



Collecting data on children with disabilities: The UNICEF/WG Module on Child Functioning (CFM)

The case for children

- ✦ Children less visible in the data collection agenda
- ✦ General household surveys and censuses found to inadequately identify children with disabilities
- ✦ Research suggests that children might be overlooked on surveys that do not ask specifically about them
- ✦ Children of low socioeconomic status and girls in general might be particularly under-enumerated

Specific measurement challenges

- ★ Questions addressed to adults are inappropriate or different in kind for children (e.g. falling over, stretching)
- ★ Questions addressed to children are sometimes inappropriate for adults (e.g. crawling, running)
- ★ Children are in a process of development and transition and child development does not follow a fixed schedule
- ★ Disability measurement takes place through the filter of adults - parental knowledge of norms and standards vary by culture

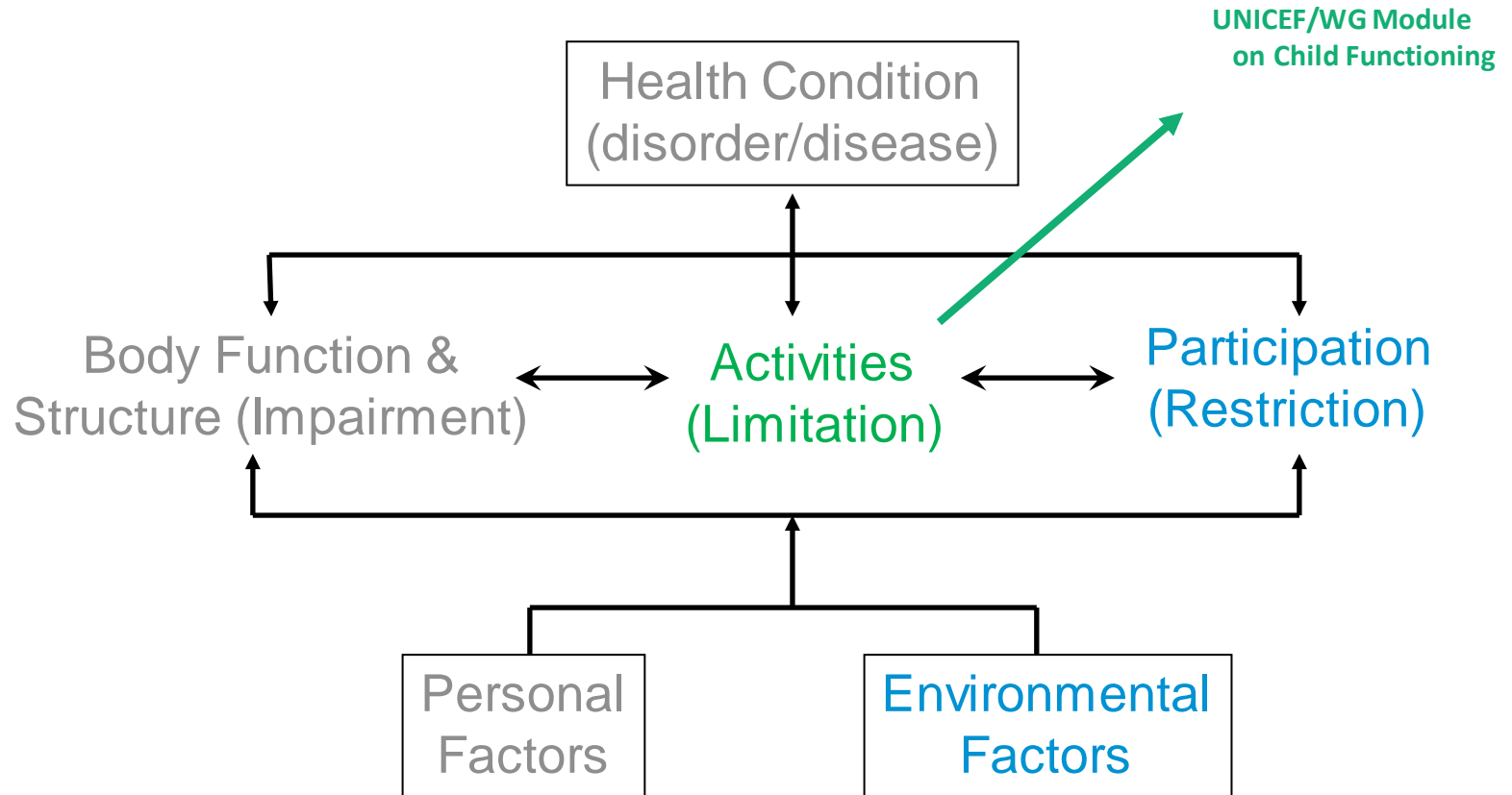
Objectives of the module

- ✦ Primary purpose: to identify children with *functional difficulties*
- ✦ Aim
 - ✦ To provide cross-nationally comparable data
 - ✦ To be used as part of national population surveys or in addition to specific surveys

