

# Beyond Child Indicators: A Framework to Assess & Evaluate Quality Early Childhood Programs in Global Contexts

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# Presentation Overview

1. Rationale: Urgency of Quality in Global Early Childhood Development Services
2. Aims
3. Process: Stakeholder Participatory Methods
4. Initial Results: Emerging Quality Framework and Examples of Dimensions
5. Next Steps: Testing the Framework & Implications

# 1. Rationale: Urgency of Quality in Global Early Childhood Development Services

# Child Rights are a Guiding Principle

**Every child**  
has the right to:  
Survival  
Development  
Protection  
Participation



**Childhood is precious**

# Rationale: Urgency of Quality

- Currently, many of the predominant measurement approaches focus on:
  - Access and Equity (Education for All Goals; EFA, UNESCO)
  - Assessments & monitoring of child outcomes (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, MICS, UNICEF)



# Rationale: Urgency of Quality

For programs, quality is the critical ingredient linked with early childhood outcomes

- Programs of sufficient quality have the potential to increase cognitive and socio-emotional skills in the long term



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# Rationale: Urgency of Quality

- However-- quality is an urgent international priority:
  - Even though the percentage of children with access to ECCE is low, the number of countries increasing provision growing rapidly (UNESCO, 2006)
  - The vast number of children who can benefit from quality programs (Lancet, 2007)
- Without a commitment to quality – **program, setting and system characteristics associated with effectiveness and greater gains in child health, learning and behavior** -- intended gains for children's prospects as future citizens may be lost

# Rationale: Urgency of Quality



# Rationale: Urgency of Quality

## Why is quality the last piece, despite the need?

- Conceptualizations of quality in more country and cultural contexts need to be clarified and defined
- Lack of measurement and assessment tools beyond the individual level; shift in ecological focus required
- Limited capacity to support quality improvements
- Quality is often seen as a luxury given its perceived cost

## 2. Aims



# Aims

The aims of the proposed initiative are to

- 1) Develop a conceptual framework and set of guidelines for the measurement and monitoring of ECCE program quality in global contexts
- 2) Test the framework in multiple country contexts, developing web-based and other supports for learning communities across nations

### 3. Process: Stakeholder Participatory Methods for Aim 1



# Overview of Process for Aim 1

- 1) Conceptualization of quality with reference to contextual & ecological parameters of regional & cultural variation through participation of international stakeholders & experts;
- 2) Situational analysis to obtain information on currently used tools and instruments of program quality through a survey of measurement approaches; and
- 3) Assessment of program quality measurement experiences and needs through a facilitated work space on the Web for a community of users.

# International Stakeholders Meeting on Program Quality

## Goal:

To discuss key dimensions of quality and processes of defining and monitoring quality across settings and cultural contexts and develop a common framework

**Abu Dhabi, UAE, April, 2010**

**Under the Patronage of**

**H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarek**

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# Participant Diversity

- Across disciplines (Psychology, Education, Economics, Public Health, Statistics)
- Across Expertise (Academics, Practitioners, Policy Makers)
- Across Sectors (NGOs, Global and Regional Networks, Universities, Ministries, Funders)
- Across Regions (Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North America)

