

EVALUATION REPORT

January 2016

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and school readiness

■ ■ **Evaluation synthesis** ■

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EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ELDS) AND SCHOOL READINESS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE	8
RESUMEN EJECUTIVO	13
SECTION I BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	18
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	19
1.1 Context: UNICEF, ELDS and school readiness	19
1.2 Overview of the evaluation	20
CHAPTER 2 ELDS in context	25
2.1 School readiness	25
2.2 Standards for ECED	28
CHAPTER 3 UNICEF’s support for ELDS	32
3.1 Rationale for supporting early learning and development standards	32
3.2 Theory of change for UNICEF support for ELDS	33
SECTION II RESULTS OF UNICEF’S SUPPORT FOR ELDS	44
CHAPTER 4 ELDS contribution to systems for ECED and school readiness	44
4.1 A theory of change for ELDS influence on systems	44
4.2 Capacities for the use of ELDS	44
4.3 ELDS used to support systems for school readiness	50
4.4 Systems that support quality services for school readiness	54
CHAPTER 5 The influence of ELDS on practice	59
5.1 The theory of change: from ELDS to changing practice	59
5.2 Preschools provide quality services	61
5.3 Families support child development and transition	64
5.4 Primary schools ready for children	65
5.5 Children ready for school: the impact of ELDS	66
SECTION III CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	67
CHAPTER 6 Conclusions	68
6.1 Learning and development standards in the global ECED landscape	68
6.2 UNICEF support to ELDS	69
6.3 ELDS into the system	69
6.4 ELDS into practice	70
CHAPTER 7 Recommendations	72
7.1 Learning and development standards in the global ECED landscape	72
7.2 UNICEF support to ELDS	72
7.3 ELDS into the system	72
7.4 ELDS into practice	73
APPENDIX 1. Terms of reference for the evaluation	74
APPENDIX 2. Evaluation framework	87
APPENDIX 3. Normative questions: assessment criteria	101
APPENDIX 4. Summary of Boolean coding of country questions	105
APPENDIX 5. Profiles of thematic field visit countries	108
APPENDIX 6. List of people and organisations consulted	113
APPENDIX 7. Bibliography and references	119

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Stakeholders and method of consultation in thematic case studies	23
Table 2:	Types of standards for early childhood (adapted from UNICEF, 2013)	29
Table 3:	Regional spread of ELDS: final and final draft documents	38
Table 4:	ELDS development process: time taken for each phase (years) (from survey of COs)	38
Table 5:	Review of ELDS-type documents: region and domains covered by ELDS from countries in the region	41
Table 6:	Elements of typical standards documents	42
Table 7:	Review of ELDS-type documents: by region, type of document and age ranges covered	43
Table 8:	ELDS implementation and use in ECED systems: stakeholder analysis	48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	The theory of change showing inputs, ELDS activities and expected outputs	34
Figure 2:	Timeline of UNICEF-supported ELDS work	36
Figure 3:	CO survey responses (N=33) to question “What stages have been completed in the process of developing the ELDS/similar child outcome standards?”	37
Figure 4:	CO survey responses to question “Were any of the following a challenge in developing the standards?” (N=30)	39
Figure 5:	CO survey data (N=33): “Have the standards been validated?”	40
Figure 6:	CO survey responses to question “Have you received any of the following types of support from UNICEF HQ or your RO at different stages of developing ELDS/child outcome standards?” (N=32)	40
Figure 7:	A theory of change for ELDS to improve ECED systems	46
Figure 8:	Professional capacity challenges in the use of ELDS identified by CO survey respondents (N=26)	50
Figure 9:	System areas supported by ELDS identified by CO survey respondents (N=26, respondents in countries with ELDS in place).	51
Figure 10:	CO survey responses (N=30) on extent to which the process of developing ELDS influenced other ECE standards	53
Figure 11:	ELDS theory of change: how ELDS might influence ECED practice and children’s readiness for school	60
Figure 12:	Responses to the question “To what extent have the standards been used in the following areas of practice to support school readiness outcomes for children, for families and for primary schools?” (N=26, respondents from countries with ELDS in place). Labels edited for clarity.	62



PREFACE

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All goals (EFA) and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have all highlighted early childhood development (ECD) as an important area of focus in improving health, wellness and education outcomes for young children. In UNICEF early childhood development was identified as one of the five priorities medium-term strategic plan, the perceived benefits of which was to enhance children's thinking, language, social, and emotional skills, and to increase their developmental readiness to start primary school on time school readiness (MTSP 2002-2005; 2009-13).

A pivotal activity in UNICEF's engagement with the ECD sector in the earlier years of the programme was to expound a set of Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), that codified expectations for children's behaviour and performance across multiple dimensions of learning and development, and to work with countries to adapt the standards to their own contexts. ELDS reflect what children should know and be able to do with respect to their physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language development, from birth to 8 years of age. An evaluation of the work around ELDS and school readiness was conducted in 2015.

The evaluation set out to investigate how countries organized their early learning initiatives, and whether there was a coherent approach to the development and implementation of ELDS, and whether those efforts did result in the intended improvements in children's school readiness outcomes. The evaluation also examined the extent to which UNICEF made a meaningful contribution in strengthening national capacities for early learning and school readiness work.

The evaluation concluded that as ECED provision has become a global priority, ELDS development processes typically assembled a range of stakeholders and resulted in effective cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination. ELDS work influenced ECED systems most directly through improvements in curriculum development, and highlight the urgency for outcome measures and indicators.

However, when UNICEF's role in direct implementation and/or facilitation diminished, governments and national agencies were not successful in moving ELDS into ECED systems, or in using the data from ELDS pilots to inform policy and practice, or in harnessing those efforts to achieve improvements in school readiness. The evaluation recommended among other things, that UNICEF should build more knowledge on how a child's developmental profile contributes to his or her positive experience in primary school and fulfilment of their potential, and do more to expose the children's rights implications of using ELDS.



PREFACE (cont'd)

The evaluation was ably conducted by Education for Change Ltd (EFC). On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to express my appreciation to John Wood for his leadership of the evaluation and to the EFC evaluation team consisting of Julie Carpenter, Anise Waljee, Jin Sun, Laetitia Antonowicz, Patricia Daniel, Helen Penn and Sheldon Schaeffer. National experts in their respective countries enriched the evaluation with their extensive knowledge of critical education sector issues and national perspectives, as well as making connections with key institutions and interlocutors in each of their countries. These are Vivien Linington (South Africa), Marilyn F Manuel (Philippines) Bishkhorloo Boldsuren (Mongolia) and Tagreed Abu Taleb (Jordan). We are also grateful to colleagues from sister organizations – UNESCO and the World Bank, as well as the many development partners and education sector specialists who were generous with their time.

I would also like to express our gratitude to our colleagues in the Education Section for their technical inputs. Colleagues in the UNICEF Country Offices in Jordan, Mongolia the Philippines, and South Africa and their government partners provided invaluable support during field visits. As always, their inputs and cooperation are appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office for their work on this challenging evaluation. Kathleen Letshabo developed and managed the evaluation throughout, bringing her own expertise in education to bear, and Celeste Lebowitz and Dalma Rivero provided strong administrative support throughout.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEECIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region	ICCS	
CO	Country Office	INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
COAR	Country Office Annual Report	ISSA	International Step by Step Association
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan	KRA	Key Results Area
CPD	Country Programme Document	KSRAT	Kenya School Readiness Assessment Tool
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	LACRO	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	LMTF	Learning Metrics Task Force
DFID	Department for International Development	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
EAP/ECDS	East Asia-Pacific Early Childhood Development Scale	MDG	Millennium Development Goals
EAPRO	East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office	MECS	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Mongolia)
EC	Early childhood	MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
ECCD	Early childhood care and development (Philippines)	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ECD	Early childhood development	MTSP	Medium-term Strategic Plan (UNICEF)
ECE	Early childhood education	NCF	National Curriculum Framework (South Africa)
ECED	Early childhood education and development	NELDS	National Early Learning and Development Standards (South Africa)
EDI	Early Development Instrument	NELF	National Early Learning Framework (Philippines)
EDQUAL	A research programme consortium on implementing education quality in low-income countries	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
EFA	Education for All	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards	OECD/DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
ELSR	Early Learning and School Readiness	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
ERfKE	Education Reform for a Knowledge Economy (Jordan)	QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office	RO	Regional Office
FAQs	Frequently asked questions	ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
GER	Gross enrolment rate	SITAN	Situational Analysis
GMR	Global Monitoring Report for Education for All	TOR	Terms of reference
HQ	Headquarters	WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E.1. UNICEF has worked for many years to improve early childhood development and early childhood education. The Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2002-2005 set *integrated early childhood development* as one of five organisational priorities. UNICEF, national counterparts and other partner organisations identified the need to clarify expectations of children's development and achievement, and indicators against which such development would be measured.

CONTEXT

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)

E.2. In 2002 UNICEF initiated work on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). The work was led by the Education and Early Childhood Development Sections at UNICEF headquarters (New York) in partnership with Columbia University, through a project entitled *Going Global with indicators of child well-being: using a standards approach* ('*Going Global*' for short). The main objective of the *Going Global* project was "to develop nationally acceptable early learning and development standards". The *Going Global* team established a model of support intended to facilitate national ownership of the process and suitability of the resulting standards to national perceptions, cultures and expectations of children.

E.3. The *Going Global* model ELDS describe expectations for children's behaviour and performance across multiple dimensions of learning and development: they reflect what children should know and be able to do from birth to 8 years of age related to their physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language development.

School readiness

E.4. 'School readiness' refers to how well children are prepared to engage in formal learning as evidenced by their levels of development upon reaching the legal age of schooling. The term has been used in discussions about the poor outcomes of (some) children in primary schooling and as a rationale for pre-schooling to improve all children's chances in school.

E.5. In 2006, UNICEF developed a framework for school readiness which has become an important driver for UNICEF interventions. The analysis of school readiness recognises the importance of parents and of primary schools in optimising children's transitions to, and experience of, more formal education. It posits a triple focus of school readiness: the child; the family and the primary school.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

E.6. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine from both a learning and an accountability perspective UNICEF's contribution to strengthening national capacities for providing high quality early learning programmes and improving children's school readiness through the development and use of ELDS. The evaluation had a clear programmatic focus, investigating what country programmes set out to do in early learning initiatives, examining whether there is a coherent programme approach to ELDS and school readiness that would increase the likelihood of achieving intended results/outcomes, and determining how programmes were or are being implemented, as well as the results achieved.



METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

E.7. In 2013 UNICEF Evaluation Office undertook a stocktaking exercise in preparation for this evaluation, which comprised a desk review, structured interviews with 58 Country Offices.

E.8. The stocktaking also developed a theory of change that summarised the putative pathways from ELDS interventions to school readiness. The theory of change was revised during the inception phase of this evaluation and is the organising structure for the enquiry and analysis.

E.9. A review of global literature was undertaken covering the international discourse, evidence and perspectives on the relevance and role of normative frameworks and standards in ECED, trends in approaches to system elements that ELDS aim to influence and how UNICEF's school readiness and ELDS approaches and activities relate to these issues and trends.

E.10. Extensive internet searches for relevant UNICEF literature and a UNICEF intranet search were undertaken for all relevant internal documents and any other ECED related literature per country for a sample of 23 countries, and from UNICEF regional offices.

E.11. The evaluation reviewed the draft or final documents resulting from the standards or ELDS development process in 35 countries.

E.12. Face-to-face and telephone or Skype interviews were conducted with UNICEF headquarters and regional office staff and UNICEF consultants from Columbia University.

E.13. An online survey for UNICEF country offices was offered in English, French and Spanish. To 108 offices, and 42 (39%) completed responses were received.

E.14. Country visits to Jordan, Mongolia, Philippines and South Africa were undertaken to inform findings on two thematic case studies, namely:

- Strengthening systems for school readiness through the use of, and the process of developing, ELDS
- ELDS-related changes in local practice that support children's development outcomes and transition to primary school.

FINDINGS

ELDS in context

E.15. Expansion and improvement of ECED provision is now a global priority, and there is recognition among ECED professionals of the need for outcome measures and indicators.

E.16. In general there is a lack or paucity of evidence on what contributes to children fulfilling their potential.

E.17. Globally, there is little analysis of how learning and development standards or school readiness constructs relate to the realisation of children's rights.

E.18. The *Going Global* work on developing ELDS predated, and presumably influenced, UNICEF's work on school readiness, which has become an important construct in ECED.

UNICEF's support for ELDS

E.19. UNICEF support to the development of ELDS was a considerable investment across many countries, but it did not extend to supporting the implementation of ELDS.

E.20. The *Going Global* model of ELDS proved highly influential but UNICEF headquarters' steer and oversight of ELDS work effectively ended with the end of the project.

E.21. Take-up of ELDS work has been very varied across regions and commitment is strongest in those regions with a tradition of standards in public services.

E.22. Very few countries have chosen to develop ELDS for children from 0-8 years old, as recommended in *Going Global*.



ELDS contribution to systems for early childhood education and development

E.23. As UNICEF stepped back from facilitating and supporting the implementation of ELDS, government and other national agencies have been unable to move ELDS into ECED systems, in part due to national capacity challenges and constraints.

E.24. ELDS have influenced ECED systems most directly through curriculum; however, the standards have had little influence on measuring children's development, and using the data to inform practice and policy

E.25. Although the ELDS development process involved cross-sectoral stakeholders, it has not resulted in more effective cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination in ECED.

The influence of ELDS on practice

E.26. ELDS have influenced practice, indirectly, through changed curriculum and the professional preparation of teachers. However, there has been little influence on the practices of assessment using outcome indicators.

E.27. ELDS are rarely used to identify individual and population developmental diversity.

E.28. The holistic vision of early childhood that ELDS helped to form has influenced parenting programmes.

E.29. There has been no change in primary practice that draws on the content of ELDS or uses them to support transition.

CONCLUSIONS

Learning and development standards in the global ECED landscape

Conclusion 1: There has been too little research on which early childhood experiences and interventions contribute most to children fulfilling their potential. Learning development standards have potential to inform such research.

Conclusion 2: The learning and development standards approach has the potential to contribute to the children's rights agenda, but, at the same time, presents some risks. Although central to UNICEF's mandate, it has not properly addressed the impact of a standards approach on children's rights, how standards can be used to support rights and how any risks can be mitigated.

UNICEF support to ELDS

Conclusion 3: ELDS workshops, discussion, conceptualisation and drafting contributed to the capacity and awareness of national and regional ECED professionals. However, UNICEF has not followed through towards operationalising ELDS and there was weak analysis of critical capacity gaps for the 'next steps'.

Conclusion 4: Within UNICEF itself, there is limited understanding of the potential import of learning and development indicators and commitment to operationalising them has waned.

Conclusion 5: Most ELDS cover the pre-school years (typically 0 to 6) despite the Going Global model.

ELDS into the system

Conclusion 6: ELDS have contributed to ECED curriculum change and consequent professional development: these are important but they are the 'low-hanging fruit' of system change.

Conclusion 7: The arguments for school readiness were not part of the Going Global ELDS model and most countries developed them as pre-school standards. This has limited their use and usefulness in support of school readiness and continuity at transition to primary school.

Conclusion 8: There are a variety of capacity challenges to implementing ELDS as foreseen. In particular ECED lacks supportive bureaucratic structures, finance and human resources: these became particularly evident when UNICEF stepped back from its role as facilitator and supporter.



Conclusion 9: The ELDS initiative brought representatives of sectors together, which strengthened the process and improved the coverage of the product. However, it has not significantly improved collaborative working across agencies in different sectors.

ELDS into practice

Conclusion 10: Using ELDS in practice, for assessing individuals, institutional performance and broader interventions, may require instruments that are simplified and mediated to fit the uses and the users.

Conclusion 11: There is too little work to make the national ELDS workable across the diversity of populations.

Conclusion 12: ELDS and the standards development processes have contributed to a holistic vision of children's development and the inclusion of that vision in parental, professional and political discourse.

Conclusion 13: ELDS have highlighted the importance of the primary school in ensuring a continuity of support through transition and the ability to respond to individual needs, but their potential has not been realised in practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Learning and development standards in the global ECED landscape

Recommendation 1: UNICEF should lead or commission research as to how a child's developmental profile contributes to his or her positive experience in primary school and fulfilment of their potential in later life.

Recommendation 2: UNICEF should to more to expose the children's rights implications of using ELDS.

UNICEF support to ELDS

Recommendation 3: UNICEF should build on the body of work that has resulted from the ELDS initiative and renew its support to using the standards effectively as outcome measures for ECED.

ELDS into the system

Recommendation 4: UNICEF should develop a capacity analysis toolkit for ECED that countries can be used to identify the support that is needed to use ELDS, including identifying agencies and areas in which cross-sectoral practices can continue.

Recommendation 5: UNICEF needs to make the argument for using ELDS to improve transition, in particular assisting the extension to cover children up to age 8, and working on alignment of ELDS with more traditional primary curricula.

ELDS into practice

Recommendation 6: UNICEF should support global and national work to develop operational tools (e.g. observation and recording tools), which draw on ELDS and facilitate their better use in classrooms and institutions.

Recommendation 7: UNICEF should provide guidance to national users of ELDS about how to adapt and use them to identify difference and diversity, not only as a tool for remediation but better to understand developmental difference.

Recommendation 8: UNICEF should take positive steps to ensure that the lessons learned from the ELDS work inform ongoing work on international, population-level instruments, notably those for the Sustainable Development Goals.



RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

E.1. Depuis de nombreuses années, les efforts de l'UNICEF portent sur l'amélioration de l'éducation et du développement du jeune enfant. Le Plan stratégique à moyen terme 2002-2005 incluait le *développement intégré du jeune enfant* parmi les cinq priorités de l'organisation. L'UNICEF, ses homologues nationaux et d'autres organisations partenaires ont identifié le besoin de clarifier les attentes en matière de développement et de réussite des enfants, et de créer des indicateurs pour mesurer ce développement.

CONTEXTE

Normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement du jeune enfant (*Early Learning and Development Standards, ELDS*)

E.2. En 2002, l'UNICEF a commencé à travailler sur les Normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement du jeune enfant (ELDS). Ce travail était mené par les sections Éducation et Développement de la petite enfance au siège de l'UNICEF (New York), en partenariat avec l'Université de Columbia, dans le cadre d'un projet nommé *Going Global with indicators of child well-being: using a standards approach* (Mondialiser les indicateurs du bien-être de l'enfant à l'aide d'une approche normative, « *Going Global* »). Le principal objectif du projet *Going Global* était de « mettre au point des normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement précoces acceptables au niveau national ». L'équipe du projet *Going Global* a défini un modèle de soutien destiné à favoriser l'appropriation nationale du processus et l'adéquation des normes résultantes avec les perceptions, cultures et attentes des enfants dans le pays.

E.3. Les ELDS issues du modèle *Going Global* décrivent les attentes en matière de comportement et de résultats des enfants à travers

différentes composantes de l'apprentissage et du développement : elles reflètent les connaissances et les capacités attendues des enfants, de la naissance jusqu'à l'âge de 8 ans, en fonction de leur développement physique, cognitif, socioémotionnel et du langage.

Préparation à la scolarité

E.4. La « préparation à la scolarité » est le niveau de préparation atteint par les enfants avant de commencer un apprentissage formel. Il est indiqué par leur niveau de développement une fois atteint l'âge légal de scolarisation. Ce terme a été utilisé au cours d'échanges au sujet des mauvais résultats de (certains) enfants en école primaire et pour justifier la préscolarisation comme moyen d'améliorer les chances de tous les enfants à l'école.

E.5. En 2006, l'UNICEF a mis au point un cadre pour la préparation à la scolarité, qui est depuis un élément important de ses interventions. L'analyse de la préparation à la scolarité reconnaît l'importance des parents et des écoles primaires dans l'optimisation de la transition des enfants vers une éducation plus formelle, ainsi que dans l'amélioration de leur expérience. Elle propose de se concentrer sur trois éléments de la préparation à la scolarité : l'enfant, la famille et l'école primaire.

OBJECTIF DE L'ÉVALUATION

E.6. L'objectif de l'évaluation était d'examiner, tant du point de vue de l'apprentissage que de la redevabilité, la contribution de l'UNICEF au renforcement des capacités nationales en matière de programmes d'éducation précoce de grande qualité et d'amélioration de la préparation à la scolarité des enfants, grâce à la définition et à l'utilisation des ELDS. L'évaluation était clairement tournée vers les programmes et cherchait à savoir ce que les programmes des pays mettaient en œuvre dans le cadre



de leurs initiatives d'apprentissage précoce, examinait la présence ou non d'une approche programmatique cohérente des ELDS et de la préparation à la scolarité permettant d'augmenter les chances de parvenir aux résultats/conséquences désirés et analysait comment les programmes étaient ou sont mis en œuvre, ainsi que les résultats obtenus.

MÉTHODOLOGIE ET ORIGINES DES DONNÉES

E.7. Afin de préparer cette évaluation, le Bureau d'évaluation de l'UNICEF s'est lancé en 2013 dans un exercice d'inventaire, divisé entre analyse préliminaire et entretiens dans 58 bureaux de pays.

E.8. Cet inventaire a également donné naissance à une théorie du changement résumant les voies supposées conduisant des interventions ELDS à la préparation à la scolarité. La théorie du changement a été révisée pendant la phase de lancement de cette évaluation et constitue la colonne vertébrale de l'enquête et de l'analyse.

E.9. Une étude des publications mondiales a été conduite pour couvrir les discours, les éléments de preuve et les perspectives à l'international sur l'importance et le rôle des cadres normatifs et des normes dans l'éducation et le développement du jeune enfant, les approches fréquemment adoptées pour les éléments systémiques que les ELDS cherchent à influencer et les liens entre les approches et activités ELDS et de préparation à la scolarité de l'UNICEF et ces questions et tendances.

E.10. Des recherches en ligne poussées des documents pertinents publiés par l'UNICEF et une recherche sur l'Intranet ainsi qu'auprès des bureaux régionaux de l'UNICEF ont été réalisées pour tous les documents internes concernés et pour toute autre documentation relative à l'éducation et au développement du jeune enfant sur un échantillon de 23 pays.

E.11. L'équipe d'évaluation a étudié les projets et versions définitives de documents tirés des normes ou du processus de définition des ELDS dans 35 pays.

E.12. Des entretiens en personne, téléphoniques ou par Skype ont eu lieu entre des employés du siège et des bureaux régionaux de l'UNICEF et des consultants pour l'UNICEF issus de l'Université de Columbia.

E.13. Une enquête en ligne auprès des bureaux de pays de l'UNICEF a été envoyée en anglais, en français et en espagnol à 108 bureaux. Elle a produit 42 réponses (39 %).

E.14. Des visites en Jordanie, en Mongolie, aux Philippines et en Afrique du Sud ont été organisées pour étayer les conclusions relatives à deux études de cas thématiques, à savoir :

- Renforcer les systèmes de préparation à la scolarité par le processus de conception des ELDS et leur utilisation ;
- Modifier, en fonction des ELDS, les pratiques locales qui aident à obtenir des résultats en matière de développement des enfants et de transition vers l'école primaire.

DÉCOUVERTES

Les ELDS en situation

E.15. L'expansion et l'amélioration des dispositions relatives à l'éducation et au développement du jeune enfant sont dorénavant une priorité mondiale. Les professionnels du secteur reconnaissent également le besoin de mesures des résultats et d'indicateurs.

E.16. En général, les éléments de preuve expliquant ce qui permet aux enfants de réaliser leur potentiel sont absents ou trop peu nombreux.

E.17. Il n'existe dans le monde que peu d'analyses des liens entre les normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement ou la préparation à la scolarité et la concrétisation des droits des enfants.



E.18. Les travaux du projet *Going Global* sur les ELDS ont précédé, et probablement influencé, ceux de l'UNICEF sur la préparation à la scolarité, qui occupent depuis un rôle important dans l'éducation et le développement du jeune enfant.

Le soutien aux ELDS de l'UNICEF

E.19. L'aide apportée par l'UNICEF pour la définition des ELDS a consisté en un formidable investissement dans de nombreux pays, mais ce soutien ne s'est pas étendu à la mise en œuvre des ELDS.

E.20. Le modèle du projet *Going Global* pour les ELDS a eu une forte influence, mais le travail d'orientation et de supervision des ELDS depuis le siège de l'UNICEF s'est effectivement achevé avec la fin du projet.

E.21. Le suivi du travail sur les ELDS a été très contrasté d'une région à l'autre. L'engagement a été le plus fort dans les régions où les services publics sont traditionnellement assujettis à des normes.

E.22. Malgré les recommandations de *Going Global*, très peu de pays ont choisi de définir des ELDS pour les enfants de 0 à 8 ans.

Contribution des ELDS à l'éducation et au développement du jeune enfant

E.23. Lorsque l'UNICEF a cessé d'aider et de soutenir la mise en œuvre des ELDS, ni les gouvernements, ni les autres agences nationales n'ont été en mesure de les intégrer aux systèmes d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant, notamment en raison des contraintes et des obstacles en matière de capacité des pays.

E.24. La plus grande influence des ELDS sur les systèmes d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant s'est exercée sur le contenu des programmes. Toutefois, les normes n'ont eu que peu d'effets sur la mesure du développement des enfants et l'utilisation des données afin de documenter les pratiques et les politiques.

E.25. Même si le processus de définition des ELDS impliquait des parties prenantes de différents secteurs, il n'a pas donné lieu à une collaboration et une coordination intersectorielle plus efficaces dans l'éducation et le développement du jeune enfant.

L'influence des ELDS sur les pratiques

E.26. Les ELDS ont, de façon indirecte, influencé les pratiques grâce aux changements de programme et à la préparation professionnelle des enseignants. Toutefois, les conséquences sur les pratiques d'évaluation à l'aide d'indicateurs de résultats ont été faibles.

E.27. Les ELDS sont rarement utilisées pour identifier la diversité en matière de développement des individus et des populations.

E.28. La vision d'ensemble de la petite enfance que les ELDS ont contribué à forger a influencé les programmes destinés aux parents.

E.29. Il n'y a pas eu de changement des pratiques dans l'enseignement primaire qui s'appuie sur le contenu des ELDS ou les utilise pour soutenir la transition.

CONCLUSIONS

Normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement dans l'offre mondiale d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant

Conclusion 1 : Il n'y a pas eu assez de recherches pour déterminer quelles expériences et interventions pendant la petite enfance contribuent le plus à la réalisation du potentiel des enfants. Les normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement offrent la possibilité d'étayer ces recherches.

Conclusion 2 : L'approche fondée sur les normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement peut favoriser les droits des enfants, mais comporte également certains risques. Malgré sa position clé dans le mandat de l'UNICEF, elle n'a pas répondu de façon appropriée aux



répercussions d'une approche normative des droits des enfants et à la question des méthodes pouvant être utilisées pour soutenir les droits et limiter les risques.

Soutien de l'UNICEF aux ELDS

Conclusion 3 : Des ateliers, des échanges, une conceptualisation et une ébauche des ELDS ont permis d'améliorer les capacités et les connaissances des professionnels de l'éducation et du développement du jeune enfant au niveau national et régional. Toutefois, l'UNICEF n'a pas mené à terme la mise en application des ELDS, et l'analyse des lacunes en matière de capacité pour passer aux « étapes suivantes » s'est avérée faible.

Conclusion 4 : Au sein même de l'UNICEF, la compréhension de l'apport potentiel des indicateurs d'apprentissage et de développement est limitée et la détermination à les rendre opérationnels a décliné.

Conclusion 5 : La plupart des ELDS concernent les années préscolaires (généralement de 0 à 6 ans) en dépit du modèle du projet *Going Global*.

Les ELDS dans le système

Conclusion 6 : Les ELDS ont contribué au changement du contenu des programmes d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant et aux progrès professionnels qui en ont découlé : si ces évolutions sont importantes, elles restent toutefois des « cibles faciles » en matière de changement systémique.

Conclusion 7 : Les arguments en faveur de la préparation à la scolarité ne faisaient pas partie du modèle ELDS du projet *Going Global* et la plupart des pays les ont mis au point en tant que normes préscolaires. Cela a limité leur utilisation et leur utilité pour le soutien de la préparation à la scolarité et le maintien de la transition vers l'école primaire.

Conclusion 8 : Comme prévu, la mise en œuvre des ELDS se heurte à divers problèmes de capacité. L'éducation et le développement du jeune enfant manquent notamment de structures administratives, de financements et de ressources humaines : ces lacunes sont devenues particulièrement visibles lorsque l'UNICEF a quitté son rôle de facilitateur et de soutien.

Conclusion 9 : L'initiative ELDS a réuni des représentants de différents secteurs, ce qui a renforcé le processus et amélioré le niveau de couverture du produit. Toutefois, cela n'a pas permis d'améliorer de façon significative la collaboration entre agences de différents secteurs.

Les ELDS dans la pratique

Conclusion 10 : Dans la pratique, l'utilisation des ELDS pour évaluer les performances des individus et des institutions ainsi que les interventions plus générales pourra nécessiter des instruments plus simples et modifiés pour s'adapter à différentes utilisations et différents utilisateurs.

Conclusion 11 : Le travail accompli pour rendre les ELDS nationales applicables à des populations diverses n'est pas suffisant.

Conclusion 12 : Les ELDS et les processus de définition des normes ont permis de donner naissance à une vision globale du développement des enfants et de l'introduire dans les discours aux parents, aux professionnels et aux politiques.

