Management Response to Evaluation of UNICEF’s Early Childhood Development Programme

NOVEMBER 2012
Introduction

Early Childhood Development (ECD) has been embedded in UNICEF programming for more than 40 years. During this period, the role and position of ECD in UNICEF’s policies and programming strategies has been transformed as a result of significant changes in priorities and overall programmatic approaches within the organization.

In 2008, UNICEF entered into a strategic partnership with the Government of the Netherlands (GoN) that invested approximately 13.5 million (US$) to support ECD programmes in 10 selected country offices\(^1\), UNICEF regional offices and HQ, over a period of three years. Among other things, this partnership provided a much needed opportunity to review the most recent achievements and gaps in ECD programming.

The independent evaluation of the UNICEF-supported ECD programme was undertaken by a team of consultants from Mathematica Policy Research and managed by the Evaluation Office and the ECD Unit at UNICEF Headquarters. To ensure neutrality and objectivity, the evaluation was managed by the Evaluation Office as an independent evaluation, with technical inputs provided by Programme Division (ECD unit). The evaluation was conducted in three phases: (i) a review of all relevant ECD policy and programmatic documents, work plans, and fundamental research reports; (ii) an internet-based survey that covered all UNICEF country offices\(^2\); and (iii) an in-depth review of ECD programming in 10 GoN-funded countries. Out of these, four countries (Cambodia, Nepal, Ghana and Tanzania) were selected for more in-depth case studies. Overall, an excellent collaboration between PD, ROs, COs and EO branded the whole process, that resulted in the largest evaluation of ECD programmes ever undertaken by UNICEF. The findings, conclusions and recommendations were provided in the comprehensive and detailed Global Synthesis Evaluation Report, published by the Evaluation Office, UNICEF HQ, in 2011. In addition, the findings were articulated into several user-friendly formats, including the summary report “What we learned and the way forward”, the ECD Newsletter and ppt presentation, all widely shared within UNICEF ECD Community, with key developmental partner organizations (the WB, UNESCO, WHO, SCF, BvL), academia (the Yale University, AKU, etc.) and donors (SIDA, CIDA, EU, The Government of the Netherlands, etc.).

The management response

This document summarizes the core recommendations and provides a brief report on the actions taken and an abbreviated view of the way forward, ascertaining accountability for the actions planned. The recommendations are grouped in six major programmatic areas: (i) Mainstreaming ECD Policies into National Policies, Plans and Services; (ii) Building Capacity for ECD; (iii) Generating and Disseminating Knowledge for ECD; (iv) ECD Service Coverage, Quality/Efficiency, Sustainability and Scale-Up; (v) Planning, Management, Coordination and Partnerships and (vi) Human Rights-based Approach and Reaching the Less Reached and Disadvantaged. At the end of the document the summary of key recommendations and actions planned is provided.

The management response for four countries with in-depth case studies (Ghana, Tanzania, Cambodia and Nepal) has already been completed. The purpose of the document is to inform the new generation of ECD programming and decision making at all organizational level and to address strategic issues that will take ECD programming within UNICEF to the next level.

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\(^1\) Selected Country offices: Tajikistan, Cambodia, Mongolia, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana

\(^2\) Out of 123 Country Offices, 75 responded to the internet-based survey, a response rate of 61%. Respondent percentages referred to in this report are based on responses from these 75 Country Offices
**Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 1: Mainstreaming ECD Policies into National Policies, Plans and Services**

1.1. **Seek stable, multiyear funding of policy mainstreaming strategies to catalyze the transition from ECD policy development and adoption to high-quality implementation (UNICEF HQ).** Focus investments on countries that adopted ECD policies or mainstreamed them within the past two years, specifically providing funds for those committed to approaches that build infrastructure to support policy implementation. Invest in development of mainstreaming models and test them to develop formative research and inform implementation strategies.

1.2. **Identify a summary indicator or small set of indicators for ECD that could be tracked and reported at subnational, national, regional and global levels to focus advocacy and mainstreaming, build awareness and track progress toward critical outcomes (UNICEF HQ).** For example, develop summary measures of “on-track development” for ages 1, 3 and 5 that incorporate measures of cognitive, social-emotional and physical development.

1.3. **Provide training and technical assistance on costing ECD policies and strategies and identify promising practices for involving finance ministers in ECD planning and costing (UNICEF HQ and ROs).** Use lessons from recent costing efforts in developing guidance and streamlined costing tools for COs. Consider ways to consolidate costing across sectors to facilitate the costing of intersectoral efforts such as ECD.

1.4. **Evaluate sectoral versus intersectoral approaches to ECD policy and programme development, as well as universal versus targeted approaches to mainstreaming (UNICEF HQ and ROs).** Systematically track differences in approaches at the RO and HQ levels and develop models for testing these approaches against each other.

1.5. **Promote use of the ECD Resource Pack to inform country counterparts about the benefits of ECD investments and develop versions tailored for targeted stakeholder audiences (UNICEF HQ, ROs and COs).** For example, tailor the Resource Pack for use with top policymakers and ministry-level staff to differentiate the value of ECD investments from investments already being made, and do the same for stakeholders at subnational levels. Compile and disseminate promising practices for mainstreaming ECD messages into other types of interventions (UNICEF HQ). Use findings from implementation research on Care for Child Development to create a how-to manual designed to help COs obtain buy-in for incorporating ECD into existing interventions. As needed, adapt the approach UNICEF HQ took to working with global partners on Care for Child Development to develop modules on ECD that can be added to WASH, child protection and social protection interventions. Advocate for a consistent CO organizational structure for the ECD focal point that includes a reporting relationship to the deputy representative and provides clarification on the focal point’s responsibilities (UNICEF HQ). This reporting structure would underscore the broader responsibility of the ECD focal points beyond the section in which they are housed and provide accountability to keep cross-cutting efforts moving forward. Consider a similar structure for HQ since responsibilities of the ECD Unit extend beyond young child survival and development.

