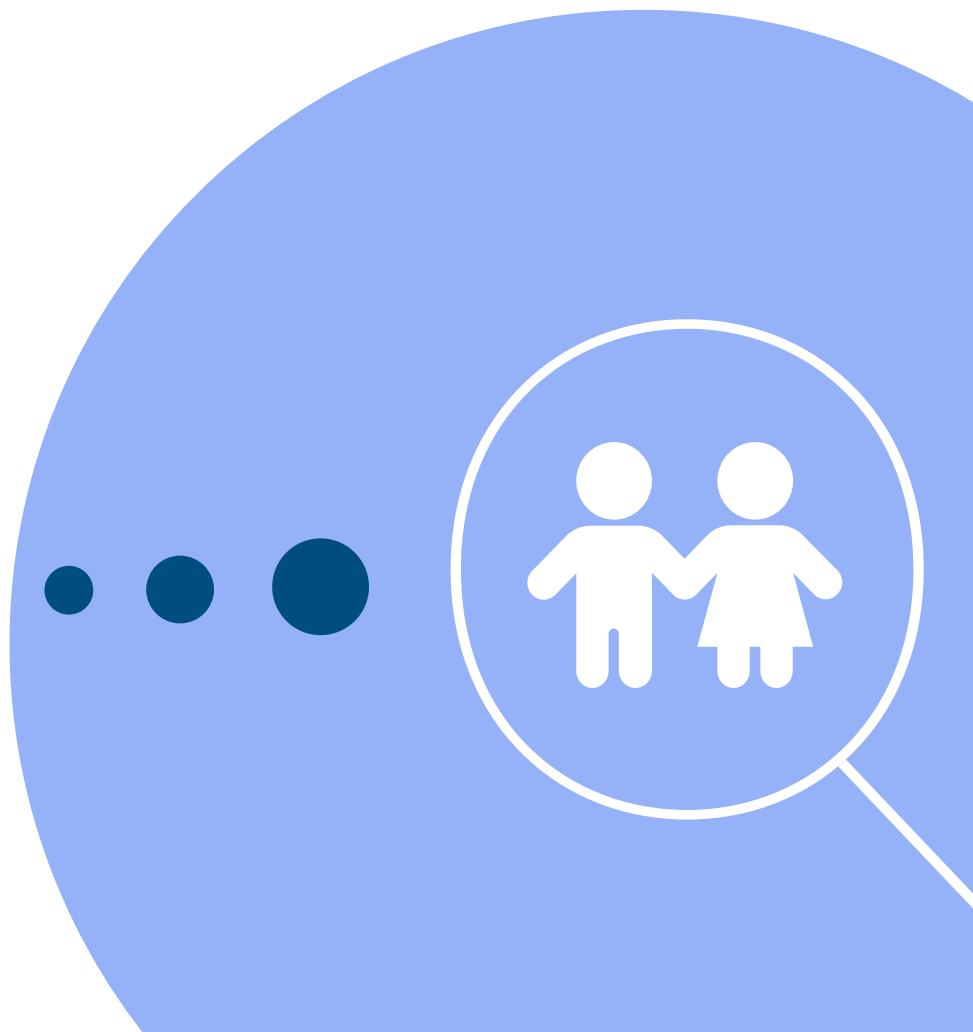# Principles

For Conducting Country of Origin Information Research on Children and Young People

Acknowledgements

Background

Following our joint project with ARC Foundation in 2021, where we became aware of the absence of relevant Country of Origin Information (COI) about children and young people, and simultaneously, the low awareness of child-specific issues in the immigration and asylum legal sector. In response, we co-developed a handbook and training module to assist researchers focusing on COI for children and young people.

To further address these information gaps, Asylos has recently launched a project that intends to address information gaps about children and young people who are seeking international protection and aimed at adding to our current thematic Principles. This project includes:

1. Producing a country report on the situation of Children and Young People in Sudan combining interviews with individuals with authoritative knowledge on the topic alongside excerpts from country information available in the public domain;

2. Developing a principles document (this document), handbook and training module (originally co-developed with ARC Foundation and now updated by Asylos and forthcoming) to guide those conducting Country of Origin Information research on children and young people related issues.

