

Approval Process for the International Classification of Violence Against Children (ICVAC)

This document takes the International Classification of Violence Against Children (ICVAC) through the approval process of the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (CEISC) for the classification to become an international standard under the custodianship of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The process is applied by the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (hereinafter referred to as 'the CEISC) to follow and check against, when considering endorsing a classification for adoption by the UN Statistical Commission or a similar governing body, and for the classification to become a member of the International Family of Classifications.

The custodian/developer of the classification needs to comply with the requirements of three documents. These documents are the:

- Best Practice Guidelines for Developing International Statistical Classifications (as detailed in Section A of this document)
- Criteria to become a Member of the international Family of Classifications (as detailed in Section B of this document)
- Grading Criteria for International Statistical Classifications (as detailed in Section C of this document)

Based upon the application of this process the classification may/may not be endorsed by the CEISC.

Final recommendation:

The International Classification of Violence Against Children (ICVAC) is recommended for approval by the UNCEISC as an international reference (statistical) standard classification. It is also recommended that the classification be recommended for endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC).

A. Does the classification meet the best practice requirements for developing an international statistical classification?

For a classification to be considered for membership of the International Family of Classifications, the classification must meet the best practice requirements. The following questions need to be answered and documented by the custodian or organization seeking approval for the classification.

- Does the classification have an identified custodian?

The custodian is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

- Is there a well-defined conceptual basis?

The ICVAC is based around the concept of 'violence against children' as included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also took guidance from other sources such as the General Comment 13 developed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; the Optional Protocol on the sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; the Council of Europe Conventions on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; etc. ICVAC is also built on the International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes (ICCS). ICVAC is based on descriptions of acts and omissions, rather than strictly legal definitions of violence.

ICVAC defines violence against children as: "A deliberate, unwanted and nonessential act or omission, threatened or actual, against a child or against a group of children that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, physical, or psychological suffering or distress.

Such acts can be of different nature, i.e., physical, psychological, or sexual. These acts also include omission of care such as neglect. They can be single or repeated acts; repeated acts would give rise to behaviour. These acts can be perpetrated by an individual against a single child (in the case of interpersonal violence) or by a group of individuals against a single child or groups of children in the case of collective violence. Collective and interpersonal violence may be motivated by political, economic or personal gains as well as beliefs and attitudes.

A child is defined as per article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as "every human being below the age of eighteen".

- Does the classification have a flat or hierarchic structure?

The classification is a hierarchic classification containing two levels (the first one with 1 digits and the second with 3 digits).

- Is the classification proposed as an international reference classification or an international derived or related classification?

The classification is proposed as an international reference (statistical) classification.

It is to note that ICVAC is built based on the International Classification of Crimes for Statistical purposes (ICCS) which is made 'child specific', nonetheless, it uses a different concept as the statistical unit, the 'acts and omissions'. ICVAC mirrors the ICCS structure nevertheless it is distinct from ICCS in its scope which includes acts that are not necessarily considered 'crimes' in a legal sense.

As a reference classification, ICVAC provides a common framework for collecting and organising information about violence against children. Its use, either directly or through national adaptations, aims to facilitate the exchange and comparability of statistics and other information between countries on violence against children. The classification has been developed through extensive international consultation, and have achieved substantial broad acceptance and agreement for use.

- Are the classification categories mutually exclusive?
Yes.

Every elementary manifestation of the violence against children should be assigned to one and only one category.

- Is the classification exhaustive for all possible values of the variable which the classification represents?
Yes. Residual 'not elsewhere classified (nec)' and 'Other' categories have been included where appropriate to enable the classification to be as exhaustive as possible.
- Is the classification statistically balanced?
Yes, in principle. Categories appear to be well balanced, but this has to be also proven in time with empirical data analysis, which means the classification can be rebalanced during revisions as necessary.
- Is the classification statistically feasible? In other words, is it possible to effectively, accurately and consistently distinguish between the categories in the classification based on the information available?
Yes. Although there could be some challenges in interpreting some categories for classifying 'violence', UNICEF as prepared extensive notes to provide guidance to user on the scope of categories contained in the classification, including relevant illustrative examples and exclusion texts.
- Does the classification have clearly defined classification or statistical units?
The statistical unit is the 'violent act/behaviour or omission committed against a child or group of children'.