History

- ★ WG Workgroup on Child Functioning was established in fall 2009 under the leadership of ISTAT (Italy) to develop and test a survey module specifically designed to capture child functioning
- ★ UNICEF joined the Workgroup in early 2011

The ICF Model – 2001



Source: World Health Organization, 2001

Content and structure

- ★ Questions ask about difficulties the child may have in doing certain activities
- ★ Questionnaires for children 2-4 and 5-17
- ★ Response categories are, exception for 5 questions:
 - ★ No difficulty
 - ★ Some difficulty
 - ★ A lot of difficulty
 - ★ Cannot do at all;
- ★ Comparison with children of the same age used when functioning can be observed in other children, and is relevant, to avoid false positives

Domains

Children aged 2 to 4	Children aged 5 to 17
Seeing	Seeing
Hearing	Hearing
Mobility	Mobility
	Self-care
Fine motor	
Communication/Comprehension	Communication/Comprehension
Learning	Learning
	Remembering
	Focusing attention and concentrating
	Relationships
	Copying with change
Controlling behaviour	Controlling behaviour
	Emotions : anxiety and depression
Playing	

Seeing

Children aged 2-17 years

Does (*name*) wear glasses or **contact lenses***?

Yes

When wearing his/her glasses or **contact lenses***, does (*name*) have difficulty seeing?

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

No

Does (*name*) have difficulty seeing?

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

*Text is customizable. In countries where contact lenses are not available, they may be removed from the question

Hearing

Children aged 2-17 years

Does (*name*) use a hearing aid?

Yes

When using his/her hearing aid, does (*name*) have difficulty hearing sounds like people's voices or music?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

No

Does (*name*) have difficulty hearing sounds like people's voices or music?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Mobility

Children aged 2-4 years

Does (*name*) use any equipment or receive assistance for walking?

Yes

Without his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking?

Would you say...

Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

With his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking?

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

No

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty walking?

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

Mobility

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) use any equipment or receive assistance for walking? Yes

Without his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking 100 **yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **1 football field***. [Or insert country specific example].

Without his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking 500 **yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **5 football fields***. [Or insert country specific example].

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

With his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking 100 **yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **1 football field***. [Or insert country specific example].

With his/her equipment or assistance, does (*name*) have difficulty walking 500 **yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **5 football fields***. [Or insert country specific example].

Would you say...

No difficulty
Some difficulty
A lot of difficulty
Cannot do at all

*Text is customizable. Yards or meters can be used interchangeably based on what is more common in the survey context. Football fields can be changed for any country specific example of the same approximate distance.

Mobility

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) use any equipment or receive assistance for walking? No

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty walking **100 yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **1 football field***. [Or insert country specific example].

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty walking 500 **yards/meters*** on level ground? That would be about the length of **5 football fields***. [Or insert country specific example].

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

*Text is customizable. Yards or meters can be used interchangeably based on what is more common in the survey context. Football fields can be changed for any country specific example of the same approximate distance.

Fine motor

Children aged 2-4 years

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty picking up small objects with his/her hand?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Self-care

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) have difficulty with self-care such as feeding or dressing him/herself?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Communication/comprehension

Children aged 2-4 years

Does (*name*) have difficulty understanding you?

When (*name*) speaks, do you have difficulty understanding him/her?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Children aged 5-17 years

When (*name*) speaks, does he/she have difficulty being understood by people inside of this household?

When (*name*) speaks, does he/she have difficulty being understood by people outside of this household?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Learning

Children aged 2-17 years

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty learning things?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Remembering

Children aged 5-17 years

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty remembering things?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Attention and concentrating

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) have difficulty concentrating on an activity that he/she enjoys doing?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Coping with change

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) have difficulty accepting changes in his/her routine?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Playing

Children aged 2-4 years

Compared to children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty playing?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Controlling behaviour

Children aged 2-4 years

Compared with children of the same age, how much does (*name*) kick, bite or hit other children or adults?

Would you say...

Not at all

The same or less

More

A lot more

Children aged 5-17 years

Compared with children of the same age, does (*name*) have difficulty controlling his/her behaviour?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Relationships

Children aged 5-17 years

Does (*name*) have difficulty making friends?

Would you say...

No difficulty

Some difficulty

A lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

Emotions

Children aged 5-17 years

How often does (*name*) seem very anxious, nervous or worried?

Would you say...

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

A few times a year

Never

How often does (*name*) seem very sad or depressed?

Would you say...

