

# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE MEASURE WE TREASURE

Oliver Petrovic

ECD Unit, UNICEF NY, June 2010

unite for  
children

unicef 

# 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



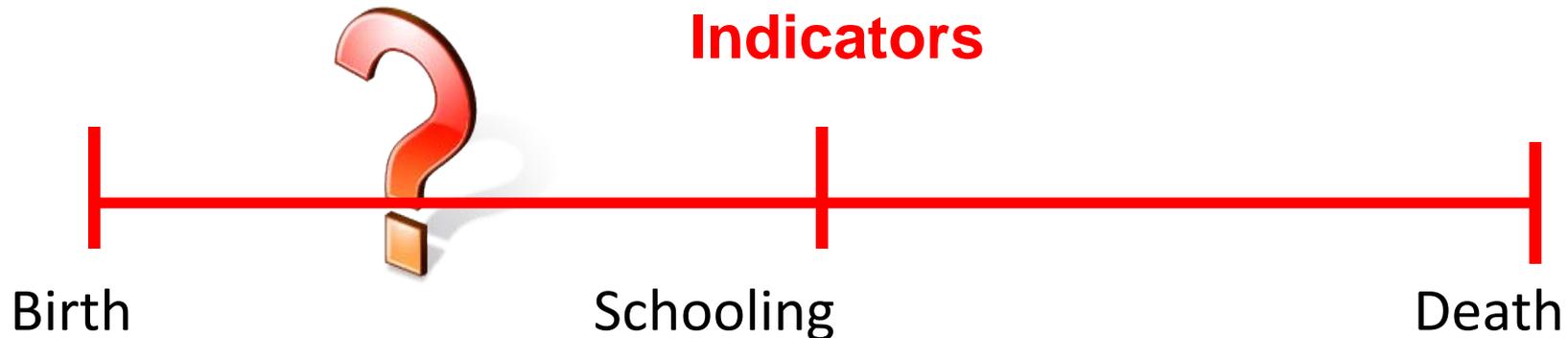
- To participate
- To play
- To be protected from illnesses

**A call on duty bearers to develop a positive agenda for rights in early childhood!**

# Measuring ECD: the global challenge

- 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?