More information on the project, and its outputs, is available on our website at: asylos.eu/Sudan-report

Acknowledgements

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Who we are

Asylos is a global network of volunteers providing free-of-charge Country of Origin Information (COI) research for lawyers helping people seeking international protection with their claim. Asylos works to ensure that people seeking international protection and their legal counsel have access to crucial sources and data to substantiate their claim. Asylos volunteers use their research and language skills to access detailed information. More information can be found on Asylos' website.

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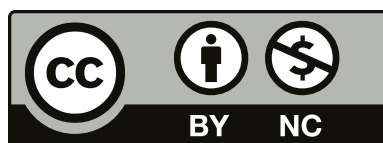
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Feedback and comments

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Rationale

Enhancing the quality and coverage of Country of Origin Information (COI) pertaining to children and young people for use in international protection procedures is vital. This need for improvement resonates with broader concerns regarding COI adequacy and availability highlighted by lawyers and charity representatives in the UK during Asylos' consultations and scoping exercises carried out over the years. They emphasised the need for more comprehensive and accurate COI across different contexts, including statelessness procedures and refugee status determinations.

Information on the situation of a child, be it separated[1], unaccompanied[2], or travelling with their family, is vital. Authorities in most countries of asylum use COI reports to assess the situation in the country of origin and help to determine whether a person has the right to international protection through a refugee status or a subsidiary protection status.

A thorough examination of UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs) conducted in 2022 by a member of Asylos' child-focused working group, revealed considerable gaps and inconsistencies in the information available on children and young people. This review revealed that a child-specific approach is lacking in most COI sources. Some COI reports do not contain enough information to assess child-specific forms of persecution, the best interests of a child[3], or safe conditions for return.

Children may be subjected to specific forms of persecution that are influenced by their age, lack of maturity, or their vulnerability that necessitate special consideration in international protection frameworks.[4] The UNHCR Guidelines on international protection highlight child-specific forms of persecution such as underage recruitment, child trafficking, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), family and domestic violence, forced or underage marriage, bonded or hazardous child labour, forced labour, prostitution, and child pornography, as well as violations of economic, social, and cultural rights.[5]

In January 2018, the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration published its 'Inspection of the Home Office's production and use of Country of Origin Information in April – August 2017'.

It found that:

"During the current inspection, both Home Office users of COI and external stakeholders pointed to a current lack of coverage of children-related country information".[6]

Inspectors found that the quality and application of the research carried out by decision makers varied to the extent that it undermined UKVI's aim of consistency in its decision making [...]

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1. MiCLU (the Migrant Children's Legal Unit at Islington Law Centre) produced a glossary of legal terminology, focussing on common terms in immigration, asylum, and nationality law. 'Separated child A person under 18 who is not living with their parent or main caregiver is known as a separated child.' Date checked 8 December 2017.

2. MiCLU (the Migrant Children's Legal Unit at Islington Law Centre) produced a glossary of legal terminology, focussing on common terms in immigration, asylum, and nationality law. 'Unaccompanied: This term is used a lot in relation to refugees and asylum seekers. A child who is under 18 years and does not have any parent or responsible older adult to look after them can be described as an unaccompanied minor or unaccompanied child. The local authority will be responsible for their care and providing them with a home if the child's age is accepted as being under' 18. Date checked: 15 December 2017.

3. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, Article 3.

4. Guidelines on International Protection No. 8: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 22 December 2009, para 4, p.p 3 and 4.

5. Guidelines on International Protection No. 8: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 22 December 2009. Para 18, p.p 9 and 10.

6. Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, An inspection of the Home Office's production and use of Country of Origin Information April – August 2017, January 2018, pg 30.

(…)

Inspectors also found decision makers **felt that it would be useful to have more child-specific information readily to hand**. One commented that claims from unaccompanied minors were becoming increasingly complex, and they were not "comfortable doing my own research on this issue, as it is so serious".