Conclusion 13 : Les ELDS ont souligné l'importance de l'école primaire pour assurer une continuité du soutien tout au long de la transition et pour répondre aux besoins individuels. Leur potentiel ne s'est toutefois pas concrétisé dans la pratique.



RECOMMANDATIONS

Normes relatives à l'apprentissage et au développement dans l'offre mondiale d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant

Recommandation 1 : L'UNICEF devrait conduire ou commander des recherches sur le rôle du profil de développement d'un enfant dans son expérience positive de l'école primaire et la réalisation de son potentiel plus tard dans la vie.

Recommandation 2 : L'UNICEF devrait intensifier ses efforts pour montrer les conséquences de l'utilisation des ELDS sur les droits des enfants.

Soutien de l'UNICEF aux ELDS

Recommandation 3 : L'UNICEF devrait s'appuyer sur l'ensemble des travaux issus de l'initiative des ELDS et renouveler son soutien à l'utilisation des normes pour mesurer efficacement les résultats en matière d'éducation et de développement du jeune enfant.

Les ELDS dans le système

Recommandation 4 : L'UNICEF devrait créer un outil d'analyse des capacités dans le domaine de l'éducation et du développement du jeune enfant que les pays pourront utiliser pour identifier le soutien dont ils ont besoin pour utiliser les ELDS, y compris pour identifier les agences et les domaines dans lesquels les pratiques intersectorielles peuvent se poursuivre.

Recommandation 5 : L'UNICEF devrait plaider en faveur de l'utilisation des ELDS pour améliorer la transition, notamment en favorisant son extension pour couvrir les enfants jusqu'à 8 ans et en travaillant sur l'alignement des ELDS et des programmes d'enseignement primaire plus traditionnels.

Les ELDS dans la pratique

Recommandation 6 : L'UNICEF devrait soutenir les efforts mondiaux et nationaux de mise au point d'outils opérationnels (par exemple, des outils d'observation et d'enregistrement) qui s'appuient sur les ELDS et permettent leur meilleure utilisation dans les salles de classe et les institutions.

Recommandation 7 : L'UNICEF devrait fournir des conseils aux utilisateurs nationaux des ELDS concernant leur adaptation et leur utilisation pour l'identification des différences et de la diversité, non seulement en tant qu'outil de rattrapage, mais aussi pour mieux comprendre les différences de développement.

Recommandation 8 : L'UNICEF devrait adopter des mesures positives pour s'assurer que les leçons tirées du travail sur les ELDS seront utiles aux travaux en cours sur les instruments utilisés aux niveaux international et des populations, notamment en ce qui concerne les objectifs de développement durable.



RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

E.1. El UNICEF ha trabajado durante muchos años para mejorar el desarrollo en la primera infancia y la educación durante la primera infancia. El Plan Estratégico de Mediano Plazo para 2002-2005 estableció el desarrollo integrado en la primera infancia como una de las cinco prioridades de la organización. El UNICEF, sus contrapartes nacionales y otras organizaciones asociadas identificaron la necesidad de aclarar las expectativas sobre el desarrollo y el rendimiento de los niños, así como los indicadores con los que se mediría ese desarrollo.

CONTEXTO

Normas sobre el aprendizaje y el desarrollo en la primera infancia (ELDS, por sus siglas en inglés)

E.2. En 2002, el UNICEF inició su labor en torno a las Normas sobre el aprendizaje y el desarrollo en la primera infancia. El trabajo fue dirigido por las Secciones de Educación y Desarrollo en la Primera Infancia de la sede del UNICEF (Nueva York), en colaboración con la Universidad de Columbia, por medio de un proyecto titulado *Going Global with indicators of child well-being: using a standards approach* (“*Going Global*” de forma abreviada). El objetivo principal del proyecto *Going Global* era “elaborar normas de aprendizaje y desarrollo temprano aceptables a nivel nacional”. El equipo de *Going Global* estableció un modelo de apoyo destinado a facilitar la apropiación nacional del proceso y la armonización de las normas resultantes con las percepciones, culturas y expectativas nacionales que se tienen de los niños.

E.3. El modelo de las ELDS según *Going Global* describe las expectativas sobre el comportamiento y el rendimiento de los niños a través de múltiples dimensiones del aprendizaje y el desarrollo: reflejan lo que los niños deben saber y ser capaces de hacer desde el nacimiento hasta los ocho años en relación con

su desarrollo físico, cognitivo, socio emocional y en materia de lenguaje.

Preparación para la escuela

E.4. “Preparación para la escuela” se refiere al grado en que los niños están preparados para participar en el aprendizaje estructurado tal como lo demuestran sus niveles de desarrollo al llegar a la edad legal de escolarización. El término se ha utilizado en los debates sobre los malos resultados de (algunos) niños en la escuela primaria y como justificación de la utilidad de la enseñanza preescolar para mejorar las oportunidades de todos los niños en la escuela.

E.5. En 2006, el UNICEF elaboró un marco sobre la preparación para la escuela que se ha convertido en un importante mecanismo para impulsar las intervenciones del UNICEF. El análisis de la preparación para la escuela reconoce la importancia de los padres y de las escuelas primarias en la optimización de las transiciones de los niños hacia una educación más estructurada, y la experiencia que se deriva de esta transición. Esto plantea un triple enfoque de la preparación para la escuela: el niño; la familia; y la escuela primaria.

PROPÓSITO DE LA EVALUACIÓN

E.6. El propósito de la evaluación fue examinar desde una perspectiva del aprendizaje y de la rendición de cuentas la contribución del UNICEF al fortalecimiento de las capacidades nacionales para proporcionar programas de educación temprana de alta calidad y mejorar la preparación para la escuela de los niños a través del fomento y el uso de las ELDS. La evaluación tenía un enfoque programático claro: investigar lo que los programas de país se proponían hacer en las iniciativas de aprendizaje temprano, examinar si había un enfoque programático coherente para las ELDS



y la preparación para la escuela que pudiera aumentar la probabilidad de lograr los resultados/productos previstos y determinar cómo los programas han sido implementados, o se están implementando, así como los resultados obtenidos.

METODOLOGÍA Y FUENTES DE DATOS

E.7. En 2013, la Oficina de Evaluación del UNICEF emprendió un inventario para preparar esta evaluación, que incluyó un examen documental y entrevistas estructuradas con 58 oficinas de país.

E.8. El inventario también desarrolló una teoría del cambio que resumía las vías putativas que conducen desde las intervenciones de las ELDS hasta la preparación para la escuela. La teoría del cambio fue revisada durante la fase inicial de esta evaluación y es la estructura organizadora que orienta la investigación y el análisis.

E.9. Se llevó a cabo un examen de la bibliografía mundial sobre el discurso, las pruebas empíricas y las perspectivas a escala internacional sobre la pertinencia y el papel de los marcos y estándares normativos en la educación y desarrollo en la primera infancia (ECED, por sus siglas en inglés), las tendencias en los enfoques de los elementos del sistema en el que las ELDS pretenden influir y la manera en que la preparación para la escuela de UNICEF y los enfoques y actividades de las ELDS se relacionan con estas cuestiones y tendencias.

E.10. Se realizaron extensas búsquedas en Internet para obtener la bibliografía pertinente del UNICEF y también se llevó a cabo una búsqueda en la intranet del UNICEF para ubicar todos los documentos internos pertinentes y cualquier otra bibliografía relacionada con la ECED por país para una muestra de 23 países, así como de las oficinas regionales del UNICEF.

E.11. La evaluación examinó los proyectos o documentos finales resultantes de las normas

o del proceso de elaboración de las ELDS en 35 países.

E.12. Se realizaron entrevistas personales y telefónicas o vía Skype con la sede de UNICEF y el personal de las oficinas regionales y con los consultores del UNICEF de la Universidad de Columbia.

E.13. Se ofreció una encuesta en línea en inglés, francés y español a 108 oficinas del UNICEF en los países, y se recibieron 42 (39%) respuestas completas.

E.14. Se realizaron visitas a Filipinas, Jordania, Mongolia y Sudáfrica para informar sobre los resultados de dos estudios de casos temáticos, a saber:

- Fortalecimiento de sistemas para la preparación para la escuela a través del uso de las ELDS, y el proceso que conlleva su elaboración
- Cambios relacionados con las ELDS en la práctica local que apoyan los resultados en materia de desarrollo de los niños y la transición a la escuela primaria.

HALLAZGOS

Las ELDS en su contexto

E.15. La ampliación y mejora de la provisión de la ECED es ahora una prioridad mundial, y existe el reconocimiento entre los profesionales de la ECED de la necesidad de disponer de medidas e indicadores de resultados.

E.16. En general, hay pocas o escasas pruebas sobre lo que contribuye a que los niños cumplan su potencial.

E.17. A nivel mundial, hay muy pocos análisis sobre la forma en que las normas de aprendizaje y desarrollo o la preparación para la escuela se relacionan con la realización de los derechos de los niños.



E.18. La labor de *Going Global* en la elaboración de las ELDS fue anterior al trabajo del UNICEF sobre la preparación para la escuela, y supuestamente influyó en el mismo; este trabajo se ha convertido en un elemento importante para la ECED.

El apoyo de UNICEF a las ELDS

E.19. El apoyo de UNICEF a la elaboración de las ELDS exigió una inversión considerable en muchos países, pero no se amplió a la labor de apoyar la implementación de las ELDS.

E.20. El modelo *Going Global* de las ELDS demostró ser muy influyente, pero la dirección y la supervisión del trabajo de las ELDS por parte de la sede de UNICEF terminó de manera efectiva cuando finalizó el proyecto.

E.21. La aceptación del trabajo de las ELDS ha sido muy variada en todas las regiones y el compromiso es más sólido en aquellas regiones con una tradición de normas en los servicios públicos.

E.22. Muy pocos países han optado por desarrollar las ELDS para niños de 0 a 8 años, como se recomienda en *Going Global*.

Contribución de las ELDS a los sistemas de educación y desarrollo en la primera infancia

E.23. A medida que el UNICEF dejó de facilitar y apoyar la aplicación de las ELDS, el gobierno y otras agencias nacionales no han podido integrar las ELDS en los sistemas de la ECED, en parte debido a los problemas y limitaciones nacionales en relación a la capacidad.

E.24. Las ELDS ha influido más directamente en los sistemas de la ECED a través de los planes de estudio; sin embargo, las normas han tenido poca influencia en la medición del desarrollo de los niños, y en la utilización de los datos para que sirvan de base a las prácticas y las políticas.

E.25. Aunque el proceso de desarrollo de las ELDS incluyó actores intersectoriales, no se ha logrado una colaboración y coordinación intersectorial más eficaz en la ECED.

La influencia de las ELDS en la práctica

E.26. Las ELDS han influido en la práctica, indirectamente, a través del cambio de los planes de estudio y la preparación profesional de los profesores. Sin embargo, ha habido poca influencia en las prácticas de evaluación utilizando los indicadores de resultados.

E.27. Las ELDS rara vez se usan para identificar la diversidad en el desarrollo individual y poblacional.

E.28. La visión holística de la primera infancia que las ELDS ayudaron a formar ha influido en los programas de crianza.

E.29. No ha habido ningún cambio en la práctica primaria que se base en el contenido de las ELDS o que las utilice para apoyar la transición.

CONCLUSIONES

Normas de aprendizaje y desarrollo en el panorama mundial de la ECED

Conclusión 1: Se ha investigado muy poco sobre qué experiencias e intervenciones en la primera infancia contribuyen más a que los niños cumplan su potencial. Las normas sobre el desarrollo del aprendizaje tienen el potencial de configurar dicha investigación.

Conclusión 2: El enfoque de las normas de aprendizaje y desarrollo tiene el potencial de contribuir a la agenda de los derechos de los niños, pero, al mismo tiempo, presenta algunos riesgos. Aunque es fundamental para el mandato del UNICEF, la organización no ha abordado adecuadamente las repercusiones sobre los derechos del niño de un enfoque basado en normas, ni tampoco cómo se pueden utilizar las normas para respaldar los derechos ni cómo se pueden mitigar los riesgos.



Apoyo del UNICEF a las ELDS

Conclusión 3: Los talleres, debates, conceptualización y redacción de borradores sobre las ELDS contribuyeron a la capacidad y la concienciación de los profesionales nacionales y regionales de ECED. Sin embargo, el UNICEF no ha seguido adelante con la instrumentación de las ELDS y el análisis de las brechas de capacidad importantes para los “próximos pasos” ha sido deficiente.

Conclusión 4: Dentro del propio UNICEF, hay una comprensión limitada de la importancia potencial de los indicadores de aprendizaje y desarrollo, y el compromiso de ponerlos en operación ha disminuido.

Conclusión 5: La mayoría de las ELDS abarcan los años preescolares (normalmente de 0 a 6 años) a pesar del modelo *Going Global*.

Las ELDS en el sistema

Conclusión 6: Las ELDS ha contribuido al cambio de los planes de estudio de la ECED y al subsiguiente desarrollo profesional: son importantes, pero son “la opción más factible” del cambio del sistema.

Conclusión 7: Los argumentos sobre la preparación para la escuela no formaban parte del modelo *Going Global* de las ELDS y la mayoría de los países los elaboraron como normas preescolares. Esto ha limitado su uso y su utilidad en apoyo de la preparación para la escuela y la continuidad en la transición a la escuela primaria.

Conclusión 8: Hay una variedad de retos de capacidad para implementar las ELDS según lo previsto. En particular, la ECED carece de estructuras burocráticas, financieras y de recursos humanos que le sirvan de apoyo: esto se hizo especialmente evidente cuando el UNICEF abandonó su papel de facilitador y dejó de prestar apoyo.

Conclusión 9: La iniciativa de las ELDS reunió a representantes de sectores, lo que fortaleció el proceso y mejoró la cobertura del producto. Sin embargo, no ha mejorado de forma importante el trabajo colaborativo entre las organizaciones en diferentes sectores.

Las ELDS en la práctica

Conclusión 10: El uso de las ELDS en la práctica para evaluar a los individuos, el rendimiento institucional y las intervenciones más amplias, puede requerir instrumentos simplificados que utilicen algún tipo de mediación para ajustarse a los usos y a los usuarios.

Conclusión 11: Hay muy poco trabajo para lograr que las ELDS nacionales sean viables para una diversidad de poblaciones.

Conclusión 12: Las ELDS y los procesos de elaboración de normas han contribuido a una visión holística del desarrollo de los niños y la inclusión de esa visión en el discurso parental, profesional y político.

Conclusión 13: Las ELDS han destacado la importancia de la escuela primaria para asegurar la continuidad del apoyo a través de la transición y la capacidad de responder a las necesidades individuales, pero su potencial no se ha realizado en la práctica.

RECOMENDACIONES

Normas de aprendizaje y desarrollo en el paisaje mundial de las ECED

Recomendación 1: El UNICEF debería dirigir o encargar investigaciones sobre la forma en que el perfil de desarrollo de un niño contribuye a su experiencia positiva en la escuela primaria y el aprovechamiento de su potencial en la vida posterior.

Recomendación 2: El UNICEF debería hacer más para exponer las implicaciones que tienen la utilización de las ELDS sobre los derechos de los niños.



Apoyo del UNICEF a las ELDS

Recomendación 3: El UNICEF debería basarse en el conjunto de trabajos resultantes de la iniciativa de las ELDS y renovar su apoyo a la utilización eficaz de las normas como medidas de resultado para la ECED.

Las ELDS en el sistema

Recomendación 4: El UNICEF debería elaborar un conjunto de herramientas de análisis de la capacidad para ECED que permita a los países identificar el apoyo que necesitan para utilizar las ELDS, incluida la identificación de organismos y ámbitos en los que puedan continuar las prácticas intersectoriales.

Recomendación 5: El UNICEF debe establecer un argumento para utilizar las ELDS con el fin de mejorar la transición, en particular ayudando a ampliar la cobertura para los niños de ocho años y trabajando en la armonización de las ELDS con los planes de estudios primarios más tradicionales.

Las ELDS en la práctica

Recomendación 6: El UNICEF debería apoyar el trabajo a nivel mundial y nacional para desarrollar herramientas operacionales (por ejemplo, herramientas de observación y registro) que se basen en las ELDS y faciliten su mejor uso en las aulas y las instituciones.

Recomendación 7: El UNICEF debería proporcionar orientación a los usuarios nacionales de las ELDS sobre cómo adaptarlas y utilizarlas para determinar las diferencias y la diversidad, no sólo como una herramienta para la recuperación, sino para comprender mejor las diferencias en el desarrollo.

Recomendación 8: El UNICEF debería adoptar medidas positivas para garantizar que las enseñanzas extraídas de la labor de las ELDS sirvan de base para el trabajo en curso sobre los instrumentos internacionales a nivel de población, en particular los relativos a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.



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SECTION I BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the evaluation and describes its context, purpose and scope, methodology and limitations.

1.1 CONTEXT: UNICEF, ELDS AND SCHOOL READINESS

1.1.1 UNICEF and early childhood education and development

UNICEF has worked for many years to improve early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood education (ECE)¹. The Mid-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2002-2005 sets *integrated early childhood development* as one of five organisational priorities and identifies the need to:

- Create the policy environment for early childhood development in partnership with governments, including for regulations and standards;
- Support further development of indicators and data collection and analysis for areas of children's development; and,
- Increase coverage of ECD services, in collaboration with governments and other local partners and ensure linkage between design and delivery.

Within work on the policy environment for ECED, UNICEF, national counterparts and other partner organisations identified the need to

clarify expectations of children's development and achievement, and indicators against which such development would be measured. In some countries (e.g. Cuba, Comoros), UNICEF worked on initiatives to measure and assess early childhood learning and development, and to improve children's life chances and readiness for school.

Focus Area 1 of MTSP 2006-2013 restated UNICEF's commitment to young children's survival and development and, in Focus Area 2, the MTSP established a key result area (KRA) to improve the proportion of children attending school at the prescribed age and to "increase from 6 to 40 the number of countries with nationwide standards for monitoring school readiness as a component of developmental readiness" in ECED.

1.1.2 Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)

In 2002 UNICEF had recognised a need for indicators of children's development across a range of domains and initiated work on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)².

The work was led by the Education and ECD Sections at UNICEF HQ (New York) in

¹ These two terms have traditionally been used to distinguish between interventions seeking physical and psychosocial development in keeping with health and welfare and care and those for cognitive development in keeping with education cultures. Institutional arrangement for older and younger pre-school children often reinforce this dichotomy. Early Learning and Development Standards explicitly seek to establish an integrated holistic approach for all aspects of children's growth and progress. Henceforth we use the term Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED).

² Different countries use different nomenclature for the instrument(s) that fulfils identified needs. In this document we use the abbreviation 'ELDS' to mean specifically work and standards documents that benefited from UNICEF support post-2002 and are, to some extent, based on the Going Global model.



partnership with Columbia University, through a project entitled *Going Global with indicators of child well-being: using a standards approach* ('Going Global' for short). The main objective of the *Going Global* project was "to develop nationally acceptable early learning and development standards". The Going Global team established a model of support intended to facilitate national ownership of the process and suitability of the resulting standards to national perceptions, cultures and expectations of children.

The *Going Global* model ELDS describe expectations for children's behaviour and performance across multiple dimensions of learning and development: they reflect what children should know and be able to do from birth to 8 years of age related to their physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language development.

The first *Going Global* ELDS pilots were launched in 2003 in six countries (Brazil, Ghana, Jordan, Paraguay, Philippines, and South Africa). However the concept and process were shared through project activities and other countries joined in the ELDS development work.

1.1.3 School readiness

'School readiness' refers to how well children are prepared to engage in formal learning as evidenced by their levels of development upon reaching the legal age of schooling (typically 5-6 years old). The term has been used in discussions about the poor outcomes of (some) children in primary schooling and as a rationale for pre-schooling to improve all children's chances in school.

MTSP 2002-2005 uses the term in this sense and makes a link between ECED and girls' increased school readiness. MTSP 2006-2009 establishes the importance of "children's developmental readiness to start primary school, particularly for marginalized children" and the need for tools to measure that readiness.

In addition to children being ready to learn in primary schools, in 2006 UNICEF developed a concept paper concerning school readiness, which includes two other components that contribute to positive transition and performance in primary school:

- the extent to which **families** are ready to send their children to school, which may be demonstrated by active participation in preparing children and supporting their transition, as well as providing a home environment that reinforces learning
- whether primary **schools** are ready to receive children by providing a safe learning environment, age-appropriate learning resources and opportunities for play, preparing and deploying highly skilled and/or motivated teachers to the early grades, as well as actively working with the community to seek out and bring in children who are supposed to enrol in a given year.

This school readiness 'triple' of ready child, ready family and ready school, has become important in UNICEF discourse and support.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine from both a learning and an accountability perspective UNICEF's contribution in strengthening national capacities for providing high quality early learning programmes and improving children's school readiness through the development and use of ELDS. The evaluation had a clear programmatic focus, investigating what country programmes set out to do in early learning initiatives, examining whether there is a coherent programme approach to ELDS and school readiness that would increase the likelihood of achieving intended results/outcomes, and determining how programmes were or are being implemented, as well as the results achieved. All evaluation questions



are presented in the evaluation framework in Appendix 2, while normative questions and criteria for assessing them are presented in Appendix 3.

1.2.2 Methodology and data sources

Stocktaking

In 2013 UNICEF Evaluation Office undertook a stocktaking exercise in preparation for this evaluation, which comprised a desk review, structured interviews with 58 Country Offices (CO) (of 64 identified as having standards on school readiness in place). The stocktaking produced a report on the status of ELDS in respondent countries, which was validated by Regional Offices (ROs) (UNICEF, 2013).

The Theory of Change

The stocktaking also developed a theory of change that summarised the putative pathways from ELDS interventions to school readiness and children's lives. As it was developed retrospectively, the theory of change reflects more recent understanding of the potential of ELDS to influence the systems for school readiness. The theory of change was revised during the inception phase of this evaluation and is the organising structure for the enquiry and analysis.

Global literature review and analysis

A review of global literature was undertaken during the evaluation. It covered the international discourse, evidence and perspectives on the relevance and role of normative frameworks and standards in ECED, other approaches and frameworks, international trends in approaches to system elements that ELDS aim to influence (such as monitoring systems, curriculum and teacher training) and how UNICEF's school readiness and ELDS approaches and activities relate to these issues and trends.

UNICEF document review and analysis

The evaluators undertook extensive internet searches for relevant UNICEF literature on the Going Global project and ECED, using terms such as ELDS, standards in ECE and ECD,

standards for early learning, early learning, child outcome standards and learning metrics in early childhood.

A UNICEF intranet search was undertaken for all CO Annual Reports (COAR), Country Programme Documents (CPD), Country Programme Action Plans (CPAP), evaluations and any other ECED related literature per country for all the sample countries and a number of substitute countries.

Requests for documentation were sent by UNICEF HQ to a sample of COs and possible substitutes according to the following criteria:

- inclusion of the six countries where the ELDS were piloted
- countries where ELDS (or equivalent) have been in place before 2012
- either ELDS 'implementation' or 'validation' stage had been reached
- representation from all UNICEF regions
- contextual factors such as country income status (World Bank data), pre-school gross enrolment levels (UNESCO Institute of Statistics data)

Country documentation was received from 23 UNICEF COs

ELDS or other standards documents were also sought for this sample and other countries, by internet search, in total 35 were collected.

Requests for relevant documentation at regional level from UNICEF regional offices (ROs) relating to ELDS activities elicited a limited response, even where other data sources suggested that such activities had taken place.

Review of ELDS

The evaluation reviewed the draft or final documents resulting from the standards or ELDS development process in 35 countries, using the following categorisations:

- Type of document (e.g. standard, indicator set, curriculum)



- What domains are covered in the documents
- What is the structure of the documents in each domain (e.g. does it include a standard statement, indicators, examples of practice for teachers or for parents etc.)
- What terminology is used for each level in the document structure (e.g. standard, domain, indicator, preparatory learning activities, and measurement)
- Whether the documents contained statements of intended uses as well as what they should not be used for.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Initially it was intended to undertake QCA to explore the logic linking inputs and conditions to the ELDS outcomes. To this end a framework of Boolean (True or False) characteristics was completed as part of the country document review. However, the data, particularly concerning outcomes, were too sparse and, with the agreement of the Client, QCA was not pursued. The codified responses do, nevertheless, quantify the country document review and triangulate the data from the CO survey (see below). Appendix 4 shows a count of the True, False and Unknown responses for each of the country characteristic statements.

Interviews

Face-to-face and telephone or Skype interviews were conducted with the following:

- UNICEF HQ staff from Education Section, ECD Section and Evaluation Office (5)
- consultants from Columbia University that formed the Going Global team (2)
- the consultant who undertook the ELDS Stocktaking exercise in 2013
- Regional ECD Advisers or Focal Points in five ROs

These interviews were based on semi-structured interview checklists and were intended to provide further information, triangulate and fill gaps in data from UNICEF global, RO and CO document reviews.

UNICEF CO survey

An online survey was offered in English, French and Spanish. Invitations to complete the survey were sent out to named staff in 108 COs. Forty two (39%) completed responses were received.

Country field visits

Country visits were undertaken in Jordan, Mongolia, South Africa and the Philippines. The purpose of the field visits collect evidence from the selected countries to inform understanding of the inputs, outputs, and the pathways to the desired outcomes as postulated in the theory of change.

The following criteria was used to select the country visit sites:

- Regional coverage
- coverage of both thematic case study areas
- a spread of different uses of ELDS at system and local levels
- availability of data on changing practices at local level, child outcomes and transition to primary education.

Table 1 shows the types of stakeholders consulted in each country, the method of consultation and the focus of enquiry: lists of institutions and people consulted are provided in Appendix 6.



TABLE 1		Stakeholders and method of consultation in thematic case studies
Who	Method	Overall focus
National		
Education Ministry: ECD unit or equivalent, Planning department, Inspectorate.	Individual interviews	Relevance of process Government buy-in Regulatory changes Sustainability plans and capacity.
Other relevant ministries, departments or agencies: Health Social welfare Family/Women Local government	Individual interviews	Relevance and alignments with other standards Understanding
Curriculum lead agency Training lead agencies	Group interview	System changes
Academia (involved in ELDS development and use)	Individual or group interviews	Relevance and alignments with other standards Understanding and buy-in Partnerships
UNICEF relevant staff covering: ECE/ECD Education Social protection M&E	Joint interview	Relevance Efficiency of process Partnerships
Funding agencies concerned with ECE (e.g.: World Bank, bilateral donors, etc.)	Individual interviews	Partnerships Efficiency Sustainability
NGOs e.g. ISSA, Save the Children etc.	Individual or joint interviews	Relevance Partnerships
Regional / district level		
Local authorities: Education office Health office Social welfare	Individual interviews	Local relevance Sustainability: capacity and budget
Implementing partners: NGOs/CSOs	Individual or joint interviews	Partnerships Relevance to local needs
Institution level		
ECE centres, and pre-school Directors and teachers	Joint interviews	
Primary school Directors and teachers	Joint interview	
Service beneficiaries		
Parents and caregivers	Individual or joint interviews	Parental understanding Parenting practices



1.2.3 Strengths and limitations

ELDS and school readiness

The evaluation terms of reference (see Appendix 1) make an explicit link between ELDS and improving school readiness. However the two concepts developed, and have been operationalised, independently, and the evaluators have not seen any documents that examine the link analytically or provide a route to operationalise ELDS in support of the UNICEF three-pronged approach to school readiness. In practice, the term is used loosely, often *de facto* to mean that a child has attended some or any form of pre-schooling.

Documentation

The desk review relied heavily upon documentation from COs, ROs and from UNICEF HQ. The inputs and progress of the ELDS development

process, its activities, results and outcomes have been poorly and unsystematically documented at global, regional and country levels. There has been little or no systematic monitoring of these initiatives at country or regional levels.

A particular challenge was the identification and acquisition of documentation about the preparation and implementation of the *Going Global* project and its follow-up, particularly by UNICEF HQ and the Columbia University team, in the years 2005-2013.

The omission of this documentation from the evaluation review and analysis has limited the evaluators' understanding of the range, extent and quality of UNICEF-funded technical assistance and of the nature of the engagement and activities by government and other stakeholders in those countries that benefited from UNICEF support.



CHAPTER 2

ELDS IN CONTEXT

In this chapter we summarise the global discourse on school readiness and standards in early learning, how UNICEF's school readiness framework relates to this discourse and how UNICEF's approach to ELDS is situated within it.

■ KEY FINDINGS

The expansion and improvements of ECED provision is a global priority, and there is recognition among ECED professionals of the need for outcome measures and indicators

In general there is a lack or paucity of evidence on what contributes to children fulfilling their potential

There is little analysis of how learning and development standards or school readiness constructs relate to the realisation of children's rights.

ELDS work predated and presumably influenced UNICEF's work on school readiness, which has become an important construct in ECED.

2.1 SCHOOL READINESS

UNICEF committed to the concept of school readiness in the MTSP 2006-2009. At that time the term was widely used in ECED policy and planning and had become an important driver for ECED initiatives.

Early childhood support

Britto et al (2012b), in a contribution to the post-2015 planning, have made the case that early childhood support, for child and family, potentially contributes to reducing inequities (between individuals and between systemically marginalized groups), and has a disproportionate impact on children's future lives compared to other educational investment. The potential to contribute to equity has been an important driver for increasing and targeting ECED provision.

