EFA End Decade Note

Goal 1: ECCE

Introduction

- The term "early childhood" refers to the period between birth and eight years of life.
- The term "Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)" refers to a whole range of processes and mechanisms that sustain and support development during the early years of life: It encompasses education, physical, social and emotional care, intellectual stimulation, health and nutrition of the developing child.
- The term also encompasses the supports a family and community need to promote children's healthy development.

Rationale for Note on ECCE

Why ECCE?
- Neuroscience: First three years of life represent a "critical period": Neural connections multiply
- Economic: ECCE can break "cycle of poverty" in many reasons
- Developmental: Holistic ECCE can promote social, emotional, cognitive, health and intellectual development
- Political: Can assist in achievement of fundamental right to education

Rationale for Note on ECCE

Strong need expressed in the region regarding:
- Diversity of terminology: Need resolution in some publications or reports
- Lack of holistic , integrated services: needs to be addressed with some concrete recommendations
- Lack of review documents with regional information/evidence on ECCE:
- Absence of end target makes M&E difficult
- Specific gaps and equity issues need to be systematically documented

Scope of Goal

- Goal deals with 0-8
- Refers to both care and education,
  - Care refers to hygiene, health, nutrition, affection, safety, protection
  - Education refers to opportunities for learning and stimulation, not just "downward extensions of primary school"
- All aspects of development: education, cognitive, social, emotional, physical and mental health have to be addressed
- Confusion regarding terms pre-primary education, preschool (3-5)and ECCE (0-8) exists
- Pre-school or pre-primary can be a part of ECCE but is not all ECCE

Questions after Dakar

- Do more young children, particularly those in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, have access to quality ECCE programmes, per the commitment in 2000?
- How are existing center-based and family-based programmes functioning?
- Are existing programmes comprehensive, inclusive of families and communities and supported by multiple sectors and ministries?
- Are partnerships with parents and families forged based on an understanding and analyses of practices and established indicators?
- What budgets have been allocated for ECCE?
- Who seems to be responsible for ECCE at the national and sub-national levels?
- Are there new/additional provisions for children between the ages of 0-3?

Before we talk about Dakar…

Point to remember:
    Limited quantitative data on 0-3
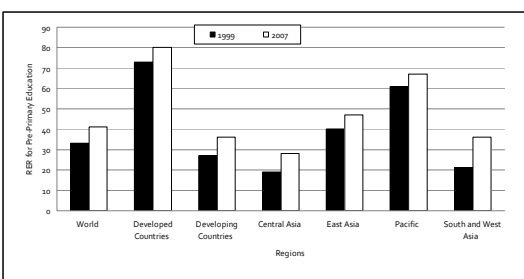   Therefore, may need to examine quantitative data only on 3-5

However, important to keep in mind that ECCE refers to 0-3 as well!
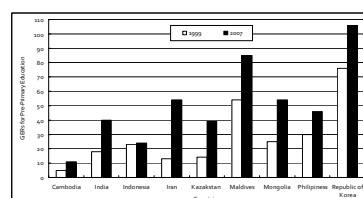May need to refer to qualitative data for this aspect

Progress since Dakar

- Overall, gross enrolment rates (GER) in ECCE has increased in all sub-regions and in most countries of the Asia Pacific, between 1999 and 2007 (UNESCO, 2009).
- In South and West Asia particularly, the increase was sharp.
- In Central Asia, however, GER in ECCE declined in many countries
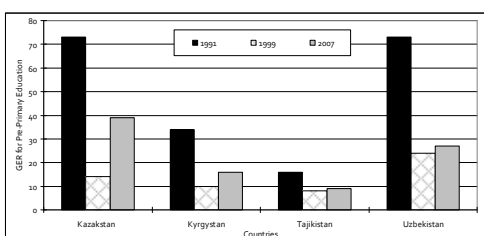
GER in ECCE (Global trends)

Increases in Gross Enrolment Ratios for Pre-Primary Education in Selected Countries

Changes in Gross Enrolment Ratios for Pre-Primary Education in Central Asian States