External stakeholders confirmed that the findings from the sampled decisions reflected what they had seen themselves. **The widely held view was that the dearth of child-specific COI produced by CPIT as standard had a negative impact on decision quality, and it led some decision makers to do their own research and to give weight to inappropriate sources.**

112 Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 **https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/11/section/55**

113 Immigration Rules part 11: asylum, Paragraph 339JA **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-part-11-asylum**

114 Amnesty International

115 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' is a human rights treaty, which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The UK signed the convention in 1990 and it came into law in the UK in 1992. UNICEF publishes an annual report, 'The State of the World's Children', which includes the latest available statistics for countries on child survival, development and protection.

The absence of precise, detailed, and child-sensitive COI significantly undermines the ability of decision-makers to accurately assess the protection needs of this group. Although **UNHCR guidelines**, the **UK Immigration Rules[7]** and the UKVI **guidance on processing children's asylum claims** make it clear that country of origin information (COI) is vital in the assessment of a child's claim for international protection, there is a significant lack of child-specific COI in the public domain.

The inadequacies in COI on children and young people stem from several factors:

- Persons claiming asylum are often marginalised in their countries of origin and thus silenced from national statistics, reporting and services.

- There are numerous barriers to conducting primary human rights research (security, access, language, funding, etc.) in countries of origin, which can lead to serious information gaps.

- Ethical research considerations mean children's voices in research projects are less likely to be heard.

- Certain human rights abuses take place in the private sphere and thus less likely to be reported on, e.g. child abuse.

- COI is rarely published with the asylum protection context in mind.

- A small number of unaccompanied children claim asylum in the UK.[8]

Article 3 of The Palermo Protocol[9] and Article 1 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)[10], define a child as any person under the age of 18. This means that every person under 18 years who is the principal asylum applicant is entitled to child-sensitive procedural safeguards.

If during the asylum procedure age cannot be determined with sufficient certainty, because of missing formal documents and/or contrary statements of the applicant, national asylum authorities undertake short visual age assessments shortly after a person arrives in the UK, e.g. on a small boat. In this article, Free Movement explains the process that the UK Home Office uses to initially assess the age of separated children who entry country:

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7. Paragraph **339JA of the Immigration Rules**.

8. UK Government, **Asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement – Asy_D01**, 29 February 2024.

9. United Nations, 2000. **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime**.

10. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, **Article 1**.

(…)

"The majority of unaccompanied children who enter the UK to seek asylum do not bring with them evidence of their age. Because of this, the Home Office has a duty to carry out an initial assessment of their age to establish whether they are, or could be, children."

"[...]As soon as a separated child enters the UK, the Home Office will carry out an initial age assessment to establish whether they are, or could be, a child. This process is fairly arbitrary. Essentially, two Home Office members of staff will look at the child and decide whether, based on their appearance and demeanour, they think that they could be a child."[11]

Currently, EU Member States use different methodologies for age assessment (both medical and non-medical), which have been criticised for their impact on the individual's rights, including privacy and the best interest of the child, but also because of their lack of reliability.[12]

The necessity of COI in age assessments is also highlighted by several key aspects and challenges addressed in the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)/formerly EASO Practical Guide on Age Assessment.[13] This guide emphasises the importance of a multidisciplinary and holistic approach in assessing an individual's age, ensuring that the best interests of the child are paramount in such evaluations.

It recommended that

"Since encouraging the child to be forthcoming with the disclosure of information on his or her age is crucial in establishing the need to undertake age assessment, the officials interacting directly with the child [...] should have the necessary background information and expertise (including on the child-specific context) regarding the country of origin of the child **(26)** required to properly assess the information on the age provided by the child." (pg. 29)

(26) EASO gathers and develops country of origin information available on their website: **https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/country-origininformation/country-reports**.

Additionally, the guide states that decision-makers need to be well-versed in the child's cultural, societal, and legal contexts to accurately gauge the information provided during interviews.