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

A few times a year

Never

Cut-offs

- “A lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” established as cut-off for international comparison (severe difficulty in functioning)
- “A lot more” for controlling behaviour among children aged 2-4
- “Daily” for emotions among children aged 5-17
- Overall measure: % of children with functional difficulty in at least one domain

Proportion of children with disabilities by different cut-offs

Cut-offs - at least one domain coded as:	Ages	Percentage (%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some difficulty”, “A lot of difficulty”, and “Cannot do at all” • “Weekly” and “Daily” for anxiety and depression • “More” and “A lot more” for controlling behavior (2-4) 	2-4	9.4
	5-17	25.0
	2-17	22.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A lot of difficulty”, and “Cannot do at all” • “Daily” for anxiety and depression • “A lot more” for controlling behavior (2-4) 	2-4	1.1
	5-17	3.6
	2-17	3.2

Results across modules

	Children aged 5-17	
	Child Functioning Module	WG Short Set
Seeing	0.5	0.3
Hearing	0.0	0.2
Walking	0.3	0.2
Learning/Cognition	0.9	0.3
Self-Care	0.2	0.3
Understanding	NA	NA
Being understood/ Communicating	0.4	0.5
TOTAL PERCENTAGE (using the questions in the two modules with overlapping domains)	3.6	1.3
TOTAL PERCENTAGE (using all the questions in the two modules)	11.5	1.3

Use of the Child Functioning Module

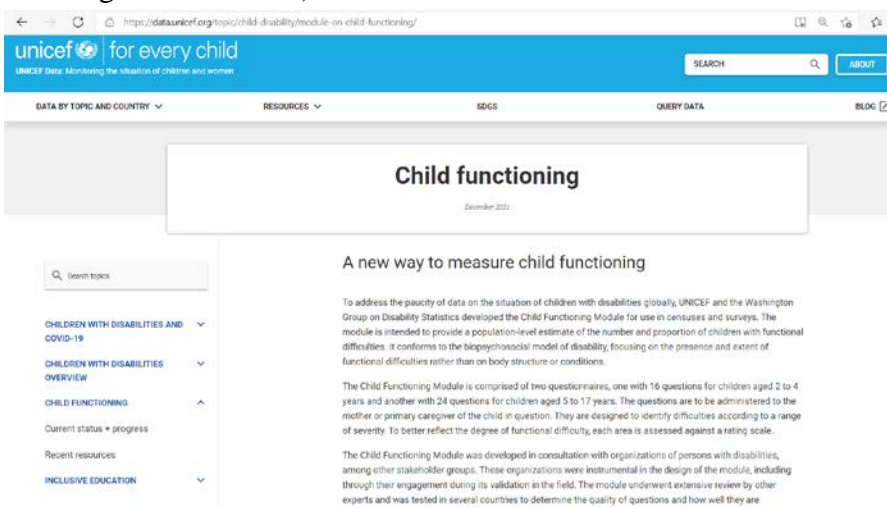
- As of 2022, the Child Functioning Module has been used to collect data in 50 countries, in 55 surveys
- Within the next 3 years, at least 20 more countries are expected to collect data using the module
- The widespread use of the Child Functioning Module has created the largest, internationally comparable, source of data on children with disabilities

Conclusions

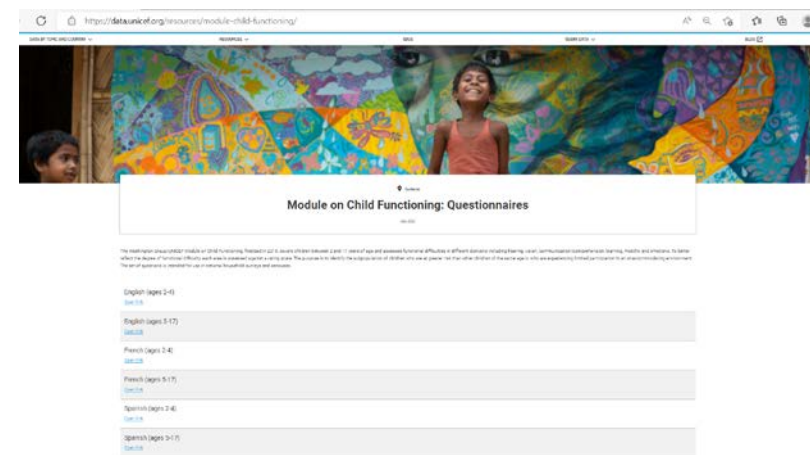
- Questions carefully drafted to reflect multitude of domains and reduce risk of missing out children with different functional difficulties
- Domains are not meant to be looked at in isolation
- Questions carefully tested and cut-offs selected to reduce risk of false positives
- Not recommended to reduce number of questions, change response categories, modify content or change cut-offs

Data.unicef.org

More information about the Child Functioning Module (including guidance notes) available here



To find current translations of the Child Functioning Module see here



For tabulation plans, narratives, and syntax files please see here