Based on a literature review of 20 efficacy or effectiveness studies and programme assessments, Engle et al. (2011) conclude that participation in pre-primary education is essential to prepare children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, for school.

These ideas have resonated with the increasingly prominent rationales derived from neuroscience for more early childhood interventions and early stimulation.

Equity in provision remains a challenge. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for pre-primary education in low-income countries is only 15 percent, compared to the global GER of 48 percent (UNESCO, 2012). Furthermore enrolment is growing: the GMR (UNESCO, 2015) shows a global increase of 64 percent in enrolment between 1999 and 2012, but the evidence is that enrolment remains inequitable and that, in some cases, inequity is increasing (see for



example UNICEF 2014 on the effect of rapidly increasing private provision on equity).

Against this background, Rao et al. (2014) argue that effective policy and investment decisions in this area require reliable international indicators/standards that consider all children, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, so as to make children's learning or developmental outcomes measurable and comparable.

Although there is considerable evidence for the efficacy of early childhood interventions, the case is by no means cut and dried. Boyden (2015) addresses the complexities of children's lives, and the impact of poverty upon them, and the difficulties in predicting educational outcomes. Drawing from the United Kingdom Department for International Development's (DFID) Young Lives Project which followed 12,000 children for 15 years in four countries (India, Ethiopia, Peru and Viet Nam), she points out that participation in pre-school education is not a silver bullet. Poverty, inequality and cultural and linguistic disparities, as well as shortcomings of formal schooling, can be powerful factors in influencing educational outcomes. There is a wide range of views and beliefs about children's transition from home to school, so theoretical assumptions have to be explicit and methodologies carefully designed.

Children's progress in school

Achieving universal access to quality primary education for all children was one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Fit for Children (UN General Assembly Resolution 2002).

There has been uneven progress towards this goal, but even amongst those countries that have succeeded in improving access to primary education; the progress of children within school has often been problematic, particularly for the least advantaged. Problems include late entry, poor attendance, high dropout rates, high repeat rates and poor performance.

There have been many efforts to improve primary school systems but there is also recognition that school improvement programmes may not be sufficient to improve outcomes, especially for poor and vulnerable children, who may therefore benefit from additional support to become more 'school ready'.

These have led UNICEF and some other international organisations, such as the Aga Khan Foundation and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, to focus on questions of definition and measurement of school readiness of children. UNICEF's concern is reflected in the KRA in MTSP 2006-2009 seeking to promote the introduction of standards for school readiness.

The Education for All movement (EFA) (UNESCO, 2000), included, alongside a call for universal access to quality primary education (Goal 2), the first international commitment to ECED in *Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*. The Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) draws on evidence of the contribution of early childhood care and education to children's life chances, including learning, and emphasises the range of domains of action, including health and nutrition alongside psycho-social and cognitive development. The EFA literature did not explicitly talk of school readiness and, in discussion of programmes, warned that those for younger children should not be "mere downward extensions of formal school systems" (UNESCO, 2000 para 31).

The concept of transition

Even within the more limited framework of school readiness, there are broad and narrow approaches (Perry et al, 2014). At its broadest, rather than specifically referring to the point at which a child enters school, the concept of 'transition' aims to capture children's preparedness and their reactions to:



key events and/or processes occurring at specific periods or turning points in the life course. They are generally linked to changes in a person's appearance, activity, status, roles and relationships as well as associated changes in the use of physical and social space, and/or changing contexts of cultural beliefs, discourses and practices, especially when these are linked to changes of setting, and in some cases dominant language. (Vogler et al, 2008, p1)

The UNICEF Innocenti Centre, reviewing the position of young children in developed countries (UNICEF IRC, 2008), has argued that the key transition for young children is no longer the transition to school, but the transition to childcare or some kind of institutional setting before school begins. They have rated countries according to the conditions which make such a transition easy or difficult for children – including a consideration of the employment conditions of parents that make combining work and caring responsibilities more compatible.

Standards and early childhood support

UNICEF's call in the MTSP 2006-2009 is for standards to measure school readiness based on the expectations of children's development, abilities and skills at the point of entry into school. Its earlier work on ELDS aligns with that commitment.

Others have voiced concern that the use of measurable standards influences a shift in pre-school provision to a more school-like culture, at the expense of play and individual autonomy, especially if the indicators concentrate on traditional cognitive skills so that ECED provision becomes more like (traditional) primary school. The shift towards ECED practice that reflects schooling has been dubbed 'schoolification'.

There are no empirical data but there have been concerns expressed over schoolification of early childhood, especially in countries where free play and social development in the early years are highly valued. For example, there

has been such a response to the New Zealand government's policies on school readiness with its emphasis on national standards of academic preparedness (Alcock and Haggerty, 2013).

Similarly, Bennett (2007) points out that standards-based approaches tend to align pre-school pedagogies with those adopted in schools and, as a result, pre-schools are inclined to adopt subject-based curricula and to focus on skills deemed most useful for school learning. However, Kagan et al (2013) assert that ELDS-style standards reflect expectations of child development across several domains for early learning and development, predicated on the belief that all domains contribute to school readiness and mostly benefit from a pedagogy that recognises the importance of play and children's learning autonomy.

Other agencies have argued that standards set up a universal model of child development, assuming homogeneity and masking individual and contextual differences in each child's learning and development. As a result, there are arguments to adopt more broadly stated and applied learning goals rather than to establish age-specific learning standards in ECE (European Union Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care, 2014).

School readiness and rights

References to children's rights as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in school readiness and standards literature are rare in the literature. The CRC establishes the right to primary education and to an education that supports children's broadly defined development.

In Woodhead and Moss (2007) Kagan summarises:

Readiness, while remaining important, is now a prelude to discourse regarding rights— young children's rights to more equitable and excellent services (Woodhead, 2006). As such, 'readiness' may be best regarded not as a fixed construct, but as a theoretical elixir



that perpetually evokes new ideas about how young children should best be served.

UNICEF and school readiness

UNICEF has supported school readiness as a concept that seeks to improve the match between the child and the institutions that serve the child (Scott-Little, et al., 2006) and, as Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani and Shallwani (2006) point out, enhancing school readiness is one strategy to close learning gaps and to improve equity in learning and development among young children.

School readiness as a framework has become an important driver for UNICEF interventions: in a UNICEF paper (Britto, Kohen et al, 2006) the analysis of school readiness recognises the importance of parents and of primary schools in optimising children's transitions to, and experience of, more formal education. It posits a triple focus of school readiness: the child; the family and the primary school.

Although the discourse of ELDS (as reflected in the reports of *Going Global*, covering the period 2003 and 2005) predated UNICEF's emerging work on a school readiness framework (Britto, Kohen, et al, 2006), it can be assumed to have been influential, drawing as it did on the same Columbia and UNICEF HQ team members. Shortly thereafter and in parallel to ELDS work, UNICEF espoused the concept of school readiness to focus on the transition of children into formal education and to seek better and more equal realisation of children's potential in school.

The final school readiness concept document (Britto, 2012), presumably UNICEF's prime source of guidance, clarified the three contributory elements to school readiness: in that document passing reference is made to ELDS or other standards and their relationship to school readiness.

The ELDS Stocktaking Report (UNICEF, 2013) notes that ELDS can contribute to all three elements in school readiness: they can provide

measures of development across pertinent domains for children and might also contribute to parental awareness and drive improvement in early primary practices.

2.2 STANDARDS FOR ECED

2.2.1 Learning and development standards

As a conceptual contribution to the *Going Global* project, Kagan and Britto (2005) proposed six areas in which statements of expectations or standards contribute to ECED systems (Table 2).

In most countries ELDS was a new element in this categorisation of system-wide instruments intended to detail and measure what children should know and be able to do in the domains of physical, cognitive, socio-emotional and language development, canonically from birth to eight years of age.

Kagan and Britto (2005) argue that, because ELDS can introduce a new clarity about the holistic scope and the (age-related) achievement levels, they are a pre-requisite for developing meaningful and coherent standards in the other areas (such as teacher or access to service standards).

There has been some critique of learning standards for ECED. Some authors point out that achievement of defined levels in standards cannot be universal but vary considerably according to local circumstances and individual profiles.

Ebrahim (2012), for instance, reviews the literature, the South African literature in particular, to critique the relevance of Euro-American standards in Africa, especially in relation to language of instruction.

Various anthropological studies confirm the differences, sometimes extreme, between local conceptions of development and international ones. (Gottlieb 2004, Twum Danso and Ame 2012). Serpell, working in Zambia over 30 years, has, in a series of landmark studies, been

**TABLE 2** Types of standards for early childhood (adapted from UNICEF, 2013)

Type of Standards	Description of Standards
Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)	What children know and are able to do. These are the heart of ECD and can be used to measure children's competence, to guide pedagogy and instruction, to help families understand children's development and to inform the nature of instruction for young children.
Parenting Standards	What parents should know and do to facilitate their young children's health, development, and education. These standards focus on parenting practices, care-giving behaviour and the provision of stimulating and enriching learning opportunities to young children.
Teacher Standards	What teachers should know and do to enhance their students' learning. These standards inform teaching practices, educational interactions, pedagogy and opportunities for learning.
Social Indicator Standards	Information about relevant social and economic conditions of children and their families, such as the number of children living in poverty.
Access to Service Standards	The nature of services that exist and the access that children have to them.
System Effectiveness Standards	The degree to which services and programmes work together to improve overall effectiveness.

developing alternative conceptions of standards, based on local collectivist assumptions about development helpfulness, co-operation, obligation and tradition, for example. He argues that the inappropriateness of Anglo-European standards has been damaging to children's educational progress (Serpell 2008).

The nature of monitoring and evaluation of children's progress at school, and of their lives, over time, requires a variety of approaches to track the complex interactions. Howard White has argued that much of the 'rigorous' methodology used for evaluation has been comparatively simplistic in the range of indicators used and outcomes measured, and has tended to downplay cultural context (White, 2014, Leroy et al, 2010). The Young Lives project (Boyden, 2015) in particular raises questions of poverty, inequality and cultural complexity.

Recognising some of these concerns UNICEF has worked to ensure that ELDS were developed nationally in keeping with national understanding and cultures.

In a desk review on existing indices and indicators, Tinajero and Loizillon (2012) suggest important aspects of an early childhood development index: they can be summarised as:

- What are the age groups to be covered?
- Are they focused on individuals or populations?
- What domains will be included?
- What are the data collection methods?
- Are standards free of cultural and individual bias?

Experiences of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in the design and implementation of new curricula and standards have provided lessons on child-focused curricula, stakeholders' and experts' engagement, coherence in learning, time for changes and review, management of ECE centres and the use of simple and common language in the curriculum or standards (OECD, 2011).



2.2.2 Other standards and measures for ECED

There is broad consensus in the Anglo/American literature on the aspects of ECED provision that lead to the achievement of desired standards. These are usually divided into two categories: process variables and structural variables. Process variables reflect the nature of adult-child relationships such as personal care routines, listening and talking, activities and interactions and relationships (Peralta, 2008). Structural variables are to do with the learning environment space, structures and resources - and how it promotes and facilitates learning.

The most commonly used test measurement of process and structural variables is the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. Various adaptations of this scale have been used across the world, for example in rural Bangladesh (Aboud 2006), although there is criticism of its application beyond America and Europe.

There are international and more local efforts to develop tools that capture early childhood learning and development in holistic, feasible, child-sensitive and reliable ways. They include: the Early Development Instrument (EDI) (Janus & Offord, 2007), the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4) (UNICEF, 2009) and the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF) (UNESCO and Center for Universal Education at Brookings, 2014).

The EDI is a comprehensive teacher-report instrument that assesses school readiness in five major developmental domains of physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge (Janus and Offord, 2007). The EDI has been validated in different country contexts (Janus, Brinkman, & Duku, 2011) and been used as a population monitoring tool in 14 countries (School Readiness to Learn Project, 2015). Results from the studies using EDI as an index (Cushon, Vu, Janzen and Muhajarine, 2011; Hertzman and Bertrand, 2007; Kohen,

Oliver and Pierre, 2009; Carpiano, Lloyd and Hertzman, 2009) have allowed examination of the role of socio-economic inequalities in child development from multiple perspectives with the aggregation of individual data to the group or community level.

The MICS is a household survey initiated by UNICEF to assist countries in monitoring the situations of children and women in less-developed countries: data are garnered from nationally representative and internationally comparable samples (Bornstein et al., 2012). Since 2009, ten items, which address children's early literacy and numeracy, motor development, physical health, approaches to learning, and social and emotional development respectively, have been added to the ECD module in MICS 4 (UNICEF, 2009).

The LMTF, working as a technical part of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals' global machinery, is seeking indicators of learning achievement to strengthen the measurement of learning in national and international monitoring. The final Phase I report (UNESCO and Center for Universal Education at Brookings, 2014) addresses three major issues: 1) what learning is important globally; 2) how the learning should be measured; and 3) how measurement of learning can improve education quality. It put forward a holistic framework of seven learning domains (physical well-being, social and emotional, culture and the arts, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, numeracy and mathematics, and science and technology), which are important for all children from early childhood through lower secondary. The report considered a hybrid model for improving the measurement of learning at a global level and at a national or sub-national level.

These efforts seek global indicators across countries and cultures and take a holistic approach to measures across several domains, since this is recognised as necessary to understand the results of pre-school interventions and their contribution to school readiness



(Linan-Thompson, 2014). However, as Rao and colleagues (2014) point out, cultural and contextual differences in assessment techniques and in the overarching constructs to be measured in different regions are major technical and political obstacles to global ECD assessment.

Even when standards for early learning and development are adopted in a country, monitoring and assessment can be very erratic, especially if there is a mixed economy of provision. In most poor countries any pre-school provision is, by default, in the private sector

(Woodhead and Streuli 2012). Unless the law specifies compliance of some kind, there is no obligation on providers to improve, and no financial incentives for them to do so, especially in poorer areas where they are dependent on parental income to survive. The very mixed forms of provision in poor and middle income countries, from rural community groups to upmarket urban providers, have to be factored in to discussions and studies about the development and utilisation of standards for early learning and development.



CHAPTER 3

UNICEF'S SUPPORT FOR ELDS

This chapter considers the inputs, activities and immediate outputs of UNICEF's support to ELDS through the *Going Global* project and its follow-on activities. It describes the reach of UNICEF's ELDS work, and some of the challenges of the development process in country contexts.

■ KEY FINDINGS

UNICEF support to the development of ELDS was a considerable investment across many countries, but it did not extend to supporting the implementation of ELDS

The *Going Global* model of ELDS proved highly influential but UNICEF HQ's steer and oversight of ELDS work ended with the end of the project

Take-up of ELDS work has been very varied across regions and commitment is strongest in those regions with a tradition of standards in public services

Very few countries have chosen to develop ELDS for children from 0-8 years old, as recommended in *Going Global*.

3.1 RATIONALE FOR SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Prior to 2002 UNICEF had been working in some countries on measurement and assessment of early childhood learning and development with some early innovators in 'home grown' standards.

For example, in 1992 Cuba instituted the 'Educate Your Child' programme at a national level, which includes a comprehensive child evaluation process for children aged 0 to 6 based on holistic standards of development and learning. In 1998, Comoros developed a pilot programme with 12 schools after a school readiness provision in the Education Policy enabled them to create a model for renovated Koranic Education based on holistic early learning and development standards for children aged 3 to 5.

An integrated approach to early childhood was the second Priority area in UNICEF's MTSP for 2002-2005 (UNICEF, 2001). At the level of national policy, UNICEF's support to integrated ECED was to include:

(a) Support for the review and strengthening of comprehensive national policies for ECD, covering at least the five key elements of ECD and including the development of appropriate regulations, legislation, standards and communication initiatives;

(b) Support for the further development of indicators and data collection and analysis, disaggregated by age and gender, for the monitoring of key elements of young child survival, growth and development where these are still weak (e.g., for emotional and cognitive development).

This provided the rationale for the *Going Global* project (see Box 1) in 2002. Subsequently, and



presumably based on the work of *Going Global* in the six pilot countries, the MTSP 2006-2009 provided further rationale and impetus for UNICEF COs and ROs to support ELDS development: Focus Area 2, Key result area (KRA) 1, aimed “to improve children’s developmental readiness to start primary school on time, especially marginalized children” and included the target to “increase from 6 to 40 the number of countries with nationwide standards for monitoring school readiness as a component of developmental readiness in their ECD and learning programmes” (UNICEF, 2005).

The ELDS Stocktaking Report (UNICEF, 2013) states that UNICEF “initiated a global process for supporting the creation of national ELDS.... based on five needs and assumptions”:

- UNICEF’s global policy mandate to support the implementation and fulfilment of the CRC, EFA and the MDGs that require monitoring progress in early childhood on a range of domains. ELDS have the potential to provide UNICEF with clear benchmarks “to measure progress on the fulfilment of children’s rights, and national/sub-national achievements in improving child outcomes over time” (UNICEF, 2013).
- Children lack school readiness: “ELDS offer a strategy for promoting a more holistic view of child development, by making caregivers and service providers aware of a diverse range of benchmarks children should achieve over time to become ready for school” (UNICEF, 2013).
- Low rates of pre-primary school enrolment persist: the ELDS Stocktaking Report does not say how adoption of ELDS might directly impact low rates.
- Strong evidence in support of quality ECED programmes: ELDS can impact quality “by establishing clear expectations about children’s learning and development, and improving instructional approaches with young children and their caregivers” (UNICEF, 2013).

- Lack of culturally appropriate ECD indicators: “empowering a broad coalition of national partners... ELDS can be used to monitor national and sub-national progress according to context-specific values and principles” (UNICEF, 2013).

3.2 THEORY OF CHANGE FOR UNICEF SUPPORT FOR ELDS

The theory of change builds on the ELDS Stocktaking Report and identifies the global/regional and national level inputs, activities and outputs that should lead to national adoption of ELDS (Figure 1). These inputs and activities have been the work of the UNICEF HQ led *Going Global* project and subsequent work supported by ROs and COs, sometimes drawing on technical assistance from the team of experts in *Going Global*.

3.2.1 Global/regional advocacy, awareness-raising and support on ELDS

The theory of change assumes activities to advocate for, and raise awareness of, early learning and development standards, as well as supporting work to develop them. At the global level this is represented principally by *Going Global* (see p 16), supported by UNICEF HQ, and led by Columbia University collaborating with a UNICEF HQ team.

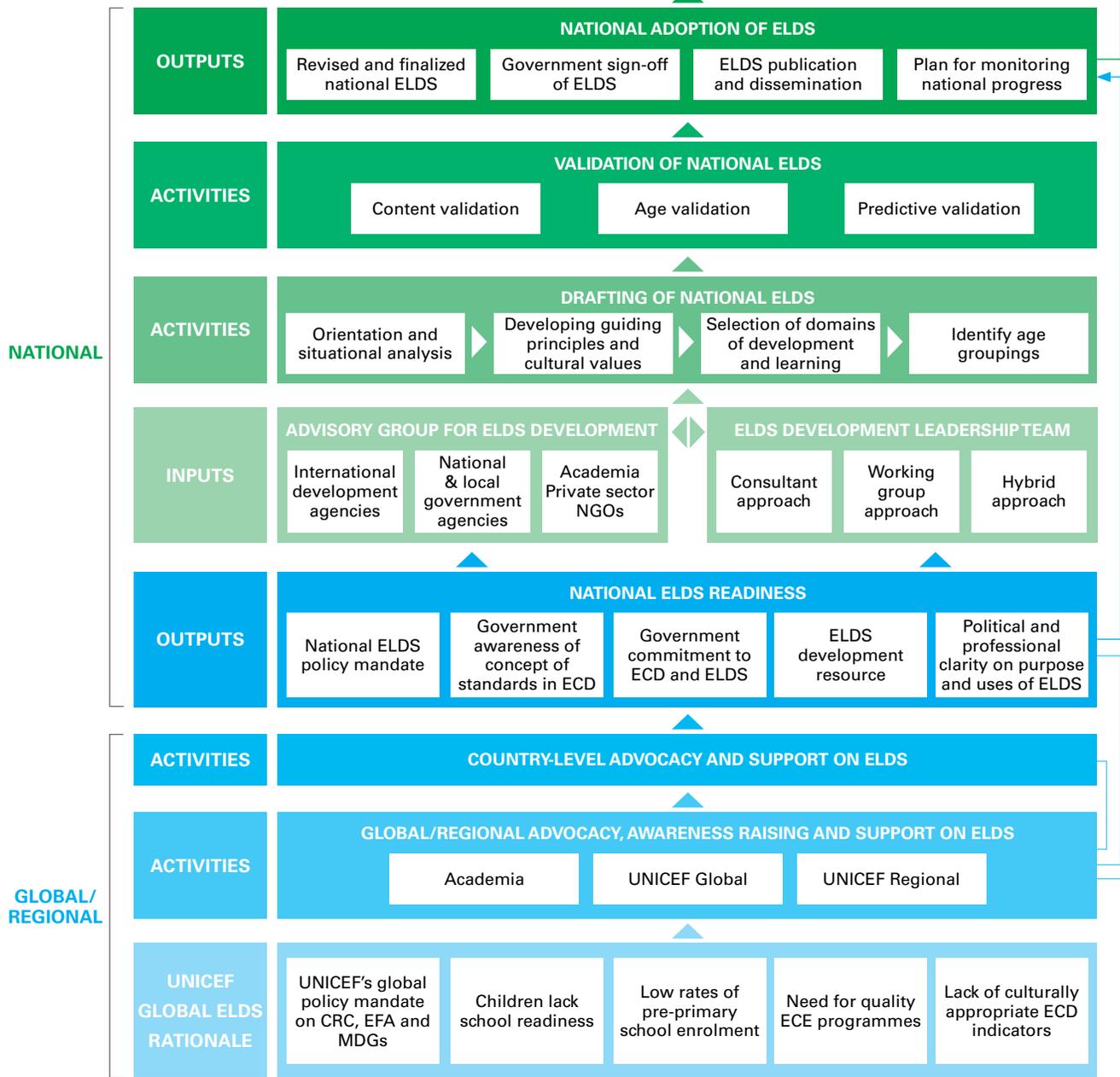
The review of UNICEF documentation (and the thematic field research) provided no evidence of advocacy work specifically related to early learning and development standards prior to the beginning of the *Going Global* project. COARs and CPAPs for the period reveal broader advocacy initiatives on assessing and improving ECED, often focusing on the need for a more holistic approach and to engage the plethora of different agencies and organisations involved in delivering ECED. Neither standards, nor indicators of child development, are mentioned as part of these advocacy campaigns.



Going Global itself initiated a range of awareness-raising meetings, discussions and workshops in the six pilot countries, replicated in other countries where UNICEF subsequently began ELDS work (Figure 2). This awareness-raising and technical capacity development proved to be influential on national policy

and stakeholders. However, no ELDS advocacy plans were produced, and these initiatives and events, though often described in the ELDS reporting as ‘advocacy’, cannot be regarded as such according to the UNICEF advocacy toolkit definition³.

FIGURE 1 The theory of change showing inputs, ELDS activities and expected outputs



³ “advocacy involves delivering evidence-based recommendations to decision makers, stakeholders and/or those who influence them. Advocacy is a means of seeking change in governance, attitudes, power, social relations and institutional functions”. (Cohen et al, 2010)



Going Global with early learning and development standards: the project

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The project was initially conceived as a response by UNICEF HQ to the MTSP 2002-2005 by facilitating the development of nationally accepted early childhood development standards, which would meet the gap in assessing and monitoring early childhood development. The project began in October 2002. Six pilot countries became the focus of the project: Brazil, Ghana, Jordan, Paraguay, Philippines, and South Africa.

The ELDS concept and generic model embedded a holistic notion of child development with clearly identified domains broken down into age-appropriate statements of what children were expected to be able to do in each domain. The domains covered were:

- *Language and literacy development*, which includes children's language, ability to communicate, and early literacy skills.
- *Social and emotional development* serves as the foundation for relationships that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, school, and larger community, and refers to a child's ability to express a range of emotions and interact with adults and peers in a culturally acceptable manner.
- *Motor development* in children encompasses a range of activities, from large motor movements, such as running and jumping, to fine motor work, such as drawing, beading, etc.
- *Logic and reasoning* has been defined in terms of children's ability to understand relationships between objects, events, and people, beyond physical attributes. This domain also includes children's mathematical knowledge and overall cognitive development.
- *Approaches to learning* refers to a child's disposition and style towards becoming involved in learning and acquiring knowledge. Examples include task persistence, curiosity, and motivation.

Using this conceptual framework and generic model, support under Going Global prioritised a process for ELDS framed within national priorities involving education and other stakeholder communities so as to build sustainable commitment and ownership of the process and of the ELDS (Kagan and Britto, 2005), and it was anticipated that the generic model would be built on and adapted to be nationally and culturally relevant.

Columbia University provided expertise on the ELDS conceptual framework as well as ongoing technical assistance to the UNICEF HQ ECD team and the focal points in pilot countries.

THE ELDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The ELDS development process as recommended in Going Global included:

- a conceptualisation of ELDS in five to six domains of child development
- an emphasis on national development of ELDS to take account of cultural diversity and ensure ownership of the standards
- an exploration of whether and where the ELDS approach fitted into both the country ECE and ECD priorities and UNICEF ECE and ECD programming
- setting up a national team of stakeholders
- vetting draft standards by the UNICEF/Columbia team and provision of more support (e.g. workshops, documents, teleconferences) to ensure coherence in understanding of ELDS
- revision of the standards and validation for both content and age appropriateness
- final revision and affirmation of the standards and development of plans for their implementation

WORKSHOPS

A 3-day workshop was held in Istanbul, Turkey in July 2003 for the six pilot countries plus participants from four other countries in the CEECIS region, with the specific focus on "how to develop early learning standards for children 4- to 5-years of age, with applications for a range of domains (e.g., behavioral, developmental) and ages (birth to 7 years of age) in early childhood" (UNICEF, 2004a).

A second workshop was held in July 2004 in Brazil. The workshop was attended by representatives of the six pilot countries and participants from five other countries from the region. The goal for the pilot countries was to develop "a clear understanding of the validation, evaluation, implementation, and dissemination strategies they could use" (Kagan and Britto, 2005). For 'new' countries, the goal was to develop a working knowledge of the ELDS approach and assess the utility and feasibility of ELDS for their countries.

The project officially ended in December 2004, with the final report produced in March 2005.

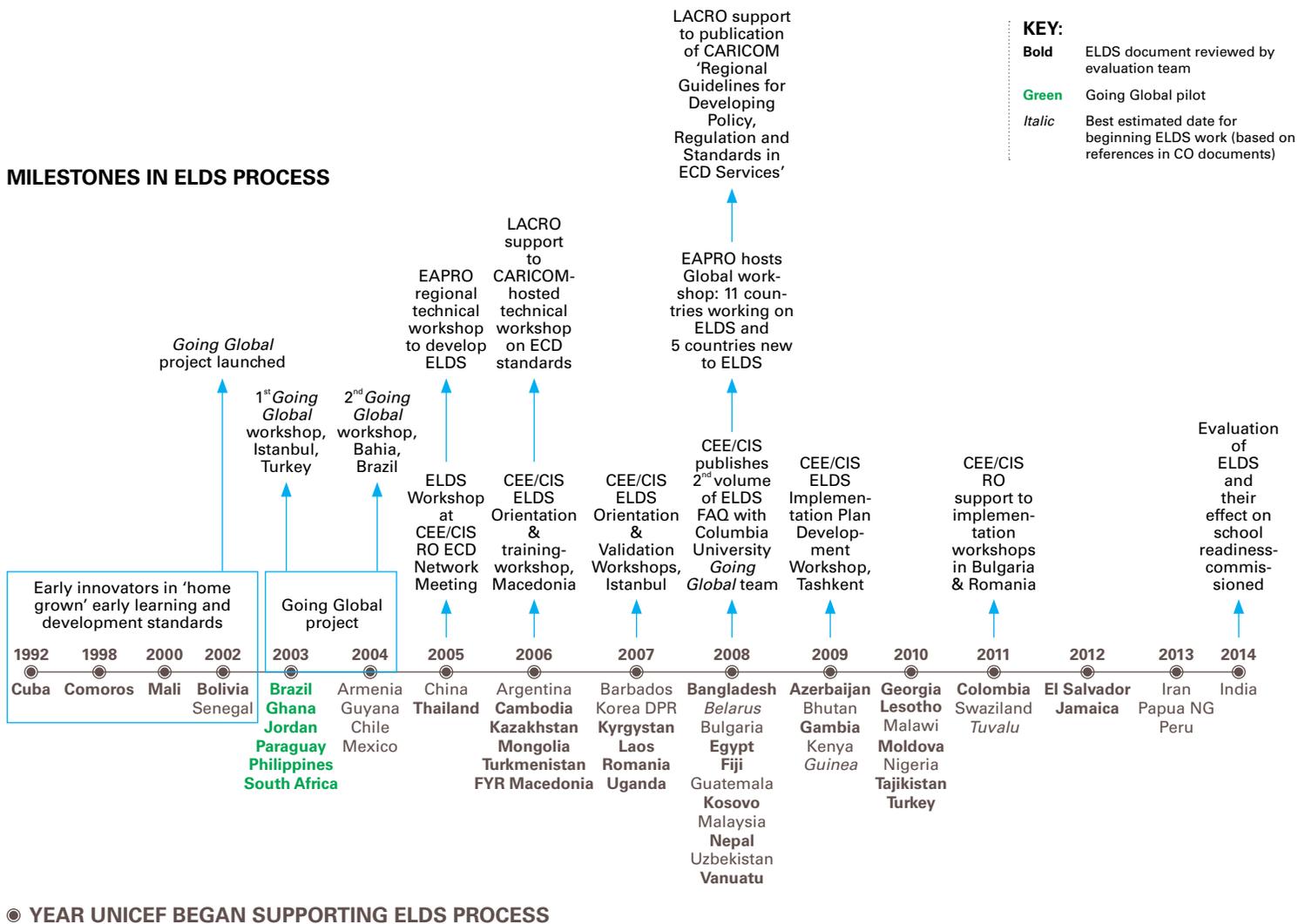


3.2.2 Country level advocacy and support

The theory of change assumed that national professional communities, led and supported by UNICEF COs, would advocate for the development of ELDS, building on the *Going Global* work. During the two-year project UNICEF led awareness-raising meetings, workshops, etc. in the six pilot countries, particularly among ECD and education professionals, but also working at national level to engage different sectoral stakeholders in discussion of ELDS, raising awareness and building commitment.