**Management Response:** Agree with all recommendations.

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: Partially disagree with the recommendation 1.4 to evaluate further sectoral versus intersectoral approaches to ECD policy and programme development. Acknowledging the evaluation findings on advantages/disadvantages in using different policy approaches, we believe that different approaches/mix of approaches might work in different settings, depending on the government structure, existing norms, readiness to change, capacity of ECD professionals/decision makers, level of development of civil society and other partners, etc. Therefore, we would recommend that countries continue applying different approaches, in line with evaluation findings in four case study countries.
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<th>Actions planned</th>
<th>Responsible Office/ Person</th>
<th>Expected completion date</th>
<th>Implementation stage:</th>
<th>Actions taken</th>
<th>Supporting documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1. a) Develop multiyear funding proposals to secure at least $20 Million to</td>
<td>a), b) and c) ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) – to draft</td>
<td>a) Dec 2012</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>● Multiyear funding proposal developed and 4.5M received from HILTON foundation to cover ECD/HIV/AIDS intervention in three countries (Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia) in the next three years, in coordination with ESARO and NYHQ.</td>
<td>ECD fundraising strategy document (draft); Multiyear funding proposal on ECD/HIV; Funding proposal for Thematic Funds; Funding proposal for ECDiE; Comprehensive Multiyear funding proposal (draft)</td>
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<td>ensure strategic, harmonized and sustainable investment in ECD at the global,</td>
<td>proposals and toolkit</td>
<td>b) At the next committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>● ECD Unit HQ received $420,000 of Thematic Funds to cover priority activities in 2013.</td>
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<td>regional and (priority) country level b) Allocate at least 10 percent of</td>
<td>b) Programme Director (N. Alipui) to recommend</td>
<td>c) Feb 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>● ECDiE received ~$400,000 to support capacity building activities in emergencies.</td>
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<td>UNICEF Thematic Funds for YCSD and at least 10 percent of UNICEF Thematic</td>
<td>and AAC to approve</td>
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<td>● An ECD fundraising strategy devised, potential donors identified and contacts with several high-likely donors initiated. The ECD fundraising toolkit is being finalized and expected to be submitted for Programme Director’s review and approval in Q1 2013.</td>
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<td>Funds for Education, to ECD in 2013 and at least 10 percent from results areas</td>
<td>c) Programme Director (N. Alipui) to approve</td>
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<td>1 through 6 and at least 25 percent from the result area 7 in the next MTSP</td>
<td>and PFP (H. Frankouil) to facilitate with inclusion on the PFP Marketplace</td>
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<td>(2014-17). c) Prepare an ECD Fundraising Toolkit for the PFP Marketplace for</td>
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<td>use by country offices.</td>
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<td>1.2. a) Refine and promote a set of core ECD indicators to be used for monitoring</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)</td>
<td>a) Dec 2012</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>● A core set of ECD indicators that can be used across countries for monitoring, planning and assessment has been created.</td>
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<td>of: (i) young child development; (ii) home and community environment; (iii)</td>
<td>b) and c) ongoing</td>
<td>b) At the next committee</td>
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<td>● Analysis of core set of MICS3 indicators relevant to young child health, growth and development is published in <em>Inequities in early childhood development</em> and has been used extensively in advocating for the importance of ECD as fundamental to sustainable human development.</td>
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<td>access to and quality of ECD services; and, promote tools to monitor (iv) ECD</td>
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<td>c) Feb 2013</td>
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<td>● A revised set of ECD indicators,</td>
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<td>policies. b) Complete validation of core indicators, and support incorporation</td>
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<td>of those indicators in national data collection systems. c) Provide technical</td>
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<td>support to</td>
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Country Offices to adopt the indicators and incorporate them in national data collection system is the next step.

| 1.3. |  
| a) Update ECD Resource Pack with guidance on ECD costing / financing and building investment cases for ECD policies and strategies  
| b) Provide technical support to Regional and priority Country Offices on ECD costing / financing / investment cases  
| c) Finalize five costing studies for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Laos, Nigeria, and Pakistan. | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) | a) Dec 2012  
| b) Ongoing  
| c) Ongoing | Underway |  
| |  
| • In cooperation with BvLF, WB, Yale University and Brookings Institute, the costing and scalability studies were drafted and finalized during 2009-2011 for Armenia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, former Macedonia, Nepal, Panamá, Romania, Tanzania, Cuba, Jordan, Mongolia, Nepal, and South Africa. | Report on costing studies; reports on scaling-up studies |  

| 1.4. |  
| a) Encourage Country Offices to Systematically track different approaches to ECD policy and programme development (mainly through application of MoRES) and monitor and analyse bottlenecks and barriers in the approaches. | ECD unit: (a) O. Petrovic (b) M. Rashid | NA | Underway |  
| |  
| • Different approaches in ECD policy / programme implementation documented through external evaluation and ongoing meta-evaluations (of parenting programmes and CBCCs).  
| • Implementation of the MoRES will enable more systematic monitoring of country office approaches / status of | ECD Annual Reports; VISION report |  

including Early Childhood Development Index, an indicator designed to assess developmental status of young children has been rolled out at workshops for UNICEF’s fourth round of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), which is being implemented in over 50 LAMI countries.

- The core set of ECD indicators has been promoted among key partners and incorporated in the existing monitoring systems of the WB (called ECD SABER) and UNESCO (HECDI). The indicators provided basis for the analysis in the new Lancet Series on ECD in 2011).
b) Support countries in documenting and sharing relevant experiences through ECD Newsletter and other information sharing mechanisms.

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ECD policies and programmes (support to country offices to establish the MoRES on-going).

