

Establishing the medium to long-term impact of Covid-19 constraints on the socio-emotional wellbeing of impoverished children and young people (and those who are otherwise disadvantaged) during, and in the aftermath of, Covid-19

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“The main narrative I hear is that children and young people will be fine.” (Professor Devi Sridhar, University of Edinburgh) (UNICEF Office of Research 2020a)

This literature-based chapter draws on a range of insights derived from a synthesis of the literature - empirical studies, journal articles, reports, viewpoints and commentaries, from global to national (Scottish), embracing social and clinical sciences. The purpose of the chapter is to reflect on the medium to long-term impact of Covid-19 constraints on the socio-emotional wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) living in poverty, and those who are otherwise disadvantaged, in order to identify key imperatives to inform public policy and practice not only with regard to Covid-19 but future crises. The chapter concludes with directions for future research. Please note that references to parents are inclusive of all carers for CYP.

The nature of the problem

Global impact of Covid-19 on CYP

According to a UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) report published on the 30th April 2020, around 1,383 million CYP world-wide had been affected by school closures, impacting on progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education (UNICEF Office of

Research 2020b). Impoverished CYP are most affected (Van Lancker and Parolin 2020) with a lack of access to facilities to support online learning (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b). A Lancet editorial indicated that 60% of children in primary schools and 86% in low HDI-countries were unable to access education by mid-April (Editor 2020b). The impact of lockdown, school closures and restrictions in population movement had halted and reversed much of the progress made in child health globally over the past two decades, heightening inequalities and disrupting social functioning globally for CYP (Editor 2020b).

The United Nations, reporting in October 2020, stated that the impact of Covid-19 globally on CYP was having a catastrophic effect with the poorest and already disadvantaged bearing the brunt (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b). The report highlights the devastating impact of the pandemic on CYP: on their physical health (with vaccination programmes interrupted), a greater risk of exposure to abuse and neglect and the deleterious and multiple effects of interrupted schooling.

Eleven months into the pandemic, the situation had not alleviated with at least three quarters of classroom instruction missed from the pre-primary to secondary sectors. The duration of school closures varied significantly across the world (UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank 2020; United Nations Children's Fund 2021). In the period July – October 2020, those children living in low-income countries were more than twice as likely to be affected by school closures than those in high-income countries (United Nations Children's Fund and UN Women and Plan International 2020).

A state of precarity

A health crisis is becoming a social and a psychological crisis, leading to higher levels of anxiety and stress in society in general (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b). Families, who in normal circumstances would not consider themselves impoverished, through the unique set of circumstances brought about by Covid-19 (job losses, reductions in salary, reduced hours) find themselves on the breadline, bringing into question understandings of marginalized and vulnerable populations (Mowat 2015; Editor 2020c; Save the Children 2021). For those families already in precarious financial circumstances, it was a tipping point, with parents using a variety of strategies to cope – cutting back on, or going without, essentials or getting into debt. Unexpected expenses, such as electrical appliances not functioning, were enough to ‘tip the scales’ for some families (Save the Children 2021).

The effects of Covid-19 have served to magnify some of the factors associated with growing up in poverty for CYP (Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) 2020). Many families are financially insecure, having less than three months’ earnings to support the family. Single parents, in particular, face compounded challenges relating to loss of income and lack of childcare and family support. The supports that families in these circumstances would normally draw on (such as food banks and advice teams) were curtailed (Barnard 2020). The combination of financial worries, along with anxieties about health, caring for children, social isolation and lack of access to support systems, left many Scottish parents feeling abandoned (Save the Children 2021): ‘I just felt so alone. It literally felt like you were dropped in a cave and it felt like, that’s it’ (p. 24) (drawing on the account of Keira, a mother).

Displaced and disabled CYP are also amongst those greatest at risk with the former group less likely to be able to access support systems put in place by governments (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b). The plight of disabled families was

showcased in research carried out by the BBC, in particular the case of Josselin, a young person with a rare genetic condition, with resultant hearing loss, vision impairment and unable to walk, talk or eat normally. In contrast to the exemplary care offered to her father recovering from Covid-19, the services supporting Josselin's physical and mental health had been stopped, giving her no access to physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy and respite care from March 2020 onwards (Clegg 2021).