# Participant List

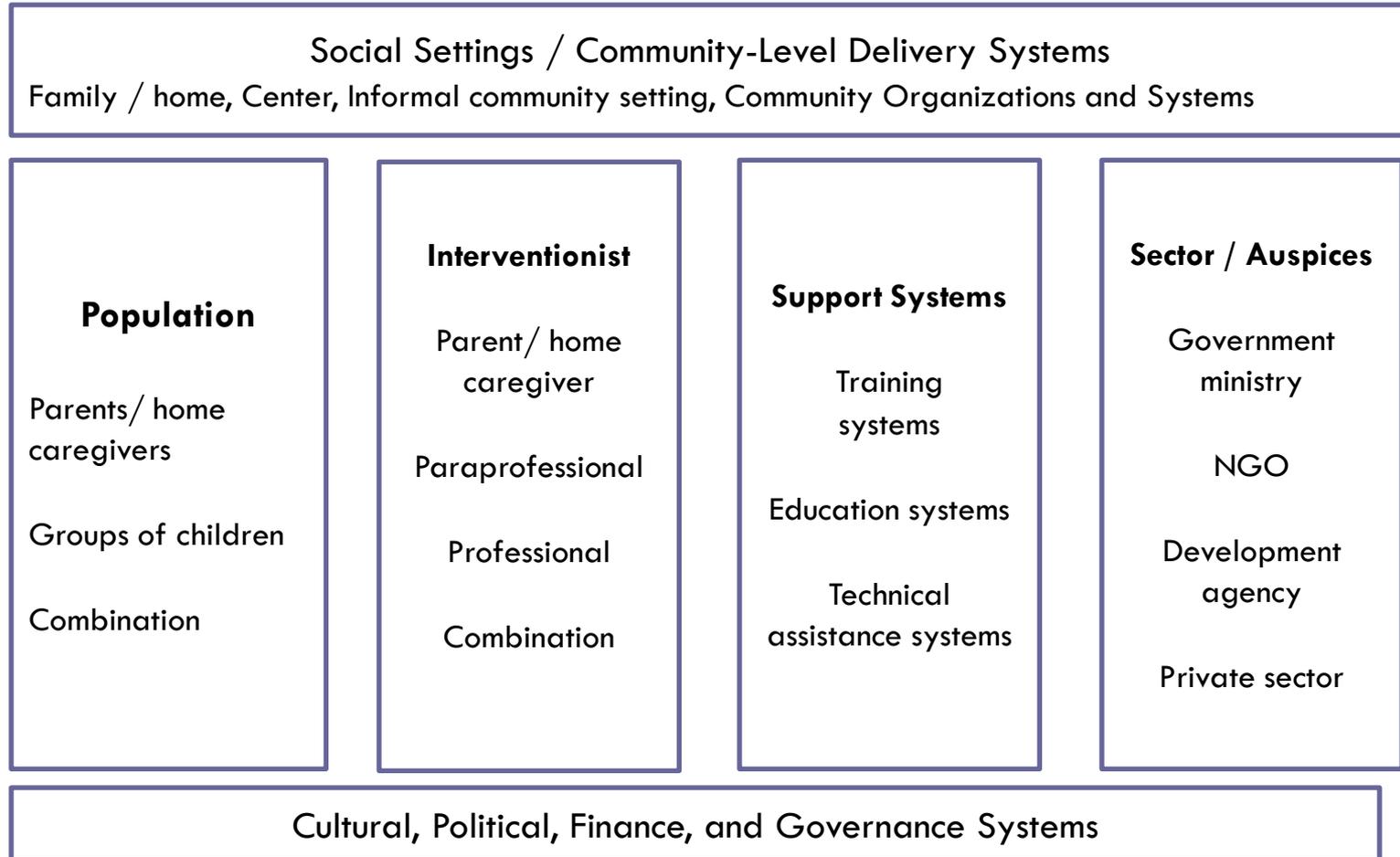
- **Academia:** Sevda Bekman, Turkey; Mehmet Buldu, UAE; Elisa Capella, US; Fabienne Doucet, US; Orla Doyle, Ireland; Patrice Engle, US; Jacqueline Hayden, Australia; Matthew Jukes, US; Sharon Lynn Kagan, US; Robert G. Myers, Mexico; Ghazala Rafique, Pakistan ; Nirmala Rao, Hong Kong; Cybele Raver, US; Andrea Rolla, US; Aisha Yousafzai, Pakistan
- **Global and regional networks:** Youssef Hajjar, Arab Resource Collective; Louise Zimanyi, Consultative Group; Lynne Pierson, Abu Dhabi Education Council
- **UNICEF:** Nurper Ulkuer, NYHQ; Deepa Grover and Aigly Zafeirakou (consultant), Geneva; Lara Hussein, UAE
- **NGOs:** Ivelina Borosova, Stella Etse, Kamal Hossain, Pablo Stansbery (Save the Children); Regina Sabaliauskiene (ISSA)
- **Funding Organizations:** Peter Mwaura (consultant), Aga Khan Foundation; Abbie Raikes, BMGF

