CONCEPT NOTE
Study of socio-cultural determinants for the adoption of key family practices in the areas of intervention of UNICEF Madagascar

Context
All social indicators related to the realization of children's rights are quite alarming in Madagascar. 82% of Malagasy children live in poverty. For the education sector, 1.5 million children are out of school. From 10 children entering primary school, only 3 complete the cycle. In the area of health, 44,000 children per year or 120 children per day die before reaching their 5th year. Only 44% of births are not attended by skilled staff, only 51% of pregnant women receive the 4 antenatal cares, and 61% of children are vaccinated with DPT3. On nutrition field, 1 child from 2 under 5 years old suffer from chronic malnutrition; only 1 child from 2 is exclusively breastfed, and more than 1 child from 10 have acute malnutrition. For water and sanitation concerns, 1 Malagasy from 6 use improved latrines. In the area of child protection, 1 child from 3 (aged between 5 and 14 years) is economically active. Over 34% of girls are engaged in marriage from 15 to 19 years. Sexual exploitation for commercial purposes is a current situation associated with harmful traditional practices such as the treatment of twins in some localities.

UNICEF Madagascar supports the Government and the civil society partners to realize the rights of children to survival, development, protection and education. However, the contribution of UNICEF to improve the access to social services for parents and children do not always fully lead to the improvement of indicators for child rights because of socio-cultural factors. To address these factors, UNICEF supports partners to implement a communication for development (C4D) strategy in order to promote the adoption of key family practices.

1. Pregnant and lactating mothers seek an appropriate nutrition
2. Pregnant women seek 4 pre-natal consultations
3. Mothers of children aged 0-6 months practice early initiation of breast-feeding and practice exclusive breast-feeding of their infants
4. Mothers of children aged 0-23 months ensure to have their children vaccinated according to the calendar
5. Mothers of children aged 6-23 months provide varied and sufficient diet
6. Parents and caretakers of children aged 6-11 years enroll children in primary school
7. Parents and caretakers of children aged 6-11 ensure that their children finish primary school
8. Parents/caretakers of children aged 10-18 years disallow that their children are married before the age of 18
9. Parents/caretakers of children aged 10-18 years adopt non-violent behaviors towards their children
10. Households wash their hands with soap at critical times
11. Households drink safe water by using an improved source or by effectively treating the water of non-improved sources
12. Households build and use latrines

Some results of studies and surveys are available in order to develop a strategy based on evidence to influence these behaviors. We have the MICS (Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey) reports, the EPM 2010 (Periodic Households Survey), the EDS 2008-2009 (Demographic and Health Survey) and
the report of the MDG 2013 (Millennium Development Goals), which can serve as a basis of discussion for the conduct of this study. In 2011, UNICEF conducted an anthropological preliminary study in 3 regions of the south in order to understand why and how development projects have failed in the past, to promote a better understanding of social, religious and political practices coming into conflict with values and goals advocated by the programs, and to provide actionable insights to deepen with an adapted approach the partnership development with multiple groups in the South.

In addition, regional authorities and community stakeholders with the support of UNICEF worked to better understand the knowledge, attitudes and community involvement around certain key practices that can fulfill the rights of children. This initiative, launched in 2013, is essentially a qualitative research on socio-cultural practices and actors of influence. It is based on community consultations to have the necessary data in order to better understand and address behavioral factors.

**Justification**

Although some data are available on key family practices, they are not complete and do not provide a full knowledge of specific vulnerable groups, key actors of influence, and socio-cultural resources that can be used for mobilization and community participation, including culturally appropriate communication channels.

There is still a need to have complementary data that can help to strengthen C4D strategies as a systemic process, planned and based on evidence that promotes positive and measurable social change behaviors. C4D is then intrinsically linked to program areas; uses the consultation and participation of children, families, communities and networks; is based on the local context, and based on a combination of communication tools, channels and approaches.

Therefore, this study consists to compile, to deepen the available data and to facilitate the use and the exploitation of research results. The study aims thus to highlight practical recommendations on local circumstances beyond the use and the exploitation of research results academic considerations. The study wants also to be credible and legitimized through the full involvement of national partners and through the collaboration with national and international research institutes.

Moreover, given that the United Nations is currently in the process of developing a new assistance framework (UNDAF) for 2015-2019, and a new government is in place in 2014, it is necessary to support national research institutions and departments within each ministry to generate relevant data to inform planning processes on C4D strategy development for survival, development, protection and education of children.

In this context, UNICEF supports a C4D research consortium composed by a national research organization and an international organization recognized in the field of C4D research. The consortium will support research activities aimed to improve communication interventions based on evidence.