Impact of Covid-19 on the socio-emotional and psychological development of CYP

Amidst the increasing concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of CYP in general (Mowat 2019a; Inchley, Mokogwu, Mabelis et al. 2020; Mowat 2020), and that of adolescents (World Health Organisation 2016; UNICEF Office of Research 2019) and teenage girls in particular (Patalay and Fitzsimons 2018; Inchley, Mokogwu, Mabelis et al. 2020), the impact of social distancing, school closures (Lee 2020; OECD 2020; UK Government 2020) and Covid-19-related family stressors (including bereavement (UNICEF Office of Research 2020a) and separation from close family (Liu, Bao, Huang et al. 2020)) is likely to be highly significant for the socio-emotional and psychological development of this demographic (Wang, Zhang, Zhao et al. 2020).

It is recognized that a poor transition can impact negatively on CYP's socio-emotional development and educational outcomes (White 2020) but no opportunity presented to prepare CYP for the unprecedented changes in their lives and the loss of the rites of passage associated with them (Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020), the lack of which may lead to a sense of loss.

UK Context The Oxford Co-Space Longitudinal survey in the UK has been tracking the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of CYP, from the perspective of parents and adolescents, through a series of surveys conducted monthly since the commencement of the study in 30/03/2020. One year on from the initial survey, it has established a correlation between periods of the highest levels of behavioural, emotional and attentional difficulties in CYP and periods when restrictions were greatest, with a sharp decrease in symptoms among both primary and secondary children when restrictions were eased in February 2021. The exception is CYP with SEN/D and those from low-income families who continued to show elevated health symptoms (Shum, Skripkauskaite, Pearcey et al. 2021).

Scottish context A report published in October 2020 by the Scottish Government, but drawing from data across the UK, found that standardized measures of mental health and wellbeing for CYP were not significantly changed from pre-pandemic levels. However, this disguised the impact on specific groups (Scottish Government 2020a). The findings relating to adolescent girls, low-income families, children identified as having SEN/D and those with English as a second language are consistent with those of other studies, including the Oxford University Co-Space study. The anxieties of CYP in general coalesce around infection transmission, physical distancing measures in school and future aspirations and job security. 8% of children had experienced family bereavement related to Covid-19.

The degree to which parents felt that the wellbeing of their children was well supported by the school or nursery during lockdown varied to a considerable extent with some considering that the support offered was not sufficiently tailored to the needs of CYP (Save the Children 2021). What is revealing, however, is that,

irrespective of income, the greatest concern of parents and CYP is not solely around learning but around the emotional support which would be offered to CYP on return to school: ‘they are equally concerned with the longer-term effects of increased social isolation and household stress’ (p. 2-3).

The importance of physical social interaction

It has been argued that, for the development of key social skills and emotional resilience (Music 2017) and the promotion of psychological wellbeing, companionship, play and peer interaction are essential (Liu, Bao, Huang et al. 2020; OECD 2020; UNICEF Office of Research 2020a). Parents of younger children were concerned that their children were missing out on key developmental stages essential for socialisation, such as interacting with extended family and friends, with limited opportunities for play and reduced access to outdoor spaces (Save the Children 2021). Even when lockdown restrictions were lifted in the summer of 2020, some children did not return to normal levels of play and regular peer interaction, with the effect on younger children being greater (Scottish Government 2020a). CYP living in homes where a family member was shielding were particularly affected and CYP who themselves were shielding felt abandoned as the messaging for this group was often directed at the elderly (Scottish Government 2020a). School closures, and the isolation associated with it, may impact on CYP’s capacity to self-regulate, increasing their vulnerability (Burns and Gottschalk 2019; OECD 2020).

For many CYP, it is not just the loss of learning imposed by lockdown measures (and the periods of time when schools close due to outbreaks of infection or classes or year groups are sent home to self-isolate) that has impacted, it is the loss of the social contact associated with school – interaction with friends and

teachers (Scottish Government 2021). In England, on the 1st of July 2021, 8.5% of CYP in English schools (adjusted for those pupils who were off-site for legitimate reasons) were not in attendance at school for Covid-related reasons, excluding those who were shielding for health reasons (UK Government, 2021).

