The challenges and opportunities for supporting early childhood development in contexts of crisis
Webinar Housekeeping

Participant audio and video are disabled.

The webinar will be held in English

Post questions using the Q&A function at any time.

This session is being recorded.

Closed captioning is available in English.

The recording and presentations will be shared on the INEE website – inee.org
Early childhood development in humanitarian standards and guidance documents
Children are affected by conflict and crisis

• The numbers are high
• Children face particular risks
• Impacts last for a long time…
• …and have lasting negative consequences
Response is insufficient

- Humanitarian Response Plans don’t sufficiently cover young children’s needs

- Overall, just 2 percent of humanitarian aid explicitly targets early childhood development
Standards and guidance contribute to quality assurance

- **Standards** describe the broad principles and essential elements for high-quality response, reflecting best practice at a global level.

- **Guidance documents** cover specific points of good practice to consider when applying the minimum standards and adapting key actions in different situations.
To what extent do they address the needs of young children and caregivers?
Questions in the review

To what degree do existing humanitarian standards and guidance documents explicitly recognize or acknowledge young children and their caregivers as important groups to target in humanitarian response?

What are the main gaps in terms of alignment of standards and guidance documents with the Nurturing Care Framework, which outlines five areas that are essential for children’s holistic development?

What are recommended next steps to achieve comprehensive and consolidated guidance for addressing early childhood development in emergencies?
Documents reviewed

**Standards**

- UNFPA Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (2015)
Guidance documents

- Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings (2017)
- Interagency Working Group on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IFE Core Group) Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies Operational Guide (2017)
- UNHCR Guidelines on Assessing and Determining the Best Interests of the Child (2018)
- UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) (2020)
Alignment with Nurturing Care domains
Introductions

- 7 interviews covering 6 standards
- Feedback (written or oral) from a total of 9 standards
Findings
Detailed guidance on supporting the youngest is lacking

- All 15 humanitarian standards and guidance documents reviewed address children, less than half specifically define young children.

- Two-thirds of the documents mention ‘caregiver,’ but only one explicitly defines the term.
No single set of standards or guidance has high alignment with all Nurturing Care domains

- Overall, the Safety and Security and Good Health domains had the highest alignment with the standards and guidance documents.

- Alignment with the Opportunities for Learning domain is high in the INEE Minimum Standards and largely absent in other standards and guidance.

- No standards or guidance document has high alignment with the Responsive
Even where domains are covered, gaps remain

- Care for children with developmental difficulties
- Nutrition for ill children
- Local language use
- Involving fathers and extended family in nurturing care
Recommendations
Strengthen what exists, don’t start from scratch

Define
Young children and caregivers

Develop
More practical guidance on ECD covering all aspects of Nurturing Care

Design
Complementary products to accompany standards

Collaborate
Build on existing training opportunities
Think creatively about format

Video and audio
Supplementary materials
Short, online training modules
Case studies
Additional consultations and research could…

- Learn from other relevant stakeholders
  - Humanitarian Standards Partnership
  - NCF Working Groups
  - Humanitarian actors
  - Caregivers and children in humanitarian settings

- Look at national and organization-specific guidance

- Assess community engagement in standards and guidance
The **Strategic Problem Solving Paradigm**: Where we are (current state) and where we want to go (goal).

Rakich & Krigline, 1996

- **Current State (Problem)**
- **Root Causes**
- **Formulate strategic initiatives**
- **Implement**
- **Evaluate**
- **Desired State (Goal)**
Problem Statement and Goal

Access to ECDEiE is not Guaranteed

Root Causes
Formulate strategic initiatives
Implement
Evaluate

Guarantee Access to ECDEiE
Page dimensions: 720.0x450.0

Rootcause Analysis (overarching categories)

1-Prioritization
2-Characterization
3-Consensus in advocacy

Access to ECDEIE is not Guaranteed

Formulate strategic initiatives
Implement
Evaluate
Guarantee Access to ECDEIE
Formulation of strategic initiatives via action research