The two *Going Global* workshops included participants from other countries in the region (Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) respectively), in several of which UNICEF supported similar follow-up work to kick start the development of ELDS. By 2007-2008 UNICEF ROs in several regions had begun to actively support ELDS development in countries in their regions, and continued to do so through regional-level workshops, technical assistance from regional resource persons, and exchange of information between countries (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 Timeline of UNICEF-supported ELDS work





3.2.3 National ELDS readiness

The theory of change assumes that the advocacy, awareness-raising and active support to ELDS development globally and nationally would stimulate a level of ‘ELDS readiness’. This might manifest in national policy changes, or at least government awareness of and commitment to the concept of ELDS backed up by financial and other resources, and with clear professional understanding and commitment to ELDS development.

The extent to which the inputs and activities, supported by UNICEF, led directly to national policy mandates is difficult to assess based on the evidence available to the evaluation. The government voice is largely missing from the documentary evidence available, though the *Going Global* reports and the evaluation’s CO survey data provide some indication of ‘ELDS readiness’ among the six pilot countries.

In several countries, government awareness of the concept of early learning and development standards in ECD was already established by 2002 when *Going Global* began, either through

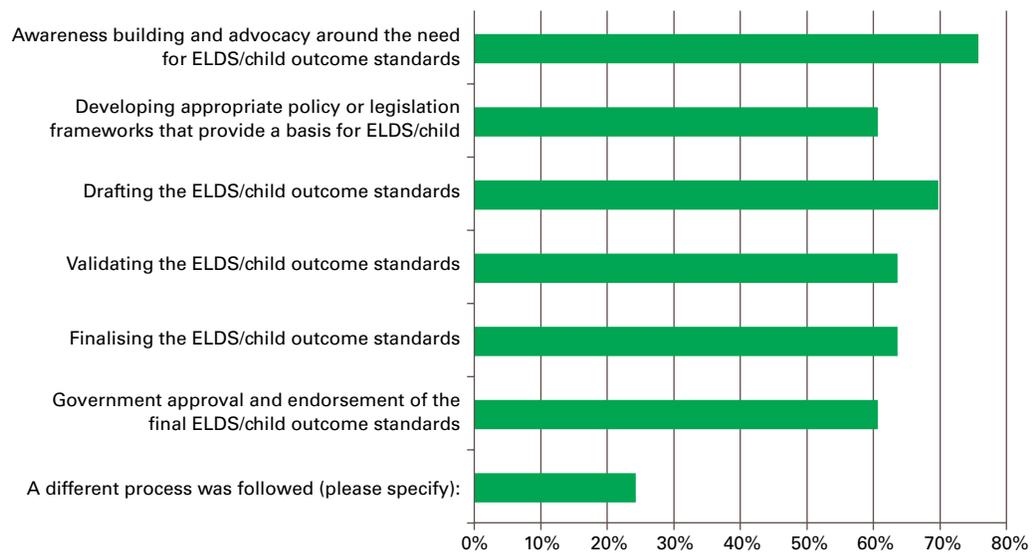
innovative work (e.g. Comoros, Mali, Bolivia, Senegal), or pre-existing professional awareness and preparatory work (e.g. Philippines). UNICEF’s early work in *Going Global* and subsequent initiatives at RO and CO level appear to have resulted in widespread government awareness of, and commitment to, the ELDS concept. Some 25 countries began the development of national ELDS in the four years immediately after the *Going Global* project (see Figure 2).

CO survey data confirm that government commitment resulted in national policy or legislative mandates for ELDS in 20 of 33 countries (60%) (Figure 3).

The *Going Global* project reported initial challenges in ensuring political and professional clarity on the purpose and use of ELDS and the emphasis in most workshops was on establishing this common understanding and clarity. The CO survey data show that this remained a challenge in 25 out of 30 countries as ELDS were developed (Figure 4).

FIGURE 3

CO survey responses (N=33) to question “What stages have been completed in the process of developing the ELDS/similar child outcome standards?”



**TABLE 3** Regional spread of ELDS: final and final draft documents

Region	# countries with early learning & development standards before 2002	# countries that began UNICEF supported ELDS development post 2002	# countries that have final standards or UNICEF-supported ELDS (including final draft in use)	% countries in UNICEF region with standards or UNICEF-supported ELDS (final or draft in use)
CEECIS	0	15	13	59%
ROSA	0	4	3	36%
MENA	0	3	2	10%
EAPRO	0	12	9	33%
LACRO	2	12	8	22%
ESARO	1	6	6	27%
WCARO	2	4	5	21%
Total	5	56	46	

Data sources: adapted from ELDS Stocktaking Report (2013); additional data from evaluation CO survey

3.2.4 ELDS development

The theory of change assumes that the ELDS will be developed after UNICEF’s work at global and national levels to promote ELDS readiness.

The ELDS Stocktaking Report (UNICEF, 2013) and the CO survey show the extent of development activity: 61 countries (including five early innovators) began work on developing home-grown child-outcome standards or UNICEF-supported ELDS (Figure 2). Of these 61, 56 countries are known to have begun the process of ELDS development after 2002, either as pilot countries in *Going Global* or as a result of UNICEF awareness-raising and support after the project ended. Table 3 shows the regional spread of the countries that have ELDS (final or a draft in use). UNICEF regions CEECIS, LAC and EAP have been the most active in take-up of ELDS work at national level. In these data it is notable that two of the regions with the highest take-up of ELDS among their countries, CEECIS and EAPRO, have a high proportion of countries which have transitioned from communist or socialist systems, in which there are strong traditions of use and compliance with standards in the public sector.

The CO survey data (Table 4) show that it took, on average, just under three years to produce a final ELDS document, although some countries took up to eight years, with delays attributed mainly to validation work.

TABLE 4 ELDS development process: time taken for each phase (years) (from survey of CO)

	Mean	Max	Min	Median
Advocacy	1.79	5	1	1
Drafting	1.53	4	1	1
Validation	1.85	4	1	2
Endorsement	1.44	3	1	1
TOTAL	5.94	9	3	6.5

Advisory group and leadership teams for ELDS development

The theory of change assumes two main inputs necessary for the effective development of ELDS based on the *Going Global* model: setting up a cross-sectoral Advisory Group, the membership of which would include personnel



from government agencies, ECD academics and practitioners from the various ECD service providers, international donors (including UNICEF itself) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as appropriate. This Advisory Group would then mandate a professional Working Group to lead the actual process of ELDS development, supported by external consultants (either from the *Going Global* team or regional experts) as appropriate.

All countries starting ELDS development with UNICEF support after 2002 appear to have followed this model, setting up initial advisory groups and, subsequently, ELDS leadership teams or working parties to begin drafting. The country documents show that, conceptually, the need for cross-sectoral collaboration was recognised in the process of developing ELDS, and this was reflected in the membership of advisory groups and, to a lesser extent, the leadership teams.

However, this cross-sectoral commitment and collaboration for ELDS development proved challenging to maintain: the CO survey data

show that in 27 out of 30 countries ‘getting cross-sector coordination and input’ for ELDS development was either a moderate or major challenge (Figure 4).

Drafting national ELDS

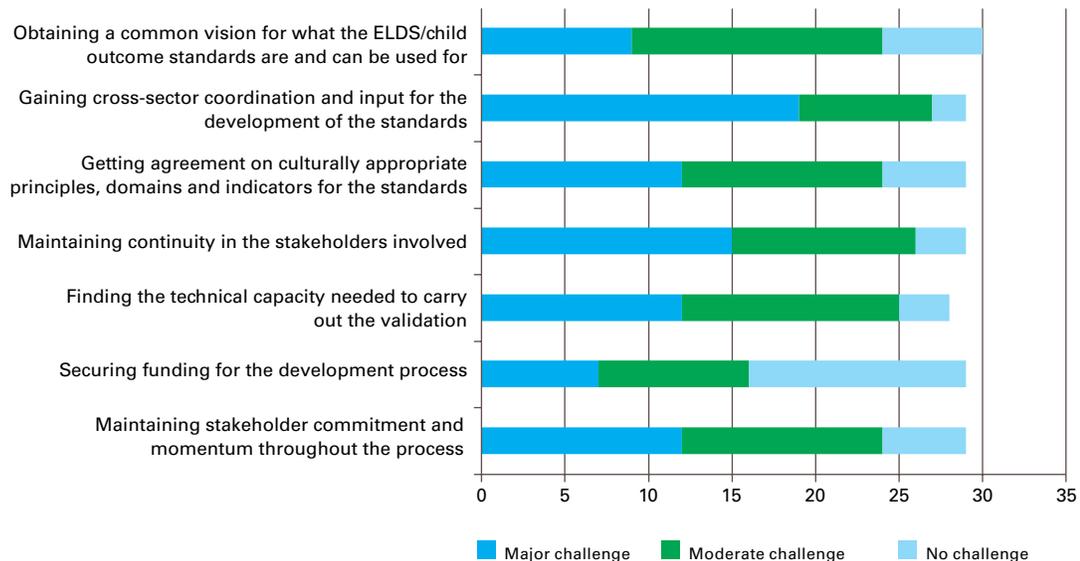
The theory of change assumes that the inputs from national advisory groups and mandated working groups would lead to the drafting of ELDS documents taking into account the national context and priorities.

In total 46 countries are known to have developed a draft ELDS document, some of which have remained in draft because of, for example, delays in validation and final revision (examples from the CO survey include Azerbaijan, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho and Malaysia).

Validation of national ELDS

The theory of change assumes that, following the *Going Global* model, a national exercise of content, age and predictive validation of the drafted ELDS will be undertaken.

FIGURE 4 CO survey responses to question “Were any of the following a challenge in developing the standards?” (N=30)



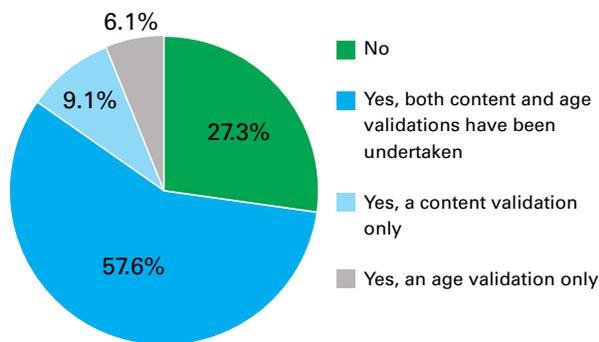


The process of validation proved the most time-consuming and challenging: the CO survey and country documentation confirm that validation is seen as a significant and technically demanding task.

Only content and age validation of ELDS have been attempted by most countries (Figure 5): the early discussion of predictive validation in *Going Global* has hardly been pursued: only COs in Kazakhstan, Ghana, Nepal and Cuba reported that all three stages of validation, including predictive validation, had been completed (UNICEF, 2013). In the CO survey, 19 countries out of 33 respondents (57.6%) report completing age and content validation (Figure 5) and none predictive validation.

Many countries struggled to find the technical capacity, money or momentum to take them through the validation research exercise. In the CO survey, 12 out of 30 country respondents said that finding the technical capacity to carry out the validation was a major challenge (Figure 4).

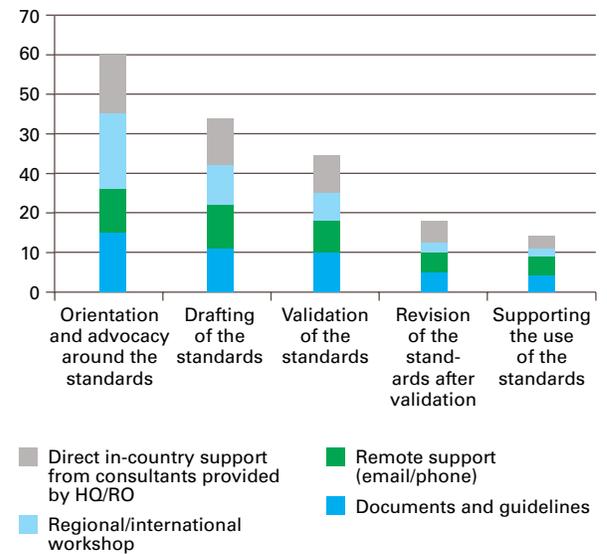
FIGURE 5 CO survey data (N=33): "Have the standards been validated?"



The CO survey data (Figure 5) show that, of 33 countries responding, nine have not completed any validation (these include Bolivia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Egypt and Comoros).

According to CO documentation and thematic field research sources, a mix of methods has

FIGURE 6 CO survey responses to question "Have you received any of the following types of support from UNICEF HQ or your RO at different stages of developing ELDS/child outcome standards?" (N=32)



been used for validation, involving questionnaires for ECED specialists and focus groups.

CO survey data show that, in the majority (18 out of 24) of countries responding to the question, the Ministry of Education led the validation exercise, working with a representative team. Validation exercises usually sought inputs from government, UNICEF COs, NGOs, academics and experts. Few countries report consulting with practitioners, parents or children: only Macedonia reports that they included observation of children in the validation as well as focus group discussions with parents.

The selection of children for age validation has been a critical point in understanding how standards might be made relevant to the whole population. The CO survey data show that the 21 countries responding to the question used the validation process to examine the relevance and applicability of national ELDS to:



- boys and girls (90 percent),
- those living in rural or urban communities (76 percent);
- children with different socio-economic status (30 percent),
- different ethnic minorities (29 percent),
- different language groups (38 percent),
- children with special educational needs (24 percent).

Only ten out of 30 countries in the CO survey said that they had received direct consultant support from UNICEF HQ or ROs to assist with validation: several COs in the ELDS stocktaking exercise highlighted the validation as the point at which they would have wanted additional consultant support.

3.2.5 National adoption of ELDS

The theory of change assumes that the final output of all the activities supported by UNICEF at global, regional and national levels will be national adoption of a context-specific final ELDS document.

Revised and finalised national ELDS

As noted above (Table 3) 46 countries have either finalised their ELDS, or there is a final draft of the standards in use in some way.

In the review of ELDS-type documents (see 1.2.2) from 35 countries, the majority (26) are innovative early learning and development standards or UNICEF-supported ELDS; 6 are guidelines or indicators for early learning and development, and 8 are or include curriculum documents (several documents have dual uses).

TABLE 5 Review of ELDS-type documents: region and domains covered by ELDS from countries in the region

Region	Domains covered							
	Physical health/ motor skills	Socio-emotional development	Approaches to learning	Cognitive development/ knowledge acquisition	Language, literacy, communication	Cultural/ moral development	Creative/ aesthetic development	Others
CEECIS	9	8	5	8	7	2	1	Social development (2)
EAPRO	7	6		5	6	5	3	Social development; maths (2); natural & physical environment; spiritual & character development; living & learning together
ESA	4	3	3	3	4	2	1	Group living; religious development
LAC	5	3		3	3	1		Intellectual empowerment; respect for self, others & environment; resilience; personal & social development
MENA	2	1	1	1	2			Sports readiness; scientific readiness; innovation readiness; social development
SA	2	2		2	2	1		
WCA	1	2		1	1	1	1	Maths; science
Totals	30	25	9	23	25	12	6	



Domains covered

The large majority of countries include four of the five domains initially recommended in the Going Global project - cognitive development, physical wellbeing and motor-skills, social and emotional development, and language, literacy and communication (Table 5). The Going Global domain called Approaches to Learning was included by only nine countries. Other domains identified for inclusion include Culture, Creativity, Moral values and a range of subject-specific domains, such as Mathematics, Science, and Natural and Physical Environment.

The coverage, even of the canonical domains, is not always consistent. So for example the standards for Fiji include indicators for play and social behaviours, normally considered in psycho-social domains, as a Social Science sub-domain of the Cognitive domain, alongside Logic and Reasoning and Mathematics and Science. This is inconsistent with others' use of these terms.

Structure and terminology

The structure of standards documents also tends to follow the Going Global model: Table 6 shows the structure of documents in three, typical, cases. There are inconsistencies among different national ELDS documents in the use of the categorising terms, as these examples illustrate (e.g. in the use of the terms 'standard', 'component', 'indicator', 'competency').

These may indicate differences in understanding and use of the terms, national and linguistic sensitivities or simply inconsistent translation.

Age ranges covered by ELDS

Only Bangladesh, Bolivia and Jordan developed ELDS for children aged 0-8 as recommended in *Going Global* (Jordan targets children aged 0-9 in keeping with the structure of education). Ten countries in the review of ELDS-type documents have ELDS for children from 0- 6 (Table 7). In four countries the ELDS (or ELDS-based curriculum) cover just one year of children's development (Ghana 4-5, Philippines 5, Trinidad

TABLE 6 Elements of typical standards documents

Fiji	Azerbaijan	Laos
Domains/Foundation Learning Areas (e.g. Physical, Health and Well-being)	Main area or domain (e.g. perception, general knowledge, and learning approaches)	Domain (e.g. Cognitive Development)
Sub domain (e.g. Physical)	Sub-domain or sub-field (e.g. perception)	Sub-domain (e.g. Scientific Development)
Standards (e.g. Children should be able to demonstrate adequate fine motor skills)	Standard (e.g. understand and describe the characteristics of children and the nature of living things)	Component (e.g. Knowledge of Elements)
Components (e.g. Child is able to draw on paper or sand, cut paper with scissors, and thread beads)	Indicator (e.g. Children can imitate the sounds of animals) Method (e.g. Talk about nature with the child) Example (e.g. Child while walking near trees; he is asked where it is and he extends his finger in direction of the tree)	Competency (e.g. Describes characteristics of the sky and weather) Indicator (e.g. Names elements in the sky such as the sun, moon, clouds and stars)



and Tobago 3-4 and Nepal 4-5). In those countries where ELDS cover three or fewer years of a child’s development, these are for children aged from 3 or 4 up to the year before formal entry into primary school (usually 5 years old).

Government sign-off of ELDS

In the CO survey, 18 out of 21 respondents reported government approval and endorsement of the final ELDS or other child outcome standards. Several other countries have partial approval, for example Ghana’s ELDS document, which is not formally approved but is accepted by the government as the basis for the development of the curriculum. In Cambodia, ELDS for children aged 5 years old has been approved by the government, but the document for 3-4 year olds is still pending, reflecting the government’s focus on 5 year olds the year before entering primary school.

ELDS publication and dissemination

The extent to which the final and approved ELDS have been published and disseminated to the professional and practitioner communities is difficult to assess as there is little information available from country documentation. UNICEF and other donors have sometimes funded publication and distribution of copies; for example in Mongolia (a thematic case study country visit), the Asian Development Bank funded the printing and dissemination of copies to every ECD teacher and trainee teacher in 2012.

Plans for monitoring national progress

The CO survey data indicate that, of 26 countries responding to the question ‘is there any plan to revise and review the standards in the future?’, 11 countries have no such plan: nine countries have a plan but no funds to implement it, and six countries have both plan and funds in place.

TABLE 7 Review of ELDS-type documents: by region, type of document and age ranges covered

Region	Type of document			Ages covered												
	Standards/ ELDS	Guidelines/ indicator sets	Curriculum	0-2	0-4	3-4	0-5	3-5	4-5	5	0-6	3-6	0-7	3-7	0-8	0-9
CEECS	9	1	1				1	1			5		4	1		
EAPRO	6	1	2					2		1	2					
ESA	3	1	1		1		1	2								
LAC	3	3	3	1		1	2				3		1		1	
MENA	2															1
SA	2								1						1	
WCA	1		1						1			1				
Totals	26	6	8	1	1	1	4	5	2	1	10	1	5	1	2	1



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SECTION II

RESULTS OF UNICEF'S SUPPORT FOR ELDS



CHAPTER 4

ELDS CONTRIBUTION TO SYSTEMS FOR ECED AND SCHOOL READINESS

This chapter describes where and how ELDS, developed with UNICEF support, have contributed to strengthening system components for early childhood education and development. It identifies areas of the ECED system where opportunities to use ELDS have been missed or not exploited, and some of the factors militating against the use of ELDS.

■ KEY FINDINGS

As UNICEF stepped back from facilitating and supporting the implementation of ELDS, government and other national agencies have been unable to move ELDS into ECED systems, in part due to national capacity challenges and constraints.

ELDS have influenced ECED systems most directly through curriculum; however, the standards have had little influence on measuring children's development, and using the data to inform practice and policy

Although the ELDS development process involved cross-sectoral stakeholders, it has not resulted in more effective cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination in ECED.

4.1 A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR ELDS INFLUENCE ON SYSTEMS

With national ELDS adopted by governments, or, in some countries, draft ELDS in use while awaiting final revision and approval, the theory of change (Figure 7) assumes a range of further inputs and activities will move the ELDS into use within the ECED system. The inputs relate to capacities for the use of ELDS; the activities relate to efforts to integrate ELDS into system components; and the intermediate outcomes are assumed to be systems that better support quality services.

4.2 CAPACITIES FOR THE USE OF ELDS

Inputs include ensuring that the institutional and professional capacities to put ELDS into use within ECED systems are in place.

UNICEF support to strengthen local capacity-in the form of financial resources, consultant input and technical assistance –underpinned the development of ELDS, and through that development made significant contributions to professional awareness and understanding of ELDS.



However, data from the CO survey (Figure 6) indicate that UNICEF technical support declined in the majority of countries that were developing ELDS once the standards documents had been drafted. The country documentation shows that UNICEF support (including capacity development) to implementation and use of ELDS in various aspects of the ECED system has been limited in most countries.

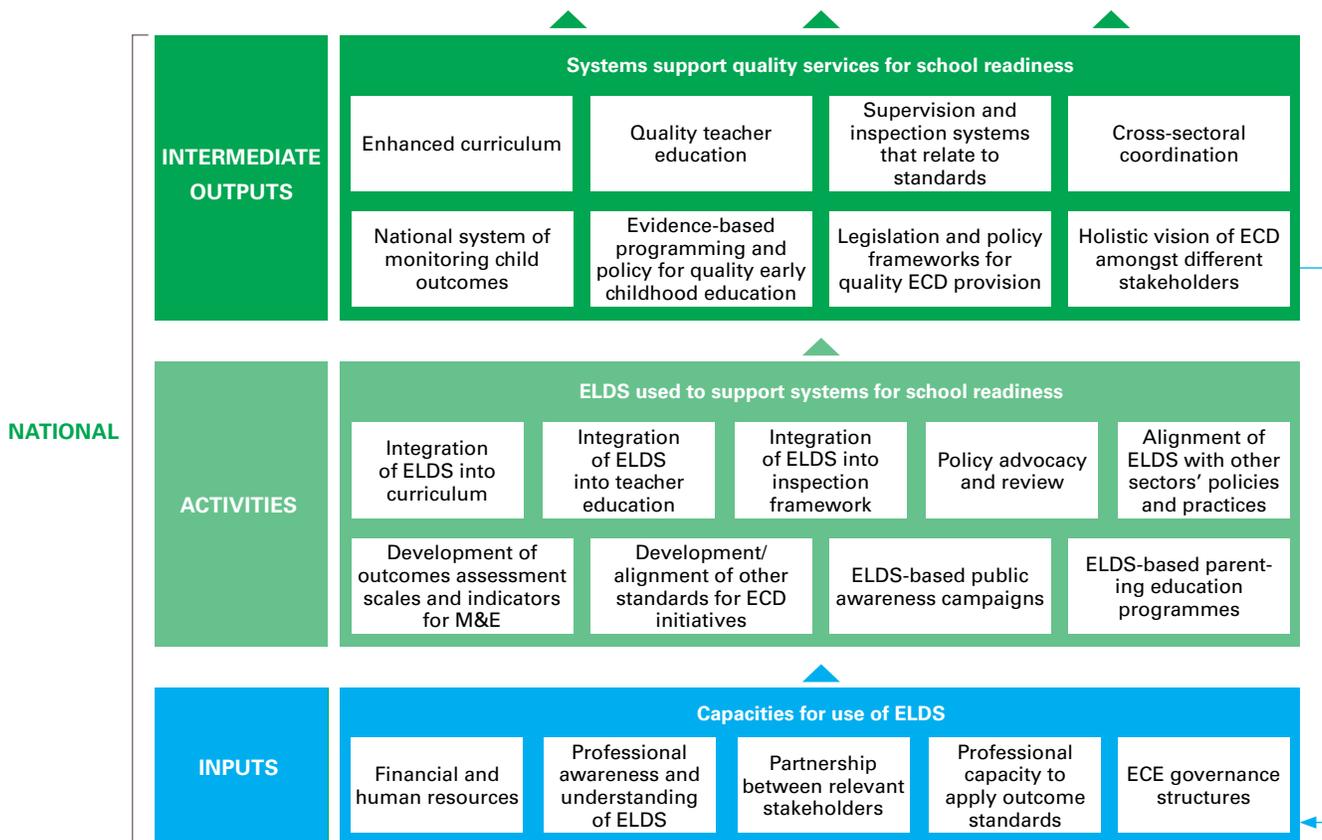
An exception to this is where ELDS has been used to drive or underpin curriculum change: several countries (e.g. Macedonia, Mongolia, South Africa) report UNICEF support to capacity development work such as training and

producing teachers' manuals for the serving and new pre-school teachers in the use of ELDS-based curriculum.

4.2.1 ECED governance structures

Although ECED is commonly referred to in much of the development literature as an 'holistic' service, in fact it encompasses many different kinds of services spread across different jurisdictions (Britto et al 2013). In the majority of countries these services are differently conceived and separately administered; there are overlaps and contradictions in the way they are implemented (EC/NESSE, 2010).

FIGURE 7 A theory of change for ELDS to improve ECED systems





In general, few countries have established national frameworks to finance, coordinate and supervise ECED programmes. Ministries of health or ministries associated with child welfare generally target health and welfare needs specific to young children, but not the broader care and educational dimensions of early childhood provision. Ministries of education tend to view the education of younger children (and almost always those under 3) as the responsibility of parents, private associations or NGOs, whilst governments play a more active role in the provision and supervision of programmes for children age 3 or older.

Emily Vargas-Barón (in Britto et al 2013) identified the complexity of systemic analysis across the multi-sectoral responsibilities of health, nutrition, sanitation, education and protection, which seeks cooperation and coordination between agencies and across levels. She identifies the challenges to integrated or coordinated approaches, including:

- sectoral institutional cultures that do not reward collaboration;
- sectoral competition for budgets that militates against cooperation;
- leadership, typically untrained in ECED and lacking skills for consensus-building;
- different governance and needs of public and non-public providers in ECED.

The importance of cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration for ECED is stressed in policy documents and sector plans in the country documentation review, though the translation of policy into practice is not so well-documented or evident. For example, in Tajikistan, a national forum brought together government representatives across sectors, producing a ten-point plan of action to promote ECED but, although awareness was increased as a result, the country documents report that no actions occurred.

4.2.2 Partnerships between relevant stakeholders

The development of ELDS and their implementation within ECED systems involved a range of stakeholder groups, with varying roles and levels of influence. Table 8 presents an analysis of these stakeholder groups and, based on the thematic case study country visits, the main capacity constraints and challenges they face.

Partnerships between stakeholders at different levels in the system have been crucial elements in ELDS development and use. For example, partnership between government and academia underpinned professional awareness raising and gaining commitment to the ELDS concept; partnerships between UNICEF, other international agencies and government enabled ELDS development to progress.

4.2.3 Financial and human resources

While the demand for structured early childhood provision is rising, few governments have prioritised publicly funded care or educational programmes for young children. To meet existing demand, primarily from middle class and urban families, private initiatives were encouraged (GMR 2007).

Several countries draw attention to the lack of government funding for implementation of any plan for ELDS use. In the CO survey data 11 COs (out of 26 responses) identified “insufficient financial resources to make use of the standards” as a major challenge; nine identified this as a moderate challenge.

Among the thematic case study country visits, only in South Africa has government financial support followed its commitment to embedding the national ELDS (NELDS) into the diverse ECED system. In Mongolia only UNICEF, with minimal inputs from other donor agencies, has financially supported the use of ELDS (mainly through ELDS-based curriculum development and teacher training). In Jordan also, no government resources have been allocated to drive the use of ELDS in the ECED system.