Trends Examined in this Note

To facilitate critical analysis of ECCE progress and challenges, 5 trends were identified in this EDN

- **Policy making in the region**
- **Access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children; Closely related to Finance issues**
- **Holistic ECCE including health and wellbeing of young children**
- **Standards, Regulations and Guidelines**
- **Quality in ECCE: Training, capacity building, parenting and community involvement, and coordination among multiple stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation**

In addition, a separate section on "Disparities due to poverty and Limited Parental Education" is included

Progress on the five trends…

- Noteworthy progress has been made in the region in terms of ECCE policy formulation, development and finalization
  - At least 9 countries in the EAP region have ECCE-related policies in place
  - At least 6 countries in South Asia have ECCE-related policies in place
- Early Learning Development Standards, Standards and reviews relating to Curriculum , training for teachers, regulations for quality of child care centers, in various countries, serve as solid examples of progress in the region

Progress (Contd)

- Several qualitative examples of promoting quality in ECCE, parenting and community involvement, coordination among multiple stakeholders and formation of national networks (e.g. Bangladesh, Philippines) are now documented and available in the region
- Appreciation for disaggregated data, use of advanced statistical and KM tools have led to increased specificity in identification of target areas for ECCE interventions
- Research in the region shows that access to ECCE programs, even with relatively lesser resources, appears to have huge beneifts for children from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds eg in Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia , Indonesia (Aboud, 2004; Bartlett, 2004; Rao & Pearson, 2007; Nina, 2009)

Challenges: Policy Making

Policy making in the Region
- Differences among countries in terms of definitions and key activities under ECCE
- Vast disparities in target ages of children: 0-3, 3-5; 0-4; 6-8
- Gaps in national-provincial coordination mechanisms (Country teams: Need examples of how you address these)
- Absence of ownership of policies
- Financial constraints causing implementation nightmares (Country teams: Need examples of implementation; e.g Indonesia MoNE public financing block grants of private ECCE centers)

Challenges: Access for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children

- Children who come from marginalized groups and lower castes may get left out of ECCE
- Gender disparities in pre-primary education seem to disadvantage boys (caution in interpreting this though since overall enrolments are low!, yet another challenge!)
  - National data may mask or hide local disparities
  - Another gender issue in ECCE may be the feminization of the teaching profession: Female teachers outnumber male teachers in many countries. How do we attract and enlist male teachers? (Country teams : Need inputs on any efforts in this direction)
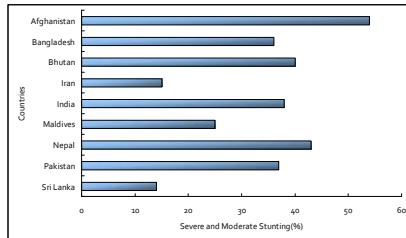
Challenges: Access for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children (Contd)

- Access to ECCE limited in rural or Mountainous Areas, Ethnolinguistic Minority and Indigenous Communities (Country teams: Case examples? Data?)
- Where it exists, ECCE programs are not always sensitive to language issues: M-t based programming and MLE are limited and need urgent attention
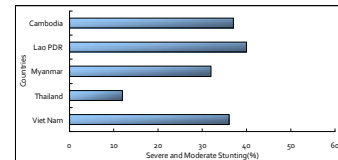
Challenges: Holistic ECCE including health and well-being of young children

- Some sub regions (eg S Asia) have unacceptable U-5 mortality rates
- Alarmingly high rates of stunting in the South Asia region: This has educational and developmental implications
- Children from the poorest contexts are likely to be the most malnourished and underweight (Holistic ECCE can assist in this issue: E.g. immunizations in Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, ICDS in India; breastfeeding in Laos; Thailand health diaries and parent ed, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh)
- NOTE: HAVE BIG SECTION in draft, need verification/update

Rates of Moderate to Severe Stunting among the under Fives in South and West Asia (2000 – 2007)

