

University of Groningen

Third Annual Report of the Task Force

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**Third Annual Report of the Task Force:
“Toward Multidimensional Indicators of Child Growth
and Development”**

October 2016



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Between October 2015 and October 2016, the Task Force's activities have focused on the further conceptualisation of the project and on fieldwork in Tanzania and in Bangladesh.

Conceptualising multi-dimensional child growth

Using the Capability Approach as a framework for the assessment of healthy child growth has been quite challenging in terms of its operationalization. Last year two papers have been finalised where this conceptualisation has been further developed. These frameworks will serve as the basis for all projects of the Task Force, including (1) a systematic review on healthy child growth; (2) analysis of Indian DHS data aiming to identify capabilities of child growth; (3) Ethnography of Child Growth in Tanzania (see below); (4) Capabilities of Child Growth in Bangladesh (see below).

Ethnography of child growth, Malangali, Tanzania

The main objective is the identification of multi-dimensional indicators of child growth that go beyond the biomedical ones, and the capabilities that allow this growth. The Capability Approach (Sen) and Cultural Schema theory (D'Andrade) provide the conceptual framework for this ethnographic study. Methods used include a household census, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants, mothers, fathers, and elderly women. Zaina Mchome from NIMRI Tanzania is conducting the research as part of her PhD research with local supervision from Dr. Flora Kessy from Mzumbe University in Dar es Salaam. Malangali, in Morogoro district, has been chosen as the study site. From June - October 2015, Zaina lived in Malangali village, and conducted the focus groups. After analysis of her data she adopted the interview guide and she returned to the field in September 2016, where she stayed for another two months to conduct the in-depth interviews. Her interviews show interesting results on perceptions of growth of children and the capabilities and conditions that either facilitate or hamper healthy growth in children.

In addition, to the ethnographic work, Zaina has worked on a systematic review of multi-dimensional indicators of child growth and its capabilities. This work is ongoing.

In the next year, she will concentrate on analysis of her data, and writing papers for her dissertation under the supervision of Prof Hinke Haisma. The systematic review will be continued in collaboration with researchers from Manipal University, under the supervision of Dr. Shirish Darak, from Prayas Institute in Pune, India.

This study is funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research through grant W01.70.300.002.

A capability approach of child growth in haor regions, Bangladesh

Barnali Chakraborty (Chumki) started her PhD project in September 2015. She is a staff member of BRAC, Dhaka. The objective of her work will be to identify capabilities of healthy child growth of households in haor regions (flooded areas). She will use a mixed-method approach. Initially, qualitative data will be collected using focus group discussions with the aim to identify capabilities of child growth; subsequently she will conduct a household survey with the aim to study the capabilities of households with healthily growing versus households with stunted children.

She has conducted a pilot study in June 2016, and will conduct the qualitative work next year.

This research is funded by DFID through the LANSa consortium, and an Erik Bleumink Foundation fellowship from the University of Groningen. Her work is supervised by Prof Hinke Haisma, Dr Sepideh Yousefzadeh (fuzzy set analysis) from the University of Groningen and Dr Shirish Darak (qualitative research).

Symposium ICN 2017

Next year the Task Force will organise a symposium at the ICN in Buenos Aires in Tanzania, with the title "Toward a new paradigm in child growth". We will present our theoretical framework for such a proposed paradigm, and how capabilities of parents and health professionals can be leading in the assessment of healthy growth, for measuring, counselling and intervention purposes.