COMMISSION 5: Monitoring and Evaluation of ECCE at National and International Levels

5.1. Towards Developing a Holistic Child Development Index (HCDI)

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Towards a Holistic Child Development Index (HCDI): Rationale, Prospects and Challenges for Child Protection

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I. Rationale for Child Protection

1. How does child protection enhance child learning and education outcomes? Alternatively, how does the weakness of child protection in a country reduce child learning and therefore dampen meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals?

   a. Child ill health, hunger, and poor nutrition reduces school attendance, learning, and completion; school repetition arising from these problems leads to higher educational costs
   b. Child abandonment, abuse and maltreatment affects child learning, and poor psychosocial development arising from these problems could lead to youth delinquency and other forms of social pathology
   c. Child labor takes children out of school or reduces their available time for learning
   d. If not addressed, child disability could lead to significant numbers of children unable to access educational opportunities that the rest enjoy
   e. Children involved in crime or delinquency dims their future prospects and, unless given a second chance, could lead to wasted lives and societal costs
   f. Child poverty inhibits overall access to educational opportunities and learning, and has a negative intergeneration impact on the prospects of their children

2. What should be the underlying framework for formulating child protection interventions?

   a. Rights-based approach – Countries have already committed to various international and regional conventions and laws on child rights, and the implementation of these commitments should be done as a matter of course. (See Annex)

      i. Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959: A child is entitled to a name and a nationality; adequate nutrition, housing, recreation, and medical services; education; for the handicapped, special treatment, education and care; protection against neglect, cruelty and exploitation, trafficking, underaged labor, and discrimination.

      ii. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989: participation of children in decisions affecting them; protection of children against discrimination and all forms of neglect and exploitation; prevention of harm to them; provision of assistance to them for their basic needs (4 Ps); treatment of children in armed conflict; principles of adoption; rights of child refugees for special protection;
indigenous children’s rights to practice their culture; rights of disabled children; banning traditional practices prejudicial to children’s health; rehabilitative measures for victims of neglect, abuse, and exploitation

b. Poverty reduction or human capital development – (1) Human capital investments at an early age yields social returns – measured in future lifetime earnings – far in excess of the initial social costs of those investments. (2) Early intellectual stimulation in ECCD is seen as providing the foundation of life-long learning, which benefits societies as a whole. (3) Underinvestment in ECCD interventions may result in “catching up” costs later, a phenomenon that has not been well analyzed.

c. Equity, gender rights, and social inclusion – ECCD and child protection: (1) provides a fair start in life, especially for the disadvantaged social groups; (2) facilitate women’s entry into the labor force; (3) concretizes a socially inclusive approach to development as they provide for equal importance to an otherwise neglected age group.

d. Social capital – Early introduction of proper socialization, especially in a multicultural context, can enhance social cohesion.

3. What child protection interventions and services should countries offer? (Illustrative and tentative list which needs to be debated.)

a. Child health and nutrition services (school feeding, deworming, school health, mother’s education, other interventions)

b. Control of child injury (current MDG covers only health aspects, but not injury. And yet child injury has been showing up in epidemiological studies as a major cause of child mortality and morbidity)

c. Elimination of child abduction and trafficking

d. Elimination of child maltreatment (neglect, physical abuse including corporal punishment, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment, other forms of maltreatment)

e. Elimination of child labor

f. Services for children in exceptional circumstance (children with mental and physical disabilities including speech and language difficulties)

g. Services for children in hard circumstances (orphans and vulnerable children, street/homeless and abandoned children, children in armed conflict, etc.)

h. Services for out-of-school youth (alternative education opportunities)

i. Rehabilitation of youth offenders (youth justice and protection from legal punishment)

j. Services for children on care and protection orders (broken homes, etc.) and children in out-of-home care (institutional and residential care)

k. Care and support for children in poverty, including children prematurely heading households (arising largely from the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa)