- Systematic documentation and sharing of relevant experience is continuously done through ECD newsletter (four issues in 2012); frequent webinars and renewed website.

1.5. Current ECD Resource Pack will be revised starting with modules on (a) Emergency, (b) Costing / Financing and (c) M&E (d) ECD Policies, (e) Parenting Programmes, (f) Community Based Childcare Centers. All items except (a) are subject to availability of funds. French translation of revised modules of the Pack is planned for 2013.

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<tr>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)</td>
<td>a) Dec 2012 e) Dec 2012</td>
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- Emergencies section of the ECD Resource Pack has been updated.
- Planned revision of modules on ECD policies, monitoring and parenting will follow a phased approach based upon availability of funds and completion of related ECD activities (i.e. completion of the ECD parenting programme meta-evaluation and technical guidance note).

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<td>ECD Resource Pack</td>
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Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 2: Building Capacity for ECD

2.1. Develop and advocate for implementation of a systematic approach to capacity building that includes assessing needs, implementing evidence-based training, tracking completion of service provider training and parenting education and assessing and evaluating outcomes (UNICEF HQ). Develop the capacity and infrastructure necessary to identify training needs and develop, implement and evaluate capacity-building approaches. Align ECD goals and investments with expected outcomes by targeting specific capacity-building strategies to meet the needs of policymakers, government officials and planners, programme implementers and parents. Adapt the UNDAP capacity development approach to ECD and develop formal training modules designed to meet country and global needs. Evaluate changes in capacity-building infrastructure and outcomes.

2.2 Continue to invest in existing resources for capacity building, such as the ECD Resource Pack and ECDVU, and develop new resources to address capacity gaps (UNICEF HQ and ROs). For example, UNICEF COs expressed the need for additional training and guidance in the areas of equity and reaching the marginalized/disadvantaged, costing and finance, quality improvement and training of service providers. To meet these needs, prioritize Module 5 of the Resource Pack for updating with the latest information about effective policy development and advocacy as well as cutting edge costing methods and examples of recent cost analyses and simulations. Consider adding information and tools on how to go from policy development to creating a national plan of action and getting to high-quality services for children and families. Increase the return on these investments by allocating funds to translate and adapt ECD capacity-building materials into more languages and for use by service providers, parents and children.

2.3 Invest in developing models for parent/caregiver training based on research evidence about the dosage, content and training approaches that are likely to produce intended outcomes (UNICEF HQ). To ensure that parents/caregivers become engaged, begin by planning interventions that take into account factors that increase and those that inhibit the consistency of participation. Consider including meaningful incentives designed to attract parents and caregivers to training events and activities. Incorporate adult learning principles into training designs to maximize the likelihood that training will produce positive and lasting changes in parent/caregiver behavior.

2.4 Hire child development specialists to strengthen the role of the ECD Unit within UNICEF HQ, and have dedicated ECD advisors in each RO (UNICEF HQ and ROs). Increase the number of staff at UNICEF HQ with a specific background and focus in ECD who can help integrate ECD with other sectors and provide a greater presence in key planning and decision-making activities. Create or fill RO ECD Advisor positions to improve relevance and efficiency in meeting CO ECD-specific needs. Clarify the role of the RO in providing ECD expertise to COs and the region. Provide more technical support to COs on ECD policy advocacy and costing efforts.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree with the recommendations. In addition to external evaluation recommendations, capacity development assessment done by MANET provided the same recommendation as 2.4.

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

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<tr>
<th>Actions planned</th>
<th>Responsible Office/Person</th>
<th>Expected completion date</th>
<th>Implement ation stage:</th>
<th>Actions taken</th>
<th>Supporting documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.1. Develop and roll-out UNICEF ECD Capacity Development Strategy and Implementation</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O.)</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>• UNICEF capacity gap assessment for ECD programming at global, regional and</td>
<td>Final report on an Assessment</td>
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<td>Plan (subject to availability of funds).</td>
<td>Petrovic</td>
<td>country level was conducted during 2010-2011; recommendations for the way forward were drafted and partially included in the management response.</td>
<td>of UNICEF’s Capacity in ECD.</td>
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<td><strong>2.2.</strong> Revise ECD Resource Pack (as described in 1.5 above).</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) Dec 2012 - Underway See 1.5 above</td>
<td>See 1.5 above</td>
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<td><strong>2.3.</strong> Develop Technical Guidance for implementation/monitoring of parenting programmes, with focus on the most marginalized children and families (subject to availability of funds).</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) Dec 2012 Underway</td>
<td>* Meta-evaluation of parenting programmes is currently underway and expected to be completed by end-2012. As part of the process, a literature review of thousands of parenting programmes, targeting the most marginalized parents, was completed in 2011. Meta-evaluation of parenting programmes report.</td>
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<td><strong>2.4.</strong> a) Establish a P-5 Senior Advisor post for ECD in HQ, which would focus on resource leveraging and partnerships building for ECD (subject to funds availability) b) Establish and allocate funds for a P-3 level KM Specialist post at HQ (subject to funds availability) c) Establish a talent pool of ECD candidates, that can be drawn upon for future short and long term opportunities</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic to secure the funds) Same as above HR (Holly White) a) Dec 2012 b) Aug 2012 c) Jun 2013 Not started</td>
<td>* Funds to maintain the current ECD unit structure in 2013 secured (funds to expand the unit with recommended additions not yet available). NA</td>
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Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 3: Generating and Disseminating Knowledge for ECD

3.1. Develop a multiyear, integrated research and evaluation agenda, coordinated across organizational levels and regions, that includes a continuum of formative and summative evaluation to support programme improvement (UNICEF HQ). Create an agenda that describes the state of children; documents the dosage, content and quality of interventions; and rigorously assesses impacts on children and families. Synchronize agendas across organizational levels and regions to address key knowledge gaps and facilitate pooling of resources for larger evaluations. Make findings and lessons learned readily accessible. Finally, develop a system for using research and evaluation findings to inform ECD policies and interventions.