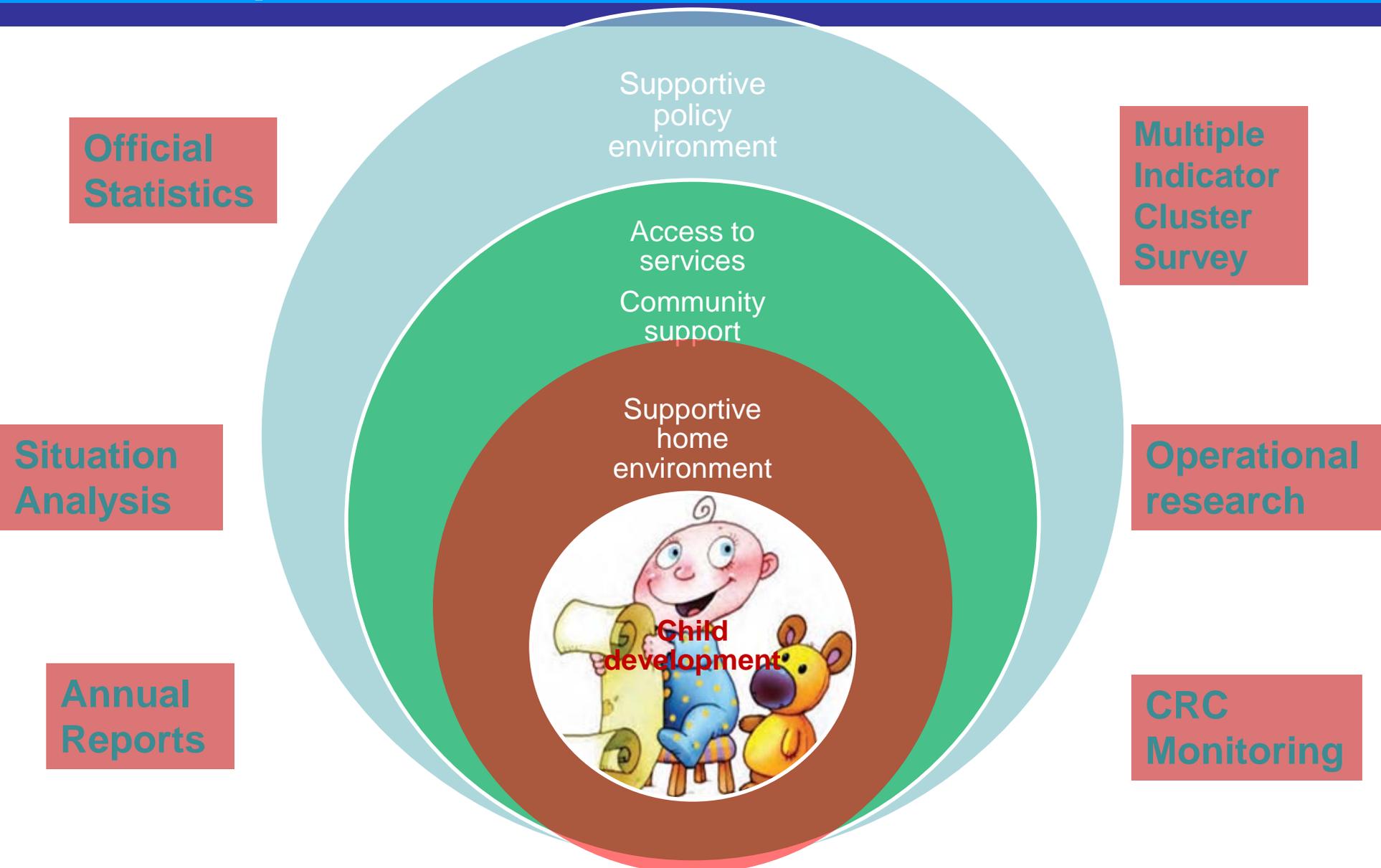


- Reliable info on child health/nutrition at birth
  - A lot of data on education (but access, not a quality)
  - Relatively accurate mortality statistics
- yet...
- **Huge data gaps on early childhood development**



# Monitoring

# What to measure in early childhood development?



# 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**

```
graph TD; A[Child Right Convention] --> B[General Comment 7(GC:7) Implementing child right in early childhood]; B --> C[GC:7 Indicators]; C --> D[Implementation manual of GC:7 indicators];
```