**Purpose and Objectives**

- Verify and deepen available data and information on the opportunities and challenges in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and practices for each key family practice by considering differences
between groups (difference of race, color, sex, language, religion, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status).

- Analyze the mechanisms of social support and community participation including the analysis of key actors and existing networks;

- Describe and analyze the communication situation: what media / communication channels are the most popular and influential to what themes, what traditional media are used, what are the credible sources of information, what media could provide useful calls to action, what are the current trends in social life in terms of communication, what are the current communication methods for each sector;

- Recommend pragmatic and programmatic innovations for C4D strategies related to each sector.

Areas covered by the study

The study will take place in 07 selected regions according to their vulnerability in social sectors and according to the presence of various programs of UNICEF.

These regions are:

- Atsimo Andrefana
- Analanjirofo
- Anosy
- 4 and other areas (to be specified)

6 main ethnic groups of Madagascar are represented in the 3 regions where all UNICEF programs are involved, namely: the Antandroy, the Antanosy, the Bara, the Vezo, the Mahafaly, the Betsimisaraka; and when relevant, data have to be presented by region and by ethnic or social group.

Methodology and Technical Approach

The study will be implemented by national partner in Madagascar who has experience of social data collection and communication. For that, the University of Antananarivo is selected through two specialized key departments on the implementation of a socio-cultural study: the Department of Sociology and the Inter-Disciplinary Department of Professional Training. These departments will use their comparative advantage related to the knowledge of the local situation and context. They will implement data collection in the field and support data analysis and the drafting of the study report.

As a multidisciplinary study in the field of "communication for development" has not yet been conducted in the country, it is proposed that an international research institute with an important international experience in conducting similar studies in developing countries will be selected to
support the national university. The international research institute will ensure exchange of knowledge and experience, support the coordination of C4D research, and accompany the process until the final submission of the study. Furthermore, the international university will provide a more comprehensive vision to the study.

The two entities will form the research consortium that will provide a sustained approach and an adapted methodology for the requested research. The consortium must provide a multidisciplinary team experienced in the areas to be treated to meet the objectives of the study, in addition to a good knowledge of the mandate of UNICEF and the areas of study.

The research consortium will therefore base its reflections on the preliminary results of the various existing studies and reports related to social and cultural organizations and the behavior of the population, particularly around the realization of child’s rights.

A steering committee of the study composed by the focal points of key sectorial ministries, the research consortium, the National Institute of Statistical Research and UNICEF will be established. It will be responsible for the coordination, the monitoring and the validation at each key step of the process through regular meetings (including the validation of ToRs, methodology for conducting the study, study reports and results). It thus ensures quality control of the conduct of the study throughout the process.

The study will be implemented in phases and will be initially conducted for a period of 6 months in 03 regions where all UNICEF programs are present (Atsimo Andrefana, Analanjirofo Anosy). It will be during a second phase of the study that other 4 regions will be covered for a new period of 6 months.

The study will be conducted by experts regarding ethnicity, gender issues, economics, geographical situation (rural / urban), socio-cultural situation, religious practices, communication aspect and other significant characteristics.

The consortium research must therefore ensure that the analysis will be balanced in terms of social and behavioral methodologies.

In addition, the analysis will be based on the life cycle approach corresponding to the following table:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant group</th>
<th>Behavioral objectives</th>
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| 1 Pregnant and lactating women | • seek an appropriate nutrition  
• seek 4 pre-natal consultations |
| 2 Mothers of children 0-6 months | • practice early initiation of breast-feeding  
• practice exclusive breastfeeding  
• ensure to have their children vaccinated according to the calendar |
| 3 Mother of 3 children 6-23 months | • provide varied and sufficient diet  
• ensure to have their children vaccinated according to the calendar |
| 4 Parents and caretakers of children aged 6 to 11 years | • send their children to primary school  
• keep their children in school to complete |
Key steps of the process

The process of conducting the study requires special attention to the critical points below:

- **Preparatory step**: coordination with the national university, development of partnership with the international university, set up of the Steering Committee;
- **Desk review**: literature research based on anthropological and sociological studies related to thematic mentioned above, synthesis of the results of previous studies in the target regions; identification of missing information;
- **Technical preparation** to develop appropriate methodology for the study and to achieve the objectives of the study listed above;
- **Training of all consortium partners on C4D research practices**;
- **Conduct the research in the field** by mobilizing multidisciplinary team and by organizing logistics (material, financial and organizational) to respond to the methodology of the study;
- **Data analysis, drafting of preliminary and final study reports**
- **Coordination, monitoring, pre-validation and validation sessions** with the steering committee at all stages of the process to ensure greater ownership of the results of the study.

The study will be conducted under the technical supervision of the Communication for Development section and the methodological support of the Social Policy and Evaluation Section from UNICEF Madagascar.