3.2. Invest in knowledge management systems that catalog past and current research and evaluation projects at all levels and make them available on public websites (UNICEF HQ). Systematically distribute information about UNICEF-supported research activities and reports outside of the organization through dissemination channels with a broad policy and practice audience. This includes participation at conferences as well as maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date public websites with publications databases that cover previous and current research projects.

3.3. Continue to invest in the MICS4 ECD module and to advocate for its use by more countries (UNICEF HQ). Widespread use of the module will help to close the existing knowledge gap about children’s progress globally in key developmental domains. Consider expanding the module in the future to include items on infants and toddlers.

3.4. Work with COs and country partners to fully develop ELDS for the conception-to-8 age span, use ELDS as the basis for developing training and monitoring systems and evaluate their effects on targeted outcomes (UNICEF HQ and ROs). For example, ELDS can serve as the basis for defining quality in ECD interventions and for developing monitoring processes and tools for assessing the degree of adherence to ELDS. Gaps identified through monitoring can inform ongoing training and technical assistance. Use ELDS to inform curricula and training materials for staff and community volunteers who deliver ECD services and programming. Evaluate ELDS efforts to identify successes and challenges. Develop guidance on how to maximize the contribution of ELDS to achieving improved service delivery systems and outcomes for children.

Management Response: Agree with first three recommendations.

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: Partially disagree with 3.4. UNICEF regional and country level capacities are already built and ELDS is rolled-out in over 40 countries – accountability to further scale-up remains at the regional and country level.

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<th>Actions planned</th>
<th>Responsible Office/Person</th>
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<td>a) Develop an integrated research and evaluation agenda coordinating across organizational levels and regions.</td>
<td>a) ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)</td>
<td>a) Dec 2012 b) Ongoing</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>• Synchronization of ECD research and evaluation agenda across organizational levels and regions, but also with main partners,</td>
<td>ECD Global Consultation on Research</td>
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3. Due to the variability of context, situations and programmes at regional and country level, harmonization is possible only to a limited extent, and is to be achieved in cooperation with regional and priority country offices.
| b) This research and evaluation agenda will include a continuum of formative and summative evaluation to support programme improvement.  
| b) Further improve accessibility of evaluation and research reports and their use in programme planning and evaluation. ECD Unit will need to strengthen its KM function at HQ and work with the Evaluation Office, Regional and Country Offices to achieve this.  
| ECD Unit (M. Rashid); Evaluation Office (K. Belbase)  
| Ongoing  
| Underway  
| started with the First Global Consultation on ECD monitoring, evaluation and research held in NY in April 2010. In February 2012, a follow-up meeting was organized (2nd Global Consultation on ECD monitoring, evaluation and research) with the main objective to agree on the joint ECD monitoring and evaluation framework, on priority future research agenda for ECD as well as to ensure commitment of partners on roles and responsibilities in this regard. For smooth implementation, establishment of a global Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group for ECD (MERG-ECD) was agreed to. Inter-agency consultation on ECD MERG is on-going.  
| • ECD unit is participating in Programme Division initiative to harmonize the research agenda among sectors  
| • ECD Unit recently completed a revision exercise for its taxonomy on the Intranet, which, is expected to enable more precise search results on the Intranet for ECD related documents. This is done in tandem with regular updating of content on the Intranet.  
| 3.2. Distribute UNICEF research and evaluation products internally within UNICEF and externally with UNICEF partners.  
| ECD Unit (M. Rashid); Evaluation Office (K. Belbase)  
| Ongoing  
| Underway  
| • Evaluation Office already has an Intranet based Database that allows UNICEF staff to search for ECD Evaluations by topic and year of publication.  
| • Evaluation findings and recommendations disseminated widely to UNICEF Regional and Country Offices, as well as to external developmental partners and academia (i.e. a Summary report produced and distributed; evaluation presented at the Global Consultation on ECD research; webinar held; ECD Newsletter on ECD Evaluation produced and disseminated).  
| • In addition, to ensure use of evaluation findings in UNICEF programming, a Global EO internet/intranet; ECD Unit internet/intranet, etc.  
| Report (1 & 2). ECD MERG ToR.
| 3.3. | Support roll-out of ECD MICS4 module, through active participation in MICS4 roll-out workshops. | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic), in cooperation with Global MICS team (A. Hancioglu) | a) Dec 2012  
b) Dec 2014 | Underway | • As part of MICS4 implementation, ECD module was rolled out in all regions in 2010-12. As a result, approximately 60 surveys included the ECD module, for which technical support in training, data analysis and reporting, was provided by the MICS global/regional teams and ECD Unit.  
• MICS4 data analysis is on-going and will serve as a basis for the design of ECD module in MICS5. | Field trip reports; MICS reports |
| 3.4. | Provide further technical support to countries that are in an advanced stage of ELDS implementation (mostly countries in CEE/CIS and EAPRO) with monitoring and documentation (including case studies). | Education Section (A. Rana) | a) Dec 2013  
b) Dec 2013 | Underway | • ELDS initiative on-going in 53 countries, in different stages of implementation, with technical support provided from Education Section HQ and Regional Offices. At the regional ECD meeting organized by UNICEF ESARO in September 2012, government and CBO representative from 15 African countries (Botswana, Burundi, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were brought together to discuss implementation and validation of ELDS. | Education Annual reports |
### Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 4: ECD Service Coverage, Quality/Efficiency, Sustainability and Scale-Up

1. **Advocate for increased funding levels and intersectoral donor groups to increase sustainability of ECD strategies and interventions (UNICEF HQ, ROs and COs).** Involving finance ministers in ECD planning and informing finance and other ministry-level staff about the benefits of holistic ECD interventions contribute to sustainability of ECD interventions. To reduce turnover (an inefficiency related to training resources), governments may need to shift from unpaid or minimally paid community volunteers to more paid staff over time, requiring additional funding allocations to scale up and sustain service quality. UNICEF is in a strong position to advocate among donors about the need for a holistic, long-term approach to ECD interventions and engage intersectoral donor groups for ECD.

