

Early Childhood Development in
Emergencies (ECDiE) Coordinator
Learning Cohort Initiative

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECDIE COORDINATOR TOOLBOX



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Sesame Workshop (SW) launched a partnership with the University of Virginia’s Humanitarian Collaborative (UVA) in January 2021 to gain a better understanding of how early childhood development (ECD) coordination models operate in a variety of humanitarian contexts.

The work began with a series of pre-scoping interviews with key stakeholders in the ECD in emergencies (ECDiE) community, which revealed that there was specific interest in learning more about the different roles that ECDiE coordinators can play at the country level and what lessons could be drawn from their work to inform coordination efforts in other contexts.

These pre-scoping findings informed the launch of a learning cohort comprised of individuals supporting ECDiE coordination in Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan and Lebanon in October 2021. In the second phase of the initiative, starting in October 2022, the cohort was expanded and now includes ECDiE coordinators working in six countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan, Syria, Uganda, and Ukraine.

(See [Annex 2](#) for more detail about the ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort initiative)



**HUMANITARIAN
COLLABORATIVE**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarizes key insights from the ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort about the potential development of an ECDiE Coordinator Toolbox, including recommendations on:

- Potential toolkit format and contents, identifying both existing resources and gaps to be filled.
- Next steps for the development of a toolbox that could be taken forward by the ECDiE community.

If/when developed, the ECDiE Coordinator Toolbox would be intended to provide tools and resources for individuals like those participating in the ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort, who support ECD coordination within and/or across clusters/sectors at the country or crisis level. These ECDiE coordinator roles vary by context. Please see our [ECDiE Coordinator Profiles](#) for descriptions of each cohort member's role and responsibilities.

The insights and recommendations in this report are based on discussions with the ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort members focusing on the following questions:

- What existing coordination tools and resources have been most useful in your work? Where are there gaps in the available resources?
- If you were starting your role for the first time, what tools/resources would you want in your toolbox?
- What toolbox would you put together for someone in a similar ECDiE coordinator role in another context?
- Where and/or to whom (role/function) do you go for support in your role?

Sesame Workshop and UVA also solicited input on these questions from members of the Moving Minds Alliance (MMA). These insights have been incorporated into this summary report.



RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOOLBOX FORMAT AND CONTENTS

The following are recommendations based on the discussions with cohort members and the Moving Minds Alliance.

Format and Accessibility:

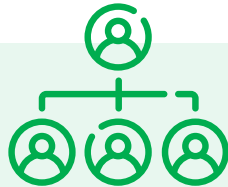
- The toolbox should be **online, easily accessible and user friendly** for coordinators often working in high pressure, time-bound critical emergency response operations.
- The cohort indicated that a **document repository** would be useful (containing for example reports and detailed program guidance). They also emphasized that the toolkit should contain resources that pull out and synthesize key information in easily accessible and user-friendly formats. This repository should be carefully tagged/ categorized to enable users to rapidly search for and filter information they want to find. This emphasis on accessibility was particularly important given the fast-moving humanitarian environments in which ECDiE coordinators operate.
- The [Protection Cluster Coordinator Toolbox](#) is a potential model/best practice to be followed. Its logical layout, low-tech design (making it accessible in low-bandwidth environments) and focus on the coordination component of the mandate of the cluster were considered a useful reference for the development of an ECDiE Coordinator Toolbox.
- The toolbox should aim to **balance carefully** between provision of resources that are checkbox format and those that focus on qualitative guidance.



Toolbox Contents:

Suggestions on content for the toolbox are organised into four broad groupings. A summary of the cohort's recommendations is below, with a more detailed matrix of content suggestions and existing resources included in Annex 1.

GROUPING 1 Setting up an ECDiE Coordination Structure

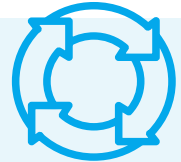


There was recognition that each coordination environment is unique, but the provision of some basic tools to support rapid establishment of a coordination structure should be prioritised. Understanding core roles and functions for coordinators as well as the key elements of the ECDiE coordination landscape (ex. who to engage, what broader coordination mechanism to plug into etc.) was a priority.