It is recognized that the peer group takes on a particular significance during adolescence (aged 10-24) for both sexes as young people grow in independence (Editor 2020a; Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020). It is a sensitive period for social development, identity formation and mental health when there is a heightened sensitivity to social stimuli and a greater need for social interaction. Adolescents, in comparison to younger children, spend greater time in interaction with their peer group than their family and are increasingly influenced by them. They are more sensitive to peer rejection, acceptance and approval (Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020). The lack of opportunities for physical social interaction, arising from school closures, social distancing and isolation, disrupts networks of support, impacting on psychological wellbeing (Editor 2020a; Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020). It may be the case that the effect of such constraints may extend beyond the period of social distancing itself (Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020). It is also suggested that the impact of social isolation and deprivation on brain function and behaviour in adolescents may make them particularly prone to deleterious effects, although access to social media may serve to mitigate these effects to a degree (Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020).

Family-related and environmental stressors

While, for some CYP, spending increased time with family members may be beneficial, for others, home confinement and the conditions associated with it may

put CYP at greater risk of abuse and neglect (Lee 2020; OECD 2020; Scottish Government 2020a; UNICEF Office of Research 2020a,b; Usher, Bhullar, Durkin et al. 2020) with schools less able to provide a safe-guarding function (Armitage and Nellums 2020; Lee 2020). Children may have less access to key adult supports and services that have a child protection function (Public Health Scotland 2017; Smith 2018; Golberstein, Wen, Miller et al. 2019; Armitage and Nellums 2020; Lee 2020; UNICEF Office of Research 2020a,b; Usher, Bhullar, Durkin et al. 2020).

This is particularly of the essence for CYP who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and/or Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) as it has been established that for these CYP the support of a key adult can make all the difference in building emotional resilience (Public Health Scotland 2017; Smith 2018), particularly across transitions (Mowat 2019b; Mowat 2019c), such as the significant and sudden upheaval CYP have experienced in their lives (Orben, Tomova and Blakemore 2020).

For CYP in poverty (Van Lancker and Parolin 2020), living in disadvantaged circumstances (eg. poor housing conditions, damp (Karvonen, Hyvarinen, Roponen et al. 2009; Behbod, Sordillo, Hoffman et al. 2013; Behbod, Sordillo, Hoffman et al. 2015), over-crowding (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b) and lack of access to outside spaces and leisure facilities), difficulties may be compounded with socio-economic differences exacerbated; health risks accentuated (Editor 2020c); and home schooling compromised (Armitage and Nellums 2020; Barnard 2020; UK Government 2020; UNICEF Office of Research 2020b; Van Lancker and Parolin 2020).

‘A perfect storm’ – child protection issues

For CYP living in abusive homes, perhaps witness to family violence, for whom school served as a safe haven (OECD 2020), home confinement poses particular risks (OECD 2020), with family stressors amplified (Lee 2020). For Usher and colleagues, the combination of isolation, accompanied by the psychological and financial stressors associated with social distancing (particularly if accompanied by excessive alcohol consumption), create ‘a perfect storm’ which is an ideal breeding ground for family violence, posing greater risks for CYP (Usher, Bhullar, Durkin et al. 2020). Beyond those most obviously at risk of abuse and neglect, around eight in ten CYP aged 1-14 years globally had experienced some form of psychological aggression or physical punishment within the home environment in a one month period during lockdown, as was the case for three quarters of 2-4 year olds (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b).

The impact of family bereavement, illness or separation on the capacity to care for CYP, coupled with the above family stressors and increased care-giving responsibilities arising from the pandemic, places many CYP at increased risk of abuse or neglect at a time when family supports (such as the support offered by grandparents) are reduced (United Nations Children’s Fund 2020; Weiner, Heaton, Stiehl et al. 2020). This is further compounded by the disruption to child protection services brought about by the pandemic and the lack of contact with school staff who would normally be the first line of defence in picking up signs of child abuse and neglect, leading to a reduction in referrals (United Nations Children’s Fund 2020; Weiner, Heaton, Stiehl et al. 2020). The pandemic has led to widespread disruption to the services that normally support families and CYP, such as welfare

services, case management services/referral pathways and household visits to children and women at risk of abuse, reduced respectively by 48%, 52% and 53% world-wide (United Nations Children’s Fund 2020).