2. **Advocate for investment by country partners in initiatives to improve the quality of center-based ECD interventions, especially in countries in which coverage has expanded rapidly (UNICEF HQ, ROs and COs).** As noted above, rapid expansion of centers may result in less focus on quality. To ensure that new facilities are safe, healthy and equipped with appropriate materials, provide technical support for a parallel expansion of teacher training systems and monitoring and inspection systems. Use ELDS as a starting point for developing standardized monitoring tools and collecting consistent information about each center. Advocate for increased access to holistic services that reach children ages 0 to 3 and their parents (UNICEF HQ, ROs and COs). Highlight the need to address gaps in services for the youngest children and encourage partners to expand services for parents of children under age 3. Evaluate and disseminate effective service models, including interventions in which parents and children participate together. Involve multiple sectors—including health, WASH, child protection and social protection—in promoting holistic ECD. Provide funding for effective interventions across the relevant sectors.

### Management Response: Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

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<th>Implementation stage:</th>
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|                 | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)    | a) Dec 2012 b) See 1.1 c) February 2013 | Underway            | • In 2010, an advocacy package was developed for ECD in Emergencies.  
• In February 2012 ECD Unit co-organized a UN Forum event in partnership with GMA UNICEF and ILO, in preparation for the ECOSOC ministerial review in July 2012. The February event further advocated for the importance of ECD.  
• ECD Unit convened and participated in a number of meetings to discuss the design and implementation of a Global Campaign/Alliance for ECD. |

Supporting documents: NA
4.2. Preparation and dissemination of the Technical Note on quality community-based centres for young children.

- ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) in cooperation with Education Section (A. Rana)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>Preparation and dissemination of the report on the effective interventions that support early learning</th>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>Education Section (A. Rana)</td>
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Underway

- ECD Unit completed Meta-review of Community Based Childcare Centers (CBCC) and Programmes for young children - the findings/lessons learned will be used to prepare a Technical Note on quality community-based programmes for the most deprived young children. Currently a summary report of the meta-review is being prepared, which would be disseminated widely among UNICEF ROs and COs, as well as UNICEF partners, using multiple dissemination channels including a webinar, inclusion in ECD newsletter, conducting an email campaign, and uploading it to the Intranet. The same dissemination channels would be used for the Technical Note as well.

| ECD & Education Annual reports; CBCC Report |
**Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 5: Planning, Management, Coordination and Partnerships**

5.1. Prioritize development of results frameworks for holistic ECD (UNICEF HQ, ROs, COs). At all levels, specify and define measurable ECD outcomes. At the CO level, establish or refine logical frameworks for ECD that reflect activities across sectors. Measure progress toward the expected outcomes identified in these frameworks over time. Encourage UNICEF COs and country partners to use monitoring results to identify and plan for course corrections as needed in areas for which sufficient progress is not being made. Share well-specified results frameworks with all partners to guide activities and ensure that all are working on a common set of targeted outcomes.

5.2. Take steps to improve the quality and efficiency of reporting on specific investments by donors (UNICEF HQ). Work with donors to specify measurable expected outcomes and clarify reporting requirements at the start of each funding period. Provide consistent training on the measurement system and reporting expectations to funded ROs and COs that includes an overview of the measurement strategy, its purpose and goals and expected uses of the data; definitions of data elements; identification of appropriate data sources and measures; a system for reviewing data quality; and how to use the data for programme improvement.

5.3. Encourage distribution of funding for ECD more evenly across sections in UNICEF COs (UNICEF HQ). As an advocate for intersectoral approaches to ECD, COs serve as models for country-level intersectoral collaboration. Instead of concentrating ECD funding and interventions within a few CO sections/sectors, allocating funding for ECD more evenly may reinforce the importance of intersectoral coordination on ECD. Intersectoral committees of CO staff can be tasked with the responsibility of increasing coordination among sections on ECD policy and programming at the country level.

**Management Response: Agree**

**If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:**

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<th>Actions planned</th>
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<th>Supporting documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.1. Develop SMARTER organizational targets / indicators for ECD and incorporate these into UNICEF data collection systems⁴.</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)</td>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>• UNICEF MTSP is currently being revised and a new ECD-related result for children is being proposed: <em>Thriving in supportive family and community environments, protected from the effects of poverty and discrimination. In addition ECD interventions will be mainstreamed in other new organizational targets that are related to improved child health, nutrition, education and protection. The related indicators proposed are the following:</em> Support for learning at home; Attendance to early childhood care and education services; Early childhood development</td>
<td>MTSP result matrix; Technical Note / Guidance on the MoRES</td>
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⁴ Indicators were developed to monitor OTs and incorporate these into UNICEF data collection systems. Definition of well-specified results frameworks is under the responsibility of each Country Office.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>5.2. Improvement of the quality and efficiency of reporting on specific donors’ investments is an ongoing effort, tailored to their requests.</th>
<th>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic) in cooperation with PARMO</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>The major donor report in last several years was the Donor Report to the Government of Netherlands (submitted on 27 December, 2011) and it was very well-received by the donor (received a rating of 4 out of 5).</th>
<th>Donor Reports</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.3. Please see 1.1. and 4.1. above.</td>
<td>Programme Director, ECD Unit</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>See 1.1 and 4.1 above</td>
<td>See 1.1 and 4.1 above</td>
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### Evaluation Recommendation, Issue 6: Human Rights-based Approach and Reaching the Less Reached and Disadvantaged

6.1. **Allocate substantial resources to improving access to ECD interventions for the less reached and disadvantaged (UNICEF HQ, ROs, COs).** Given that the majority of COs are not certain about funding for current and future ECD strategies and activities, initiatives focused on increasing access require reallocation of existing ECD funds or allocation of additional resources. Clear goals and indicators of progress, strong leadership and effective partnerships are needed to secure the resources required to address the need for reliable data to inform intervention targeting, development of strategies and approaches to increasing access and engagement and retention of children and families who are disadvantaged and may remain unreached by new strategies, ensuring gender issues are also considered.