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

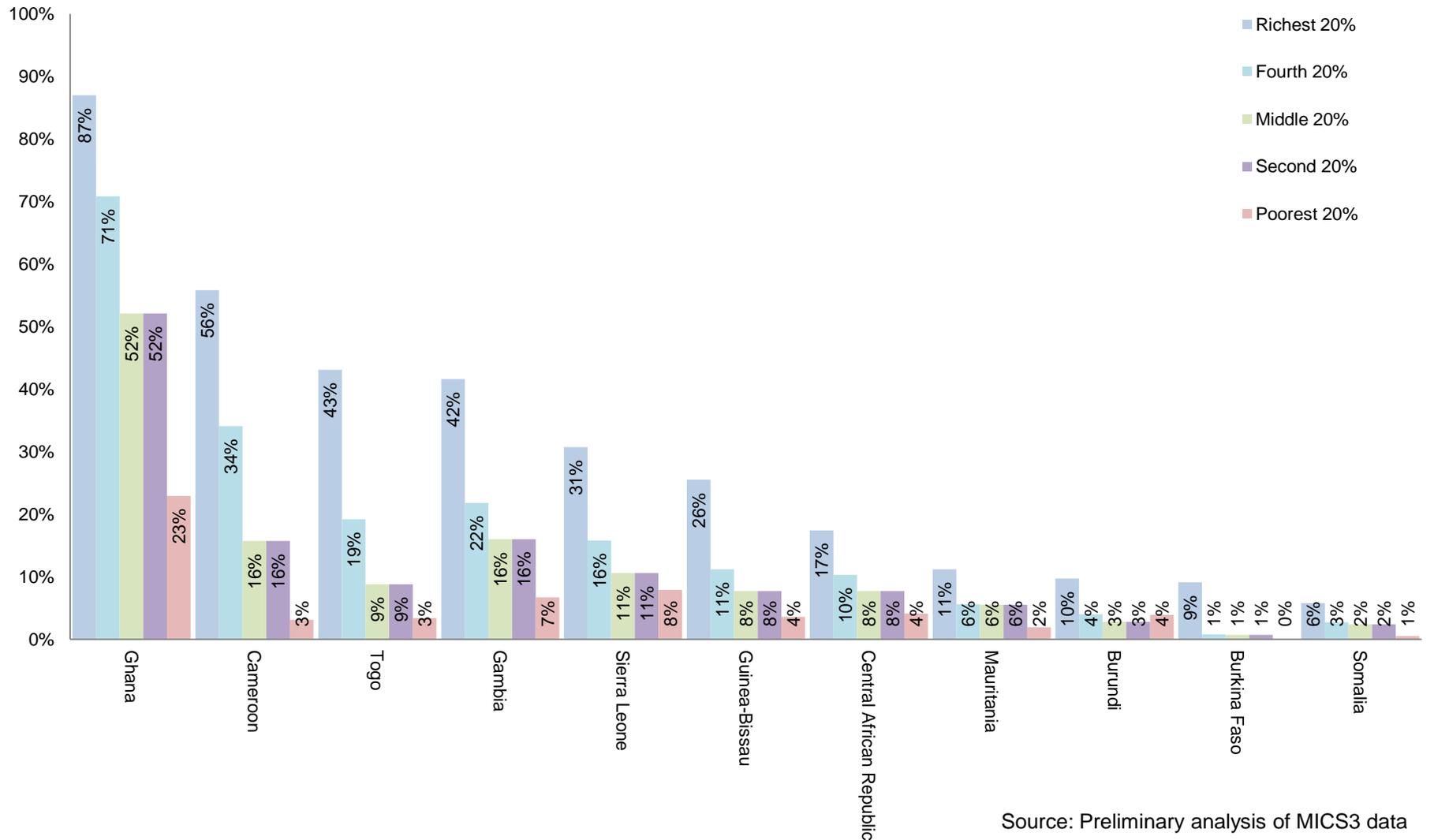
**GC:7 Indicators**

**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

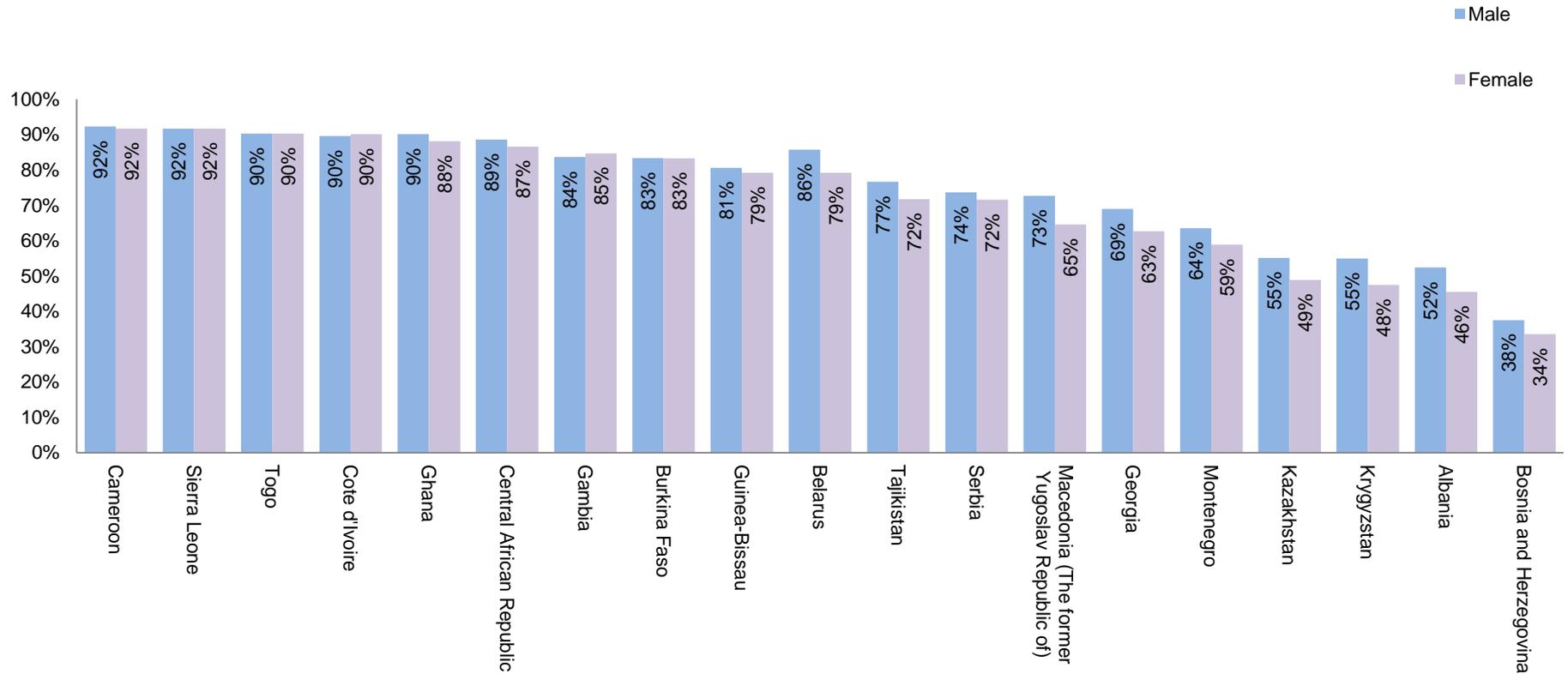
# Measuring attendance to early education in Africa, by wealth



# 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

# Evaluations

- 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!*

