collection was carried out in 9 different communes in 3 provinces in February 2009. It was mainly based on a series of interviews and group discussions with international labour migrants who have returned from Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, Middle East countries, Eastern European countries, Russia, Germany, Czech Republic, and with their families. Additional data were obtained through a household questionnaire among 352 households with international labour migrants (mainly with their husbands or wives). There were four key findings that emerged from this exercise:

First, the impact was felt harder by labour migrants employed in the informal sector, by those employed in (especially export oriented) industries, and by those working in countries with underdeveloped social security systems.

Second, the impact was felt much harder by young migrants who had recently left compared to labour migrants who had already worked abroad for several years. The latter group appeared to better absorb the financial shock, because of accumulated savings and assets, and because they are generally in a better position (with information, language, networks) to find new employment opportunities and/or new migration destinations.

Third, the impact was felt much more by poorer families. It was found that labour migrants from poor households typically worked in insecure and low-skill segments of the labour market. In addition, their families lack informal support networks and fewer options to diversify income or to absorb shocks.

Finally, the assessment points at emerging consequences for children as reduced incomes forced some households to delay payments of school fees, to take their children out of school, or to compromise on visits to health care facilities. The crisis reduced the incomes of 72% of the households surveyed. It had also increased the worries of households about their debt as

¹⁵ *Report on the impact of the economic downturn on international labour migrants and their families: Key findings of a quick assessment*, June 2009, UNICEF-IOS-MOCST, Viet Nam

well as increased their life instability (for about 40% of households). Because of these reasons, for instance, 8% of households had expressed their concern that the crisis had worsened their children's health and education. And this was only till February 2009.

Conclusion¹⁶

It is clear that the actions and contributions of UNICEF Country Offices in EAPR have been noteworthy in UNICEF's overall effort to produce evidence to underpin advocacy on protecting children from the negative effects of the economic, and food price and fuel crises. Doing this is crucial because the inability to spot short-term deprivations that children face can have long-term and often irreversible impacts on them. Children face more severe risks during crises than adults. While adults face the risk of hunger, children face the risk of permanent stunting. While adults face the risk of temporary unemployment, children risk dropping out of school permanently¹⁷. The costs of these scenarios are both normatively and positively unacceptable. UNICEF's efforts to set up systems to generate evidence as close to real time as possible are aimed at helping avoid this before it is too late.

¹⁶ Much of the information in this brief has been compiled based on the work of UNICEF Country Offices. For more information, please contact Samman J. Thapa (sthapa@unicef.org) at UNICEF EAPRO.

¹⁷ "Economic Crisis and Children: An Overview for East Asia and the Pacific," by Dr. Mahesh Patel in *Global Social Policy*, Volume 9 Supplement 2009