6.2. **Develop a set of strategies to increase access to ECD interventions for disadvantaged and marginalized populations (UNICEF HQ).** Identify and disseminate strategies to increase access, including a set of outreach approaches and incentive strategies. Identify successful models from other sectors to inform development of a set of evidence-based interventions for increasing access to ECD programming. Examples include the use of community volunteers to identify orphans at the village level and assist with their enrollment in ECD services. Develop and test creative incentive strategies. Consider strategies such as financial incentives for construction of ECD centers in areas with high concentrations of disadvantaged and marginalized populations, higher rates of compensation for ECD teachers to staff those centers and incentives targeted to parents to encourage enrollment.

6.3. **Develop tools and data sources for monitoring access to ECD services among disadvantaged groups (UNICEF HQ, ROs, COs).** Most case study countries did not monitor access to ECD for specific marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Provide technical support to country partners in establishing systems for collecting these data, such as levels of enrollment for orphans, very poor children and children from specific minority ethnic groups. Once data systems are in place, set targets to monitor progress.

**Management Response: Agree**

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:
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<th>Actions planned</th>
<th>Responsible Office/Person</th>
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<td><strong>6.1.</strong></td>
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<td>a)</td>
<td>ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)</td>
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<td>Underway</td>
<td>• Please see 1.1. and 4.1. above.</td>
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<td>Technical guidance on parenting programmes; technical guidance on CBCCs; Costing and scaling-up study reports; ECD strategy</td>
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| b)             | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic, M. Rashid) | a) Dec 2012; b) - d) Dec 2013 | Underway              | • As part of MoRES Toolkit, evidence-based strategies to respond to the bottlenecks faced by the most marginalized children in assessing ECD services identified and made available to support planning
• Meta-evaluation of parenting programmes and CBCCs ongoing
• Costing and scaling-up studies ongoing. |                     |
|                |                          |                          |                       |              |                     |
| **6.2.**       | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)   | NA                       | Underway              |              |                     |
| To facilitate better planning and targeting of ECD interventions for disadvantaged and marginalized populations the preparation and dissemination of the following technical documents is planned: a) MoRES Toolkit b) Technical Notes on Parenting Programmes (see 2.3) c) Technical Notes on CBCCs (4.2) d) Costing and Scaling-up studies (see 1.3) e) ECD strategy. |                     |
|                |                          |                          |                       |              |                     |
| **6.3.**       | ECD Unit (O. Petrovic)   | NA                       | Underway              | • ECD core indicators to support situation and impact assessment designed and through MICS being implemented in over 50 countries.
• Major developmental partners (the WB, UNESCO) incorporated UNICEF ECD indicators in their |                     |
<p>| Advocacy and technical support to country offices in establishing a national data collection, analysis and reporting systems to track the progress of the most |                     |</p>
<table>
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<th>disadvantaged young children.</th>
<th>reporting systems.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• The monitoring of the core determinants to achieve the results for young children ongoing.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ToR for establishment of ECD MERG (that include inter-agency work on core indicators and data collection system and reporting) drafted</td>
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Summary of evaluation findings, recommendations and follow up actions

Key evaluation findings / recommendations

The evaluation focused on the main strategies UNICEF is using in supporting ECD programmes and policies: capacity development; knowledge management; policy advocacy. It also looked at internal coordination and management issues.

In increasing the capacity for ECD programming

- Capacity development is a core strategy used by nearly all UNICEF Country Offices to support ECD programming and is highly appreciated by government counterparts and NGO partners that acknowledged the sustained contributions of UNICEF in the enhancement of their capacity.

  The evaluation revealed a variety of capacity development investments in ECD, from training of service providers, community members, parents and policy makers, using a variety of methods and tools, such as conferences, workshops, individual counseling; media campaigns, strengthening networks etc.

Main accomplishments:

- **Preparing and disseminating high-quality resource materials.** These materials targeted the capacity of both rights holders and duty bearers (i.e. ECD Resource Pack; Early Learning Development Standards tools; Care for Child Development training package, ECD in Emergencies materials), were highly rated and used for various purposes, from policy development to caregiver training. The joint work of UNICEF Headquarters (HQ), Regional Offices (ROs) and Country Offices (COs) in updating the material, engaging highly skilled experts, integrating new evidence and customizing the materials to fit the local context, was emphasized as a good practice.

- **Support to national leaders and experts.** The attendance of key stakeholders at the ECD Virtual University (ECDVU) had a positive impact on ECD buy-in, collaboration, and inter-sectoral policy development.

- **Support to global and regional ECD networks.** By supporting global and regional networks such as the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CG), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), and the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), UNICEF continues to build capacity while tapping existing expertise.

Main challenges/shortfalls:

- **Disproportionate level of ad hoc planning versus strategic capacity development planning.** One of the primary reasons for ad hoc planning is the lack of a reliable and consistent funding pipeline for ECD.

- **Weak monitoring of capacity development interventions and very few evaluations of capacity development efforts.**

- **Limited resources within UNICEF.** Although UNICEF COs reported that ECD capacity grew over the past four years and UNICEF counterparts reported in many instances that although UNICEF is a leader on ECD issues, in general, the low number of staff, insufficient
ECD-specific expertise and limited financial resources at all organizational levels inhibit progress toward targeted outcomes. ECD expertise is concentrated among only a few ECD specialists.