Rates of Stunting in the Mekong Delta

Challenges: Standards and Guidelines

- Equity and access for indigenous populations continue to be challenging even if there are standards
- Lack of conformity to existing standards of national curricula (e.g., Philippines has reported on this)
- Quality of data management in standards and national statistics
- Monitoring of teacher standards does not extend to remote areas or private institutions (Country teams: Any examples of how you respond to this?)
- Urgent need for data on teacher qualifications and standards in ECCE (Country teams: Updates?)
- Minimal/no standards for children with disabilities (Any policies we shd mention?)
- Greater public impetus needed for early screening programs with referral systems

Challenges: The Quality Imperative in ECCE

- Traditionally, DAP and other Western Quality frameworks were used to assess quality in ECCE. Does not seem to make much sense in this region: Research calls for urgent attention to conceptualizing quality based on national and local consultations with multiple stakeholders on what the issue of quality means, in each country
- Frequently not clear from national reports whether quality is considered from the point of view of (a) program impact or (b) actual delivery/intervention of the program

Challenges: The Quality Imperative in ECCE

- Teacher-pupil ratio is frequently advanced as a problem; but needs to be examined
- Teacher training quality highly uneven across countries (Country teams: What initiatives have been put forth?)
- In addition, format of learning itself is didactic, lecture, literacy and numeracy oriented: not play-based, not holistic, discouraging of exploration

Other challenges: Disparities

- ECD in emergencies presents a challenge
  - Lack of preparedness
  - Children in remote areas are particularly difficult to reach during emergencies (Country teams: What initiatives might be noteworthy in this regard in your countries?)
- Negligible public funding
- Lack of data
- Lack of national collaborations and networks to speak in one voice
- Home-based programs not recognized/strengthened particularly in ethnolinguistic, remote and indigenous communities
- Partnerships with parents not encouraged; strengthened

Realistically… what are urgent priorities?

- Need for development and elaboration of new and existing outcome measures; evidence based knowledge generation and management:
- "Mandated Collaborations?"
- Leveraging existing mechanisms and articulating roles and responsibilities in existing mechanisms with greater clarity and definition
- Sound costing (including cost-benefit analysis) and financial planning
- The need for effective monitoring and evaluation: Need for process assessments

Urgent priorities for countries in Policy Development Stage

- Identification of a nodal agency or ministry as the lead agency that will collaborate with other relevant sectors and stakeholders
- "Mandated collaborations" between sectors with modalities of operations clearly identified: E.g., the nodal agency should be charged with facilitating regular and periodic email contacts, face-to-face meetings when possible
- Allocation of budget to support policy implementation and monitoring
- Formal establishment of a coordinating mechanism, through an M-O-U or a "who-does-what" with provisions for regular meetings, formal notes and minutes

Urgent priorities for countries in Policy Development Stage (Contd)

- Representation of lower-level administrative units in the coordination mechanisms
- National and local consultations on what the term "quality in ECCE" means
- Involvement with researchers and academic institutions to ensure that policies are evidence-based and rooted in sound research on the needs of the country, including use of observational and qualitative data on holistic ECCE
- Consultations with multiple sectors and communities to ensure that all aspects of the Child's Development are addressed
- Engagement of nodal ECCE ministries with Emergency cluster organizations and nodal DRR ministries, to ensure preparedness for ECCE during Emergencies

Urgent priorities for countries in Policy Implementation Stage

- Formal, written commitments from key actors on distribution of responsibilities for policy implementation
- Instituting measures for ongoing monitoring of programs:
- Capacity building and training for process documentation, even in the context of emergencies or disasters, and in remote or geographically difficult areas, is seen as critical by several experts.
- Ensure that all input, process and outcome evaluations are documented and disseminated, and serve as data and baseline for next steps, in a continuous improvement process

Recommendations

- Strategies are outlined for each of the 5 trends

Recommendations for Evidence –based Policy Formulation and Implementation

- Explicit and well-articulated definitions of quality, based on national consultations, on what the term "quality" means to the country, in all forms of reporting
- Explicit and clear statements specifically directed toward issues for very young children (0-3) in policy documents, guidelines and frameworks
- Active engagement with experts and practitioners in the country to build a sound evidence base
- Disaggregation of data to ensure inclusion of research on children in indigenous minority communities, ethnolinguistic communities, children with disabilities, children in emergencies, rural and remote areas
- Documentation and scale-up of innovative practices