Examples:

- Generic terms of reference for ECDiE Coordinator.
- Generic terms of reference for ECDiE Working Group/sub-cluster/other form of coordination mechanism.
- A compilation of tips and good practices from other coordination environments.
- A briefing note on what ECDiE coordination means in practice (vertical and horizontal) including relevant cluster coordination mechanisms.
- Guidance on engagement with international and regional humanitarian architecture and systems.
- A “how to” guide on delivering coordinated services in low resource environments.

GROUPING 2 Program Cycle Management and Resource Mobilisation



Coordinators were looking for tools/resources to strengthen ECD coordination and integration in each phase of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (including needs assessment and analysis, strategic planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring, and operational peer review and evaluation). This includes finding ways to elevate ECD as its own cross-sectoral theme throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, but also identifying tools and resources to increase attention to the needs of young children within each sector's planning and response.

Examples:

- An abridged, summarised version of the Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.
- “How to” guide on including ECDiE in sector plans and analytical funding documents, providing ECDiE specific tips and tricks for engagement throughout the program cycle.
- ECDiE-specific rapid assessment methodology.
- Consistent indicator set for ECDiE programming.
- Stakeholder and social network analysis tools.

Grouping 3 Policy and Advocacy



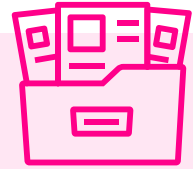
ECDiE involves significant work in seeking to influence policy and practice either during or in the margins of humanitarian response operations. Access to advocacy guidance, policy best practice and other relevant documentation and guidance would be useful. The importance of tools/resources that provide an understanding of the national policy landscape for ECD (i.e. what policies are in place, which ministries are involved, and whether there are opportunities for collaboration between the government and the UN-led system) was stressed.

Examples:

- Glossary of global resources on ECD to help coordinators measure national response through peer comparison.
- Analytical framework for policy/advocacy development.
- Compendia of guidelines and policies issued by governments of affected countries.
- National level beneficiary mapping resources to support project development.
- Examples of ECD activities which are feasible in challenging contexts.

The SW/UVA team gathered the existing resources identified by cohort members and MMA and have included links to them in Annex 1 to this report.

Grouping 4 Information Management



The cohort highlighted the importance of optimal management of available information to support effective coordination, including knowing by whom and where information related to ECD is being collected and how best to access this information.

Enhanced information management support tools such as a standard monitoring format and processes, general advocacy guidelines and an ECDiE Data Hub, which can all help to provide a joined-up package of information to be shared between sectors such as education, child protection, and health and nutrition were considered to be priority items for inclusion in the toolbox.

Examples:

- Visual mapping of requirements to support effective ECDiE coordination – policies, donors, services etc.
- Guidance on establishing document management system.
- Guidance on establishment and managing an ECDiE data hub.
- Sharing ECDiE results frameworks and tools.
- Data collection guidelines to support fundraising and program cycle management.

WHERE ECDiE COORDINATORS SEEK ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Sesame Workshop and the University of Virginia asked the cohort members where they seek advice and support in the execution of their functions. Codifying responses may prove useful in supporting the development, rollout, and maintenance of a toolbox.

The cohort confirmed they all seek greater and more systematic engagement with the ECDiE community and a greater/better situational awareness of the broader humanitarian architecture. Coordinators indicated that they currently seek guidance from a range of actors, including:

- **Relevant government entities and bodies** for updates on recent legislation, national guidelines, and procedures for project implementation.
- **Country experts on ECD** – particularly important to gain local situational awareness and to understand where/how crisis response ECD coordination can connect with existing in-country programs.
- The **education sector/cluster** was mentioned several times given the synergy between its work and ECDiE. In Bangladesh, for example, the ECDiE coordination mechanism is housed under the Education cluster. In other environments, there are varying arrangements, but a common thread running across all countries was a recognition of the need to establish a line between cluster coordinating agencies and ECDiE-specific coordination structures to open dialogue, support advocacy and policy development and to share resources that can be used in the country-level ECD working group.
- The **UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**, to support enhanced situational awareness and connection with coordination/resource mobilisation/program cycle management. Respondents noted, however, that OCHA needs to better understand ECDiE coordination and leadership. In this regard, the [SW/UVA Discussion Brief](#) on humanitarian leadership may be useful.
- The **Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) ECD Working Group**
- The **Arab Network for Early Childhood Development** provides strong engagement and support to ECD actors in the Middle East.
- **Global and regional stakeholders** who engage with country-level ECD coordination platforms.
- The UN's Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) and, to some extent, the **World Bank**.
- **UN/international advisers** on governance, advocacy, ECD, partnerships, local partners, ECD Technical Advisor, and Cluster partners (including coordinators and members).

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR THE ECDiE COMMUNITY

Our discussions with the cohort and the Moving Minds Alliance confirmed there is strong appetite for the development of an ECDiE Coordinator Toolbox.

As the contents of the report and Annex 1 show, there is a wealth of information available on ECD, ECDiE, and related topics. As has been done for those who coordinate the work of clusters and some other thematic issues (e.g. cash, accountability etc.), organising the available information into an accessible, logical, and robust toolbox will help busy practitioners on the front line of emergency operations to optimize their support to national and sub-national authorities, implementing agencies, staff from other sectors and/or clusters that interface with or work on ECDiE. Here the accrued evidence demonstrates that cohort coordinators are largely aware of available information but seek better organization/codification of that information as well as succinct summaries of the often-lengthy manuals and notes that are currently available.

The development of an ECDiE Coordinator Toolbox appears to be a relatively low-hanging fruit. The information needed to populate the toolbox is largely available but not held in a common repository. The expertise exists at all levels of administration to develop succinct summaries of longer guidance notes and other documents that are “field friendly.” A proposed structure for the toolbox has been discussed with six country-level coordinators and is referenced in this report. Taking the development of the toolbox forward would require short-term dedicated capacity for its design and development as well as part-time capacity thereafter to ensure that it is maintained and kept up to date.

Sesame Workshop and the University of Virginia hope that the broader community will consider the contents of this report and support our recommendation that the development of an ECDiE coordinator toolbox will strengthen collective efforts to ensure that ECDiE is more fully mainstreamed in crisis response.

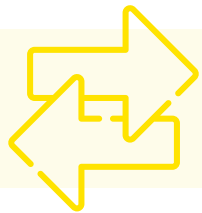
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ANNEX 1:

DETAILED OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL TOOLBOX CONTENTS

ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort members articulated a number of tools and resources that they need to support their work. Some of the resources are already developed or in development, others are noted as future resources that need to be developed.



CROSS-CUTTING RESOURCES

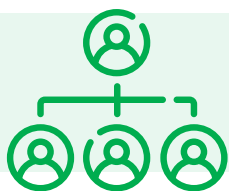
Resources providing guidance and information across more than one of the four groupings.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES & IN-DEVELOPMENT:

- [Early Childhood Development Kit: Coordinator's Guide \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Care and Development in Emergencies—A Program Guide \(Plan International\)](#)
- [Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development—A Framework for Helping Children Survive and Thrive to Transform Health and Human Potential \(UNICEF, World Bank, WHO, ECDAN, PMNCH\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Development in Emergencies Manual \(Save the Children\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Development: Global Strategies for Implementation Training Modules \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [Stepping Up Early Childhood Development—Investing in Young Children for High Returns \(World Bank\)](#)

REQUIREMENTS STILL TO BE DEVELOPED:

- Trainings via the World Bank [Early Years Fellows](#) Program
- Country level planning and program instruments (requires further investigation)
- Colombia ECDiE Learning Cohort resource hub



GROUPING 1

Setting up an ECDiE Coordination Structure

REQUIRED RESOURCES

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Generic terms of reference for an ECDiE Coordinator.

Generic terms of reference for ECDiE Working Group / Sub-Cluster / other coordination structure.

Tips and good practice examples from ECDiE Coordinators in other countries and environments – broken down by crisis typology if possible.