# Meeting Approach

- Inclusive of multiple perspectives and wide representation
  - Comparative, multinational, and global perspectives, with limited reliance on western models and perspectives
- Participatory
  - Submission of concept notes prior to meeting that created the main issues for the agenda
  - Sessions lead by participant presentations, small working groups on specific questions and plenary discussions
- Methodology
  - Deliberations, reflections and considerations of key issues

# Figure 1: Guiding Framework for Meeting Discussions

[quality can be assessed within boxes or across adjacent boxes, in their interactions]



# Guiding Principles for Meeting Discussions

Measuring quality requires attention to:

- 1) Multiple levels of contexts--from dyads, to community processes, to regional and national systems
- 2) What is being imparted to children and their caregivers - content
- 3) Cultural ways of knowing the child and her contexts
- 4) The dynamic process of developing and improving assessment in the context of changing ECD services
- 5) The methods and properties of the instrument

## 4. Initial Results



# Framework Components

1. Definition
2. Values & Principles
3. Measurement Framework
4. Process of Development



# Emerging Definition of Quality

- Dynamic, flexible and adaptable across cultures, settings, time, and types of intervention
- Multi-dimensional and requires articulation beyond interactional (responsiveness and reciprocity) aspects to include accountability, ownership, alignment with goals and management
- Who defines quality? Client/family, program developer, program implementer, trainer
- Specificities with reference to cultural or regional differences within nations and approaches

# Emerging Ideas around Values and Principles

- In the development of the quality framework an explicit articulation of values is being sought because values are inherent in practice and programs.
  - eg: Convention on the Rights of the Child.

# Emerging Measurement Framework

- From a socio-ecological perspective the measurement framework nests contexts from the most proximal to more distal taking into consideration the multiple dimensions and the interrelatedness between them

# Emerging Measurement Framework

	<b>Social Settings</b>	<b>Systems</b>
Desired Interactions	Dyads or groups	Groups across organizational/ institutional levels
Resources (levels and distribution)	Human & Material	Human & Material
Desired Physical & Spatial Characteristics	Homes, centers	Where training occurs
Alignment with...	Family / child needs and developmental stage	Provider needs and experience
Communications	Comprehensive, simple relevant	Openness of system to flexibility and change

# Examples of Dimensions of Quality at the Social Setting Level

- *Desired Interactions:*
  - *Responsiveness; scaffolding; cooperation; motivation; active participation of children / parents / community*
- *Resources:*
  - *Learning materials; teacher / provider / parent skills*
- *Physical and spatial characteristics:*
  - *Safety; Quality of Shelter; Disaster Preparedness*
- *Alignment with needs:*
  - *Consideration of migrant / seasonal work; ethnolinguistic minorities; inclusion of children with disabilities*
- *Communication:*
  - *Among staff of different sectors (health; education; child prot)*

# Examples of Dimensions of Quality at Larger Systems Levels

- *Desired Interactions:*
  - *Participation in higher-level governance; responsiveness of trainers, monitors; collaboration among NGO's, ministries*
- *Resources*
  - *Funding (NGO / govt); capacity in systems for policy planning, training and monitoring, data collection and analysis*
- *Physical and spatial characteristics:*
  - *Distance (e.g., of training centers from programs)*
- *Alignment with needs:*
  - *# teacher / trainers to meet demand; curricula alignment with developmental stage, cultural diversity and norms*
- *Communication:*
  - *Across sectors / ministries;*

# Themes in the Process of Developing and Improving Measures of Quality

- Dialogue and negotiation during development to promote community ownership
- Different processes, such as adaptations to widely used instrument (e.g. ECERS) vs. locally development of instrument
- Need for feasibility and ease of use; match of complexity of instrument to capacity of training and monitoring systems
- Uses: Quality measures as foundation for professional development
- Flexibility to changes in service provision

# Next Steps

- Further developing conceptual framework through feedback from variety of stakeholders
- Applying framework to small learning communities of countries within and across regions
- Developing web-based resources for sharing of measures and assessments

# Implications for Head Start

- Measurement as foundation for professional development and monitoring systems
- System level characteristics of quality are less developed in HS
- Innovations in global ECD represent new directions for improvement of ECCE in the US
- Global forces of migration and changing demographics in the US require attention to diverse stakeholder approaches to defining and measuring quality