USA Context Weiner, Heaton, Stiehl et al. (2020) in the USA (drawing on a range of extant data sources and after factoring in seasonal variations in reporting and county-level specific factors) established a strong correlation between community-level stressors, such as rates of unemployment, and maltreatment reports relating to CYP. The authors observe that, as the relationship between variables such as unemployment and maltreatment is mediated by other factors (for example, mental health, isolation, stress), then prevention becomes a priority. They make the case that, rather than focussing on reporting measures, the focus should shift towards alleviating the stressors and economic drivers within the community which create the conditions under which CYP are more likely to experience abuse and neglect: ‘Understanding the factors that elevate risk of harm to children during economic downturns and periods of social isolation can help child welfare systems to formulate adaptive responses to family needs’ (p. 2).

An over-stretched system - access to mental health services

The loss of familiar routines associated with school - a coping mechanism for many CYP with mental health issues and on the autistic spectrum – creates anxiety and distress (Lee 2020; Scottish Government 2020a). This is compounded by a lack of access to mental health supports in schools and mental health services (Armitage and Nellums 2020) which, in Scotland, were under strain and inadequate even prior to the pandemic (Murphy 2016; Mowat 2019a; Mowat 2020). Key global initiatives, such as the WHO Health Promoting Schools, had not had the desired effect in

promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in CYP (World Health Organisation and UNESCO 2018) and services such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in the UK were over-whelmed, with too many referrals rejected due to a lack of resource (Audit Scotland 2018; Office of the Children's Commissioner for England 2019). An audit of referrals to CAMHS in Scotland found that there had been a steep decline during the initial lockdown in the UK (spring 2020), with referrals reducing by a third, but with some recovery during periods when restrictions had eased (Public Health Scotland 2021).

Lee (2020), reporting on the findings of a survey conducted with 2111 participants up to age 25 by the UK charity – Young Minds, identifies that 83% of participants considered that the pandemic had had a worsening effect on their mental health with around a quarter being unable to access services. The OECD (2020) cautions that the long-term effects on CYP may range from anxiety-related disorders to post-traumatic stress. Given what is understood about the long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on an extensive range of indicators (Felitti, Anda and Nordenberg 1998; Bellis, Ashton, Hughes et al. 2015) and the increased prevalence amongst disadvantaged CYP (Marryat and Frank 2019; Walsh, McCartney and Smith 2019), this is of particular concern and calls for clear direction from governments and CYP's services to address the problem (Education Scotland 2017; Public Health Scotland 2017). Marryat and Frank (2019) identify that the most disadvantaged 10 year old CYP in Glasgow, Scotland (deciles one and two of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government 2020b), were ten times more likely to experience four or more ACEs than the least disadvantaged CYP.

In keeping with these findings, the newly formed UK Trauma council identify the key issues as being the increased risk of exposure to trauma during the pandemic; the likelihood that those who have previously been exposed to trauma will experience particular difficulties, struggling to adapt to the lockdown environment with less recourse to normal supports; and the disruption to services which would normally support CYP who have experienced or are experiencing trauma (UK Trauma Council 2020).

A social crisis in the making

Food insecurity, brought about by disruption to school meals (Van Lancker and Parolin 2020) and programmes of international support (Editor 2020c) impact disproportionately on the already disadvantaged, as does lack of access to universal health care (Editor 2020c). Van Lancker and Parolin (2020) identify that a range of non-school factors (such as the home environment and the degree to which it supports learning) are likely to impact to a much greater extent on the physical and mental wellbeing of CYP living in poverty than other CYP. According to the authors, a substantial minority of CYP in Europe have no suitable place to do homework; lack access to the internet; are living in homes that are poorly heated; have no access to outdoor leisure facilities; and have no access to age-appropriate books in the family home which, coupled with the financial stressors to which reference has previously been made, 'create a social crisis in the making'. These problems are compounded for CYP living in unstable homes.