Guidance for coordinators on engagement with international and regional humanitarian coordination, funding and programming architecture and systems.

Socratic guidelines with a set of questions designed to help stakeholders define the role and scope of a coordination mechanism so that it is tailored to the context, rather than being defined by a set checklist.

Definitions for / guidance on critical interventions (e.g., breastfeeding women and children in crises contexts).

Guidance / best practice on scaling that integrates ECDiE into other programs and cluster priorities rather than / instead of separate programs and cluster arrangements.

Guidance on mainstreaming inclusion in ECD programs.

A “how to” guide on delivering coordinated services in low resource environments.

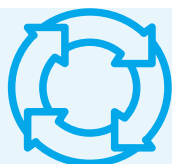
- [Early Childhood Development in Emergencies Integrated Program Guide \(Annex III\)](#)
- Bangladesh: [Terms of Reference for the ECD Working Group in Cox's Bazar](#)
- Colombia: [Proposal for Creation of ECDiE Working Group \(Spanish\)](#)
- Colombia: [Terms of Reference–ECDiE Working Group](#)
- Jordan: [ECDiE Coordination Mechanisms in Jordan](#)
- Jordan: [Briefing Note: ECDiE Task Team](#)
- Ukraine: [Terms of Reference for the ECCD Working Group](#)

- Bangladesh: ECD [competency framework](#) and [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\)](#)
- Bangladesh: [Preliminary Mapping Report of Early Childhood Development Programs and Services in Cox's Bazaar 2021](#)
- Bangladesh: [ECDiE Working Group Plan 2022](#)
- Bangladesh: [Planning and Reflection Workshop Report 2022](#)

- As a starter: [The IASC and the global humanitarian coordination architecture: How can NGOs engage?](#)

- [Sectoral issue briefs](#) covering various aspects of care including nutrition, MHPSS etc. (MMA)
- [Technical Note: Early Childhood Development](#)
- [Early Childhood Development and Disability: A Discussion Paper by UNICEF and WHO](#)
- [Resources](#) from UNICEF on ECD and Disability

- Syria: The [Ahlan Simsim Scaling Briefing Note](#)
- Syria: Education Strategy



GROUPING 2

Program Cycle Management and Resource Mobilization

REQUIRED RESOURCES

An abridged/summarized version of the [minimum standards in humanitarian response](#) focused on ECDiE elements.

“How to” guide on including ECDiE in sector plans, HNOs, HRP, etc. to include a description of the humanitarian program cycle that provides ECDiE specific tips and tricks for engagement during each phase (preparedness, response, needs assessment, program implementation, monitoring, evaluation, etc.).

Consistent (if possible globally agreed) indicator set for ECDiE programming (based on the Nurturing Care Framework or global Early Learning and Development Standards).

Monitoring and evaluation tools based on best practice examples from other countries.

Checklist of key ECDiE interventions that coordinators would be expected to pursue with programming agencies.

A stakeholder analysis tool to:

- support understanding the broader humanitarian environment.
- deepen understanding of audience and stakeholders.

A social network analysis tool (which provides information on / analysis of power relations).

Guidance on how to close the vocabulary gap between ECDiE practitioners and other related sectors (e.g. ECCE).

AVAILABLE RESOURCES & IN-DEVELOPMENT

- [Early Childhood Development in Emergencies–Integrated Program Guide \(UNICEF\)](#)
- INEE ECDiE Programming Guidance Tool (under development and expected to be published in 2023)
- ECDiE-specific rapid assessment methodology and set of tools, or more central inclusion of ECDiE in global multi-sectoral assessment methodology and tools (possibly in liaison with OCHA and/or [ACAPS](#))
- Colombia: [Inclusion of ECDiE in Needs Assessments and the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan \(2022\)](#)

- [Guidance Note–Supporting Integrated Child Protection and Education Programming in Humanitarian Action \(INEE/ CPHA Alliance\)](#)
- [The Sphere Humanitarian Standards](#)

- [Child Friendly Feedback Mechanisms – Guide and Toolbox \(Plan International\)](#)

- [Nurturing Care for Children Living in Humanitarian Settings \(Nurturing Care Framework\)](#)

- Syria: Stakeholder Analysis Tool

- Syria: Social Network Analysis tool



GROUPING 3

Policy and Advocacy

REQUIRED RESOURCES

AVAILABLE RESOURCES & IN-DEVELOPMENT

Clarity on/glossary of global level resources on ECD, (especially but not exclusively from UNICEF), which enable coordinators to measure national response by comparing with efforts elsewhere.

