EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE MEASURE WE TREASURE

Oliver Petrovic
ECD Unit, UNICEF NY, June 2010
Presentation outline

• Measuring early childhood development (ECD) – a global challenge
• UNICEF ECD Monitoring framework
• UNICEF ECD Research agenda:
  • Evaluations
  • Operational research
I have the rights!

- The right to a name and nationality
- To be properly fed
- To drink safe water
- To learn
- To participate
- To play
- To be protected from illnesses

A call on duty bearers to develop a positive agenda for rights in early childhood!
• Nearly 9 million under-five children died in 2008
• Over 220 million under-five children are not developing to their full potential
• An estimated 20% loss in adult productivity
• Poor child development will remain a challenge unless it is on political agenda
Why measure early childhood development?

- Reliable info on child health/nutrition at birth
- A lot of data on education (but access, not a quality)
- Relatively accurate mortality statistics yet…
- **Huge data gaps on early childhood development**
Monitoring
What to measure in early childhood development?

Supportive policy environment

Access to services

Community support

Supportive home environment

Child development

Official Statistics

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

Situation Analysis

Operational research

Annual Reports

CRC Monitoring
Measuring ECD Policy environment

- Core Indicators (sample):
  - National policies that prioritize equity in access to social services
  - Countries whose National Development Plan includes targets for scaling up improved family and community care practices (78 countries, or 54% of all UNICEF supported countries)
  - Countries that have conducted a gender analysis to identify gaps/challenges in family and community care practices (48 countries, or 34%)
Assessing ECD Policy Environment

Child Right Convention

General Comment 7 (GC:7) Implementing child right in early childhood

GC:7 Indicators

Implementation manual of GC:7 indicators
Measuring access to ECD services

• Core Indicators:
  • Antenatal care & skilled attendance at delivery
  • Birth registration
  • Full immunization coverage
  • Attendance to Early childhood education
  • Attendance to preschool
Measuring attendance to early education in Africa, by wealth

Source: Preliminary analysis of MICS3 data
Measuring family environment

• Supportive environment:
  • Support for learning (activities; availability of books / play materials; non-adults care)
  • Physical environment (use of improved water sources and sanitation)

• Caregiver’s Knowledge / Practices:
  • Exclusive breastfeeding rate
  • Child disciplining practices
Child disciplining practices, by sex

Source: Preliminary analysis of MICS3 data
Measuring Early Childhood Development

• Proxy Indicators:
  • Health outcomes (under-five mortality; morbidity)
  • Nutritional outcomes (stunting)
• Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI)
Early Childhood Development Index

- Tested in the Philippines, Jordan, Kenya
- A tool to assess the Literacy/Numeracy; Social/Emotional; Physical & Learning domains
- Early Childhood Development Index will ensure that:
  - Public policy is informed on the developmental status of children within a given nation, population subgroups, gender, and economic class
  - Targets aiming at improving the wellbeing of young children are set, adequate resources allocated
  - Early childhood development is on political agenda
Research agenda
• Evaluation of ECD programmes at global, regional and country level
• Meta-evaluation of parenting programmes
  • Review of existing parenting programmes (e.g. 80 UNICEF supported programmes)
  • In-depth review of selected programmes
  • Longitudinal study of selected programmes
• Meta-evaluation of community based young child centres
Emphasis on implementation research

- Increased investments in implementation research
- Research necessary to bring interventions into the routine practice of national social systems
- Is the intervention working? Why and How?
- What interventions can be effectively packaged and delivered together?
- What are the best approaches to scaling them up?
Pakistan Early Childhood Development Scale-up (PEDS) trial

• Based on the UNICEF/WHO Care for Child Development Intervention
  • Designed to prepare service providers / community workers to provide caregivers with knowledge and skills to improve children’s development
• Preliminary findings:
  • Significant improvements of home environment
  • Improved child development
  • Improved nutritional status of children
ECD Research Agenda

• Identify knowledge gaps
• Leverage resources to close the gaps (increased UNICEF commitment)
• Use of evidence in planning / policy development
• Direct support to ongoing and new research (in partnership with academia and developmental organizations)
• Scale-up best practices & approaches
• Developing research capacity at the field level
• Focus on developing countries and on the most marginalized!
Vision of early childhood development programme / policy

All children should be physically healthy, mentally alert, socially competent, emotionally sound and ready to learn

*We can measure what we treasure!*