II. Indicators for Child Protection

1. What is an indicator for child protection?

   a. To point out, to direct attention to, to signify, to show need for

   b. To mark; to provide evidence that something has happened

   c. To monitor or evaluate progress about a goal
2. Why is there a need for indicators of child protection? The following six rationale could be the basis for collecting international data on child protection:

   a. Global advocacy for countries to meet *international commitments* on child rights and protection
   b. National advocacy to strengthen national *legal framework* (formulation of new laws or revision of old laws on child protection, if necessary)
   c. National advocacy and *policy and planning* formulation, analysis, and monitoring
   d. National monitoring and administrative assessment of relevant *programs*
   e. In the case of devolved and private-sector provided services, national *standardization and regulation* of these services
   f. International *benchmarking* to put pressure on countries lagging behind on their commitments on child protection

3. What should indicators on child protection convey?

   a. Countries’ overall environment and context of child protection
   b. Countries’ political will and financial/resource commitment to protect children and reduce their vulnerability
   c. Countries’ demonstrated efforts in child protection, including the necessary legal and policy framework; administrative and institutional structures; reach and quality of services; and support to vulnerable families or children
   d. Efficiency or cost-effectiveness of child protection interventions (program expenditures relative to service coverage)
   e. Effects of child protection interventions (household access to services; achievements of interventions vis-a-vis targets; changed knowledge, values, attitudes and practices about child protection)
   f. Social well-being or impact of child protection (improved child health and nutritional status; improved education outcomes; reduced delinquency and youth involvement in crime)

4. What should child protection indicators measure?

   a. Scope – Child care and protection within ECCD programs only? Overall national child care and protection?
   b. Focus – International benchmarking? Benchmarking and variance analysis within countries?
   c. Hard or soft indicators?

III. Issues in Formulating Child Protection Indicators

1. Challenges for constructing a global set of indicators on child protection

   a. Identifying the goals of child protection; different priorities of each country; and different implicit “weighting” of legal, policy, and program interventions (Slide 12)
   b. Different paradigms of child protection, e.g., risk management approach (U.S., U.K., Australia, New Zealand) vs. therapeutic approach (Continental Europe)
c. “Market” vs. “nonmarket” services in child protection; problem of many “nonmarket” transactions (largely invisible or under-recognized efforts families, neighbourhoods, and communities) in poor and low middle-income countries
d. Some needed and critical data are not routinely collected, and even if they are, there may be reliability issues
e. Lack of baseline information for some critical data
f. Difficulty of inter-country comparability of data due to the wide range of contexts, cultures, institutions, and reporting biases from which these data emerge
g. Cross-sectoral nature of child protection within countries (different information systems)

2. Prospects for constructing a global set of indicators on child protection
   a. Wide agreement exists on the importance of protecting children and early childhood development
   b. A few well accepted indicators on child protection are already in use
   c. Several major efforts towards establishing indicators of child protection, with different focus areas, are underway or completed at the international and national levels
      i. International – UNESCO, UNICEF, Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Save the Children
      ii. National – Australia, Brazil

IV. Short-list of Illustrative Indicators of Child Protection

1. Child health
   a. Infant, neonatal and child mortality rates
   b. Prenatal and postnatal care
   c. Breastfeeding rate
   d. Immunization rates (measles, FIC)

2. Child nutrition and food security
   a. Nutritional status of expectant mothers
   b. Childhood protein-energy malnutrition rates
   c. Childhood micronutrient deficiencies (Vitamin A, anemia)
   d. Children experiencing hunger; children going to school without breakfast

3. Child labor
   a. Children involved in income-generating activities
   b. Out-of-school children who are working

4. Child maltreatment and abuse
   a. Neglected children
   b. Children experiencing physical abuse
   c. Children experiencing sexual abuse
   d. Children experiencing emotional maltreatment
   e. Children experiencing other forms of maltreatment

5. Children with disability
   a. Children with physical disability
   b. Children with language and learning disability

6. Children in hard circumstances
a. Children involved in war
b. HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children
c. Street children and abandoned children
d. Children involved in crime
e. Children in indigenous population or other minority groups
Annex: Key International and Regional Conventions Pertaining to Children’s Rights


References


Boyson, Rowan and Lucy Thorpe (2002). Equal Protection for Children. NSSPCC.