"A birth certificate is the document that bears witness to the person's birth, the date, the place, the sex and the parents. The primary purpose of civil registration is to create a legal document that can be used to establish and protect the rights of the individual. As mentioned earlier, some countries do not systematically register the vital events of their citizens or residents (births, marriages and deaths) and some of them do it very rarely or late. Therefore, such registration may not meet the standards of public records for the authorities in EU+ states (preventing double registration of the same event, gaps or inconsistencies in the records, etc.).
Furthermore, due to events that occurred in their country of origin or the circumstances of their flight (armed conflicts or persecution and/or discrimination from the national authorities, etc.), these legal documents may not be available to persons in need of international protection and therefore they will not be able to provide valid proof or reliable certificates of their identity." (pg. 45)

The guide also emphasises that COI is a key component in considering the wide aspects of the background of an individual, including ethnicity, culture, and customs, which have to be respected all through the assessment process. Knowing the country of origin allows officials to be able to identify and discuss topics of relevance in a sensitive and appropriate manner in order to ensure that the process of assessment is not only comprehensive but also culturally competent.[14]

11. Free Movement: **Age assessments: what happens when a child arrives in the UK?** 4 July 2023.

12. Refugee Law Initiative Blog: **Age Assessment and the protection of minor asylum seekers: time for a harmonised approach in the EU**. Blog post by Evelien Brouwer (Amsterdam Centre for Migration and Refugee Law, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and Romain Lanneau (Research and Project Assistant at the Odysseus Academic Network). Aug, 10, 2020.

13. The **EASO Practical Guide on Age Assessment**: Second edition, 2018.

14. The **EASO Practical Guide on Age Assessment**: Second edition, 2018, pg. 50.

(…)

UK Home Office guidance states that an asylum application can be made by or on behalf of a child in their own right whether accompanied or unaccompanied, but even when being considered as a dependent:

> 'Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the Home Office to carry out its existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. Where an asylum claim involves dependent children caseworkers must consider protection needs and the best interests of each child as an individual and in the context of the family unit.' [15]

Important to note here that in 2021, a Supreme Court decision, **G v G**, prompted the Home Office to modify its approach to processing asylum applications involving accompanied children, asserting that a child listed as a dependant in an asylum application is typically to be considered as having lodged a claim for asylum independently.

Therefore, it is clear that decision makers should consider the individual protection needs of every child, whether or not they are making an application in their own right or as part of a family.

UK case law recognises the principle that "persecution is not respectful of birthdays" and that "apparent or assumed age is more important than chronological age"[16].

The boundary between being a child and being an adult is fluid. UK case law recognises this, stating that "It is not easy to see that risks of the relevant kind to who as a child would continue until the eve of that birthday, and cease at once the next day"[17] and that "persecution is not respectful of birthdays – apparent or assumed age is more important than chronological age".[18]

However, COI reports often fail to acknowledge and account for the experiences of young people, who are likely to face similar risks to those faced by children, but may be unable to access any of the child specific protection that does exist, because of their age. This is why this Principles document is titled 'COI for Children and Young People'.

It is our hope that the principles set out in this document will encourage COI researchers, along with legal representatives and decision-makers, to adopt a comprehensive and informed approach when addressing international protection claims involving both children and young people. Such an approach will lead to an improvement in the availability of good quality COI research and well-founded decisions.

Children and Young People

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15. Home Office, **Asylum Policy Instruction: Dependents and Former Dependents**, May 2014, pg 5.

16. **KA (Afghanistan) & Ors v Secretary of State for the Home Department[2012] EWCA Civ 1014** at [(18)].

17. United Kingdom: **Court of Appeal (England and Wales), DS (Afghanistan) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2011] EWCA Civ 305 at [(54)]**, 22 March 2011.

18. United Kingdom: **Court of Appeal (England and Wales), KA (Afghanistan) & Ors v Secretary of State for the Home Department[2012] EWCA Civ 1014 at [(18)]**, 25 July 2012.

Principles

Principle 1:
Take a rights-based approach

COI on children and young people should be grounded in a rights-based approach, recognising them as active rights holders. This perspective ensures that the COI not only focuses on the risks of persecution or harm but also on the violations of rights inherent in their situations, such as the right to family unity, education, and health.

When assessing a child's asylum claim, decision makers are obliged to apply a child sensitive definition of persecution and as such any COI research relating to children should be wide enough in scope to include information on how effectively children's rights (as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) are protected in a country of origin.

In their report[19] analysing the Home Office's coverage of issues related to children in their COI reports, the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) stressed that child-focused COI should make use of the evidence produced as part of the reporting process on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that when structuring a report, adopting a framework that mirrors the reporting structure to the UN Committee Reports could be useful.