Access to ECDEiE is not Guaranteed
Root Causes
Formulate strategic initiatives
Implement
Evaluate
Guarantee Access to ECDEiE
Sector-wide characterization of Early Childhood Development and Education in Emergencies (ECDEiE): Study Overview

Country-case studies (n=4)

Global stocktaking survey (n=118)

Academic literature review

Scoping review of the grey literature (n=218)

Global Reference Group: Aga Khan Foundation, ChildFund International, the Global Education Cluster, the International Rescue Committee, the Open Society Foundations, Plan International, Save the Children
The **Strategic Problem Solving Paradigm**: Where we are (current state) and where we want to go (goal)

### Formulate Strategies

1. Community and family participation
2. Evidence brokering
3. Workforce
4. Donor/finance engagement
5. Humanitarian vis a vis National systems
6. Multisectorality

---

**Access to ECDEiE is not Guaranteed**

- (1) Prioritization
- (2) Characterization
- (3) Consensus in advocacy

---

**Implement**

**Evaluate**

**Guarantee Access to ECDEiE**
The Strategic Problem Solving Paradigm:
Where we are (current state) and where we want to go (goal)

- Access to ECDEIE is not Guaranteed
- Prioritization
- Characterization
- Consensus in advocacy

Formulate Strategies:
- Community and family participation
- Evidence brokering
- Workforce
- Donor/finance engagement
- Humanitarian vis à vis National systems
- Multisectorality

Implement

Evaluate

Guarantee Access to ECDEIE
Sector-wide analysis of early childhood development and education in emergencies in Colombia and considerations to strengthen systems globally

Liliana Angelica Ponguta 1 | Carlos Andres Aragón 2 | Lucero Ramirez Varela 3 | Kathryn Moore 2 | Sascha Heln 4 | Adrian Cerezo 5

1 Yale Child Study Center
2 Independent Consultant
3 Harvard Graduate School of Education
4 Department of Education and Psychology, Post University, Herstal, Belgium
5 Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy

Abstract
There is an urgent need to strengthen early childhood development and education in emergencies (ECDHiE) globally. Colombia has faced protracted and acute crises for decades. Also, the country has applied a unique approach to holistic and integrated ECDE policy formulation. We argue that these characteristics offer a valuable country-case to identify barriers and levers to the operationalization of ECDHiE. We applied a sector-wide analysis protocol that harmonized components of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and of a framework to characterize the governance of ECDE systems. The study outlines how the policy and program characteristics identified may represent levers or barriers to the effective operationalization of ECDHiE in Colombia. We discuss how these attributes could be considered in the trans-sectoral dialogue between ECDE and humanitarian actors with the aim of strengthening ECDE systems globally.

Keywords
cross-sectoral responses, early childhood development and education in emergencies, ECDE governance, humanitarian emergency, humanitarian programme cycle, policy formulation, sector-wide analysis.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2020 Wiley Periodicals LLC.
Policy frameworks and systems preparedness

Strategic planning, data management, and coordination

Programmatic approaches and implementation

Resource mobilization and financing
What did we find?

1. Education Cluster & other international coordination mechanisms

2. Education Cluster's operationalization: preschool services and school feeding programs

3. Need to strengthen response in accordance with the National “Zero to Forever” Law
What implications did these study findings have?

- Influenced the formulation of ECD Subgroup in the Cluster System
- Supported the inclusion of ECD-specific indicator and strategic objective
What elements of the study led to its actionable impact?

- Research partnerships (Academia-UNICEF)
- Research process itself as an advocacy tool
What factors contributed to an enabling environment to the formulation of the ECD subgroup in the Cluster?

- Other research and actors (e.g. Sesame Workshop)
- Political moment and will
What lessons can be highlighted at this point?