- **Frequent turnover of staff and community volunteers.** This reduces sustainability of investments in technical expertise/capacities and introduces inefficiencies.

- **Eventual obsolescence of existing resources and materials.** Effective ECD capacity building approaches incorporate learning resources and materials that are up-to-date and are informed by evidence.

Main recommendations:

- Apply a systematic approach to capacity building that includes assessing needs, implementing evidence-based capacity development strategies; track their implementation and evaluate impact.

- Continue to invest in existing resources for capacity building, such as the ECD Resource Pack and ECDVU, and develop new resources to address capacity gaps, based on the evidence about the content, intensity/frequency, management, monitoring, etc. of effective ECD interventions.

**In Generating and Disseminating Knowledge for ECD**

Main accomplishments:

- There has been **increased UNICEF investment in ECD research and evaluations** over the last several years.

- **Knowledge and capacity to use data for planning and managing ECD within UNICEF has increased in recent years**, although expertise may remain concentrated among a relatively small cohort of staff.

- **A recent focus on development and inclusion of the ECD module in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) with ongoing implementation in over 50 developing countries is seen as a major break-through toward closing the knowledge gap on ECD in developing countries.**

Main challenges/shortfalls:

- **Existing data is not sufficient for planning and monitoring ECD progress** (the only widely available and used indicators are Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in preprimary services and the proportion of children attending any ECD services). Particular knowledge gaps are in the following areas: (i) psychosocial and cognitive development of young children; (ii) quality of ECCE services; (iii) costing / financing of ECD services.

- The efficiency of knowledge generation and dissemination at both the global and country levels is diminished by a **lack of coordinated, systematic planning**.

- Current **knowledge management practices within UNICEF do not adequately allow public access** to findings from previous and ongoing research and evaluations.
Evidence regarding the impact of specific ECD interventions remains limited. The Pakistan Early Childhood Development Scale Up (PEDS) Trial and a few other ongoing and new studies are exceptions, and signal a growing trend toward sponsoring rigorous research that assesses ECD intervention outcomes.

Main recommendations:

- Develop a multiyear, integrated research and evaluation agenda, coordinated across organizational levels and regions to address key knowledge gaps and facilitate pooling of resources for larger evaluations.
- Make research and evaluation (past and current) findings, lessons learned and recommendations, readily accessible and develop a system for using research and evaluation findings to inform ECD policies and interventions.

In mainstreaming ECD Policies into National Policies, Plans and Services

Main accomplishments:

- In nearly all (95%) of UNICEF-supported countries surveyed, ECD policies are in place or under way.
- Young children’s access to early childhood care and education services has been expanding.
- The successful scale-up efforts have been aided by supportive national policies that were followed with adequate budget allocations; partnership with NGO/CBO partners helped with implementation efforts on the ground.

The following key factors have consistently emerged as central to the successful implementation of ECD policies / scaling-up efforts:

- Involvement of representatives from multiple ministries/sectors early on and throughout the planning process, including ministries of finance, international development organizations and civil society representatives;
- Investment in building and supporting subnational and local governance structures;
- Previous investment in capacity building of key decision makers;
- Establishment of the core team with common goals and objectives, clear coordination and communication chain, strong leadership; and
- Well-developed monitoring systems in place.

However, approximately half of the policies are only in draft form, while the other half have been approved and/or are in different stages of implementation. Serving disadvantaged and marginalized children is included in most policies and plans. However, they rarely delineate concrete steps for expanding access.

Main challenges/shortfalls:

- Poor quality of services provided. The main bottlenecks are: (i) poor infrastructure that is sometimes unsafe (lack of WASH facilities for example) and often non-stimulative (lack of learning materials – especially early learning and play- materials; no playgrounds, etc.) for child development; (ii) low number of qualified ECD professionals; and (iii) poor geographical access resulting in high student/ECD professional ratio that again had negative effects on the quality of services provided.
- **Gains in service coverage were not equitably distributed across regions and social groups.** Access among the most vulnerable children—those who are poor, live in rural areas, and/or are members of disadvantaged social groups—is significantly lower than rates of access for their less disadvantaged peers;

- **Lack of Sustainability**

- **Limited focus on ECCE services for children 0-2 years old**

- **Weak links between pre-primary schooling and the early grades of primary programmes** which is needed to ease the transition and help young children to adapt to primary school particularly, for the most disadvantaged children.

In countries where ECD policies are still not fully in place or being implemented, the main shortfall is lack of human and financial resources (weak governance structure); lack of data/monitoring systems and lack of clarity on the holistic concept of ECD (what is and what is not part of ECD).

Main recommendations:

- Define clear UNICEF strategy for ECD.
- Continue with provision of training and technical assistance to national stakeholders (with additional emphasis on costing/financing; planning/monitoring and targeting of the most marginalized children).

*Planning, Management, Coordination and Partnerships*

Main accomplishments:

- ECD programming is successful in applying basic principles of human rights based programming: (i) the approach to programming is highly participatory and encourages involvement of both rights-holders and duty-bearers in programme design and implementation; (ii) national and local contexts were taken into account in programme planning, design, and implementation and (iii) strategies used were developed with respect for the rights and needs of family and community contexts related to religious beliefs, cultural norms, and values.

- UNICEF’s investment in partnerships at all levels is assessed as successful and central to progress made in the targeted strategic areas (ECD policy development, capacity building, and knowledge management). This finding is confirmed by partner organizations, who perceived UNICEF as a leader in advocating for ECD policies and supporting ECD capacity development in partner countries. Partners also appreciated UNICEF’s ability to act as the convener to bring organizations together to collaborate on ECD policies, strategies, and interventions.