Whilst this level of detail will usually not be possible in a case specific report, it may be helpful to look at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's template for State Party reports, in order to identify the key issues that will inform your research.

These key issues include:

- information on the definition of who constitutes a child;

- legal provisions and principles on non-discrimination,

- on best interests of the child, and on the right to life, survival and development;

- civil rights and freedoms;

- family environment and alternative care;

- disability, basic health and welfare;

- education;

- special protection measures in the case of armed conflict, military conscription, child labour, child trafficking, street children, administration of juvenile justice, and children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group.

When drafting or revising research questions we would also advise that you consult UNICEF's 'Methodology Guidance on Child Notice'. UNICEF has published a number of 'Child Notices', which are COI reports specifically addressing the situation of children, with each report based on an extensive list of research questions. These reports combine desk based research with interviews with local sources, including local UNICEF offices. UNICEF states that these questions have been inspired by all of the relevant legislation and so "by answering the research questions in a detailed and comprehensive manner, one should be able to generate a holistic picture of the situation of children in the country concerned".[20]

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19. IAGCI, An analysis of the coverage of issues related to children in Country of Origin Reports produced by the Home Office, 2012.

20. UNICEF, Methodology Guidance on Child Notice 2015, pg 4.

(...)

This 'Methodology Guidance on Child Notice' provides a detailed list of questions divided amongst the following research headings:

1. Demographic information/statistical data on children

2. Basic legal information

3. General principles

    a. Non-discrimination (including children of minorities and indigenous people)

    b. Best interests of the child

    c. Right to life and development

4. Civil rights and freedoms

5. Basic rights (health / water / food / education)

6. Family environment and alternative care

7. Special protection measures

    a. Children in conflict with the law

    b. Victims of child trafficking

    c. Children in armed conflict

    d. FGM/C

    e. Forced and underage / child marriage

    f. Domestic violence

    g. Child labour and other forms of exploitation

    h. Children living and / or working on the streets

    i. Refugee children and internally displaced people

8. Returning separated or unaccompanied children and families

9. Country specific issues that affect children

It should be noted that UNICEF are currently updating their methodology to include a section on children with disabilities. This means that researchers will have to consult other sources[21] for guidance on relevant factors, such as **Asylos' Principles for Conducting Country of Origin Information Research on Disability**.

People conducting COI research should:

- Put children's rights at the centre and make sure their research questions are child specific, based on a good understanding and knowledge of child-specific rights and their violations.

- Consult the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's template for State Party reports and UNICEF's 'Methodology Guidance on Child Notice when developing research questions, in order to identify the relevant issues. Some of the issues will overlap, and it will not always be possible (or even necessary) to draw on them all. However, this list will provide a useful starting point that should be utilised as much as possible.

- Check other sources when identifying the different factors that may be relevant for a child who is displaced with their family.

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21. Such as **State party reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

(…)