Recommendations for Improving Access for Children in Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Circumstances

- Using low-cost, safe, indigenous and local materials to enhance the quality of activities and program content
- Building on activities and programming that may be based on culturally salient practices that can benefit children (A word of caution might be that not all traditional practices may necessarily be beneficial, it may be very important to separate the "grain from the chaff" and employ established, evidence-based practices)
- Engaging local talent creatively in the service of improving program content and quality: E.g. in the Philippines, the use of a program where local musicians and local instruments were used extensively in the curriculum to ensure inclusion of Movement and Play in the curriculum.
- Including grandparents and other family members in classroom scheduling (again, examples exist from PNG and the Philippines)

Recommendations for Improving Access for Children in Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Circumstances (Contd)

- Ensuring smooth transitions from ECCE to primary school, through *administrative* strategies as well as *relational* These seamless transition`s should occur regardless of whether the entrants to primary school come from community-based or formal center based ECCE programmes, and

- Encouraging and supporting play-based rather than overly-formal, pedagogical approaches (that appear more like a formal "grade" school curriculum), regardless of whether these approaches are employed in formal or community-based settings

Recommendations for Holistic ECCE and Multisectoral Coordination

- Formal, written agreements among key players and agencies: With clearly outlined workplans, and "who-does-what".
- Engagement in not only the initiation of joint programmes, but "staying the course" and engagement in joint monitoring and evaluation activities as well
- Synergistic integration of staff and personnel from various ministries and departments, through email platforms and/or regular phone or email contact
- Ensuring that the Nodal ministry or department actively reaches out to other sectors including Education, Health and Nutrition, Women and Children's Affairs, Child and Social Welfare, Protection etc.

Recommendations for Holistic ECCE and Multisectoral Coordination

- Ensuring inclusion of Local Administrative Representatives from lower administrative units in national coordination mechanisms
- Ensuring inclusion of Parents and Family Members in the National Coordination Mechanisms
- Increasing and enhancing budget allocations for implementation and monitoring of existing policies and frameworks
- Strengthening financial commitments for policy reviews on the very young(0-3)

Recommendations for Improving Training and Standards

- Establishment and/or implementation of standards for ECCE
- Standardization and regulation of teacher qualifications that are meaningful, and based on research
- Creative formats for delivery of training: Through media, radio programs to access remote neighborhoods . In this scenario, there is a need to ensure an M& E component to such programs. Strengthening programming is possible if a short, but targeted assessment of the impact of such programs could be obtained.

Recommendations for Improving Training and Standards (Contd)

- Establish culturally relevant, play-based age-appropriate curriculum guidelines for education of the very young, including safe, indigenous, low-cost resources for play and stimulation of very young children (0-3).
- Virtual education and the enhanced use of ICT have also been recognized as important mechanisms for delivery of ongoing pre and in-service training programs.
- Involvement of experienced research and expert practitioners in in-service and preservice training, mentoring and monitoring.

Recommendations for Community and Family Involvement

- Allocation of financial resources for strengthening family-based/home-based ECCE programs, particularly for the very young
- Engagement with parents on strengthening resources and materials for mother-tongue based instruction
- Invitations to parent bodies in national consultations, especially in defining criteria for quality in ECCE

EDN Goal 1- Review Guide
Please email to: edngoal1@gmail.com

- **Challenges**: newly emerged challenges in ECCE since Nov 2010?
- **Priorities**: (1) most relevant priorities for your country (2) missing priorities
- **Good practices** from your country
- **Review of your country's policy information** (Annex)
- Additional further country information particularly in policy implementation

Discussion Points

1. **General comments, feedback and clarifications**
2. **Are the five main categories for recommendations essential and sufficient?**
   - Evidence-based policy and advocacy
   - Improving access for children in vulnerable and disadvantaged circumstances
   - Provision of holistic ECCE, governance and strengthening national coordination mechanisms
   - Improvement of training and standards
   - Community and family involvement
3. **What are the essential elements for a case/practice to be selected as "successful" or "noteworthy"?**