

The first pilot study will focus on children's perspective of the impact of the school environment on their well being. It will provide maximum opportunity for us to learn what is in their hearts and minds in relation to the three learning environments researched (school, ICT and media).

For the qualitative research, staff will be exposed to the UEF's current understanding of well being so that they are aware of parameters that it may be important to explore. They will be trained to try to elicit material from children in the most open-ended way possible, and in ways that do not impose UEF paradigms.

The development of the pilot questionnaire, the data collection, processing and analysis has been developed by a team of highly experience professionals, in partnership with the UEF. The senior researchers are experts in well being, child research, education, ICTs, media and sociological research. All the global and regional partners contributed their specialist expertise to the process.

The results of the pilot surveys will allow us to refine our concept of well being through soliciting the views of children about it and to refine our methodologies for accessing information about the impact of their learning environments. Through successive studies we will explore the perspectives of different age groups and focus on specific indicators of well being.

Education by All for the Well Being of Children

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Voice of Children Initiative

The **Voice of Children Initiative** will bring to public attention children's perspectives about the impact of learning environments on their well being. The learning environments prioritized by the Universal Education Foundation are ICT, media, healthcare and education. This initiative is designed and implemented by the UEF and its global and regional partners.

We believe that it is essential to engage children and young people as active participants in reshaping learning environments so that they become more supportive of their well being. As the primary 'customers' of the education system and of many ICT and media programs, their perspectives and opinions on the learning environments in which they are growing up should provide significant input to education reform agendas.

UEF will be exploring and implementing different ways of listening to children, such as research and an interactive website. Currently, the initiative supports an ongoing program of international quantitative and qualitative surveys that study the ways in which learning environments (education, health, ICT and media) impact on children's well being.

This program is called the **Voice of Children 'Learning Environment Observatory' (LEO)**. To underpin the research, it is also developing and testing a toolkit to study the impact of the prioritized environments on the well being of children and young people in their learning environments. A set of indicators are being developed to measure how the learning environments contribute to children's physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual well being.

The **Voice of Children Initiative** is being piloted in several countries. The first pilots are currently being carried out in 2006 in three countries in the Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine) with the purpose of using the results to enhance the design and subsequent implementation. It is the intention of the **Voice of Children Initiative** partners to adapt and replicate the initiative to other regions of the world including Europe, Asia, etc.. (see the information sheet on **Voice of Children - Middle East Pilot**). Findings will be presented at the **Learning for Well Being Forum** and will be disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders in education, health, media and ICT.

UEF will explore ways in which to showcase the results of the surveys most effectively, so that they can be recognized as useful information in determining goals and activities of the learning environments and carrying out educational reform at a policy level. Bringing the voices of the new generation to the educational reform agenda is consistent with the global thrust towards widening and deepening citizens' participation and youth empowerment.

UEF will create the **Voice of Children Virtual Community** as a mechanism for listening to the voices of young people worldwide. The website will launch discussions, foster exchange of ideas and stimulate actions based on student voices.

UEF is currently developing a working definition of well being and indicators of the physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual dimensions of well being that can most effectively present children's perception of the impact of their learning environments on the different aspects of their well being.

Well Being in education

The issue of well being is a highly complex one which touches on almost every aspect of a child's life. Given that the integrative and holistic approach to understanding the well being of children from their own perspective covers new ground, we will need to learn by experience, and build and refine our studies in a gradual and systematic way.

As the surveys progress we hope to deepen and refine our definition of well being and the indicators for the quantitative and qualitative surveys. The quantitative surveys are being undertaken by means of a questionnaire administered to representative samples of students. The qualitative surveys, conducted in parallel, are being undertaken through focus groups and individual interviews on the basis of open questions.