TABLE 8

ELDS implementation and use in ECED systems: stakeholder analysis

Level	Stakeholder group	Roles and influence	Functions	Capacity constraints/challenges
NATIONAL	National government agencies: education, health, social welfare	Authorizers, sponsors/ owners of standards, decision-makers	Policy formulation, management, professional and system oversight (inspection, supervision, monitoring)	Sectoral/organisational cultures do not encourage collaboration; competition for limited budgets and human resource capacity militate against cooperation. Capacity for monitoring compliance with regulatory instruments and management of ECED provision is limited, challenged by rapid growth, diverse provision and decentralised responsibilities
	Institutions: academic and training	Champions and key influencers of standards, users of standards	Professional expertise and leadership, capacity development	Limited pool of ECED expertise Risk that experts are remote from the challenges. Limited professionalization at grass-roots level (teachers and caregivers)
	National NGOs	Advocacy, influence	Service provision	Diverse perspectives on ECED provision Limited capacity to implement new approaches and drive change Potential conflicts of interest between ECED expertise embracing change and provision of income-generating services
	International agencies inc. UNICEF, international NGOs	Facilitators, key influencers and advisers	Technical assistance and financial support	Approaches to ECED and standards in early childhood may be influenced by Western, affluent country experience and models, and other external agendas
SUB-NATIONAL	Sub-national government agencies: education, health, social welfare	Policy and standards implementers, decision-makers	Management, professional and service oversight (inspection, supervision)	Lack of financial and human resources Capacity for monitoring and inspection of ECED provision at sub-national level tends to be limited
	Institutions: ECED centres, pre-schools (public and private)	Users of standards, practitioners, influencers	Service provision, professional in-service training	Ensuring compliance with standards in mixed provision economy is challenging Voices of service providers not always heard or sufficiently influential in policy/regulatory discussion and debate
LOCAL	Parents and families; representative civil society organisations	Service users, influencers	Selection and use of ECD centres and preschools, support to children	Increasingly aware of importance of ECED for their children and under pressure to enrol children in pre-school Not sufficiently empowered to make choices or demand accountability
	Children of pre-school age	Service users, learners	Beneficiaries of quality services	ELDS approaches place onus on 'ready children' but children's voices rarely heard in standards debate and discussion



With limited financial and physical resources and relatively small professional cadres, setting government regulatory requirements such as the use of ELDS, is only the first step, as Penn (2005) notes, staff are also needed to oversee the implementation of regulations, to support centres seeking to improve and to pursue those who have not complied.

ECED professional cadres are commonly small relative to the national need. Examples from the thematic case study country visits include South Africa, where the ECED sector is served by three government departments: education, social development and health, none of which has the capacity to serve such a big constituency and there is lack of clarity as to where the lines of responsibility and accountability lie; and in Jordan there are capacity concerns for the expanding ECED sector, notably to ensure the quality of private sector provision. Capacity constraints are mainly at sub-national levels for supervision and operational resources, and in institutional organisation under two ministries to ensure coherence amongst private providers of nursery and kindergarten services.

Similarly in Mongolia, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS) has only one ECED specialist on staff, and ECED expertise at provincial levels (district ECD specialists, teacher trainers, experienced kindergarten teachers) is limited. Professional capacity limitations at different levels also constrain national coordination across sectors. The lack of human resource capacity within the Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection meant that consistent and sustained inputs to ELDS development relating to child participation and rights were limited.

4.2.4 Professional awareness and understanding of ELDS

Evidence from the thematic case study country visits suggest that those ECED professionals at national and sub-national levels who were involved in the development and validation of

ELDS built up a clear awareness and understanding of the ELDS and their potential uses, in 'ELDS readiness' activities supported by UNICEF (3.2.3). However, the extent to which this awareness and understanding spread throughout the ECED community – including teachers and caregivers – is less certain.

For example, the CO survey data on capacity challenges show that five CO respondents regarded "inappropriate use of the standards (e.g. teachers using it to label, place, retain or promote individual children)" as a major challenge and ten saw this as a moderate challenge, indicating that a proper understanding of ELDS and their uses may not be widespread among pre-school teachers.

Part of the problem may lie with the capacity to publicise and disseminate the final ELDS documents: for example, in the Philippines the thematic case study country visit revealed that considerable resources went into ELDS dissemination and awareness (UNICEF funded the printing and dissemination) around the country to all levels of stakeholders through its incorporation in the National Early Learning Framework (NELF). However, this may not have been sufficient: and the NELF and thus ELDS are no longer readily available to either practitioners or public.

4.2.5 Professional capacity to apply outcome standards

It is evident from the thematic case study country visits that the process of ELDS development, through workshops, discussions, conceptualisation, drafting and testing in national contexts, has been influential in building and extending the capacity of the cadre of ECED professionals, particularly at national level.

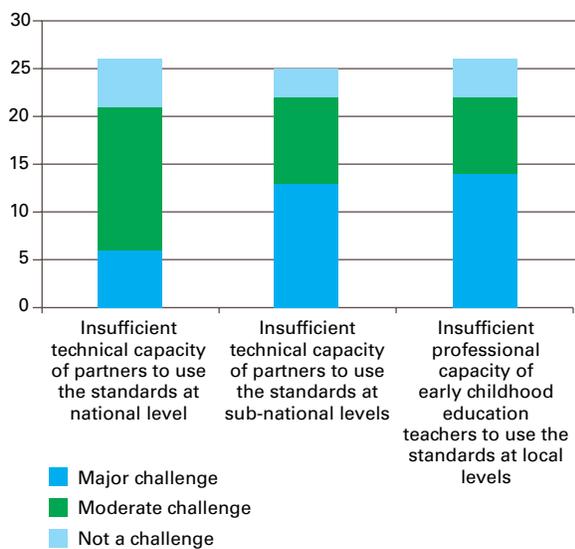
However, professional capacity to use or apply ELDS at different levels within the system was identified in the CO survey as either a major or moderate challenge by over half of the 26 COs responding (Figure 8).



The country visit in Mongolia revealed that almost every ECED specialist (including in the health sector) has been involved in some way or other with the development or validation of ELDS, and in teacher training and curriculum development, with a heavy reliance on expertise within the academic sector.

FIGURE 8

Professional capacity challenges in the use of ELDS identified by CO survey respondents (N=26)



Because Mongolia is small country in population terms it has been easier to achieve consensus in ELDS development and, to some extent, work across education and health sectors. However, the reliance on a small pool of ECED experts and academics at national level resulted in a degree of detachment from the grass-roots, and some professionals in Mongolia argue that there should have been more focus on the everyday challenges of kindergarten teachers and less on ‘academic’ approaches, thus making the ELDS more usable throughout the system.

4.3 ELDS USED TO SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOL READINESS

4.3.1 Integration of ELDS into the curriculum

The CO survey data show that 18 (of 33) respondents cited that a planned main purpose for the ELDS was to “inform curriculum development/review for ECE”: only three of those countries had no EC curriculum at the start of the ELDS process.

This main purpose was put into practice in most of those countries when the ELDS were finalised: the CO survey data (Figure 9) show that use of the ELDS to review or develop curriculum were used a lot by 14 (of 26) respondents, and used a little by eight.

The country documentation (from 15 of 23 countries) confirms the importance of using ELDS to improve or develop curriculum. Also eight of the 35 national ELDS-type documents reviewed are, in fact, curriculums, or incorporate curriculum guides (e.g. El Salvador, Gambia, Jamaica, Laos, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey) and there is evidence from country documentation of new or revised ELDS-based curriculums in Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, South Africa and Tajikistan. In some of these countries (e.g. South Africa) ELDS drove the first nationally applicable curriculum to be used across the variety of ECED provision.

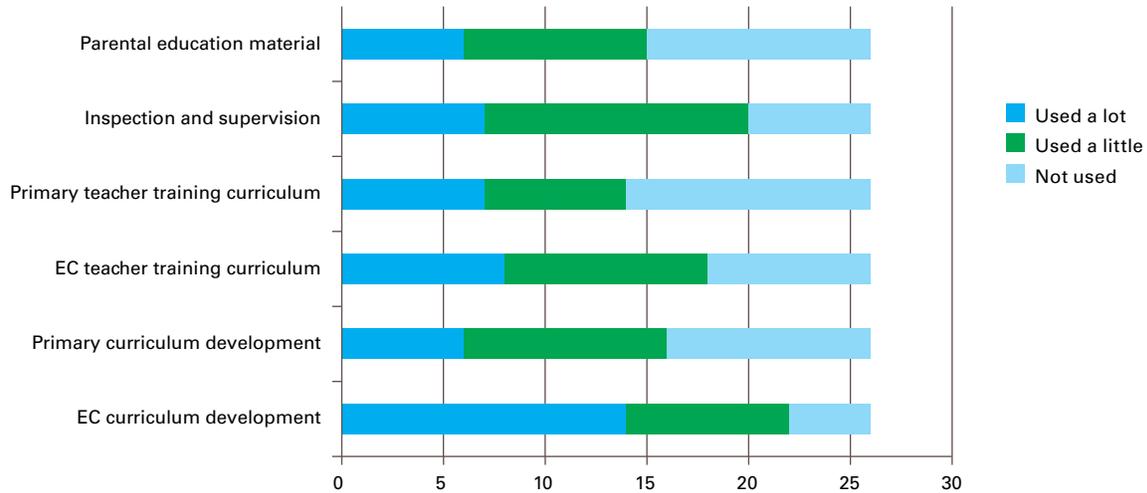
4.3.2 Integration of ELDS into teacher education

Slightly less common, but also reflected in the country documentation, is the influence of ELDS (or indirectly of ELDS-based curriculum change) on the curriculum for pre-service and in-service teacher education: eight of the CO survey respondents (Figure 9) report that ELDS were used a lot in teacher education curriculums, and 10 countries used ELDS a little for this purpose.



FIGURE 9

System areas supported by ELDS identified by CO survey respondents (N=26, respondents in countries with ELDS in place).



4.3.3 Integration of ELDS into inspection framework

The capacity for inspection of ECED provision is limited in most countries, often challenged by rapid growth, diverse provision and decentralised responsibilities.

Only five (of 33) CO survey respondents planned to use ELDS in supervision and inspection and country documents from only 3 (of 23) countries specifically described this use of ELDS (see Appendix 4 item 48).

However, the CO survey data (Figure 9) show that, among those countries with ELDS in place (26) more countries (seven) have in fact used the ELDS a lot to inform inspection and supervision, and 13 report using the standards a little for the purpose.

4.3.4 Policy advocacy and review

A majority (18 of 29) of respondent countries in the CO survey reported that the **process** of developing the ELDS had been a **major** influence on policy (for example, in South Africa ELDS activities were a starting point for

national approaches to holistic ECED) with 10 more reporting a **minor** influence (for example, in Gambia ELDS discussions have contributed to the National Policy Framework for ECD).

ELDS workshops, discussions, conceptualisation, drafting and testing were influential for the cadre of ECED professionals. The process provided them an opportunity to rethink and consider ways to strengthen national policy and regulation in ECED. Through these professional cadres, some of the ELDS concepts, approaches and models have influenced policy formulation and planning for ECED irrespective of whether the ELDS themselves were finalised and adopted into national regulatory frameworks.

In some countries ELDS have been adopted as integral parts of the national regulatory framework for ECED (for example, in Macedonia, Mongolia and South Africa).

In the CO survey half (13 of 26 countries with ELDS in place) of the respondents reported that the **ELDS themselves** had been used a lot to inform national policy or legislation for



ECED and 11 more reported that they had been used a little. However, in the country document review, few countries explicitly refer to ELDS in policy or regulation and it is rarely stated how policy changes and regulation link back to ELDS specifically, which may have been part of a portfolio of changes that contributed to policy discourse.

Although it is often unclear how policy and regulation changes link directly back to ELDS, and no specific references to ELDS are evident, it is often possible to find traces of the 'ELDS DNA' in policy and planning documentation from many countries: for example, through references to developmental domains and sub-domains and age-appropriate mapping of expected outcomes, which use similar structures and terminology to the original Going Global model promulgated so widely by UNICEF. For example, the 2013 ECD policy in Mongolia, and the results of the Inter-American Development Bank-funded Regional Program on Child Development Indicators in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.

4.3.5 Alignment of ELDS with other sector policies and practices

In most countries, different government agencies and partners from different sectors (particularly health, education and social welfare) have responsibility for the different age groups within the ECED age range, and have poor or non-existent mechanisms and capacity for coordination of policy, planning and programme implementation.

The process of developing ELDS successfully encouraged and nurtured cross-sectoral advocacy and discussion. However, there is relatively little evidence of the coordination or alignment of policy or ELDS use across the different sectors. In the CO survey (of 26 countries with ELDS in place) limited cross-sectoral coordination is identified as either a major (17 countries) or a moderate (7 countries) challenge to using ELDS (Figure 4). For example, in

Ghana a multi-sector team was established and training was provided for representatives from those ministries with a mandate for children. Multi-sectoral team members were also trained in advocacy, planning, community sensitisation, and monitoring. However, a UNICEF evaluation (UNICEF, 2011) found ECED narrowly focused as an educational intervention and with no evidence of systematic efforts or processes to bring the ELDS to the work of other sectors.

In countries where cross-sectoral programmes do exist, they are not necessarily attributable to ELDS work. From the country documentation review it appears that parenting programmes are the most common example, especially those intended to promote the development of children aged 0-3 that include early cognitive and physical stimulation alongside health, nutrition and child protection inputs (e.g. Gambia, Comoros, Jordan, and Egypt).

In Jordan (a thematic case study country visit), where responsibility for the 0-4 age range lies with National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) (with ministerial oversight by both Ministries of Health and Social Development), cross-sectoral partnerships were established at the beginning and for review of the ELDS and subsequently the ELDS were used by the Ministry of Health in the development of the Infant and Young Child Feeding programme (IYCF) guide and tools to monitor growth and development.

4.3.6 Development of outcomes assessment scales and indicators for monitoring and evaluation

Only eight (of 26) CO survey respondents confirm that ELDS have been used to inform school readiness monitoring. In the review of ELDS-type documents from 35 countries only five (Kosovo, Lesotho, Moldova, Romania and South Africa) make explicit statements about intended use of the ELDS in monitoring and evaluation.



In the country documentation there are examples from other countries of the use of ELDS for assessment and monitoring purposes. For example,

- in Bangladesh, a small-scale study conducted by Aga Khan Foundation in 2013 used an assessment tool based on ELDS to assess the impact of a UNICEF/Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) pre-school programme on motor development, social and emotional development, language development and emerging literacy and general knowledge, as well as approaches to learning of Grade 1 primary students
- in the Gambia, ELDS are used to assess developmental milestones for 4-6 year olds in rural and remote pre-school classes that are annexed to primary schools
- in Ghana, assessment tools apparently have been developed from the ELDS
- a regional instrument for measuring early childhood development in the East Asia and Pacific region, the East Asia Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS) (Rao et al., 2014), has been developed based on the ELDS in seven countries in the region. The EAP-ECDS reflect regional expectations of child development at specific ages and can be used for population level assessments of progress at a national level and to examine inequities within countries arising from factors such as location or ethnicity, and if desired, for making comparisons between countries (Rao et al., 2014).

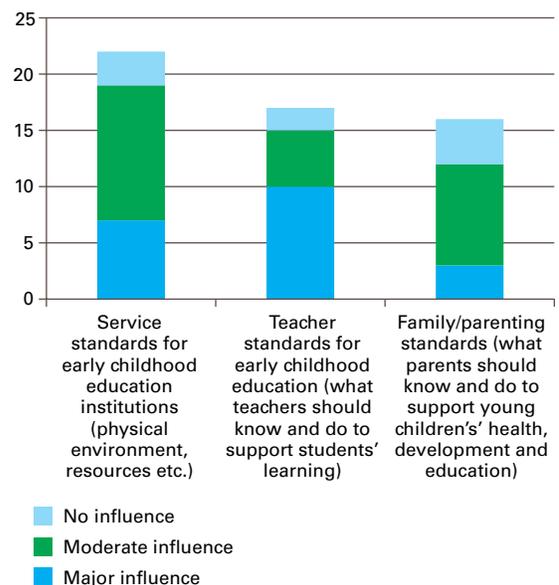
4.3.7 Development/alignment of other standards for ECED

In the CO survey 15 COs (out of 31 responding) reported that ECED service standards were already in place at the time of developing the ELDS; similarly 12 COs reported that EC teacher standards were in place, and five that family/parenting standards already were in place at that time.

For those other countries represented in the CO survey the process of ELDS development was clearly influential on the development of other ECE standards: Figure 10 shows in particular strong influence on teacher standards reported by 10 COs.

Once the final ELDS were in place, COs from six countries responding to the CO survey (out of 26) reported that the ELDS had actually been used as the basis for developing other ECED standards, though only one CO reported that ELDS had similarly been used in the development of early childhood standards in other sectors such as health.

FIGURE 10 CO survey responses (N=30) on extent to which the process of developing ELDS influenced other ECE standards



Among the thematic case study country visits, in Mongolia standards on ECED environments are being developed that are said to reflect ELDS principles and targets; other ECED-related standards (e.g. teacher standards, service delivery) have yet to be developed.



4.3.8 ELDS-based public awareness campaigns

According to the country documentation review (23 countries) over a ten-year period UNICEF has supported a wide range of public awareness and advocacy campaigns promoting ECED in general, but only in two countries of these 23 countries have the campaigns been specifically about child outcome standards or ELDS. In Macedonia this comprised a communication strategy and visits to regions by the Ministry and UNICEF as well as media engagement and a launch event for the ELDS; in South Africa posters and brochures about the NELDS were produced by UNICEF and the Department for Basic Education for parents and caregivers.

A further three countries—Kosovo, Moldova and Romania - have specified public awareness-raising as use of their ELDS documents (from review of the ELDS-type document sample of 35).

4.3.9 ELDS-based parenting education programmes

In the CO survey only six respondents (out of 26 countries with ELDS in place) reported using ELDS a lot in parenting education, while a further 11 said ELDS have been used a little for this purpose, which has been an important part of UNICEF's overall approach to ECED over the period.

In the ELDS documents reviewed from 35 countries, six documents specifically refer to using ELDS to support family and parent education (from Bangladesh, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Moldova and Tajikistan).

In the four thematic case study country visits, the ELDS have been used in, or have influenced the design of, programmes to address parental attitudes to child development, to increase parental involvement and support and to build a more holistic vision of ECED. In general, those parents and family members interviewed

during the country visits were unaware of the ELDS *per se* (as standards, indicators, tools etc), only of new or different approaches (as manifested in curriculum, for example) and hoped-for better outcomes for their children.

In South Africa, for example, parents are not aware of the label 'NELDS', but, when NGOs work with them, they become aware of the need to stimulate their young children and are given strategies to do so. NELDS have been particularly influential on those NGOs that go out into the areas where children cannot access ECED and work with their carers.

In Mongolia, which has a relatively small ECED sector (in terms of population and its professional cadre, mostly based in the capital) it has been feasible to address support to parents and families in a systematic way to raise awareness of the ELDS. UNICEF funded a parent/teacher handbook based on the ELDS to assist kindergartens and parents; the National Authority for Children also produced a parents' handbook, based on the ELDS, for families with children not enrolled in kindergartens. Other organisations and international NGOs have incorporated 'ELDS approaches' into parent and child programmes for those families whose children are unable to access kindergarten services. Nonetheless, ECED specialists at district level report that parental understanding of ELDS as a standard is tenuous, especially in remote areas, but the curriculum is known, and parents are aware of new teaching and learning methods.

4.4 SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT QUALITY SERVICES FOR SCHOOL READINESS

The theory of change assumes that a range of intermediate outcomes will result from the introduction and integration of ELDS into ECED systems. Evidence of outcomes is derived primarily from the thematic case study country visits in four countries.



4.4.1 Enhanced curriculum

The curriculum for ECED has been the system element most influenced by ELDS and in most of the countries under scrutiny. In some of those countries, as noted above, the development of ELDS prompted curriculum revision, and in others ELDS drove the development of an holistic curriculum for early childhood.

In Mongolia the ELDS were embedded in a new curriculum for children ages 2-5 years old in 2011-2012. This was intended for, and is used in all kindergartens, irrespective of the kind of provider. There is also a simplified curriculum for 2-5 year olds, also based on ELDS, widely used in the alternative system (see Appendix 5), which has mixed age classes. The previous ECE curriculum was task and subject theme-based and the child outcomes approach of the ELDS-based curriculum presented an initial challenge, particularly for practising kindergarten teachers and principals, as it demands very different teaching and learning methodologies. Since the curriculum has been embedded into practice, however, it is widely acknowledged among ECED professionals and teachers to result in improved quality in the children's learning experience and environment.

In Jordan, the ELDS was developed at the same time as a major initiative to produce a new curriculum for the two pre-school years, Kg1 (~4yrs) and Kg2 (~5yrs) as part of substantial investment in public pre-schooling (see Appendix 5). This curriculum was quickly reviewed in light of the ELDS and adjusted to align with its domains and age-expectations: this did not require a major revision, suggesting the original new curriculum reflected holistic domains and appropriate ages. Jordan, however, demonstrates how, in a mixed economy of provision, a new ELDS-based curriculum may not reach all providers and children. This new kindergarten curriculum is statutory but is only enforced across public institutions and has almost no impact on private sector institutions a large proportion of pre-school provision.

In South Africa, the NELDS were adopted in 2009 and are in use as the national standards against which crèches and ECD centres for children aged 0-4 have to demonstrate compliance in order to register officially and attract financial support from government. The NELDS have been used as the basis for the first National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for ECED (ready in 2015) which is more detailed than the NELDS in terms of actual practice, and takes better account of marginalized groups. The NGO sector—the main provider of crèches and ECD centres for children aged 0-4 has become very comfortable with the NELDS and is somewhat reluctant to now embark on aligning its work with the NCF. The curriculum document is they feel not seen as user-friendly and will need to be carefully mediated to practitioners. Hence the NGO sector is in danger of treating the two as almost the same 'except for the use of certain terms', so as to minimise their own adjustment. The government is now training and pushing for the use of the NCF to bring coherence to the sector: NCF adoption will depend on the quality of training and this raises a capacity concern with the Department of Basic Education, stretched as it is in terms of human capacity and other resources to deliver a sound training programme.

In the Philippines there have been two main curriculum initiatives: under the Department of Education a revision is ongoing to include a compulsory kindergarten year in a coherent Kindergarten to 12 curriculum; at the same time the Early Childhood Care and Development Council is working on a new curriculum for the earlier years. Both of these reflect the ELDS in coverage of domains and age expectations, but do not explicitly reference the document.

4.4.2 Quality teacher education

In Jordan, although they were not finalized or adopted as government standards, the ELDS influenced the teacher education and training curriculum in terms of holistic coverage and recognition of outcomes for ECE teacher



training curriculum. ELDS have been explicitly used as part of the manuals to be used by trainers within teacher training programmes. Outside the public sector, the influential Islamic Center Charity Society also uses the ELDS in preparing staff for their widespread multi-service children and parents' centres, which offer ECED services and parenting programmes.

In South Africa the NELDS have informed (and continue to inform) NGO programming and training for practitioners. The practitioners are introduced to and oriented to the NELDS though this is currently being overtaken by training in the NCF (see 4.4.1).

In Mongolia, ELDS are now embedded in teacher training curriculum for all pre-service kindergarten teachers since 2012. All serving kindergarten teachers (and some early grade primary teachers) were provided in 2012 with training on ELDS by UNICEF-funded cascade training (although there is evidence among teacher groups from remoter areas that the ELDS messages and concepts become weaker further down the 'cascade').

4.4.3 Supervision and inspection systems that relate to the standards

Among the thematic case study country visits, only in Mongolia have the ELDS clearly informed tools and practices for inspection. The State Inspection Agency (separate from the MECS), which inspects and monitors every Government policy and standard irrespective of sector, has ECED specialists in the Education and Culture section. Theoretically, they measure kindergarten progress against the ELDS, using it as 'target levels of school readiness.' According to the Law on ECD (2008) there were meant to be associated procedures on how to evaluate school readiness, but these were never developed. The Inspection Agency has found it challenging to monitor and inspect using the ELDS, without giving children the impression that if they don't reach the target they have failed.

They now use the teachers' notes (and record books) of children's development progress (which are mostly based on ELDS domains and indicators) for the whole class and kindergarten, and emphasis is moving towards kindergartens doing their own self-assessment.

In South Africa, a checklist derived from the NELDS is used as a basis for observation of practice in pre-schools. However, the observation exercises themselves vary immensely in quality and it is not clear how far the data gathered then inform further programming for the children.

In the other two countries it is reasonable to assume that those involved with inspection take the ELDS statements of domains and expectations into their work, and certainly take note of new curricula, but there is no evidence of more concrete results.

4.4.4 Cross-sectoral coordination

The thematic case study country visits all demonstrated how difficult it has been to coordinate ELDS implementation across different sectors. In all cases the imperatives of the education sector and the language of school readiness has strengthened the ministry of education's oversight of provision for children in the one or two years before primary school entry.

In South Africa the ECED sector is served by three government departments (see Appendix 5): education, social development and health and there is lack of clarity as to where the lines of responsibility and accountability lie. Although the NELDS and the government intent, enshrined in legislation and policies, are founded on the need to work inter-sectorally, the structures and systems pull against this intention. However, at provincial level (e.g. Cape Town, Gauteng province), there is evidence of more effective inter-sectoral approaches where the delivery of all ECED rests with NGOs, the



NELDS is the basis of all programming and the coordination mechanisms are there to support operationalisation.

Similarly in Mongolia, cross-sectoral collaboration seems to work better at grass-roots level than at national government and institutional level. ELDS have been used as the basis for the child's record book, produced by the Ministry of Health for mothers and children aged 0-5, which is used to monitor children's development by health and nutrition personnel at all levels, as well as by parents. In many kindergartens a similar learning and development record book is provided to each child and their parents, using ELDS indicators in different domains, to help them monitor the child's progress (including involvement by the child in recording its own progress) and these record books are clearly aligned with the health record 'pink book'.

4.4.5 Holistic vision of ECD amongst different stakeholder groups

Even where ELDS have not been finalized and formally adopted into government policy and legislation (Jordan, Philippines), the ELDS development process and influence of ELDS in systems, particularly in ECED curriculum and professional development, have engendered a more holistic notion of child development with clearly identified, cross-sectoral domains and expectations of child outcomes.

Though coordination and alignment of this holistic view across sectors is a challenge, the professional ECED communities and stakeholder institutions at national and sub-national levels (see Table 8) have generally bought into this holistic vision. However, the extent to which the holistic approach has filtered down to local levels – to state, private and NGO ECED providers and to teachers and caregivers – is

evidently more limited, constrained by, among other things, the quality and reach of professional development, the effectiveness of national monitoring and supervision of ECED regulation, and the remoteness or location of service providers.

4.4.6 National system of monitoring child outcomes

There are few and limited examples of the utilisation of ELDS to monitor and assess children's development, despite the fact that this was arguably the *raison d'être* of ELDS⁴.

In Jordan there is a simplified record-keeping tool in use in kindergartens, completed every semester, covering the range of ELDS domains but with many fewer indicators used. There is also some evidence of additional regular record-keeping of children's progress on specific activities or learning goals, not diagnostic but as a report to the parents. Teachers speak of finding it useful to alert them to developmental or learning concerns, which they may then respond to by additional support, reference, parental liaison etc.

Similarly, in Mongolia ELDS-based assessment and monitoring tools have been developed by teachers (the development and production of which have been funded in some cases by international NGOs) and are in use in kindergartens to monitor individual children's progress, similar tools are used in health and nutrition.

4.4.7 Evidenced programming and policy for quality ECE

Three of the countries visited for the thematic case studies have no national level mechanisms to collect and aggregate local child assessment data from individual kindergartens, nor any population level programmes, ELDS-based or

⁴ *Going Global* was initially conceived as a response by UNICEF to meet its MTSP 2002-2005 target "to facilitate the development of nationally accepted standards, which would meet the gap in assessing and monitoring early childhood development" (Kagan and Britto, 2005).



not, to monitor child outcomes and generate the kind of evidence that might feed into ECED programming and improve quality of provision.

Only Jordan has undertaken a series of population sample monitoring from 2007 (using its own Early Years Evaluation tool) 2010 and 2014 (using EDI). The ELDS were not used, though there is anecdotal evidence (from the Ministry of Education) that the EDI tool was compared with the ELDS as part of steps to develop a nationally appropriate version (this included language).

4.4.8 Legislation and policy frameworks for quality ECD provision

In Mongolia and South Africa the ELDS have become part of the legislative and policy framework for ECED, and arguably have improved the quality of ECED provision through the requirement for compliance with the standards in service provision, professional development and curriculum change.

However, there is evidence to suggest that since 2012 the influence on national policy of the ELDS-based approach (that is, placing the focus on children's outcomes in ECED provision and ensuring that these are addressed across all providers) has been overtaken by new policy

concerns. In Mongolia, the latest 2013 ECD policy from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science makes no mention of ELDS, though there are traces of ELDS terminology. A spokesperson from the government reported that the new policy was built on 'lessons learned' from ELDS, though this raises the question as to what possible lessons could have been learned in the short time that the ELDS had been finalised (2011) and put into use in the curriculum (2012) (which has also already been superseded by a new one adopting a different approach).

In Jordan the ELDS were referenced in the national strategy for early childhood (2004-2013) and although their potential has not been realised, subsequent work has benefited from the expertise of the professional community that was involved in ELDS.

In the Philippines, there is widespread understanding of holistic developmental domains so it is difficult to trace the contribution of this aspect of ELDS in policy documents, but the ELDS were incorporated in the NELF, produced by, and soon after the creation of, the overarching Early Childhood Care and Development Council.



CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF ELDS ON PRACTICE

This chapter considers how ELDS, supported by UNICEF, and other standards have contributed to changing practices that contribute to school-readiness.

■ KEY FINDINGS

ELDS have influenced practice, indirectly, through changed curriculum and the professional preparation of teachers. However, there has been little influence on the practices of assessment using outcome indicators.

ELDS are rarely used to identify individual and population developmental diversity.

The holistic vision of early childhood that ELDS helped to form has influenced parenting programmes.

There has been no change in primary practice that draws on the content of ELDS or uses them to support transition.

5.1 THE THEORY OF CHANGE: FROM ELDS TO CHANGING PRACTICE

The theory of change elements (Figure 11) shows the expected influence from the system components into changed practice. This, the outcome level of the theory of change, shows the elements of practice structured around the three loci in UNICEF's analysis of school readiness (Britto, 2012).

5.1.1 Preschool practice

There are many and varied drivers of change in pre-school practice and over the period much of professional and political discourse has been consistent with ELDS in raising the importance of early childhood and a holistic view of development: the ELDS process has been part of that discourse in the participating countries. It is therefore difficult to assess the contribution of

new standards to changing practice. However, there are dimensions of practice that more identifiably reflect the influence of child outcome and developmental standards, namely:

- classroom (and institutional) pedagogical practice that identifies and addresses the holistic developmental domains of the standards and works in an age-appropriate ways towards the identified developmental milestones
- assessment practices within the classroom/institution that use milestones to establish developmental profiles of children. These might be used to inform individualised interventions
- improved information about successful pre-school practice, which could inform interventions at all levels; institutional, national or sub-national administration, for individuals, projects or programmes



5.1.2 Family support for children

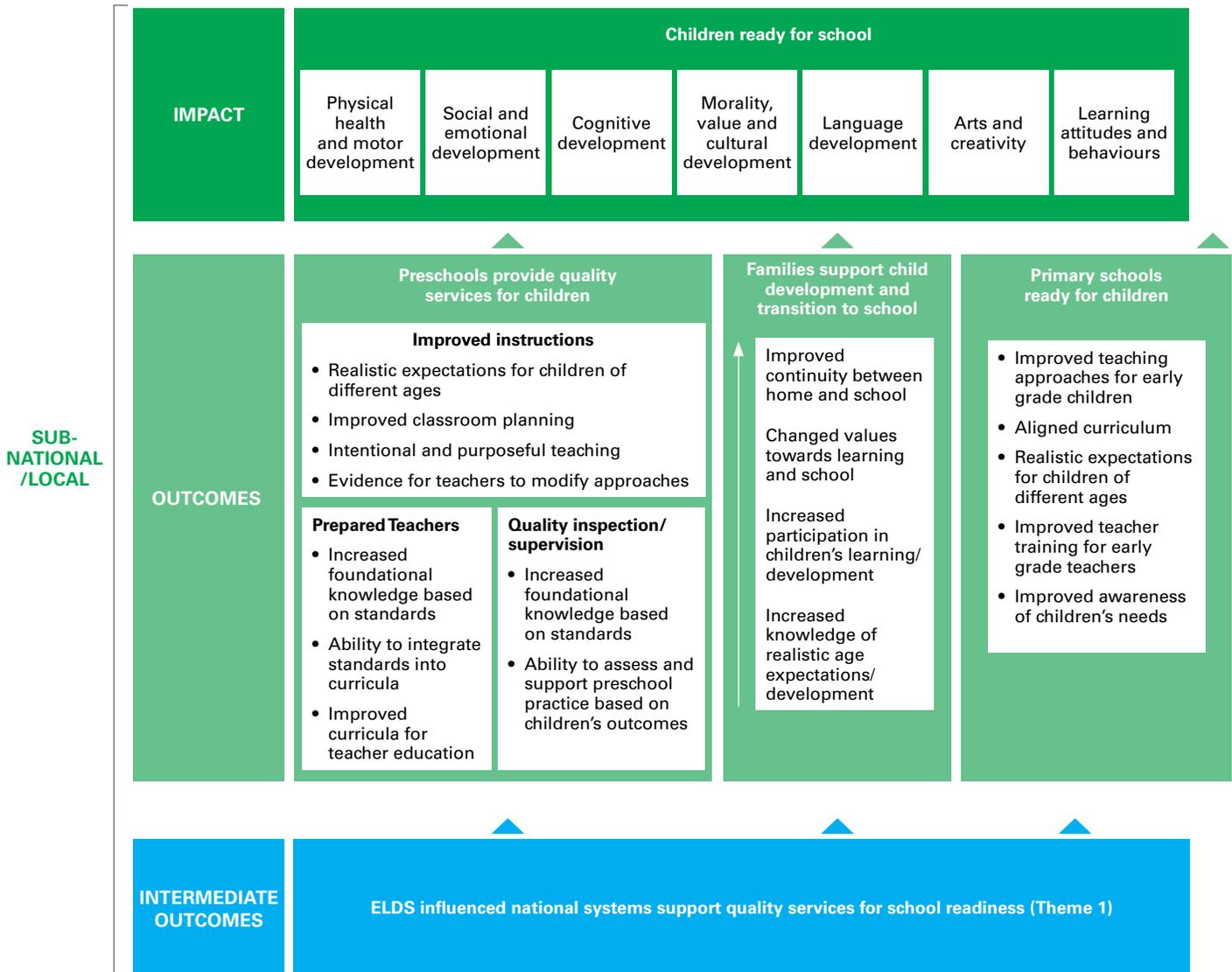
Parents are the main providers of developmental support for young children but not all have the knowledge, skills and wherewithal to offer stimulation, support and opportunities for children across all domains.

Many governments and agencies, including UNICEF, have undertaken awareness-raising and parenting programmes, often starting from or before birth, to develop parenting practices that accord with a holistic understanding of

development and set realistic expectations. The theory of change postulates that ELDS contribute to such work by providing practical indicators of expected developmental milestones in a way that parents can understand, monitor and practise.

Where standards are being used to identify children's developmental profile in pre-school or primary school there is the opportunity to share this reference framework with parents and to advise parents on appropriate interventions or support to address developmental needs.

FIGURE 11 ELDS theory of change: how ELDS might influence ECED practice and children's readiness for school





5.1.3 Primary school practice

The theory of change postulates that ELDS influence primary practice. There are two potential main paths of influence:

- ELDS establish the developmental domains for all young children up to the age of 8 and thus help primary teachers to provide a recognisably similar range of learning experiences and expectations for incoming student. This helps provide continuity for children.
- primary schools communicate with feeder preschools and receive individual development profiles that allows them to plan activities and support to suit individual needs that ELDS helps them to be more meaningfully 'child-centred'

5.2 PRESCHOOLS PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES

5.2.1 Prepared teachers

Improved curricula

The most important routes to changing practice have been through revised curricula, supported by professional development. Curriculum changes, which followed and drew on ELDS or other standards, have been widely introduced and teachers are using them. In several countries (e.g. Senegal) the curriculum document is the visible manifestation of the ELDS.

Ability to integrate standards into practice

Thirteen (of 23) countries' documents show that there was ELDS-related training for teachers, with seven showing some evidence that ECED teachers are using ELDS in practice.

In Mongolia, teachers were observed to be practising child-outcome focused approaches and methodologies, which were introduced to them through the in-service and pre-service training programme that followed the adoption of ELDS as a national standard and mediated through the new ELDS-based curriculum.

Increased foundational knowledge based on standards

Mongolian teachers reported that they find the age categorisation within each domain useful as it provides a guide to appropriate expectations of children's progress. They use the indicators (usually picking a smaller set of them) in age-associated progress monitoring tools. There is strong, albeit anecdotal, evidence that, after three years, these changes in practice are contributing to improved quality.

5.2.2 Improved instruction

Intentional and purposeful teaching

In Jordan, good practice was evident in well-resourced public kindergartens, which had received support from a major project (Education Reform for a Knowledge Economy). Children had some independence to use a wide range of learning and play resources within the guidelines of the curriculum, which is closely aligned with the ELDS. The new curriculum and associated in-service teacher training programmes have contributed to child-friendly kindergartens and improved record-keeping, within classroom practices that demonstrated respect for children and their learning autonomy.

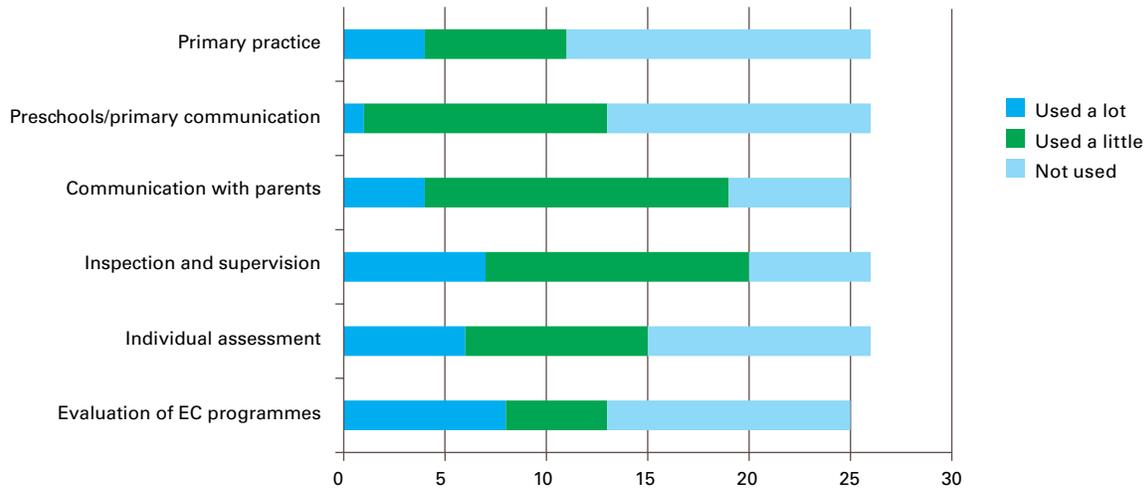
In Mongolia, a provincial ECD specialist described changing practice: teaching in kindergartens used to be very lesson- and teacher-centred. Since the ELDS-based training and materials teachers have recognised that child outcomes are not only knowledge and skills. Teaching methods have changed: whereas teachers used to address the whole class, the methodology now includes group work; children are encouraged to play, touch and use different materials in the classroom, while the teachers observe.

However, significant differences can be seen in the take-up of ELDS-based approaches and methodologies between large urban kindergartens and small rural kindergartens at *soum* (district) level that may be serving seasonally nomadic herding communities. The quality of



FIGURE 12

Responses to the question “To what extent have the standards been used in the following areas of practice to support school readiness outcomes for children, for families and for primary schools?” (N=26, respondents from countries with ELDS in place). Labels edited for clarity.



in-service training for rural teachers may not have been as good as for those in the city; rural kindergartens serving small populations are not as well-resourced: one teacher pointed out that the new curriculum says ‘to use games’, but her kindergarten has no games. One kindergarten principal pointed out that there are big differences between the competences of children growing up in herding families (‘very real-life skills’) and those coming from the city for extended visits to grandparents living in the soum; for example, in understanding animals.

Realistic expectations of children

There is little evidence of standards (or derived tools) being used to assess children’s developmental progress in formal ways. Only 8 (of 26) of CO survey respondents identified individual assessment as a main use of the standards (Increased foundational knowledge based on standards (Figure 12). Country documents provided no examples.

Among the thematic case study country visits Mongolia is the example in which ELDS has been most influential on this aspect of practice. Several different ELDS-based assessment

and monitoring tools have been developed and are in use in some (though by no means all) kindergartens to monitor individual children’s development and learning progress, and ELDS-based tools are being used similarly in children’s health and nutrition monitoring (the ‘pink book’). This reflects a level of provincial, if not national commitment to follow up the development of ELDS into classroom practice.

In Jordan and the Philippines there is simplified child record-keeping and, in both cases the domains were described by responsible Ministry officials as “broadly consistent” with the ELDS, but there has been no attempt to ensure matching indicators, levels or domains and observation is that these instruments prioritise the cognitive (and more easily measurable) domains, particularly so in the Philippines.

In Jordan the recording tool more closely reflects the curriculum, which makes it more practical for teachers. However, it records across a restricted set of domains with many less indicators of levels than the ELDS: it is completed each semester. Teachers speak of finding it useful to alert them to developmental



or learning concerns, to which they may then respond by additional support and parental liaison. There is some evidence of additional regular record-keeping of children's progress on specific activities or learning goals, such as knowing letters.

In the Philippines there are two tools used to assess children, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) checklist and a more restricted school-readiness assessment tool. The ECCD checklist was designed to screen children on entry, to identify those with developmental delays but is administered periodically to record progress. It is said by officials to align with the ELDS but it pre-dates it and is more limited in its scope and coverage.

The separate school-readiness instrument in the Philippines was designed for, and previously used for, all children on entry to primary school to inform the school's response to children with different pre-school experiences. With the introduction of universal one-year kindergarten, a similar instrument is administered at the end of the kindergarten year and triggers a catch-up session for children who underperform. It has a much more limited coverage than the ELDS (or the ECCD checklist) concentrating on learnt knowledge, classroom behaviours and operational skills.

In South Africa, teachers base classroom observation on the NELDS but not in a consistent way. Officials and teachers suggest that the use of these observation to inform planning is dependent on the level of training and support teachers have received.

All the thematic case study countries strive identify children with special educational needs as young as possible within the primary health systems that work closely with families to undertake developmental checks. Such checks may not be directly based on the ELDS document but they reflect the domains and expectations.

In Mongolia the so called 'pink book', used by health professionals, is a developmental checklist based on the ELDS. It has reportedly enabled earlier identification of potential child developmental problems.

Improved classroom planning

For older children, in more educational setting, teachers described tailoring activities to suit children's needs within their range of classroom practices but there is very limited use of the ELDS to identify individual developmental delays that require external support.

The ECCD check-list, widely used in the Philippines on entry to preschool, was specifically designed to screen for developmental delays. Teachers reported using the results to plan classroom activities and provide additional individual help but rarely to trigger external services.

In South Africa, whilst the NELDS includes a developmental achievement level (a scale "a", "b" or "c") there is no guidance on how to deal with the resultant individual developmental profiles and respond with plans to address identified special needs: it was reported this is likely to be addressed in the nascent NCF.

5.2.3 Quality inspection and supervision

Ability to assess pre-school practice based on outcomes

There is little evidence of the use of standards to inform inspection and supervision of ECED institutions, to assess performance and steer improvement planning.

Increased foundational knowledge based on standards

There is no evidence of standards being used to improve understanding of developmental difference between different groups of children, including those from marginalized communities or disadvantaged circumstances.



In South Africa the NELDS has been criticised as not taking account of the diversity of languages and cultures and of reflecting the developmental expectations of the dominant culture. In some countries in Latin America the political fallout from such concerns has constrained the development of ELDS.

Respondents from the concerned Ministry in Jordan strongly made the point that the ELDS were not relevant to the various groups of marginalized children under its welfare remit (street children, children of refugees and displaced families, and those with mental and physical disabilities). Despite the robust (and inclusive) age validation of the ELDS, this Ministry took the view that it was only a tool for the “normal” children. There is unexploited potential better to understand the developmental profiles and specific needs of these groups and to evaluate the impact of the targeted interventions, for which this Ministry is responsible.

There is little evidence of national practices (based on ELDS or other outcomes frameworks) to evaluate programmes or interventions. About a third of 26 CO survey respondents identified this utilisation but few are documented.

In Jordan there has been a series of national assessments using the EDI tool on a population sample: this is reported as part of the educational statistics.

In 2013 Macedonia undertook a controlled evaluation of outcomes of different modalities of pre-school provision, using indicators from their ELDS. However, there is little other evidence of outcome assessment feeding back to identify best practice and inform policy to promulgate or support it.

5.3 FAMILIES SUPPORT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION

Increased knowledge of realistic age expectations

There is some evidence that pre-schools are using standards to structure dialogue

with parents. Four (of 22) countries’ documents assert that this is happening (Bolivia, Cuba, Macedonia, Moldova). More than half of CO survey respondents (from 26 countries with ELDS in place) report some use ELDS to communicate with parents and inform parenting programmes (Figure 12) and there are good examples from the thematic case study country visits. However, the evidence on whether or not this work has had any impact on parental practices is sparse and mainly anecdotal. Parents were able to speak of major developmental milestones for young children, often reflecting the structure and language, for example, of the primary health checklists, but were not normally familiar with the domains and milestones as they apply to older children.

Increased participation in children’s learning

In Mongolia there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that ELDS and related changes in practice have contributed to improved family support for children’s development and engagement. Many kindergartens report positive responses from parents newly engaged in the activities of the kindergarten and active support to their children’s learning; several report that parents have seen good results arising in other children and been convinced by kindergartens to change their behaviour to support children’s early development and learning in the home.

Changing values towards learning

In Jordan, there is anecdotal evidence (from teachers and parents) of parents being more motivated to play with children, allow them more autonomy in relationships and decision-making and to offer more stimulation and learning opportunities; changes are attributed to the Better Parenting initiative (UNICEF) and the government’s Parent Involvement Programme. These were both informed by ELDS and the new curriculum. A study of the impact of Better Parenting on the lives of children suggests mothers, who were the main target, reported “improved parenting knowledge and spending quality time with children” (Al-Hassan and Lansford. 2008).



In Mongolia one kindergarten principal was clear on the benefits, in terms of child outcomes, of engaging parents actively in the life of the kindergarten and supporting parents to work with their children at home, using the ELDS-based child's record book and other materials. She noted a difference in children whose parents actively support them and those that do not: the latter are more withdrawn, less confident and less communicative in the class. They do not get their lessons reinforced by parents working with them at home, and are not able to follow-up or remember what they learnt. She cited the example of a child who, the day after a lesson on circles, enthusiastically began pointing out different circular objects that she had identified in her home with her mother.

Improved continuity between home and school

There was little evidence of change in the structures and practices to improve the transitions to school.

5.4 PRIMARY SCHOOLS READY FOR CHILDREN

In only two countries (of the 35, for which documents were inspected) have ELDS been developed for ages up to 8 (i.e. matching UNICEF's definition of 'early childhood' and the Going Global recommendation for ELDS).

In most cases standards are simply not seen as relevant to primary schools by practitioners and officials. The country visits confirmed that primary teachers and principals are hardly aware of them: typically those interviewed had not seen copies of the ELDS document, for example.

Improved teaching approaches for early grade children

The differences can, indeed, be stark, as children move from colourful, well equipped, playful kindergartens into overcrowded rooms, sitting in crowded rows, listening to a teacher talking from a blackboard in Grade 1 as seen in Jordan and South Africa.

There is very little evidence of standards being used to influence practice in primary schools. The CO survey data show that in 15 countries of 26 with ELDS in place) ELDS are not used in this respect and in seven they are used a little (Figure 12). Only one country (Cuba) reported the use of their (pre-ELDS) standards in primary training and only two (Macedonia and Cuba) report in country documentation any use of them by primary teachers.

Aligned curriculum

The cultures and practices of the primary school constrain how holistic developmental domains map onto subject-based curriculum: this is widely perceived as a constraint by those concerned with children's first experiences in primary school.

Ten (of 26 with ELDS in place) CO survey respondents reported that ELDS were used a little to inform curriculum development for early grade primary education. However, in the thematic case study countries the ELDS had not been influential in primary curriculum change, although in three of the countries the pre-school curriculum was the responsibility of the same agency as the primary curriculum and officials recognised the importance of continuity (at least relating to the primary school subjects).

Realistic expectations for children of different ages

There is no evidence of primary schools using ELDS or other standards to adjust expectation of children of different ages or to use them to individualise their practice.

Improved teacher training for early grade teachers

There is no evidence of changes associated with ELDS in the professional development of primary school teachers.

Improved awareness of children's needs

Only one (of 26 with ELDS in place) CO survey respondent reported that ELDS had been used a lot to help communication between pre-schools



and primary school, while 12 COs reported they had been used a little for the purpose.

In Mongolia there was limited, anecdotal, evidence, from officials, that the draft ELDS were used by teachers of the first intake of 6-year olds into a few primary schools following a change in the law in 2008.

In the Jordan and the Philippines (and many other countries that are moving towards a universal Grade 0) there is de facto inclusion of that preschool year within primary school facilities, which can facilitate communication between teachers about practice or about individual children. However, officials interviewed made no reference to ELDS in this context.

In Jordan a record book is passed from the pre-school to the primary school for each child. It is an administrative booklet, which includes addresses and health history etc. but captures very limited information about learning, and is uses a format unrelated to the domains of the ELDS.

5.5 CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL: THE IMPACT OF ELDS

There is some very broad evidence, including research in Jordan and the Philippines, that children who have some pre-school experience are better prepared at the start of primary school, but in general this research is based on limited instruments that prioritise measures of cognitive domains at transition to primary school and in the subsequent assessment of progress.

In Mongolia, there is anecdotal evidence from a few kindergarten and early grade primary teachers that, since the successful introduction of ELDS and the related changes in practice at kindergartens, there have been positive psycho-social changes in children entering primary school, such as increased confidence, communication skills, and responsibility, which are considered important in preparation for transition.

There is no evidence on changes in developmental outcomes resulting from improved pre-school practices or parenting, nor of any impact on children's successful transition to primary schooling. Specifically there is nothing that helps understand the importance of the range of developmental domains to children realising their potential in subsequent schooling or their lives.



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SECTION III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the evaluation conclusions that reflect findings.

Overall the evaluation concludes that, while ELDS are a pertinent and relevant approach to measuring outcomes of ECED, in too many countries this potential has not been realised. ELDS can help build a better understanding of school readiness, but this has not yet been exploited and there is no evidence coming from the use of ELDS on the critical questions for ECED concerning the most effective interventions and their impact on children's futures.

UNICEF has been uniquely positioned to use ELDS to progress the school readiness discourse but has not taken the opportunity. UNICEF's school readiness framework has not been deconstructed to assess the detailed dimensions of school readiness, the contributions of developmental domains or how they might be used during transition to school.

6.1 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN THE GLOBAL ECED LANDSCAPE

Conclusion 14: There has been too little research on which early childhood experiences and interventions contribute most to children fulfilling their potential. Learning development standards have potential to inform such research.

Learning outcome standards, and ELDS in particular, when measured and comprehensively applied over the population, offer a tool to increase understanding of the effectiveness of ECED measures. Longitudinal research that starts when children are very young and seeks to understand what contributes to

their development is expensive, but much of ECED practice lacks an evidence base without such research.

Conclusion 15: The learning and development standards approach has the potential to contribute to the children's rights agenda, but, at the same time, presents some risks. Although central to UNICEF's mandate, it has not properly addressed the impact of a standards approach on children's rights, how standards can be used to support rights and how any risks can be mitigated.

Learning and development standards make explicit the outcomes a young child has the right to expect and, hence, that duty-bearers should be making possible on their behalf. They have the potential for measuring realisation of those rights and driving interventions to ensure they are fulfilled.

The rights discourse for pre-school children has not moved beyond the right of access: learning and development standards could help establish the more meaningful right to a suitable early childhood experience leading to expected developmental outcomes.



There is a risk that, in practice, introducing attainment targets can be (mis)used as a rationale to reduce playful, exploratory pre-school experiences that value individuality. Rigid application of age-related standards can undermine recognition of, and respect for, children's individuality, agency and learning autonomy. All children are different and will progress at different rates in different domains: it is important to be clear how the standards, and their utilisation, can identify and support responses that respect and protect difference.

6.2 UNICEF SUPPORT TO ELDS

Conclusion 16: ELDS workshops, discussion, conceptualisation and drafting contributed to the capacity and awareness of national and regional ECED professionals. However, UNICEF has not followed through towards operationalising ELDS and there was weak analysis of critical capacity gaps for the 'next steps'.

Where countries (in some cases regions) committed to ELDS, it stimulated discourse about the scope and expectations of ECED and provided a national tool to influence systems and practice. In many cases this was particularly timely, because of rapidly changing landscapes of providers and models, and the work was able to inform changes and ensure proper coverage of the range of developmental domains.

Conclusion 17: Within UNICEF itself, there is limited understanding of the potential import of learning and development indicators and commitment to operationalising them has waned.

The process of introducing ELDS in UNICEF established understanding of their potential purpose but this has attenuated. Over time, since the beginning of Going Global, and with UNICEF staff changes, common understandings have weakened and in many countries, ELDS has not been on CO agendas for the last two to three years. There has been no global focal point driving the use of developmental indicators in this form for some years.

UNICEF structures contributed to weak follow up and drive to realise the potential of ELDS and other standards so, although the work has made some contribution to the ECED debate and to some system changes, it has not institutionalised an outcome-based approach to ECED.

Conclusion 18: Most ELDS cover the pre-school years (typically 0 to 6) despite the *Going Global* model.

In most countries, the ELDS covers the pre-school age group, which was, perhaps, a pragmatic response to the structures and national agendas that reinforce the separation of ECE and primary.

6.3 ELDS INTO THE SYSTEM

Conclusion 19: ELDS have contributed to ECED curriculum change and consequent professional development: these are important but they are the 'low-hanging fruit' of system change.

Developing the curriculum and revising training for ECED teachers are usually the responsibility of a central agency, with qualified staff and a resource base for their task. In many cases those concerned with such work are part of the professional cadre for ECED and were involved in developing ELDS.

Next steps to implementation are at national scale and seek to mobilise a wide range of different, teachers and bureaucrats. This has been much more challenging.

Conclusion 20: The arguments for school readiness were not part of the *Going Global* ELDS model and most countries developed them as pre-school standards. This has limited their use and usefulness in support of school readiness and continuity at transition to primary school.

The potential of ELDS to support all three parts of UNICEF's model of school readiness has not been exploited.



Conclusion 21: There are a variety of capacity challenges to implementing ELDS as foreseen. In particular ECED lacks supportive bureaucratic structures, finance and human resources: these became particularly evident when UNICEF stepped back from its role as facilitator and supporter.

The capacity risks to operationalisation include:

- institutional relationships, particularly those involved in children's transition to primary school at the local and the national level
- teachers' professional capacity, not only in their competence to undertake standards-based individual assessments but to ensure that the organisational arrangements in their schools/centres support the additional demand on their working time and administration
- supervision and inspection, which for ECED are often weak (and sometimes non-existent)
- agencies responsible for ECED performance, which may not have taken on board the potential of outcome measures and may lack technical and policy expertise to exploit the data (this may include several agencies with overlapping responsibilities)
- agencies involved in collecting and interpreting educational system information, which will have existing methodologies and will need to adjust if they are required to include (or expand) ECED coverage

Conclusion 22: The ELDS initiative brought representatives of sectors together, which strengthened the process and improved the coverage of the product. However, it has not significantly improved collaborative working across agencies in different sectors.

The institutional arrangements for early childhood are often complex, but the canonical

arrangement, by which health and family welfare agencies deal with younger children and the education agencies take over after age 4, remains in place in most countries, with different arrangements for oversight and administration at sub-national level.

Within UNICEF, the initial cross-sectoral drive for ELDS has attenuated over time and, in most instances, education agencies (and education staff in UNICEF) are now taking the lead. This may have reduced opportunities to coordinate and exploit the potential of standards to identify children with developmental needs and trigger an appropriate, possibly multi-sectoral, response.

6.4 ELDS INTO PRACTICE

Conclusion 23: Using ELDS in practice, for assessing individuals, institutional performance and broader interventions, may require instruments that are simplified and mediated to fit the uses and the users.

Many ELDS documents are daunting and impractical for teachers, in particular, to use.

Conclusion 24: There is too little work to make the national ELDS workable across the diversity of populations.

It remains unclear how national ELDS should reflect different languages (including oral traditions) and cultural practices around childhood (affecting social relationships and autonomy). Is it by versioning, differential application, or in the interpretation of the results of different groups?

There are conflicting demands for ELDS: a positive tool that can be used for all children needs adaptations to the culture, language and levels of different groups; a tool to inform understanding of inequity suggests common outcome measures that expose difference and increase our understanding of the nature of difference in developmental profiles.



In some countries, this tension was a political hammer blow to the ELDS, which were deemed inapplicable to important minorities.

Conclusion 25: ELDS and the standards development processes have contributed to a holistic vision of children’s development and the inclusion of that vision in parental, professional and political discourse.

Attitudes to early childhood are changing. The ELDS process has contributed to changing the vision and helped to underpin activities that have led to new understandings.

Conclusion 26: ELDS have highlighted the importance of the primary school in ensuring a continuity of support through transition and the ability to respond to individual needs, but their potential has not been realised in practice

ELDS can help primary schools to individualise practice and to recognise the scope of holistic developmental, especially if they address the 0 to 8 age range.

Even where ELDS have been created with the ‘full’ age range of 0 to 8 years, they have not influenced primary practice and there is little use of individual developmental profiles to inform primary schools of individual needs.



CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented in this chapter draw on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation and attempt to identify key actions for UNICEF concerning the use of ELDS for ECED and school readiness.

7.1 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN THE GLOBAL ECED LANDSCAPE

Recommendation 9: UNICEF should lead or commission research as to how a child’s developmental profile contributes to his or her positive experience in primary school and fulfilment of their potential in later life.

ELDS have a particular contribution to make to better understanding of early childhood interventions. Longitudinal research would help understand how the developmental domains contribute to a child’s future in school (and beyond).

Recommendation 10: UNICEF should to more to expose the children’s rights implications of using ELDS.