Principle 2:
Take an intersectional approach

> ### What is intersectionality?
>
> In Chapter 9, of the Oxford Handbook of Children's Rights Law, Jessica Dixon Weaver[22] discusses the concept of intersectionality in the context of international children's rights, a term first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a scholar in critical race theory and a feminist:
>
> > "[...]Crenshaw "has defined intersectionality as a way of conceptualizing a problem in a way that captures the dynamics of the interplay between two or more axes of subordination."[3] She and other scholars have expanded on the understanding and analysis of intersectionality, and it has been used within the law and other disciplines to further understand the complexities of living with multiple cultural characteristics and the cumulative harm experienced by certain individuals and groups.[4] Within the context of international children's rights, intersectionality has been used to examine the experiences of children, their subordination by law, and the ways in which these different identities come together to exacerbate discrimination and limitations placed on children because of their minority status.[5]" (pg. 181)
>
> 3. Rangita de Silva de Alwis, "Mining the Intersections: Advancing the Right of Women and Children with Disabilities within an Interrelated Web of Human Rights," Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal Association 18, no. 1 (2009): 293–322, 301 (citing UN Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Racial Discrimination, Gender-Related Aspects of Race Discrimination, UN Doc. EGM.GRD/2000/WP.1 (2000)).
>
> 4. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color," Stanford Law Review 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–1299; Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," Social Problems 33, no. 6 (1986): S14; Devon W. Carbodo and Mitu Gulati, "The Fifth Black Woman," Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues 11 (2001): 701–729; Darren Lenard Hutchison, "Identity Crisis: 'Intersectionality,' 'Multidimensionality,' and the Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination," Michigan Journal of Race and Law 6, no. 2(2001): 285–317; Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall, "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications and Praxis," Signs 38, no. 4 (2013): 785–810.
>
> 5. Sherrie L. Russell-Brown, "Bridging the 'Divide' between Feminism and Child Protection Using the Discourse of International Human Rights," Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies 13, no.1 (2003): 163–168; de Silva de Alwis, "Mining the Intersections," 293; Thomas A. Mayes, "Understanding Intersectionality between the Law, Gender, Sexuality and Children," Children's Legal Rights Journal 36, no. 2 (2016): 90–106; Aurelie Roche-Mair, "Challenges to the Protection of Children's Human Rights and the Perpetuated Marginalization of Children in Transitional Justice," Georgetown Journal of International Law 49, no. 1 (2017): 135–161.
>
> The author continues to give the following example:
>
> > "Within the realm of child marriage, several overlapping or interlocking identities of children present different types of bias. For example, the identity of a child as a refugee, female, person of color, Muslim, and child bride creates five layers of oppression that are not simply addressed by one or two provisions of international law." (pg. 182)

22. Olena Hankivsky, Anuj Kapilashrami, (2020), **Beyond sex and gender analysis: an intersectional view of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and response**, Policy Brief.

(...)

An intersectional approach to childfocused COI research is not common or, when undertaken, is relatively superficial. This carries the risk of homogenising very diverse experiences.

When researching child specific human rights violations, we must always remember to look at how the identity-based, economic and social characteristics of the child such as gender, family background, class, caste, health, education and income level may a) increase the risk of harm, b) influence the type of persecutory conduct inflicted on the child, and c) exacerbate the effect of the harm on the child.[23]

Taking an intersectional approach to COI research may sound complicated, but it will be critical when developing your research strategy, and can be easily broken down into a set of clear research questions.

People conducting COI research should:

- Have a good understanding that for children in particular, persecution may be established through an accumulation of a number of less severe violations. For example children with disabilities, or stateless children who lack access to birth registration, may be excluded from education, health care and other services.[24]

- Ensure that their research questions are phrased in an intersectional way that considers the multiple and cumulative forms of discrimination that may amount to persecution for a child.

- When researching child-specific human rights violations, remember to look at how the identity-based, economic and social characteristics of the child (such as gender, family background, class, caste, health, education and income level) may a) increase the risk of harm, b) influence the type of persecutory conduct inflicted on the child, and c) exacerbate the effect of the harm on the child.

This approach can in some cases be challenging as it requires finding sources that are very specific to the claimant's circumstances. In the following Principle, we will provide some tips on where a COI researcher may be able to find such relevant and specific sources.

Principle 3:
Use child-focused COI sources

Consulting child-specific COI sources is important for accurately assessing asylum claims made by or on behalf of children. These specific sources provide nuanced insights into the unique risks, legal frameworks, and social conditions that children face in their countries of origin. In contrast to broader COI sources, which may overlook or inadequately cover issues pertinent to children and young people, child-specific COI delves into aspects such as recruitment into armed forces, child labour, access to education, and protection against abuse and trafficking.

UNICEF, the IAGCI and ARC have provided useful lists of sources for child-focused COI, which we have amalgamated below:

Background sources

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child website and documents, including:

1. **State Reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

2. **Committee on the Rights of the Child – Concluding Observations**

3. **Committee on the Rights of the Child – General Comments**

4. **Committee on the Rights of the Child – Decisions**

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23. UNHCR, **UNHCR GUIDELINES ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**, 22 December 2009 pg 6-7.