Analytical framework and related tool for policy development, implementation, and related advocacy.

Access to reference materials and best practice repository designed for coordination and advocating for prioritization of ECDiE by governmental stakeholders and other ECD partners.

A compendium of guidelines and policies issued by the governments of affected countries.

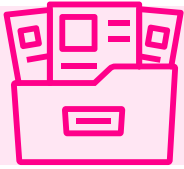
Resources at national level including stakeholder and beneficiary mapping for project development and grassroots organizations, national indicators on ECD, and quality assurance for kindergartens.

Examples of ECD activities with facilitation guidelines; examples of activities that are feasible in challenging contexts (during winter cold, without electricity, etc.)

- [A workbook for policy advocacy strategy development \(PATH\)](#)
- [Are climate change policies child-sensitive? A Guide for Action \(UNICEF\)](#)

- Jordan: ECDiE Advocacy and Financing Guidelines

- Ukraine: Guidance on field grants for the purpose of promoting the local organization of ECD coordination in emergency contexts.



GROUPING 4

Information Management

REQUIRED RESOURCES

AVAILABLE RESOURCES & IN-DEVELOPMENT

Mapping requirements –policies, donors, partners, services, etc.

- Jordan: Assessment, policy and financing mapping tools.

Guidance on setting up an accessible document management system or repository for information sharing across stakeholders.

- Jordan: Guidelines for ECD database development and operations (Arabic).

Guidelines on setting up a ECDiE data hub, potentially drawing on work already underway by the [Centre for Humanitarian Data](#).

Circulation of key ECDiE results frameworks and measurement tools.

Data collection guidelines to support:

- Making ECDiE more visible for fundraising purposes.
 - Understanding education curriculum adaptation requirements.
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BACKGROUND ON THE ECDiE COORDINATOR LEARNING COHORT

The ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort initiative is intended to advance the advocacy objectives of the Play to Learn (PTL) program, a collaboration between Sesame Workshop, the LEGO Foundation, BRAC, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and NYU Global TIES for Children. The overarching advocacy objective of PTL is to see local, national, and international humanitarian stakeholders prioritize and invest in high-quality ECD programs that utilize learning through play approaches in crisis and conflict response.

Multi-sectoral coordination at the crisis- or country-level is essential to the provision of comprehensive ECD services, and it is a prerequisite to promote increased prioritization of and investment in ECD in humanitarian response. Therefore, it is critical to the success of PTL's advocacy goal to contribute to strengthening ECD coordination in crisis settings.

When the **first phase** of the cohort initiative launched in October 2021, it included three individuals already funded through the PTL project to support coordination efforts in Bangladesh, Colombia, and parts of the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon). During the first phase, cohort members exchanged learnings from their work, including insights about the coordination structures in their contexts. For further information please read the [ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort Phase 1 Summary Report](#).

Building on these insights, the cohort and key stakeholders in the ECDiE community expressed interest in a deeper focus on the specific role played by individual ECDiE coordinators at the country or crisis level. As a result, Sesame Workshop and UVA launched a **second phase** of the cohort project in October 2022 focusing on better understanding the different roles that individual ECDiE coordinators can play at the country or crisis level.

During phase two, this initiative aims to:

- Create a small cohort of ECDiE coordinators working at the country or crisis level to exchange learnings in a small community of practice.
- Better understand the different roles ECDiE coordinators can play at the country or crisis level.
- Gather lessons learned from the coordinators' work to share with key humanitarian stakeholders and inform similar work in other contexts.
- Generate learnings on why and how humanitarian actors, donors, and host governments should invest in deploying ECDiE coordinators in other contexts.