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

Childhood is precious
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)
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
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

- Access & Equity
- Child Outcomes
- 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 workspace 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

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Under the Patronage of
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Hosted: New York University Abu Dhabi
Funders: NYU, Harvard, UNICEF
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]

Social Settings / Community-Level Delivery Systems
Family / home, Center, Informal community setting, Community Organizations and Systems

Population
Parents / home caregivers
Groups of children
Combination

Interventionist
Parent / home caregiver
Paraprofessional
Professional
Combination

Support Systems
Training systems
Education systems
Technical assistance systems

Sector / Auspices
Government ministry
NGO
Development agency
Private sector

Cultural, Political, Finance, and Governance Systems

Yale
Center on the Developing Child
Harvard University
Mathematica
Policy Research, Inc.
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
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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Interactions</th>
<th>Social Settings</th>
<th>Systems</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyads or groups</td>
<td>Groups across organizational/institutional levels</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (levels and distribution)</td>
<td>Human &amp; Material</td>
<td>Human &amp; Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desired Physical &amp; Spatial Characteristics</td>
<td>Homes, centers</td>
<td>Where training occurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family / child needs and developmental stage</td>
<td>Provider needs and experience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Comprehensive, simple relevant</td>
<td>Openness of system to flexibility and change</td>
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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; ethnilingual 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