

CALL FOR PAPERS

The impact of the global food, fuel, and financial crises and policy responses: A child-sensitive approach

ODI and UNICEF Conference, November, 2009, London, England

Deadline for abstract submissions: July 31, 2009

In November 2009, ODI and UNICEF will convene a conference that brings together development practitioners, policy experts and academic researchers from around the world to examine the ways in which the food and fuel price volatility, financial market volatility and global economic slowdown are affecting children and youth in both developing and industrialized countries, and to recommend policy responses. Papers can draw upon original research, evidence from past crises or first-hand policy-making experience to advance the discussion of how best to protect children and ensure their access to basic and social services during and after the crisis.

The global economic downturn of 2008/9 (on the backs of a food and fuel crisis) is already predicted to have exacerbated the poverty and deprivation suffered by 100s of millions (McCord, 2009). An economic downturn imposes significant costs on individuals through shrinking employment opportunities, reduced wages, reduced levels of demand, and cuts in government expenditure, especially with regard to basic services etc. The major long-lasting impacts of any crisis are likely to be those affecting children and where parents cannot mitigate impacts; the costs of all the above are frequently absorbed by children. Where children are withdrawn from school, are required to work, suffer early life malnutrition which may result in stunting, or are victims of neglect or violence, they are likely to suffer long-term and often life-long consequences. The extent to which an economic crisis results in increases of any of these phenomena is a major matter of concern.

The conference is seeking two types of submissions:

- Policy essays (6,000 words) - analysis of existing literature and evidence on policy responses to crises and their effects on child well-being
- Empirical papers (10,000 words) – quantitative and qualitative data analysis to advance our understanding of economic crises and how they affect children's and their care-givers' experiences of poverty.

There is a possibility for selected policy essays and papers to be published in a special issue of a major development policy journal in 2010 focussed on the impact of financial crises on children in developing country contexts.

Possible topics include:

- The nature of the economic crisis and its impact (for example on public revenues and expenditures, the labour market, the Balance of Payments/Trade Balance etc.); comparisons to previous crises, including the food and fuel prices crises of 2008; the relative importance and duration of different impacts in different contexts for children and care-givers
- The impact of the crisis on children, their care-givers and household coping mechanisms and intra-household dynamics (impact on vulnerable groups through health, education etc., most common coping mechanisms, interactions between informal and formal coping mechanisms/protection schemes, long-term effects of youth unemployment, vulnerability to violence, abuse and neglect)
- Possible government responses (social budgeting, social protection, improved governance, with particular attention to policies that effectively complement social protection plans, including social, economic, fiscal and aid policies that cushion children and their care-givers from shocks)

Abstracts (300 words in length) should be sent to: c.byrne@odi.org.uk by July 31 for consideration. The conference organisers will decide which abstracts to accept for the conference and inform authors by 30 August. Final paper submissions will be expected by 15 October.