ELDS capture expectation of children’s characteristics and competencies that should be supported if their rights are respected, especially their rights to education, to play and to be treated with respect.

Such standards provide an opportunity to strengthen understanding of the realisation of the rights of younger children, to mobilise more information to hold duty-bearers to account, and to reflect on how the school readiness approach may drive a school-like agenda into the pre-school experience and put at risk play-centred practice.

7.2 UNICEF SUPPORT TO ELDS

Recommendation 11: UNICEF should build on the body of work that has resulted from the ELDS initiative and renew its support to using the standards effectively as outcome measures for ECED.

The potential uses of ELDS are closely aligned to UNICEF’s agendas and concerns and they provide a solid basis of existing standards in many countries. The next steps, be they political, technical or organisational, fall within UNICEF’s core functions.

7.3 ELDS INTO THE SYSTEM

Recommendation 12: UNICEF should develop a capacity analysis toolkit for ECED that countries can be used to identify the support that is needed to use ELDS, including identifying agencies and areas in which cross-sectoral practices can continue.

ECED presents varied and complex capacity challenges: for institutional arrangements; organisational competence; and professional expertise. Capacity issues are often compounded by decentralised responsibilities and non-governmental actors. COs need to analyse this complex landscape to inform planning.



Recommendation 13: UNICEF needs to make the argument for using ELDS to improve transition, in particular assisting the extension to cover children up to age 8, and working on alignment of ELDS with more traditional primary curricula.

The potential to support transition and the early years of primary school is limited if the ELDS document covers only pre-school ages.

7.4 ELDS INTO PRACTICE

Recommendation 14: UNICEF should support global and national work to develop operational tools (e.g. observation and recording tools), which draw on ELDS and facilitate their better use in classrooms and institutions.

In many countries the ELDS indicator list is comprehensive but difficult to use. Toolkits might include observation guidance and recording frames to help teachers maintain a record without the exercise becoming too burdensome (for teachers or children).

Recommendation 15: UNICEF should provide guidance to national users of ELDS about how to adapt and use them to identify difference and diversity, not only as a tool for remediation but better to understand developmental difference.

Classroom tools are needed to help manage the age-mapping of indicators in ways that reflect and celebrate developmental difference, identify different profiles and set appropriate triggers for responses to those who respond significantly below (and above) age-mapped developmental norms.

Recommendation 16: UNICEF should take positive steps to ensure that the lessons learned from the ELDS work inform ongoing work on international, population-level instruments, notably those for the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNICEF has a leading role in developing global indicators for ECED. Its experience of ELDS, in particular on issues of national adaptation and operationalisation, is relevant to this work.



APPENDIX 1.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

Title	Terms of reference for the evaluation of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and their effect on school readiness
Purpose	To conduct an evaluation of early development learning standards that are meant to improve children’s developmental readiness to start primary school on time
Reference	RFPS-USA-2014-501901
EA Timeline	20 December 2014 through 31 July 2015
Reporting to	Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office

I. BACKGROUND

1. UNICEF Evaluation Office is requesting proposals from eligible consultancy firms (vendors) or evaluation teams to provide services to conduct a formative evaluation of the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and other UNICEF supported learner-centered programmes and/or interventions whose primary purpose is to promote school readiness.
2. According to the Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report (UNICEF, 2013), there is resounding evidence that supporting ECD and education for young children is one of the most important and effective education interventions. Yet far too many children do not have access to early learning programmes. In some countries of sub-Saharan Africa the rates of access and/or participation are as low as three percent. Because of a lack of exposure to early learning and related factors, children often enter school late, leading not only to missed development opportunities during the crucial early years, but also a lack of readiness to learn. The most disadvantaged children are the most at risk for late entry and dropout; they also have little chance to attend quality pre-school programmes.
3. One of the seminal efforts to promote early childhood learning and what has come to be known as ‘school readiness’ came through the Education for All (EFA) assessments, and the articulation of a goal to expand the primary school cycle to include 1 year of preschool (World Education Forum Dakar, 1990). Since then, a growing number of developing countries have adjusted their national aspirations and goals to align them with this global agenda, and set targets for universal preschool. While some countries have registered tremendous success (e.g., Ghana, with preschool participation from 31 percent in 1999⁵ to estimated 75 percent in 2013), the majority of the countries still are at the formative stages of implementing these mandates. In the ensuing two decades the global education development community has made substantial resources commitments to comprehensive early childhood development and learning. UNICEF’s interventions in the corresponding period have focused on the outcome of getting children to enroll in school at the appropriate age, with those who enter the first grade of primary school being ‘learning ready’, and schools being ‘learner ready’.

⁵ EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2012



Description of ELDS and other UNICEF-supported school readiness efforts

4. **School Readiness** refers to the degree to which children are prepared to engage in formal learning as evidenced by their levels of development upon reaching the legal age of schooling (typically 5-6 years of age). School readiness derives from the more encompassing concept of developmental readiness, a rights-based, ecological framework of early childhood development (ECD) which postulates that in order for children to develop to their full potential, interventions must address macro-, meso-, and micro-level systems that interact and shape opportunities for their growth and learning (Kagan and Britto, 2005)⁶. In addition to 'children being ready to learn', UNICEF's articulation of school readiness includes two other components: the extent to which parents are ready to send their children to school, evidence of which would be their values towards schooling, preparation of their children for school and being actively engaged in supporting children's participation in school; and, whether schools are ready to receive children (such as teacher preparation and access to age appropriate learning resources).
5. Correspondingly, UNICEF and others identified the need for development 'standards' to articulate expectations or indicators of achievement for the 'school readiness system', and to be used in inter-related ways to monitor school readiness at different scales of analysis. Hence the support for **Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)**. ELDS are statements that describe expectations for children's behavior and performance across multiple dimensions of learning and development. ELDS reflect what children should know and be able to do from birth to eight years of age related to their physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language development (among others).
6. Since 2002, UNICEF has supported national governments and public-private partnerships to develop and implement standards that contribute to a range of outcomes for children and their caregivers. One approach has been that of 'home grown' initiatives supported by UNICEF country offices to measure and assess early learning, particularly in the area of child survival and health and broader ECD programming. The other approach was spearheaded by UNICEF HQ through a project called, "*Going Global with Indicators of Child Well-Being: Using a Standards Approach.*" In this project, UNICEF's Education and ECD Sections partnered with Columbia and Yale Universities to launch a global ELDS initiative in six pilot countries in 2002. Based on a generic ELDS model, the project sought 'to develop nationally acceptable early learning and development standards.' Project activities consisted of orientation and capacity building workshops in 2003 and 2004, followed by HQ-based technical assistance and further dissemination of the ELDS model to other countries through regional and country-country exchanges in the subsequent years. However, the actual standards development process began around 2006, with 10 countries initiating the process in 2008.
7. In essence, ELDS are being positioned as a necessary mechanism to establish an enabling policy environment for improving the quality of all Early Childhood Education (ECE) initiatives and programmes that contribute to school readiness. These may be offered through school-based preschools; community-based child development centres; home-based centres (using

⁶ Kagan, S.L. & Britto, P.R. (2005). *Going Global with Early Learning and Development Standards: Final Report*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University/Child Study Center, Yale University



peer-to-peer early learning and/or adult facilitators); media-based early learning programmes; and, mobile ECD centers. To that end, UNICEF monitoring data indicates that 64 country offices (out of 144) reported having school readiness standards in place to assess and monitor school readiness in 2013, 46 of which are ELDS. Forty-two (42) country offices reported partial development of school readiness standards (ELDS Stock-taking report, UNICEF, 2014). UNICEF expenditures for 2013 reflect a total of \$22.6 million for school readiness initiatives at the country level, \$14.6 million for ELDS and \$14.2 million for community-based ECCE (Thematic Report: Basic Education and Gender Equality, UNICEF, 2013).

II. RATIONALE FOR CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION

8. As early as 2002, early childhood development was identified as one of the five priorities of the medium-term strategic plan, the perceived benefits of which was to enhance children's "thinking and language skills, emotional and social skills, school readiness and self-esteem" (MTSP 2002-2005). The subsequent medium-term strategic plan pursued a more explicit strategic result to "support national capacity to improve children's developmental readiness to start primary school on time, especially for marginalized children" (Key Result Area 1 for Basic Education and Gender equality, MTSP 2006-2009; 2009-13).
9. With few exceptions, most countries have not been able to evaluate the outcomes of ELDS implementation as it applies to programme quality or school readiness. One reason for a paucity of evaluative work in this theme is the perceived lack of programme maturity resulting from the fact that content and age validation studies took longer than anticipated, involving large sample sizes that consumed a large proportion of the programme budget. The other key limitation is a lack of technical

capacity to implement ELDS, resulting from the fact that a large proportion of the ECE workforce in the targeted countries is made up of volunteers with very little professional training and/or experience, if any.

10. A related motivation for the evaluation is that UNICEF's total expenditure in school readiness and corresponding early learning activities was estimated at \$56 million in 2013, representing a substantial investment of 10 percent of the Education Section's overall budget. The most recent Strategic Plan has a commitment to "increase attention to early childhood development... and support innovations with the potential to rapidly improve education outcomes for marginalized children, such as right-age enrolment" (Strategic Plan 2014-2017). As such an evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach is warranted. The evaluation will assess the extent to which UNICEF's efforts have resulted in strengthened national capacities and improved children's school readiness, and offer lessons in effectiveness of the different approaches for future programming.

III. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION, ITS OBJECTIVES AND INDICATIVE QUESTIONS

11. The purpose of the evaluation will be to examine UNICEF's contribution in strengthening national capacities for providing high quality early learning programmes and improving children's school readiness. The evaluation will have a clear programmatic focus, investigating what country programmes set out to do in early learning initiatives, examining whether there is a coherent program approach to ELDS and school readiness that will increase the likelihood of achieving intended results/outcomes, and determining how programmes are being implemented, as well the actual results that have been achieved.



12. UNICEF continues to test a number of standard-setting approaches in the different country contexts, some of which are more successful than others. To that end, the evaluation will postulate a programme theory of change that attempts to ascertain whether there is a plausible path that ties ELDS implementation efforts to attainment of specified outcomes, and to validate the theory of change with programme developers and implementers. The evaluation will

also ascertain whether the necessary monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place to facilitate systematic performance reporting and reviews. In some cases, this effort could also entail establishing baselines where none exist. Evaluation themes, and objectives, are presented in Table 1 (the numbering of themes is only nominal and does not imply any hierarchy).

TABLE A1.1 Evaluation themes and objectives

	Evaluation Themes	Key issues	Evaluation Objectives
1	The ELDS Standard Setting Approach	Purpose of ELDS; description of ELDS approach	To articulate the ELDS approach and its relationship with the UNICEF school readiness framework, and to examine whether UNICEF is doing the right things in relation to the global agenda to early learning
2	National Education Systems Strengthening	Policy articulation of the school readiness system; advocacy and awareness strategies and approaches	To articulate UNICEF's policy advocacy strategies, and governance processes and approaches that promote school readiness within national education systems, and the extent to which ELDS has strengthened these systems.
3	Capacity Strengthening	Building capacities for school readiness work among UNICEF and partners, including M&E capacities; resourcing of school readiness initiatives	To articulate the capacities and resources required to implement ELDS effectively, and to analyze the extent to which the process of developing ELDS has improved the capacity, knowledge and skills of duty bearers (development and emergency settings).
4	Cross-sector Collaboration	External partnerships; internal collaboration and coordination across UNICEF programmes (Education, Health, Nutrition, Child Protection, etc.) and among CO, RO, HQ	To examine the extent to which UNICEF has established external partnerships to advocate for and implement school readiness programmes, and analyze the UNICEF-wide coordination required to develop and implement ELDS at different geographic and institutional scales.



13 Indicative/tentative evaluation questions are offered in Appendix 2. However, two types of questions will be answered. Descriptive questions will provide information and verifiable facts about the ELDS and early learning work (e.g., the context under which ELDS was developed; who the implementing partners are; coverage of intended beneficiaries; tools/strategies that are used and how they are deployed in different contexts; UNICEF organizational capacities and arrangements, etc.). Normative questions will require making judgments, based on application of explicit and defensible criteria for weighing evidence in answering questions (e.g., whether there is coherence in UNICEF approach; relevance and adequacy of UNICEF strategies against national goals; success of initiatives/pilots etc.). Bidders will be required to propose appropriate evaluation criteria for (e.g., the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development programs⁷ or a framework from the ECD discipline) and propose improvements to the questions proffered in Appendix 2. Evaluation questions will be finalized during the inception process.

IV. SCOPE AND USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

14. Even though school readiness activities are typically transacted under the education portfolio, early learning issues cut across all UNICEF programme areas. In order for young children to learn and reach their potential, they first must survive, grow in safe environments and enjoy certain protections, including protection from debilitating diseases. Hence there are a number of health outcomes that are typically addressed in ECD standards. However, this evaluation will focus on early learning and development standards (ELDS) was

introduced through the “Going Global” initiative, and school readiness outcomes under the UNICEF definition of ‘school readiness’ (system effectiveness standards, program/school standards, and a subset of family/parenting standards that address the education of children)⁸.

15. The evaluation will provide an account of ELDS work at the global and regional level and make a determination of whether it supports implementation efforts at the country level. Assuming that the necessary data are available, the evaluation will assess whether there is a relationship between investments in early learning (ELDS and related standards, financial resources, human resources), and the desired outcomes (access and participation in formal preschool education, children’s attainment of ‘readiness’ outcomes and on-time enrollment, demand for ECE and parents’ readiness to send children to school, and education systems strengthening for the ECE sub-sector). Hence ***proposals to address these relationships and possible impacts to beneficiaries*** will be regarded highly in assessing evaluation bids.

16. The evaluation will also use the case study approach to examine key themes more deeply. Rather than single country case studies that typically attempt to investigate all research questions as they apply to that one country, case studies in this evaluation will conduct thematic case studies, namely, (i) Strengthening capacities (both UNICEF and national education systems) to provide high quality school readiness programmes; and, (ii) Using ELDS and other standard setting approaches to detect and address developmental delays that obstruct children’s readiness for school. Mainly, the case studies will examine UNICEF’s

⁷ OECD-DAC, 2002

⁸ See ELDS and ECE Stock-taking Report, UNICEF, 2014.



programming strategies, and the extent to which results were achieved in the work associated with these themes. ***Soundness of the case study approach and methodological rigor will be regarded highly in the assessment of evaluation bids.***

17. To the extent possible, evaluation lessons are meant to achieve global coverage and generalizability. Hence, the evaluation will cover the period from the onset of ELDS piloting (2003) to the end of 2013, and address all key school readiness approaches and activities. All 106 country offices that have indicated that they have some type of school readiness standards will be invited to contribute data in the document analysis phase. Also, the evaluation will focus primarily on programming in normal development settings, and less on settings that are actively programming for emergencies. However, school readiness in emergencies settings maybe addressed in the context of investigating how the ECD Kit for emergencies has been used to provide early learning opportunities, and the capacities that are required to do so.
18. The Education and ECD Sections (at UNICEF, New York) are the primary clients for the evaluation, hence the expectation is that the evaluation will provide an opportunity for organizational learning for HQ-based staff, Regional Education/ECD Advisers, Education/ECD Chiefs, and Education/ECD Specialists at all levels. Other intended users include the following:
 - Social Policy Advisers throughout UNICEF
 - Government partners
 - Other partners in education development.

To the extent possible, the evaluation lessons will influence refinement and implementation of school readiness commitment made in the current UNICEF Strategic Plan (2014-17).

V. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

19. Based on the objectives of the evaluation, this section indicates a possible approach, methods, and processes for the evaluation. **Bidders are invited to examine the approach and methodology carefully and improve on it, or propose an approach they deem more appropriate. Methodological rigor will be considered and rewarded significantly in assessing proposals.**
20. **Evaluation approach/design:** A mixed methods approach will be employed in this evaluation, using the correlational and case study designs, and employing appropriate tools of analyses for both the quantitative and qualitative components. The correlational design is suggested in this study because it allows investigation of the direction and strength of relationships between a number of variables, while the thematic case study approach would be an attempt to study those relationships in-depth in a smaller number of countries. Design elements should include, but not be limited to: (i) a desk-based review of literature on the global agenda for access and participation in preschool education and school readiness related child outcomes; (ii) an analysis of documents from UNICEF country offices and secondary data analysis from UNICEF and/or government data sources to determine if strategies, activities show any promising results and improved school readiness outcomes; (iii) field-based data collection guided by the case study design and approach, and employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain primary data from multiple sources, **with particular emphasis on participation of children as right bearers** and other beneficiaries targeted by school readiness programmes; (iv) data analysis and formulation of preliminary findings; (v) an approach to validate preliminary



findings to establish consensus and generalizability of findings, as well as to obtain additional insights/nuances that will ensure that the global perspective are represented in the evaluation; and, (vi) an approach to validate the recommendations.

21. **Evaluation methods:** To be further refined during the inception phase, evaluation methods will include sampling of participating countries; instrument development and validation; a two-stage data collection strategy involving a document review exercise and secondary data analysis and field visits to a sample of countries; and, data analysis (coding and verification).
22. **Sampling strategy:** First, a purposive sample of countries will be selected for the desk-based study, to gain a better understanding of the issues in standard setting school readiness. The next sampling block will be a census approach. Data will be collected for the Education Section at UNICEF, HQ, seven (7) regional education offices, and all 46 countries which are implementing ELDS. Two case studies will be conducted on pre-determined themes. Several countries will contribute data to the case studies. Their selection as contributors will be purposive, based on availability of data the issues under investigation in the case study and its richness. ***Bidders are invited to proffer sampling criteria for the desk review, to be considered in the technical evaluation of proposals.***
23. **Instrument development and validation:** The evaluation will pay particular attention to the development of instruments and their validation in order to reduce conceptual and measurement error. A draft data collection toolkit will be approved as part of the inception phase.
24. **Primary and secondary data collection:** Data collection will be conducted at two points.

- **Desk-based data collection:** First, the desk-based review and analysis of programme documents, (national development plans, education sector plans, past evaluations findings on this theme, both UNICEF and non-UNICEF) will be conducted. The evaluation is also expected, to the extent possible, to harvest secondary data and apply some level of analysis for the global regional and country levels as described in the sampling strategy, and to augment the data by surveying 46 ELDS countries. This review is intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of early childhood development and school readiness from a global perspective, and will attempt to answer questions of whether UNICEF has made good and strategic choices in early childhood learning relative to its positioning and comparative advantage. More importantly, an exploratory analysis of the factors that promote the quality of school readiness provision and child outcomes will be undertaken.
- **Field-based data collection:** Field-based data collection be configured around the two case studies. As mentioned in Paragraph 16, two case thematic studies will be conducted on strengthening capacities UNICEF and national education systems to provide school readiness programmes, and on developing standard that can detect and address developmental delays that obstruct children's readiness for school. To that end, field-based data collection will be conducted in up to four countries involved in programming around both themes. **While evaluation bidders are expected to proffer a more detailed case-study approach** that will include field-based data collection and/or validation of findings from document analyses and survey findings, we propose that three types of analyses at the country level be given due consideration. These are:
 - (i) **Stakeholder Analysis:** Stakeholder analyses should be conducted to have a better understanding of who was



involved in ELDS and at what stages, and what their contribution was. This analysis would ideally consist of both a geographical and conceptual mapping of individuals, organizations, and government agencies involved in different phases of the ELDS initiative: (drafting, validation, national adoption, implementation) and identify bottlenecks.

(ii) Process/Implementation Analysis: A preliminary theory of change for ELDS will be shared with the evaluators. However, we expect that a theory of change will be articulated to reflect pathways to program outcomes for each of the three case studies. Further, assumptions about enabling factors in ELDS development should be articulated. A process analysis might also include understanding the different roles or functions of UNICEF at the HQ, RO, and CO levels to improve, scale up the ECE provision at the country level and sustain the global school readiness initiative.

(iii) Equity- and Rights-Based Analysis: the case studies should give particular emphasis to issues of equity, such as the degree to which ECE provision takes into consideration the needs of both boys and girls, children with disabilities, and children growing up in institutions or protective custody. Equity should also be examined in relation to child and caregiver access to ECD programs that incorporate ELDS. Equity can be analyzed quantitatively using existing UNICEF country office data on ELDS, UNESCO data on pre-primary school enrolment, and MICS data on early childhood development, as well as through qualitative case studies. Given

UNICEF's global mandate to ensure the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the evaluation should be conducted from a rights-based perspectives, following UNEG guidance.⁹

25. **Data Analysis:** Informed by the literature review and analysis of programme documents, the evaluation methodology will articulate a unit of analysis, and a core set of indicators and outputs, and indicate how data will be organized, classified, compared and displayed, relative to evaluation questions. The data analysis approach should also examine the feasibility of comparing understandings and perceptions of different categories of stakeholders on the relevance, demand, and utility of UNICEF's support to school readiness work, and how UNICEF's contribution will be measured.
26. **Attribution or contribution:** While it is desirable for UNICEF to examine its own goals to determine if intended results were achieved through its support to policy making, education sector planning, systems strengthening, and building of strong partnerships, it is often difficult to attribute results to only any one source of inputs, actions, or actors, or to claim credit for positive outcomes associated with such efforts. Hence a 'contribution approach' will be taken, with the evaluation methodology articulating, a priori, how a contribution analysis will be carried out.
27. **Ethical considerations:** Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed during the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the UNEG guidelines. Good practices not covered therein are also to be followed. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised with the evaluation management

⁹ See UNEG Handbook on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>



team as soon as they are identified. Two particular issues should be noted:

- The evaluation methodology may indicate children as informants or objects of study. In all contacts with children, the UNEG ethical guidelines regarding issues like confidentiality and not exposing the child to danger must be carefully respected.
- In addition to exercising ethical considerations for informed consent, no participant other than UNICEF staff may be compelled to cooperate with the evaluation. UNICEF will direct staff to participate where needed.

VI. EVALUATION PRODUCTS/ DELIVERABLES

28. Several products will be expected from the evaluation activities. An inception report, a report of the document review analysis; an evaluation brief of initial evaluation results including a PowerPoint presentation to facilitate a stakeholder consultation exercise; case study reports; final report of the evaluation report with up to two revisions; live data and diagrams to be used for publication; and, a PowerPoint presentation used to share findings with the reference group, and for use in subsequent dissemination events. Outlines and descriptions of each evaluation products proffered in this section are meant to be indicative. **Bidders are invited to reflect on each outline and effect the necessary modification to enhance their coverage and clarity**¹⁰.

29. Inception report: The inception report will be instrumental in confirming a common

understanding of what is to be evaluated, including additional insights into executing the evaluation, including a detailed approach and methodology for each case study. The evaluators refine and confirm evaluation questions, confirm the evaluation scope, improve on the methodology proposed in this terms of reference to improve its rigor, as well as develop and validate evaluation instruments. The report will include, *inter alia*,

- Evaluation purpose and scope – confirmation of objectives and the main themes of the evaluation;
- Evaluation criteria and questions – final set of evaluation questions, and criteria for assessing performance;
- Evaluation methodology – a sampling plan (including sampling criteria); a description of data collection methods and data sources (including a rationale for their selection); draft data collection instruments (a data collection toolkit as an annex); a mapping that identifies descriptive and normative questions and criteria for evaluating evidence, and a data analysis plan; a discussion on how to enhance the reliability and validity of evaluation conclusions; the case study approach, a description of the quality review process¹¹; and, a discussion on the limitations of the methodology;
- Proposed outline for case study reports;
- Proposed structure for the final report;
- Evaluation work plan and timeline – a revised work and travel plan;

¹⁰ While bidders are welcome to modify the structure of each deliverable to enhance their coverage and clarity, products are expected to conform to the stipulated number of pages, where that applies.

¹¹ UNICEF has instituted the Global Evaluation Report Oversight System (GEROS), a system where final evaluation reports are quality-assessed by an external independent company against UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports. The evaluation team is expected to reflect on and conform to these standards as they write their report. The team may choose to share a self-assessment based on the GEROS with the evaluation manager.



- Resources requirements – detailed budget allocations, tied to evaluation activities, work plan, deliverables.
- Annexes (organizing framework for evaluation questions, data collection toolkit, data analysis framework)

The inception report will be 10 - 12 pages in length (excluding annexes), and will be presented at a formal meeting of the reference group (to be appointed by Director, Evaluation Office).

30. Desk-review and analysis report: This report will present the desk-based review of literature on the global agenda for access and participation in preschool education and school readiness related child outcomes, and an analysis of documents from UNICEF country offices and secondary data analysis from UNICEF and/or government data sources, to determine if strategies, activities show any promising results and improved school readiness outcomes (see Para 20i and 20ii). The report should be 10 - 15 pages in length (excluding annexes, if any).

31. Evaluation brief: Essentially a report of preliminary findings from the analysis of key UNICEF documents, secondary analyses and survey results, this brief will include a description of data collection activities and analyses undertaken (as an appendix). The report will be received and considered only by the evaluation manager in the Evaluation Office.

32. Case study reports: The case study leader will be responsible for developing a complete draft of the case study report. The report will not exceed 25 pages, **excluding** the executive summary and annexes. A complete draft report will include:

- a description of the ECD policy and ECE country context, education transformation agenda;
- an assessment of UNICEF's mandate, strengths and weaknesses relating to UNICEF's strategic choices in support of early learning and school readiness work against a set of agreed evaluation criteria;
- statements of findings, well substantiated by the data and evidence;
- Up to two recommendations to be incorporated in the overall evaluation, and a process of validating those recommendations;
- list of background materials used; and
- annexes (annotated description of methodology; and, list of people interviewed, etc.).

33. Final evaluation report: The report will not exceed 50 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes. A complete draft report will include:

- an analysis of critical issues in ECD, ECE and school readiness at the global level and regional variations if they exist (excerpted from the desk review report);
- an assessment of UNICEF's mandate, strengths and weaknesses relating to UNICEF's strategic choices in early childhood education against a set of agreed evaluation criteria;
- statements of findings, well substantiated by the data and evidence;
- a parsimonious set of actionable recommendations, and a description of how they were validated;



- list of background materials used; and
- annexes (evaluation terms of reference; annotated description of methodology; data analysis framework, list of people interviewed, etc.).

34. PowerPoint presentation: Initially prepared and used by the evaluation team in their presentation to the reference group, a standalone PowerPoint will be submitted to the Evaluation Office as part of the evaluation deliverables.

35. Data, live data tables and graphics will be submitted to the Evaluation Office as part of the evaluation deliverables.

36. Reports will be prepared in English, according to the UNICEF House Style (to be shared with the winning bidder) and UNICEF standards for evaluation reports as per Geros guidelines (referenced in Footnote 8). The first draft of the final report will be received by the evaluation manager who will work with the team leader on necessary revisions. The second draft will be sent to the reference group for comments. The evaluation manager will consolidate all comments on a response matrix, and request the evaluation team to indicate actions taken against each comment.

VII. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

37. The Evaluation Office will contract with an institution (consulting firm, research institute, university, or a vendor with similar capacities), which will offer a team of 3-4 qualified evaluation professionals. Based on their understanding of the task, the team may choose to enlist additional expertise as they see fit, including subcontracting with national evaluation partners.

38. Desired skills and competencies for evaluation team: The evaluation team must offer the following demonstrated experience, knowledge and competencies:

- Exceptional technical knowledge, skills and expertise in evaluation concepts and capacity to execute a multi-country evaluation effort, including skills to execute proposed case studies;
- In-depth knowledge and experience in conducting evaluations addressing issues of education policy development/advocacy; partnerships in EFA, and education systems strengthening;
- Exceptional knowledge of programming in education, with emphasis on early learning and school readiness;
- Familiarity with UNICEF work for children and gender rights, and proven experience and institutional knowledge of UN agencies with mandates and/or portfolio responsibilities for education, and/or experience of working cross-culturally in development;
- Strong quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills, and experience with correlational analyses;
- Excellent language and communication skills in English and one other UN languages, including facilitation skills, particularly design of stakeholder consultations exercises;
- Demonstrated report writing skills, in English: and, computer literacy in Word, Excel and Power Point.

39. The team leader is required to spend a considerable amount of her/his time on the evaluation (estimated at 70-80 person days). He/she will be required to lead in the data collection and analysis efforts, and to assure quality and validity of all activities, as well as contribute to drafting the report and editing. Other members of the team will be responsible for conducting desk reviews, data collection, and data analysis, and other tasks as may be assigned by the team leader, hence we anticipate that their inputs may require less time. In all cases,



the level of effort should be indicated for all team members.

40. Participation of present and former UNICEF staff: All current UNICEF staff and consultants may be involved only as informants or in other specific roles (e.g. member of the steering committee), and **may not be evaluation team members**. Former UNICEF staff that have worked on BEGE and/or ECD programming may be members of the evaluation team if they meet technical qualifications for skills. However, any prior involvement with UNICEF should be declared in the technical proposal in order to work around any possible conflicts of interest.

VIII. EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

41. The **Evaluation Specialist (Education)** in the UNICEF Evaluation Office in New York will be responsible for the following;

- facilitate initial consultations with relevant staff in the UNICEF HQ, and arrange for subsequent meetings and consultation with the global reference group;
- technical management of the evaluation according to the terms of reference and stipulations of the inception report;
- execute day-to-day management tasks and decision-making;
- contribute directly to the quality assurance of evaluation activities;
- review all products and provide written comments to the team, as well as be a liaison between the evaluation team and the global reference group; and,

- approve all final products.

