Invitation to Contribute to International Child Research Ethics Project

We are writing to invite you to contribute to an important international initiative aimed at improving understandings and practice in relation to ethical research with children and young people. This work, under way for the past two years, will culminate in an International Charter and Ethics Guidelines.

By way of brief background, Childwatch International convened a meeting at the University of London in July 2011 to discuss ethical issues and approaches to research with/on/for children and young people. This was attended by leading international child and youth researchers and managers in the fields of ethics philosophy, policy and practice. Participants at this meeting reviewed work previously undertaken by Childwatch International that included findings from an international survey exploring ethical issues in research with children in different international contexts and a comprehensive international literature review identifying key developments in this area (see: http://www.childwatch.uio.no/projects/project-of-the-month/2010/research-ethics). The meeting agreed that while the importance of ethical research with children and young people is now widely accepted, the tension between universally agreed principles and situationally applied practice needs considerably more thought.

In order to progress this agenda, Childwatch International has partnered on a project with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre that will:

a) Develop an **International Ethics Charter** for research involving children and young people (also linking to the values embedded in the spirit of the UNCRC).

b) Develop **Ethics Guidelines** that can be applied within and across different international (research, policy, practice and disciplinary) contexts. These need to reflect universal principles and have relevance within diverse cross-cultural contexts.

c) Identify cost effective, flexible **approaches to training / capacity building** for organisations and disciplines seeking to adopt more ethical child and youth research practice in a range of contexts.

d) Develop a **web portal** to provide a repository of information, publications and resources relevant to child and youth research, as well as a discussion board for advice and support around ethical issues and dilemmas encountered by researchers, policy makers, practitioners and ethics governance bodies.

In progressing this project we are mindful of the excellent work that has been undertaken in different international contexts, much of which we have already incorporated through the consultations and activities related to our previous survey, literature reviews and resource mapping exercises. We are conscious, however, there may be recent initiatives we’re not aware of in relation to:

1) Child/youth research ethics initiatives, resources or activities that you would like to draw to our attention;

2) Training programs, modules or initiatives informing and/or supporting either new or more experienced researchers.

We would appreciate your further input on these two matters, particularly. More importantly, however, we would warmly welcome your ongoing engagement with this initiative as we are very committed to ensuring the development of the Ethics Charter and Guidelines continues to involve those in the child/youth research, policy, NGO and ethics governance communities with expertise and experience to contribute.

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We look forward to hearing from you.  
Kind regards,  
Anne Graham & Nicola Taylor