24. UNHCR, **UNHCR GUIDELINES ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**, 22 December 2009 pg 14-15.

(…)

UNICEF

1. **State of the World's Children**

2. **Annual country reports and contact details UNICEF Country offices**

3. **Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)**

4. **UNICEF research publications of the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti**

5. **UNICEF Child Notices:**

   Methodology Guidance

   Child Notice Somalia 2018

   Child Notice Ethiopia (2018)

   Child Notice Afghanistan (2018)

   Child Notice Guinée

   Child Notice Morocco

   Child Notice Albania

   Child Notice Sudan

Non-governmental organisations working on a range of issues related to children:

1. **The African Child Policy Forum**

2. **African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

3. **African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect**

4. **Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action**

5. **Child Rights International Network (CRIN)**

6. **Defence for Children**

7. **European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)**

8. **Human Rights Watch – Children's Rights**

9. **Plan International – Children's rights**

10. **Save the Children**

11. **Terre des hommes**

UNHCR Refworld has a 'special feature' site with documents related to children, including legal, policy and background information.

Thematic sources

Some of the following resources are not exclusively about children, but contain relevant information. In order to find the child-specific information use the search terms and phrases described in **"Principle 4:" on page 15**. Please note that most of the reports about children focus mainly on unaccompanied children. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding, you should also include the information about the returning children, who are coming with their families and those who are accompanied by a family member.

(…)

Thematic sources

Demographic information / statistical data on children	**International Labour Organisation** (ILO) **Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys** (MICS) **Pew Research Centre** **UNICEF Data by topic and country** **World Bank** [Development Indicators]
Basic legal information	**Age of Consent** [age of consent by country] **Citizenships Rights in Africa Initiative** **Constitution Finder** **NATLEX** **Religion and Law Research Consortium** **Right to Education** [Minimum Age legislation] **UNHCR Refworld** [Select country > Legal information > National Legislative Bodies] **World Law Guide** [Check Legislation > select country]
Non-discrimination	*Not child specific* **Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) [Minorities at Risk Database]** **European Centre for Minority Issues** **Minorities at Risk Project** **Minority Rights Group International** **UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** **Unrepresented Nations and Population Organization**
Civil rights and freedoms	*Not child specific* **Article 19** [Freedom of expression and information] **Freedom House** **International Federation for Human Rights**
Basic rights – health	*Not child specific* **Avert** [HIV/AIDS] **Eldis** **International Committee of the Red Cross** **Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières)** **Reliefweb** [country pages] **World Health Organisation (WHO)**
Basic rights – food, water, housing	**UNOCHA** **UNHABITAT** **Reliefweb** [country pages]
Basic rights – education	**Education International** **Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack** **Right to Education** **Their World** **UNESCO** [Education Statistics] **UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education**

(…)

Thematic sources

Disability and mental health	*Not child specific* ● Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability ● Centre for Global Mental Health ● Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum ● Disabled Peoples International ● Disability Rights International ● Disability Rights Promotion International ● Global Action on Disability ● Global Initiative on Psychiatry ● Humanity & Inclusion ● International Disability Alliance ● Inclusion International ● International Disability and Development Consortium ● NGOs and UN Agencies Assisting Persons with Disabilities worldwide ● UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ● World Psychiatric Association
Family environment and alternative care	● Christian Orphanages ● Orphanages Worldwide
Children in conflict with the law	*Not child specific* ● Association for the Prevention of Torture ● Atlas of Torture ● Death Penalty Worldwide (Cornell Law School) ● International Commission of Jurists ● International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ● International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims ● Penal Reform International ● World Prison Brief
Victims of child trafficking	● Child Protection Hub for South East Europe [Global Child Trafficking Resources] ● ECPAT ● Human Trafficking Search ● UN Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT) ● UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography ● UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children ● U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Reports
Children in armed conflict	● UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict ● War Child ● Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict *Child soldiers* ● Child Soldiers World Index ● UN Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict ● The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

(...)