**Risk**
- The **tipping point** of technical groups and “tables”

**Opportunities**
- **Indicators** that drive programming

**Lesson for the sector**
- The **life cycle approach** to the humanitarian response
Next steps: evaluation, iteration, and long-term follow-up

Current State (Problem)
Root Causes
Formulate strategic initiatives
Implement
Evaluate
Desired State (Goal)
Coauthors and Acknowledgements

- Kathryn Moore, Divina Varghese, Sascha Hein, Angela Ng, Aseel Fawaz Alzaghoul, Maria Angelica Benavides Camacho, Karishma Sethi, and Majd Al-Soleiti

- Carlos Andres Aragon Alvarez, Adrian Cerezo

- We acknowledge and thank Dubai Cares for this research's financial support through the Evidence for Education in Emergencies (E-Cubed) Research Envelope.

- We also acknowledge the study's Global Reference Group (namely, focal points from the Aga Khan Foundation, ChildFund International, the Global Education Cluster, the International Rescue Committee, Plan International, Save the Children, and the Open Society Foundations) for their comments to the study protocol and brokering country-level and survey participation.

- We are grateful to UNICEF New York for their feedback and contributions to the study design.
Supporting ECE Teachers in Refugee Settings

Maysa Jalbout
October 4, 2021
Research rationale

• The trauma of conflict and displacement can have **damaging effects on children’s cognitive, emotional, and physical development**

• Sustained **nurturing relationships can help mitigate and protect against these impacts of stress**

• ECE teachers* are are one important but often under-studied and under-supported part of the ECD workforce in emergencies

• Professional development (PD) often seen as “**implicit**” to **programming** and is not a central consideration in funding
Methodology

• Mapping of teacher professional development approaches in a non-random sample of ECE providers

• Literature review

• Qualitative interviews with researchers, technical staff, and other experts
Small evidence base

- **Limited evidence** related to PD for ECE teachers in refugee settings:
  - Current scope and quality of PD
  - What works in PD for improving teacher practice, raising student learning, and supporting children’s wellbeing

Monitor and rigorously study programming
Limited guidance

• Absence of substantial guidance related to ECE in refugee settings for teachers, programs, and systems, though much is known about what young children facing adversity and trauma need
  • Many global resources either cover ECD in humanitarian settings generally without attention to ECE, or ECE in low-income countries without attention to refugees
• Providers are doing excellent and innovative work but with limited sharing of approaches, resources, and learning across organizations

Build on existing resources and efforts
Tension between global and local

- Comprehensive ECE programming – including approaches to PD – were developed and refined in context
- Strong appetite for resources and guidance grounded in evidence from refugee settings
- Global standards or a global accreditation system for PD for ECE teachers would be limiting and potentially harmful
Question of prioritizing theory vs. practice in PD

• Literature emphasizes need to balance theory and practice
• Providers aim to do so, but with limited time and resources, often opt to prioritize preparing teachers with activities or strategies
• Teachers may sometimes be unsure why certain training strategies or activities are being promoted (e.g. play-based learning)
Demand for ongoing support constrained by limited resources

• In line with evidence from all levels of education, widespread consensus that ongoing PD is ideal

• Coaching, mentoring, and communities of practice as possible avenues

• Limits on PD duration and sustainability attributed to resource limits
Diverse demographics, needs, and circumstances of the ECE workforce

- ECE teacher workforce includes diverse backgrounds, including their social, cultural, educational, linguistic backgrounds and their displacement status
- Tailored PD is in line with principles of effective teacher support across all levels of education

Tailor PD to teachers’ experiences
National system constraints

• **Low capacity** in many national ECE systems and **policy restrictions** on refugee education pose challenges for integrating refugee children into some national systems

• Programs balance aspirations for integration with current policy and capacity realities in national systems
Voices from the field: Ana Aqra’s training approach
Four avenues for future action

- Make information on the basic science of ECD more accessible to ECE teachers working with refugee students
- Support and incentivize local TVET providers to train ECE teachers
- Create peer learning communities to foster ongoing teacher learning and support
- Translate learning from local communities into broader evidence and resources through a learning hub system