Digital technologies serving a social function Much attention has been devoted in the literature to the impact of digital technologies on learning and the 'digital divide' that has emerged, exacerbating inequalities (Armitage and Nellums 2020;

United Nations Children’s Fund 2021). However, the digital divide impacts not only learning but the capacity of schools to maintain contact with families and CYP at times of disruption to schooling (Fullan, Quinn, Drummy et al. 2020): ‘Teachers also play a vital role as relationship builders and connectors. In response, teachers embraced technology to reach out to students and families’ (p.6). In a study of the digital divide on Catholic schools in Scotland, digital exclusion, associated with poverty, had led to exclusion from religious education, the religious life, community and pastoral and spiritual aspects of the school (McKinney 2020).

The importance of the family unit and networks of extended support

Whilst the above paints a very distressing and hopeless picture of the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of families and CYP globally and at a national level, a key lesson to be learned is that not all families and CYP had the same experience. Indeed, some parents enjoyed the additional time that they were able to spend with their children and the insight gained into their children’s learning, considering that family relationships had improved. Despite the many trials endured, it has been reported that some families and CYP were remarkably resilient in the face of the challenges presented. The family unit itself was the greatest source of support as was the lifeline of social media during periods of lockdown (Save the Children 2021).

These findings are consistent with the findings from a literature-based study focusing on the relationship between poverty, attainment and mental health and wellbeing in which the *nature, quality and strength of networks of support around communities, families and schools*, related, but not restricted, to social capital emerged as a key mediating variable (Mowat 2019a; Mowat 2020).

Implications for Policy and Practice: Key imperatives

In reflecting on the discussion to this point, both in terms of addressing the immediate imperatives of nations as they seek to address the medium to long-term impacts of Covid-19 but also ensuring greater preparedness to meet future challenges, the following insights emerge. Firstly, a recognition that no preparation whether at the macro- or micro-level could ever sufficiently prepare the system or the workforce to meet the challenges posed. What is remarkable is the degree to which systems and people, from all walks of life, have adapted and changed rapidly in a swiftly changing landscape. At the macro-level, there needs to be a convergence of public policy globally and nationally and a will to address inequalities in society – health, economic and educational – in order to *build resilient communities*. In order to achieve this goal, there needs to be a focus at the local level on *building networks of support* around communities, families, schools and CYP. Schools need to be not only *inclusive places of learning* but *places of belonging, caring, compassion, community, relatedness and connection* where the health and wellbeing of all of the school community lies at the heart of its endeavours, and where all members of that community are given a voice. In order to achieve this, we need to *invest in the workforce* and the professional development of teachers, freeing them from the shackles of overly controlling régimes, creating a body of *critical practitioners* who are given the freedom and autonomy to be creative and to develop a sense of agency. This requires *emotionally intelligent leaders* (Crawford 2009) and *collaborative and shared forms of leadership* at all levels of the system. Covid-19 presents us with an opportunity to stand back from our ‘dearly held assumptions’ (Brookfield 1995) about the world and to re-imagine a better future for all CYP.

To this point, much of the focus globally has been on how schools can address the interruptions to the learning of CYP but it is too early to ascertain the degree to which such approaches have been, and will be efficacious. There has been much less attention devoted to supporting the emotional and psychological wellbeing of CYP, yet, this is crucial as it underpins effective learning. Therefore, the focus must rest on identifying where attention should be devoted with regard to the direction of future research. The final discussion will focus on this aspect.

Directions for future research

Gaps within the literature

The response to the UK Parliament's call for experts to share their concerns relating to the impact of Covid-19 highlighted a range of issues pertaining to the mental health and wellbeing of CYP, key amongst which are the isolation from peers during critical stages of development, increasing the likelihood of the development of mental health conditions during and after the pandemic (Birmingham 2020).

In the UK, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) identified that there are significant gaps in the literature pertaining to the impacts of social isolation among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups during public health crises, including the positive and negative impacts of social media and digital technologies. Likewise, there is a lack of an evidence base as to the efficacy of social practices and interventions to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 constraints (Gayer-Anderson, Latham, Zerbi et al. 2020). While many of these concerns relate to the adult population, studies such as Growing up in Scotland have identified a clear relationship between precarity, adult stress (particularly that of the mother), parenting and the mental health and wellbeing and development of CYP, leading to

significant health and educational inequalities which widen over time (Parkes, Sweeting and Wight 2014; Bradshaw, Knudsen and Mabelis 2015; Marryat, Thompson, Minnis et al. 2015; Parkes, Sweeting and Wight 2016; Marryat, Thompson, Minnis et al. 2017; Marryat and Frank 2019).