Thematic sources

FGM/C	• **28 too many** [Focus on practices in Africa] • **Inter-African Committees on Traditional Practices** [Network of African anti FGM NGOs] • **Inter-Parliamentary Union** [Worldwide legislation regarding FGM] • **Orchid Project** [Country profiles covering legislation and practice] • **StopFGM/C**
Forced and underage / child marriage	• **Girls Not Brides** • **OECD's Social Institutions & Gender Index** [Database and country profiles]
Domestic violence	• **The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)** • **World Childhood Foundation**
Child labour and other forms of exploitation	• **U.S Department of State – Annual findings on the worst forms of child labour** • **Walk Free Foundation**
Children living and / or working on the streets	• **Consortium for street children**
Refugee children and internally displaced people	*Not child specific* • **Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)** • **International Refugee Rights Initiative** • **IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix** • **UNOCHA Humanitarian Response** • **UNHCR** • **UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons** • **Women's Refugee Commission**
Returning separated or un-accompanied children and families	• **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** • **Refugee Legal Aid Information** [Post-deportation monitoring programme]

People conducting COI research should:

• Guided by our previous principles relating to **Disability** and **Statelessness**, we encourage COI researchers to seek out and prioritise the inclusion of relevant sources that specifically focus on experiences of children and young people, aiming to reflect direct voices and experiences. This helps assure a comprehensive view of the particular challenges and conditions faced by younger populations in different regions.

• Proactively reach out to organisations working with children in the relevant region, to improve their understanding of the issues and gain access to information and perspectives that would not otherwise be available to them.

Principle 4:
Use child-specific terminology in your search

Although we encourage you to use terms like 'child seeking asylum' or 'refugee child' to underpin that they are children first and foremost. For practical reasons, you should consider using a broad range of search terms when undertaking children and young people inclusive research. Examples of English keywords, individually or in strings[25], could include:

English word/term	French	Arabic	Comments
adolescent	adolescent	يافع	can be used for plural form
age	âge	عمر	can be used for "age of consent", etc.
baby	bébé	طفل	can be used for plural form
babies	bébés	أطفال	no strings
boy	garçon	ولد	can be used for plural form
child	enfant	طفل	can be used for plural form
descendent	descendant	حفيد	can be used for "descendent of migrants", etc
girl	fille	بنت	can be used for plural form
infant	enfant	رضيع	can be used for plural form
juvenile	juvénile	حدث	no strings
kid	enfant	طفل	can be used for plural form
lad	enfant	ولد	can be used for plural form
lass	jeune fille	بنت	can be used for plural form
newborn	nouveau-né	حديث الولادة	no strings
minor	mineur	قاصر	can be used for "unaccompanied minor", etc
offspring	enfant	أولاد	can be used for plural form
orphan	orphelin	يتيم	can be used for "orphaned…", etc
preteen	préadolescent	ما قبل سن المراهقة	no strings
schoolboy	écolier	تلميذ\طالب	can be used for plural form
schoolchild	écolier	تلميذ\طالب	can be used for plural form
schoolgirl	écolière	تلميذة\طالبة	can be used for plural form
Separated child	enfant séparé [26]	طفل مفصول عن ذويه	can be used for plural form[27]
teen	adolescent	مراهقة	can be used for plural form
toddler	enfant en bas âge	طفل	no strings
unaccompanied minors	mineurs non accompagnés	الأطفال غير المصحوبين بذويهم	can be used for plural form
young person	jeune	شاب	can be used for plural form
younger people	jeunes gens	شباب\شابات	can be used for plural form
young	jeune	فتي	can be used for plural form
youth	jeunes	شباب\شابات	can be used for plural form

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25. Wildcard searches * can be applied to strings of words to find documents that contain variations of those words. Example: * will find documents that contain variations of the word "teen", you could use a wildcard search like "teen*". This would match any document containing words such as "teen", "teens", "teenage", and "teenager".

26. Please note, in the French language 'separated child' is not a very common phrase, but it would be "enfant séparé." Normally, in a sentence, it would take the form of "enfants séparés de leurs familles/parents," which literally means "children separated from their families/parents."

27. Similarly, in the Arabic language, the phrase "child separated from family" needs to be part of a complete sentence. Writing "separated child" alone would be incomplete in Arabic.

(…)

People conducting COI research should:

- Remember that words deemed as insensitive or inappropriate in the UK might not be perceived as such in other countries or settings and vice versa.

- Use advanced search functions – consult our list of practical COI research tips as presented in **Asyos' COI handbook on p. 19 and 20** (e.g. different keywords, language skills, advanced search terms).

Children and Young People

We stand for asylum decisions based on evidence.

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