- Has consideration been given to time-series comparability?
This is a new classification. It will be subject to revisions.

Recommendation: *The classification meets all the above requirements. It should move to the next stage of the approval process.*

B. Does the classification meet the criteria to become a member of the International Family of Classifications?

For a classification to be considered for membership of the International family of Classifications, the classifications must meet all the requirements as specified

1. Is there a custodian for the classification?

Yes

2. What is the primary use of the classification?

It is a statistical classification used to measure and analyse violence against children.

3. What are the underlying concepts used in the classification?

Violence against children define as: "A deliberate, unwanted and nonessential act or omission, threatened or actual, against a child or against a group of children that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, physical, or psychological suffering or distress.

Such acts can be of different nature, i.e., physical, psychological, or sexual. These acts also include omission of care such as neglect. They can be single or repeated acts; repeated acts would give rise to behaviour. These acts can be perpetrated by an individual against a single child (in the case of interpersonal violence) or by a group of individuals against a single child or groups of children in the case of collective violence. Collective and interpersonal violence may be motivated by political, economic or personal gains as well as beliefs and attitudes.

A child is defined as per article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as "every human being below the age of eighteen".

4. What is the scope of the classification?

ICVAC covers violence acts and omissions against children beyond the 'legal definitions' of a crime. Some acts will coincide with crimes widely recognised and defined in national legal frameworks. Moreover, disaggregating variables on victims, perpetrators and settings will also be possible. The classification does not include self-directed violence amongst its categories. Others concepts are not treated as their own categories, such as 'child marriage', child labour and child trafficking, mainly because they are composite phenomena that cannot be solely classified as violent acts. However, the violent acts that occur as part of these phenomena are classified in ICVAC.

5. What are the statistical units being measured?

Violent act/behaviour or omission committed against a child or group of children.

6. How many classification levels are required?

Two

7. Are the category names precise, unique and reflective of the category scope?
Yes
8. Is the classification code structure logical and sequential?
Yes
9. Is the classification statistically balanced?
Yes, in principle. Categories appear to be well balanced, but this has to be also proven in time with empirical data analysis, which means the classification can be rebalanced during revisions as necessary.
10. Has there been a consultation process with users of the classification?
Yes
11. Has the classification been tested?
No.
UNICEF anticipates to monitor the implementation of the classification in different countries to adjust implementation tools and also prepare for revisions.
12. Are there correspondences between previous versions and the current classification?
This is the first version of the classification. Although a correspondence table was developed between ICVAC and ICCS, its closest counterpart.
13. Is there an implementation plan for the classification?
Yes. But still in development. UNICEF has identified issues for the implementation and how to address them.
14. Is there a maintenance schedule available?
Yes. UNICEF intends to periodically revise and update the statistical classification, based on the implementation uptake at national level, challenges and lessons learnt. But no specific revision cycle was set.
15. How will the classification be disseminated?
Electronically

Recommendation: *The classification meets all of the above requirements, except for testing, and should move to the next stage of the process.*

C. Applying the grading criteria to ascertain the classification's status within the International Family of Classifications?

For the ICVAC to be considered for the next stage of the approval process it must have passed the criteria stage before entering the grading stage.

Is the classification to be considered as an international reference classification?

For a classification to be considered as an international reference classification it must comply with the following definition.

“A reference classification is one developed by an international agency. It provides a common framework for collecting and organizing information about a particular statistical system, concept or variable. Their use, either directly or through national adaptations, facilitates the exchange and comparability of statistics and other information between countries. These classifications have generally been developed through extensive international consultation and have achieved broad acceptance and official agree for use.”

Recommendation: *The classification fulfils the requirements of the definition, and should be considered as an international reference classification.*