Main challenges/shortfalls:

- ECD programming was less successful in applying results-based management. This is mainly due to the lack of an adequate results framework for ECD programming which would outline expected child-level outcomes and necessary behavioral- and operational-level
changes. Additionally, the absence of ECD specific indicators that can be monitored on a regular basis hampered tracking progress toward outcomes.

- **Lack of ECD earmarked funding limits the long-term funding potential and UNICEF’s position as the leader in the field.**

Main recommendations:

- **Seek stable, multiyear funding to ensure long-term investment in ECD programmes and catalyze the transition from ECD policy development to high-quality and equitable implementation.**
- Develop SMARTER organizational targets / indicators for ECD

**Key elements of the management response**

- In building organizational capacity for ECD, UNICEF capacity gap assessment for ECD programming at global, regional and country level was conducted during 2010-2011; recommendations for the way forward were drafted and partially included in the management response.
- ECD Resource Pack is being revised and meta-review of parenting and community based programmes is being conducted, to bring forth the latest evidence on the content, intensity/frequency, management and monitoring of effective ECD interventions.
- Further integration of research and evaluation across organizational levels is initiated by Programme Division, with active participation of ECD Unit. To harmonize and coordinate research efforts within wider ECD community, ECD Unit organized two global consultations, with participation of major developmental partners (e.g. the WB, SCF, WHO, UNESCO, WVI) and academia (e.g. the Yale University, the Harvard University, the Aga Khan University) with the main objective to agree on the joint ECD monitoring and evaluation framework, on priority future research agenda for ECD as well as to ensure commitment of partners on roles and responsibilities in this regard. For smooth implementation, establishment of a global Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group for ECD (MERG-ECD) was agreed to. Inter-agency consultation on ECD MERG is on-going.
- In making research and evaluation findings readily accessible several communication channels are active: quarterly ECD newsletters; webinars; ECD website, etc.
- The core set of ECD indicators has been defined and rolled-out. At the moment over 50 countries are collecting data on ECD (as part of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey), designed to discover (i) how conducive or risky home environment for young children is, (ii) what is the access of young children to ECD interventions, and finally, (iii) how these factors affect child development.
- Formulation of UNICEF ECD strategy is planned for the 2013.
- The on-going revision of MTSP is an opportunity to strengthen and clearly spell ECD related results. ECD is being mainstreamed into results of the new MTSP which relate to health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, WASH and Child Protection. ECD would be strongly reflected in the MTSP result 7, “Thriving in supportive family and community environments, protected from the effects of poverty and discrimination”, through outcome statements and specific ECD indicators, and in the MTSP result 5, “Prepared to start school and complete a quality and inclusive education” through outcome statements and indicators designed to monitor early learning activities.
ECD Unit along with its partners has also outlined a vision and strategy for ECD in the post-2015 development agenda. This vision is supported by advocacy efforts conducted by leading academic experts based on their work in the area of economic and sustainable development, which is directly related to child development outcomes. According to these experts, child development is the foundation of human development and an imperative for sustainable human development in the post-2015 development agenda.

There has been lower success in ensuring sustainable funds to support ECD interventions – although UNICEF investment in ECD globally is increasing (for example, it has tripled compared to 2006), it is still not nearly enough to scale-up ECD interventions. To address the issue an ECD fundraising strategy has been devised, potential donors identified and contacts with several high-likely donors initiated, however, the unit is still seeking for long-term partners and donors.

*Note: most of the activities are lead and conducted by ECD Unit NYHQ.*

**The main implications for Regional Offices:**

- In mainstreaming ECD Policies into National Policies, Plans and Services provide training and technical assistance on costing ECD policies and streamlined costing tools for COs.
- In Building Capacity for ECD: (i) advocate for implementation of a systematic approach to capacity building that includes assessing needs, implementing evidence-based capacity development strategies, track their implementation and evaluate impact; (ii) create or fill RO ECD Advisor positions to improve relevance and efficiency in meeting CO ECD-specific needs / provide clarification on the ECD focal point’s responsibilities and reporting structure.
- Support COs and country partners to fully develop ELDS for the conception-to-8 age span.
- Advocate to donor groups to increase funding of ECD strategies and interventions.
- Support country offices in identifying strategies to increase access of the most disadvantaged young children to ECD interventions.

**The main implications for Country Offices:**

- Provide technical assistance and invest in developing the capacity of policy makers and implementers to develop equity-focused ECD policies (that include costing strategies). Use research and evaluation findings to inform ECD policies and interventions.
- Support national data collection and monitoring systems specifically designed to assess home environment for young children, access to basic ECD services and interventions; policy environment for young children and their families and child development. Use MICS4 ECD module and MoRES as a basic conceptual framework in designing national monitoring systems.
- Implement a strategic, systematic approach to capacity development that includes a five-step approach: (1) engaging stakeholders on capacity development; (2) access capacity assets and needs; (3) formulate a capacity development response; (4) capacity development implementation; and (5) monitoring and evaluation.
- Develop models for parent/caregiver training based on research evidence about the dosage, content and training approaches that are likely to produce intended outcomes. Apply theory of change and the latest evidence when designing ECD programmes.
• Implement ELDS for the conception-to-8 age span.
• Improve coordination of ECD activities through a clear organizational structure that identifies ECD posts or alternatively ECD focal points, with clear ECD related ToRs (part of PER), reporting to the Deputy Representative or similar position in the office that has programme oversight function.
• Develop an ECD fund-raising strategy and actively seek for multi-year funding. Increase investment in ECD, including better targeting of existing resources;
• Develop a set of strategies towards empowerment of the most marginalized families. To improve equitable access to services as scale-up continues, countries should develop and test specific strategies to target disadvantaged groups. Non-universal targets need to be revised to avoid the risk of further marginalizing the most disadvantaged.