

## Missing Data, Missing Children

### *Approaches to leave no child behind*

UN Statistical Commission

Side event

1.15pm-2.30pm – Tuesday 7 March 2017

Conference Room B (UN Secretariat building)

**\*\*Please note that participants must have a valid UN Grounds Pass to attend this event\*\***

**Co-organizers: Global Alliance for Children (GAC), Lumos, SOS Children's Villages, UNICEF**

***Up to a quarter of the poorest wealth quintile are invisible under the current global monitoring framework<sup>1</sup>***

While all children count, not all children are counted. Millions of the world's most vulnerable children – those without parental care or at risk of being so; in institutions or on the street; trafficked; separated from their families as a result of conflict, disaster or disability; or recruited into armed groups – have largely fallen off the UN's statistical map. Weak or non-existent data on these groups of children impede efforts to include the most vulnerable in the SDG agenda and ensure that no one is left behind.

Specifically, a child's care status is a key indicator for their health, development outcomes and general wellbeing, both during childhood and in later life. Children outside of a family setting, without at least one caregiver, kin or otherwise, who can fulfil the parental role and permanently engage in a child's lifelong wellbeing are more likely than their peers to experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, lack of stimulation, poor nutrition, and toxic stress.<sup>2</sup> The life-long physical and psychological harm that institutionalization or lack of quality family based- care can cause is well documented, with numerous studies revealing that children who remain in institutions after the age of six months often face severe developmental impairments.<sup>3</sup> These children are invisible to policy, investment and data. They are not included in official statistics, yet they are among the poorest of the poor, experience extreme adversities, and in the greatest need of what the SDGs promise to deliver and achieve.

While innovative approaches to identifying and characterizing this invisible population have

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<sup>1</sup> Carr-Hill, R. (2013). Missing millions and measuring development progress. *World Development*, vol. 46, pp. 30-44.

<sup>2</sup> Berens, A. E., & Nelson, C. A. (2015). The science of early adversity: Is there a role for large institutions in the care of vulnerable children? *The Lancet*, vol. 386, no. 9991, pp. 388-398.

<sup>3</sup> Rutter, M. (1998). Development catch-up, and deficit, following adoption after severe global early privation. English and Romanian Adoptees (ERA) Study Team. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 465-476.



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begun to emerge, these efforts remain largely outside current SDG data discussions. The aim of this side event, therefore, is to turn awareness into action by: 1) providing an overview of the issue and efforts undertaken to date, including the All Children Count campaign; 2) discussing the concept of the 'missing millions' and existing gaps in data and data collection methodologies to enumerate so far "invisible" children; 3) presenting illustrative examples of work being undertaken by National Statistical Offices to develop and/or test methods or innovative approaches to gather data on children living outside of households and/or without parental care and; 4) outlining critical next steps to build momentum and commitment to ensure that this particularly vulnerable group of children will be able to contribute to and benefit from the focus, attention and progress that the SDGs will bring.

**Confirmed speakers:**

Roy Carr-Hill – UCL Institute of Education, London, United Kingdom and author of “Missing Millions and Measuring Development Progress”

Her Excellency Hang Lina - Director General, National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia

Claudia Cappa - Statistics Specialist, UNICEF

Sofia Garcia Garcia - UN Representative, SOS Children's Villages

Kathleen Strottman - Executive Director, Global Alliance for Children (GAC)

Georgette Mulheir - Chief Executive Officer, Lumos