Intersectionality

There is a need to recognize that CYP living in poverty are not a homogenous group and that, in keeping with the recommendations from the ESRC (Gayer-Anderson, Latham, Zerbi et al. 2020), childhood poverty may intersect with other variables, such as coming from a black or ethnic minority background; being disabled or from a family where a carer is disabled; living in a large family and/or with a sole parent (Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) 2020); and being displaced (UNICEF Office of Research 2020b), amongst other groups. As such, intersectionality needs to be a key consideration in the design of a research study (Gayer-Anderson, Latham, Zerbi et al. 2020).

Research Design

There is a need to conduct longitudinal, cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary study which not only gathers data at a population level to establish key variables, relationships and trends in the medium to long-term, but which also examines holistically the lived experience of CYP as they traverse the many obstacles and significant transitions in their lives brought about by Covid-19. This calls on a range of approaches to be deployed, including mixed methods and ethnographic studies, drawing on expertise across a range of academic disciplines. Such data should inform responses to future pandemics.

Creating resilient communities

In order to be able to inform future responses to this and other pandemics, research needs to not only establish the impact of Covid-19 constraints on CYP but the mechanisms and inner supports that they have drawn upon both during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. It needs to explore and evaluate the approaches and interventions which have been put in place to support CYP by agencies such as schools, mental health services and Children's Services in order to establish their efficacy and to identify those aspects which promote resilience (protective factors) not only at the individual level, but at the social and wider community level, in keeping with socio-ecological understandings of the concept (Olsson, Bond, Burns et al. 2003; Rutter 2012; Ungar 2012a; Ungar 2012b; Ungar, Mehdi and Jörg 2013). There may be a danger of an over-reliance on approaches to support CYP which focus on building resilience within the individual, failing to acknowledge sufficiently the interaction of protective and risk factors external to the individual which create the conditions under which a child or young person may be able to develop and demonstrate the behaviours which might be construed as resilient within a given context.

A focus on adolescence

Whilst we need to address the needs of all CYP arising from the constraints posed by Covid-19, I concur with the call of Orben et al. (Orben, Tomova, Blakemore 2020) that urgent research is required to understand the impact of social deprivation and physical distancing, reduced physical contact and the possibilities posed by digital communication on the development and mental health of adolescents.

Children's Rights as central

As advocated by the Lancet editorial, 'Prioritising Children's Rights in the Covid-19 response' (Editor 2020b), the tumultuous impact of Covid-19 on the lives of CYP provides an opportunity to stand back and reflect on societal norms and values and, rather than unthinkingly moving towards the 'new normal,' give proper consideration to the nature of the world we want to create for the current and future generations of CYP. As posed by UNESCO, 'What will be the impact on human rights, inclusion and values we hold dear? What values do we want to take into the new world?' (UNESCO 2020) and, arising from the above, what are the implications of these for the actions that we should take collectively and individually? As argued in the Lancet editorial (Editor 2020b), 'Children's rights must be central in the recovery phase and in future planning, to regain lost ground and to accelerate progress towards a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable world for all' (p.479). Covid-19 presents not only as a threat but an opportunity.

A call to action: Breaking down silos

The above calls for researchers, academics and professionals to move out of their silos to collaborate together to co-construct the design of research studies, breaking down barriers to communication and building shared understandings; for clinical and social science researchers to be working side-by-side; and, for professionals across a range of fields to share their insights, as it is only by so doing that the complexity of what we are dealing with can be understood and the way forward established.

Consideration of social and cultural context

Finally, just as this chapter commenced with the words of Professor Sridhar, it ends with her advocacy to 'build trust with populations,' taking account of people's social and cultural contexts in creating interventions to address need (UNICEF Office of Research 2020a). It is important that whichever approaches are adopted, we work respectfully with people, taking them with us on the journey, listening to the voices of CYP and those with responsibility for their wellbeing, not just as objects of research but as collaborators also as we build towards and beyond a 'new normal.'

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