

## CONCEPT NOTE

### **Annual Conference of the Center for Child Well-Being and Development at UZH**

What works? Social and behavioral approaches to boost children's well-being

March 15, 2019 - Zurich, Switzerland

#### **Introduction**

The Center for Child Well-being and Development (CCWD) and UNICEF are working together to advance in the Sustainable Development Goals by undertaking high quality research and generating rigorous evidence on effective social and behavioral change to improve child well-being.

This year's annual conference, co-organized by CCWD and UNICEF, showcases behavioral approaches to boost children's well-being. We will gather world-class experts from different fields to discuss whether and how development policies can be improved when target beneficiaries' behavior is accounted for.

#### **Theme of the 2019 edition**

The theme of the 2019 edition of the CCWD Annual Conference is social and behavioral approaches for improving child well-being.

Child well-being is accomplished by a combination of factors that include thriving, learning, being protected from violence and exploitation, living in a safe and clean environment, and having a fair chance in life. In this line, CCWD's projects include taking up preventive health, improving student's outcomes at school, increasing parents' investments in education and health for their children, and preventing child marriage and forced sex initiation rituals. CCWD researchers investigate cost-effective approaches to facilitate social and behavioral change in the context of child and youth development, particularly linked to communication.

This year's conference will focus on social and behavior change communication (BCCs), through which communication enables and motivates individuals and communities to adopt safer and healthier behaviors to improve their quality of life. The panels will cover social norms, the demand for and utilization of cash programs, child empowerment, community engagement, and active non-violence.

#### **The Conference**

The main goal of the conference is to gather world-class experts in behavioral and social approaches regarding child well-being, and have them share with the audience their main findings in an accessible way, focusing in how evidence can contribute to policy making and programming.

Speakers will discuss behavioral change interventions in real-world contexts. In their presentations, they will address the abandonment of harmful social norms, strategies to induce negative views on violence, and the increased demand for and utilization of higher-quality and inclusive services for children.





*Simon Hänni (CCWD) will share the results of his work in Malawi: an experiment aimed at understanding the connection between public image and harmful traditional practices against girls in the context of early marriage and forced sexual initiation rituals. The experiment tests whether those could be deterred by replacing social expectations—by introducing alternative ways to signal pro-social behavior. Next, Patrick Premand (World Bank) will present findings from his work on the effects of cash transfers and behavioral change programs on child development in Niger.*

The second part of the conference will address effective communication and community engagement for child well-being. Speakers will present perspectives on behavioral change through entertainment and in the context of active non-violence.

*Victor Hugo Orozco (World Bank) will share the results of his work on fighting HIV through mass media communication – specifically, an MTV show. Next, Lucy Nusseibeh (Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy) will share her experience with using technology to build peace and promote human security.*

Next, the conference will feature a roundtable, in which world-class panelists will discuss success and failures of creating pathways from research on behavior change and community engagement to policy design and programming. The debate between Priscilla Idele (UNICEF), Annie Portela (World Health Organization), Adina Rom (Policy Analytics Switzerland) and Fabio Segura (Jacobs Foundation) will be moderated by Dr. Vera Eichenauer, a researcher at ETH and president of the European Association of Young Economists.

The last part of the conference features a keynote speech by one of the most distinguished researchers in Behavioral Economics. **Dr. Nava Ashraf**, Professor of the Department of Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science, will present her research on behavioral approaches to improve child and youth well-being. Professor Ashraf conducts research using lab and field experiments to test insights from behavioral economics in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. She also conducts research on intra-household decision-making in the areas of finance and fertility.

## The participants

Conference participants come from different fields of knowledge and are involved in research, policy-making, program implementation and evaluation. Participants include:

- Development agencies and foundations
- Government representatives (mainly from Switzerland)
- National and international research organizations
- Tertiary learning institutions and universities
- Non-governmental organizations
- Civil society

Zurich, January 2019