The evaluation specialist will also provide overall guidance to the evaluation team on UNICEF requirements and standards for evaluative work.

42. The **evaluation team** will be responsible for the professional conduct of the evaluation in accordance with the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, and the UN Code of Conduct for Evaluation. The team will also be expected to articulate a quality review process for the execution of the evaluation, and assessment of the final evaluation report based on the Geros framework¹². The team will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- conduct initial consultations evaluation manager and relevant staff in the UNICEF HQ in New York;
- work with relevant officials in the UNICEF HQ and UNICEF Country Offices in selected countries to set up management arrangements for data collection at the country level, design and facilitation of the necessary meetings;
- develop and review data collection tools, including surveys, interview questions and protocols;
- execute data collection and data analysis plans;
- draft and present all products/reports as stipulated in the inception report, and ensure that all processes and products are quality reviewed; and,
- ensure that the evaluation manager (Evaluation Specialist in New York) is regularly informed of the progress of the evaluation, possible delays, and issues to resolve.

¹² Find information on Geros at http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/GEROS_Methodology_v7.pdf



43. A **global reference group** will be established at the UNICEF Headquarters by the Evaluation Office, in consultation with the Education Section. Membership of the reference group will include the following seven (7) members from UNICEF:

- Senior Advisor, Evaluation & Research (Evaluation Office, HQ), who will be the chair for the reference group
- Global Chief of Education and Global ECD Chief,
- One Senior Advisor (Education Section, HQ)
- Two Senior Advisors based at regional offices (Two Regional ECD Advisors and one Regional M&E Advisor)
- Evaluation Specialist and evaluation manager (Evaluation Office, HQ)

An invitation to join the global reference group will be extended to two additional individuals that are external to UNICEF, but associated with UNICEF education programmes, and work in the ECD field.

44. The global reference group will provide oversight of the evaluation, with members responsible for receiving updates on a pre-determined schedule as the evaluation reaches certain milestones (e.g., inception phase, end of data collection phase); reviewing selected evaluation products (inception report, draft report and final/penultimate report) and providing written comments to the evaluation team through the evaluation manager; and, contributing to the post-evaluation management response, action plan and dissemination strategy.

IX. RISK AND RISK MITIGATION

45. While it possible to predict all the problems and risks that might arise, timing and availability of data are considered most likely. The proposed timeline is for the evaluation is quite tight; hence both the evaluation team and the evaluation manager will be expected to adhere to agreed deadlines. To this end, the Evaluation Office will invite UNICEF offices to contribute all the necessary documentation. Also, UNICEF country office support will be necessary in ensuring that field-based data collection time is used efficiently.

46. Data availability, quality and consistency are to a degree unknown. The mitigation factors will be a comprehensive effort to collect data and sources, and the creativity and skill of the evaluation team in exploiting an evidence base that may have some gaps. Otherwise, unforeseen risks will be quickly addressed by the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team.



APPENDIX 2.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Questions are identified as normative (N) or descriptive (D) and the normative questions and criteria are presented together for ease of reference in Appendix 2.

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
Relevance				
R1. What is the relevance of UNICEF's school readiness framework in relation to the global agenda on early learning?	R1.1. What are the components of UNICEF's school readiness framework?	D	Components articulated in UNICEF school readiness literature	UNICEF global documentation
	R1.2. To what extent does the framework align to UNICEF's global agenda on equity, human rights and gender equality?	N	Alignment of school readiness framework with UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan 2006-2013 indicators and "areas of cooperation", indicators of <i>A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education For All</i>	UNICEF global documentation
	R1.3. To what extent does UNICEF's school readiness framework align with global research on early childhood development?	D	Extent to which school readiness framework includes early childhood development priorities identified in literature	Global ECD literature
	R1.4. How does UNICEF's school readiness framework align to international goals and objectives for early learning?	N	Alignment of school readiness framework with EFA Goal 1, and Moscow Framework for Action principles	EFA literature Moscow Framework for Action
R2. How relevant is UNICEF's school readiness framework to UNICEF's priorities and approaches for primary education?	R2.1. Is the 'schools ready' component recognized in primary education work?	N	Inclusion of 'schools ready' components in UNICEF's strategies and frameworks for primary education	UNICEF global documentation
	R2.2. Are the ELDS domains and levels recognized and agreed between ECD and Education specialists?	D	ECD and Education specialists identify and provide similar rationales for ELDS domains and levels in their work on ECE and early grade primary education	Global and regional interviews UNICEF global literature



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
R3. What is the relevance of UNICEF's ELDS approach to the school readiness framework?	R3.1. Is there a clear UNICEF articulation of the expected outcomes of the ELDS approach?	D	Common and specific outcomes for ELDS and their uses identified in UNICEF global/regional ELDS-literature Extent to which UNICEF staff at global and regional levels identify these outcomes	UNICEF global/regional literature Global and regional interviews
	R3.2. How do the outcomes and elements of the ELDS approach map onto the components of the school readiness framework?	D/N	ELDS outcomes and elements explicitly linked to school readiness framework components (ready children, ready families, ready schools)	UNICEF global/regional documentation
	R3.3. Does global research support the effectiveness of ELDS in developing school readiness and early childhood development?	D	Extent to which research literature supports the concept of standards in ECD, and their role in developing school readiness and EC	Global and regional ECD and ECE literature
R4. Is ELDS relevant to CO ECD programming?	R4.1. Does ELDS align with other ECD interventions?	N	UNICEF programming documentation links ELDS to identified ECD/ECE bottlenecks and outcomes Coordination with other ECD programmes developing other ECD-related standards	CO documentation Regional interviews CO survey CO interviews - country visits
R5. Is there a common understanding of ELDS within UNICEF (global, regional, country)?	R5.1. Is there agreement about the purpose of ELDS?	D	UNICEF stakeholders at different levels identify a similar purpose for ELDS	Global and regional interviews CO interviews – country visits
	R5.2. Do UNICEF staff at different levels identify the essential characteristics of an ELDS?	D	UNICEF stakeholders at different levels identify a similar set of core characteristics for ELDS	Global and regional interviews CO survey CO interviews – country visits
	R5.3. Is there agreement about the options for country context adaptation within an ELDS?	D	UNICEF stakeholders at different levels identify a similar set of ELDS elements that require country adaptation	Global and regional interviews CO survey CO interviews – country visits



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
R6. Has UNICEF advocacy for ELDS been relevant to country contexts?	R6.1. Does advocacy recognize existing national debates and concerns around ECE?	N	Available data identifying trends and patterns in early learning access, equity and outcomes Existing standards in ECD National ECD policies and strategic priorities	Regional and CO documentation Regional interviews Country visit interviews with CO and national stakeholders
	R6.2. Does advocacy acknowledge country cultural contexts and internal cultural diversities	D	Situational analysis document that incorporates analysis on early learning and school readiness, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of available data to accurately identify trends and patterns in early learning access, equity and outcomes • Cultural differences • Need for standards • Existing ECE debates/positions of key stakeholders • Evidence of advocacy referencing these issues 	
	R6.3. Does the advocacy for ELDS take into account existing ECD sector development priorities and policy?	N	National ECD policies and strategic priorities Existing standards in ECE	CO documentation Government policies and legislation CO survey
	R6.4. Does the ELDS approach align with other stakeholders' ECD programming?	D	Stakeholders' perceptions on suitability of ELDS and its timing Evidence of UNICEF/government analysis of complementarity of ELDS development with existing ECD programming	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey
R7. Have UNICEF interventions for ELDS development been relevant to country contexts?	R7.1. Were the purposes for ELDS clearly articulated at the start to guide the ELDS development process?	D/N	Specific purpose for ELDS in ELDS development literature at country level Perceptions of stakeholders involved in ELDS development on clarity of purpose at the start	Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey
	R7.2. Does the agreed ELDS approach align with existing ECD sector development and policy?	N	Rationale for changing existing practice Evidence of government analysis/research on development outcomes and monitoring Discussion of suitability of ELDS (as opposed to other types of standards) in preparatory documentation	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) R7.	R7.3. Were relevant standards, concepts, policies etc. recognized in preparing the ELDS?	D	Existing standards, policies etc. referenced in ELDS development documentation Stakeholders involved report specific mapping/consideration of these documents in ELDS drafting	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders
	R7.4. To what extent has global guidance on ELDS been adapted to respond to identified contextual issues and system bottlenecks?	D	Variation of national ELDS document from global ELDS guidance – domains selected, principles, age groups The extent to which content and age validation exercises are consistent with global guidance Specific response in ELDS to identified national context issues	Stocktaking data CO and ELDS documentation CO survey Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders
	R7.5. Who was involved in the different stages of ELDS development?	D	Stakeholder groups who were represented in different stages of ELDS development identified	Stocktaking data CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders
	R7.6. Has UNICEF engaged with appropriate national partners with the expertise and mandate for ELDS development?	D	Extent to which the following types of partners were engaged in ELDS development: responsible government ministries, decentralised authorities, teacher education, private and public sector ECE providers, academia, NGOs, CSOs and development agencies	Stocktaking data CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey
	R7.7. To what extent have ELDS approaches been adapted to the specific issues of equity and gender equality in countries?	N	Assessment against indicators and approaches identified in <i>Promoting gender equality through UNICEF-supported programming in basic education: operational guidance</i>	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey
	R7.8. Was there sufficient representation of diversity within the samples for the validation processes?	N	Inclusion of marginalised groups in early childhood development identified in UNICEF situational analysis and national ECD policies and strategies	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey
	R7.9. To what extent were children's rights to participation and voice addressed in the ELDS development process?	D	Extent to which children actively participated in ELDS development process	CO and ELDS documentation Country visit interviews with CO, national and sub-national stakeholders CO survey



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
Efficiency				
EY1. How efficiently was the advocacy for ELDS carried out by UNICEF?	EY1.1. How were countries identified by UNICEF for ELDS interventions?	D	Evidence of rationale for country inclusion in Going Global initiative Criteria in evidence for country inclusion	Global, regional and CO documentation Global, regional and CO interviews
	EY1.2. What were the partnership arrangements between UNICEF and Yale/Columbia, and were they managed efficiently?	D/N	Documentary evidence of expected roles and responsibilities of different parties Different stakeholders' perceptions on clarity of responsibilities, management, communication and cooperation arrangements Timely and cost effective delivery of activity	Global, regional and CO documentation Global, regional and CO interviews CO survey
	EY1.3. What were the partnership arrangements and support between UNICEF COs, ROs and HQ, and were they managed efficiently?	D/N	Documentary evidence of expected roles and inputs of different parties Different stakeholders' perceptions on clarity of responsibilities, management, communication and cooperation arrangements Timely and cost effective delivery of activity	Global, regional and CO documentation Global, regional and CO interviews CO survey
	EY1.4. Did UNICEF coordinate on ELDS in country with the most relevant stakeholders to deliver advocacy messages?	D	Evidence of stakeholder analysis in advocacy approach Evidence of joint advocacy materials/events etc. National stakeholders' awareness and perceptions of UNICEF advocacy	CO documentation National stakeholder interviews
	EY1.5. Was there an ELDS advocacy strategy or plan in country?	D	ELDS advocacy strategy/plan document	CO documentation
EY2. How efficiently has the process of ELDS development been planned and implemented?	EY2.1. What modalities were used to develop ELDS (e.g. consultant-led, working-group led, hybrid approach) and what were the positive and/or negative effects of each on the ELDS process?	D	Levels of consultant input/support Documentary or reported rationale for approach used Involvement of users and implementers of ELDS in the development Positive and negative perspectives of ELDS stakeholders on process	CO and ELDS documentation National and sub-national stakeholder interviews CO survey



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) EY2.	EY2.2. What are the various roles of UNICEF actors in HQ Divisions, Regional Offices and CO in supporting ELDS development?	D	Documentary or reported evidence of roles and inputs of different parties in ELDS design, process planning, capacity analysis	HQ, RO, CO interviews HQ, RO and CO documents CO survey
	EY2.3. Are these roles coherent and coordinated?	D	Common understanding of roles and responsibilities Appropriate delegation to reflect operational scope Different stakeholders' perceptions on clarity of responsibilities, management, communication and cooperation arrangements	HQ, RO, CO interviews HQ, RO and CO documents CO survey
	EY2.4. Were sufficient resources planned and allocated over time by UNICEF and other funding partners for the ELDS development process?	D	Length of each stage of ELDS development process (drafting, validation, finalisation and approval) Long-term budgeting for support Appropriate level of inputs Suitable technical assistance modalities Resources for sub-national development needs	CO and ELDS documentation CO and national stakeholder interviews CO survey
	EY2.5. Has there been coherence across the different elements of the process?	D	Development plans in place, were logical and were followed Coordination arranged between different inputs	CO and ELDS documentation CO and national stakeholder interviews
	EY2.6. Have opportunities for complementarity and coordination been utilised between other school readiness interventions and ELDS development?	D	Examples of coordination within ECD programming Examples of explicit alignment of school readiness interventions with ELDS process (timing, budgets, dialogue)	CO and ELDS documentation CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	EY2.7. What value did partnerships for ELDS development bring to the process?	D	Partners' identified as bringing specific expertise and capacity Partners reach to other constituencies	CO and ELDS documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
EY3. How efficiently have the ELDS been introduced to support systems and practices in ECE?	EY3.1. What partnerships have been developed by UNICEF to drive forward different uses of the ELDS? And have these partners had sufficient power, mandate and capacity to deliver?	D/N	Identified partners for ELDS have appropriate reach and scope in their work, political/professional mandate, and technical and resource capacity for their expected roles	CO documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews CO survey
	EY3.2. Have opportunities for complementarity and coordination been utilised between other school readiness interventions and ELDS use?	D	Examples of coordination within ECD programming Examples of explicit alignment of school readiness interventions with ELDS process (timing, budgets, dialogue)	CO and ELDS documentation CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	EY3.3. Have resources been allocated and available in a timely fashion to support the introduction of ELDS into systems/practices?	D	Budget allocations match time/expected inputs required for activities Activities have not been constrained by budget or disbursement delays	CO and ELDS documentation CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews CO survey
	EY3.4. Are there structures/system capacities to operationalize ELDS?	D/N	Capacity analysis undertaken for use of ELDS Institutions and systems in place with responsibility and mandate for system areas where ELDS taken forward (curriculum, teacher education etc.) Individual and organizational capacity of within institutions and systems for their roles	CO and ELDS documentation CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
EY4. Have UNICEF governance and management structures supported the efficiency of these processes?	EY4.1. How does internal sectoral organization support cross-sector collaboration for ELDS within UNICEF across the 0-8 age range (at global, regional and national levels)?	D	Examples of cross-sectoral working (between ECD and education, with health, social protection etc.) Identified managerial/governance bottlenecks	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
	EY4.2. How do UNICEF management and governance structures support the development of successful partnerships for ELDS (at global, regional and national levels)?	D	Examples of UNICEF's approach and commitment to partnerships, including across sectors UNICEF coordination of different inputs/relationships (ELDS, health protection, education etc) with same partner Identified managerial/governance bottlenecks	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews National, sub-national stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) EY4.	EY4.3. What monitoring mechanisms are in place for ELDS interventions?	D	Monitoring activities, reports, plans	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
	EY4.4. How effective and appropriate are these mechanisms to monitor intervention activities?	N	UNICEF governance and management structures, procedures and mechanisms Monitoring and evaluation results	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
	EY4.5. Is learning captured, shared and acted upon between UNICEF global/ Regional/Country Offices to support school readiness interventions?	D	Documents and meetings sharing lessons from ELDS ELDS contributions to relevant events	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
Effectiveness				
ES1. Did the advocacy interventions of UNICEF create public and professional awareness and commitment to ELDS?	ES1.1. Was there understanding of the purpose and process for ELDS?	D	Actors and stakeholders report understanding.	ELDS documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	ES1.2. Was there government engagement and commitment?	D	Level of government input/ support for ELDS	ELDS documents CO, national stakeholder interviews
	ES1.3. Did the advocacy influence sub-national agencies/ administrations?	D	Sub-national actors were included in advocacy scope Sub-national actors report awareness and understanding of ELDS	Documents on advocacy planning
ES2. Did the ELDS development process result in a useable ELDS document?	ES2.1. Does the ELDS meet professional expectations?	N	Professional guidelines (e.g. codes of conduct, policy guidelines for ECD service providers) Existing standards relating to ECD	Stakeholder reports and documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	ES2.2. Does the ELDS reflect the diversity of the population?	N	National statistics on diversity and inclusion National policies on diversity and inclusion	Documents (ELDS package) ELDS documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	ES2.3. Is the ELDS documentation suitable for different stakeholders to use (teachers, parents, inspection etc.)?	N	Guidelines and support materials mediating ELDS for different groups	ELDS and associated materials CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) ES2.	ES2.4. Does the ELDS cover the early childhood period (0-8)?	D	Age coverage of ELDS	ELDS document
	ES2.5. Does the ELDS promulgate children's right to education and development and their rights within ECD provision?	N	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) <i>Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools UNICEF 2014</i> <i>A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education For All</i>	ELDS and associated materials
ES3. Did the development process result in commitment and buy-in to the ELDS?	ES3.1. Is the ELDS endorsed/approved by government?	N	National legislative and regulatory instruments National policies and strategies on ECD	ELDS and government documentation
	ES3.2. Is the ELDS recognised and acknowledged by other stakeholders both within and beyond the ECE sector?	D	ELDS reference in professional and other media Discussion and debate on ELDS (including contrary voices on usefulness/acceptability)	Country-level documents Media reporting in visited countries CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	ES3.3. Is there public awareness and understanding of the ELDS?	D	Public discourse (in media etc.) Public demonstrates understanding of main tenets of ELDS	Country-level documents Media reporting in visited countries Local stakeholder interviews
ES4. Has the ELDS development facilitated cross-sectoral coordination on ECD?	ES4.1. Did the ELDS process bring together different agencies/sectors involved in ECD?	D	Actors in different sectors describe joint working	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
	ES4.2. Were new structures/coordination mechanisms established?	D	Documented operational agreements between sectoral actors New working groups/mechanisms in place	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national stakeholder interviews
ES5. Has the ELDS been integrated into ECE systems to support quality early learning?	ES5.1. Are the ELDS widely known and understood at different levels (national and sub-national authorities, teacher training institutions, preschool inspectorate, teachers (both preschool and primary), health workers, social protection services, parents)?	D/N	Actors demonstrate understanding and commitment to ELDS ELDS are used in their operations ELDS are seen as relevant by different stakeholder groups	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) ES5.	ES5.2. To what extent are ELDS being used as the basis for cross-sectoral collaboration?	D	Steps to align standards and protocols across sectors: e.g. for identifying children with specific needs Reported evidence of ELDS used as joint point of reference across sectors	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.3. How have the ELDS been reflected/ embedded in ECE policy and legislation?	D	Extent to which ELDS (or elements) reflected in policy documents and legislation.	Policies, legislation, reports
	ES5.4. How have the ELDS domains been incorporated into other ECE systems/ standards/resources to reflect holistic ECD?	D	Extent to which ELDS domains used in other ECE standards, protocols, guidelines	Other standards, reports CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.5. Are the ELDS applicable to all forms of ECE provision? (private, public, community, grade-0 etc.)?	N	National legislative and regulatory instruments National policies and strategies on ECD	Policies, legislation, reports CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.6. How are the ELDS integrated into systems for identifying special needs in ECD?	D	Guidance to teachers and other sector staff (health workers, social protection) on use of ELDS to identify needs and mobilise support Examples of training programmes Examples of children whose special needs have been identified using the ELDS	Reports, operational guidance Case records at local levels CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.7. Have the ELDS been used in curriculum revision/ development (ECE and lower primary)?	N	National curriculum documents for ECE and early primary curriculum	Reports, curriculum documents
	ES5.8. Have the ELDS been used in inspection and supervision frameworks (ECE and lower primary)?	N	National inspection and supervision guidelines and tools for pre-school and for primary use	Inspection guidelines, reports CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.9. Have the ELDS been used in professional development (ECE and lower primary)?	N	National training and assessment documents (inc. in-service) guiding practice in professional development	Training standards, training materials Interviews – teachers, trainers



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) ES5.	ES5.11. Have the ELDS been integrated into parenting education programmes?	N	National or sub-national materials for parenting programmes	Parenting programme documents Local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.12. What have been the constraining factors/bottlenecks in utilising the ELDS and what have been effective strategies for overcoming them?	D	Factors as identified by multiple respondents Types of mitigating actions adopted	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
	ES5.13. What unintended system effects (positive or negative) have ELDS interventions had on other elements of school readiness systems and capacities?	D	Other effects as identified by multiple respondents	Country-level documents CO, national, sub-national, local stakeholder interviews
ES6. Have UNICEF governance and management structures been effective in supporting these processes?	ES6.1. What evaluation and feedback mechanisms are in place for ELDS interventions?	D	M&E activities, reports and plans	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
	ES6.2. How effective are these mechanisms in evaluating intervention outputs, outcomes and impacts?	N	UNICEF governance and management structures, procedures and mechanisms Monitoring and evaluation results	HQ, RO, CO Documents HQ, RO and CO Interviews
Impact				
IM1. Have ELDS and related system changes contributed to improved preschool practice for quality preschool provision?	IM1.1. Are teachers using ELDS-related products/ methodologies/ approaches in teaching and learning?	D	Examples of good practice (addresses domains, child-centred, etc.) Teachers describe elements of good practice	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews/observations
	IM1.2. Are teachers using ELDS to assess children's individual developmental progress?	N	Records of assessments at national or sub-national levels	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews/observations



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
(cont'd) IM1.	IM1.3. How have teachers adapted their practices to take account of age-related expectations from the ELDS, evaluate developmental differences and diagnose needs?	D	Description of changed practice Examples of ELDS used to identify difference and/or to diagnose needs.	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews/observations
	IM1.4. Are there protocols and services to support children with identified developmental needs?	N	National or sub-national policy, protocols and service guidelines on supporting development in ECD	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM1.5. Are the ELDS strengthening children's participation as rights holders in school readiness services?	D	Extent to which children have some learning autonomy and approach respects individual choices	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews/observations
	IM1.6. Are teachers using ELDS to engage and inform families about their children's development?	D	Families recognise the ELDS (as mediated by schools and programmes) and report dialogue with teachers on developmental domains	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM1.7. Are there differences between different types of ECE provider (public, private, community, grade-0 etc.) in the above changes?	D	Extent to which ELDS use is systematically different in different ECE providers/ modalities	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM1.8. Have inspectors and supervisors for ECE used ELDS-related products/tools to identify and target support to teachers, preschools/schools or individual children?	N	National or sub-national Inspection and supervision guidelines and procedures	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
IM2. Have ELDS and related system changes contributed to improved family support for children's development and engagement with ECE for quality early learning?	IM2.1. How have families changed their behaviour to support children's early development and learning in the home?	D	Families are providing opportunities and support for: reading; games and playing; physical activity; nutrition/ hygiene	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM2.2. Have the ELDS contributed to changes in families' attitudes to ECE and primary school?	D	Families articulate changes concerning developmental domains and the role of ECE/ schools in learning for their children	Evaluations/programme reports Local stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
IM3. Have ELDS and related system changes contributed to improved primary education practice and readiness for children's entry into primary education?	IM3.1. Are primary teachers using ELDS-related products/methodologies/approaches?	D	Primary teachers articulate how ELDS is reflected in their practice: - Developmental domains - Diagnostic use of levels	Evaluations/ programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM3.2. To what extent is there a continuity of experience for children between preschool and primary school?	D	Liaison and communication between preschool and primary Extent to which ethos in primary is child-friendly Support services span ECE/ primary transition	Evaluations/ programme reports Local stakeholder interviews
	IM3.3. Are children's ELDS outcomes communicated between preschools and primary schools?	D	Systems in place and in use for individual reports based on ELDS	Document review Local stakeholder interviews
	IM3.4. Are primary teachers using ELDS to engage and inform families about their children's development?	D	Families describe interactions with primary school based on ELDS (as mediated into the discussion)	Document review Local stakeholder interviews
	IM3.5. How have primary teachers adapted to take account of age-related expectations from the ELDS, diagnosis of developmental differences?	D	Teachers describe changed practice	Document review Local stakeholder interviews
	IM3.6. Are the ELDS strengthening children's participation as rights holders in primary school?	D	Extent to which children have more learning autonomy and voice in primary school	Document review Local stakeholder interviews
IM4. Since the introduction of ELDS and related system changes has there been an improvement in children's developmental outcomes that contribute to school readiness?	IM4.1. How are children better prepared to move into primary education?	D	Changes in children's development outcomes at transition: (Cognitive, self-esteem and confidence, social behavior, physical wellbeing) Extent to which parents and teachers report children able to transition more smoothly into primary school	Document review Local stakeholder interviews
	IM4.2. Are children more able to benefit from primary education and to realise their potential?	N	National and sub-national statistical data on e.g. retention and repetition National or sub-national learning assessment data	Document review Local stakeholder interviews



(cont'd)

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	D/N	Indicators/criteria	Data sources
Sustainability				
S1. Are the elements in place for the ELDS to play an ongoing role in the ECE sector?	S1.1. Is there political, professional and public support?	D	Government commitment and policy/regulatory recognition of ELDS Budget commitment	National and sub-national laws and regulations National and sub-national planning documents Capacity assessment documents Capacity reviews
	S1.2. Is there institutional and organization capacity and commitment?	D	Extent to which ELDS is institutionalized in agencies and institutions and concerned institutions (for CPD, inspection etc.) at national and sub-national levels have capacity to undertake their function	
	S1.3. Are there practical plans for ELDS use with allocated resources?	D	Medium and long term plans include ELDS and school readiness	
S2. Did UNICEF ELDS interventions contribute to sustainable changes?	S2.1. Were UNICEF interventions designed and implemented to ensure sustainability?	N	Guidelines on essential characteristics of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO)	UNICEF planning documents Review of institutions



APPENDIX 3.

NORMATIVE QUESTIONS: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Criteria
Relevance		
R1. What is the relevance of UNICEF’s school readiness framework in relation to the global agenda on early learning?	R1.2. To what extent does the framework align to UNICEF’s global agenda on equity, human rights and gender equality?	Alignment of school readiness framework with UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan 2006-2013 indicators and “areas of cooperation”, indicators of <i>A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education For All</i>
	R1.4. How does UNICEF’s school readiness framework align to international goals and objectives for early learning?	Alignment of school readiness framework with EFA Goal 1, and Moscow Framework for Action principles
R2. How relevant is UNICEF’s school readiness framework to UNICEF’s priorities and approaches for primary education?	R2.1. Is the ‘schools ready’ component recognised in primary education work?	Inclusion of ‘schools ready’ components in UNICEF’s strategies and frameworks for primary education
R3. What is the relevance of UNICEF’s ELDS approach to the school readiness framework?	R3.2. How do the outcomes and elements of the ELDS approach map onto the components of the school readiness framework?	ELDS outcomes and elements explicitly linked to school readiness framework components (ready children, ready families, ready schools)
R4. Is ELDS relevant to CO ECD programming?	R4.1. Does ELDS align with other ECD interventions?	UNICEF programming documentation links ELDS to identified ECD/ECE bottlenecks and outcomes Coordination with other ECD programmes developing other ECD-related standards
R6. Has UNICEF advocacy for ELDS been relevant to country contexts?	R6.1. Does advocacy recognise existing national debates and concerns around ECE?	Available data identifying trends and patterns in early learning access, equity and outcomes Existing standards in ECD National ECD policies and strategic priorities
	R6.3. Does the advocacy for ELDS take into account existing ECD sector development priorities and policy?	National ECD policies and strategic priorities Existing standards in ECE



Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Criteria
R7. Have UNICEF interventions for ELDS development been relevant to country contexts?	R7.1. Were the purposes for ELDS clearly articulated at the start to guide the ELDS development process?	Specific purpose for ELDS in ELDS development literature at country level
	R7.2. Does the agreed ELDS approach align with existing ECD sector development and policy?	National ECD policies and strategic priorities Existing standards in ECE
	R7.7. To what extent have ELDS approaches been adapted to the specific issues of equity and gender equality in countries?	Assessment against indicators and approaches identified in <i>Promoting gender equality through UNICEF-supported programming in basic education: operational guidance</i>
	R7.8. Was there sufficient representation of diversity within the samples for the validation processes?	Inclusion of marginalised groups in early childhood development identified in UNICEF situational analysis and national ECD policies and strategies
Efficiency		
EY4. Have UNICEF governance and management structures supported the efficiency of these processes?	EY4.4. How effective and appropriate are these mechanisms to monitor intervention activities?	UNICEF governance and management structures, procedures and mechanisms Monitoring and evaluation results
Effectiveness		
ES2. Did the ELDS development process result in a useable ELDS document?	ES2.1. Does the ELDS meet professional expectations?	Professional guidelines (e.g. codes of conduct, policy guidelines for ECD service providers) Existing standards relating to ECD
	ES2.2. Does the ELDS reflect the diversity of the population?	National statistics on diversity and inclusion National policies on diversity and inclusion
	ES2.3. Is the ELDS documentation suitable for different stakeholders to use (teachers, parents, inspection etc.)?	Guidelines and support materials mediating ELDS for different groups
	ES2.5. Does the ELDS promulgate children's right to education and development and their rights within ECD provision?	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) <i>Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools UNICEF 2014</i> <i>A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education For All</i>
ES3. Did the development process result in commitment and buy-in to the ELDS?	ES3.1. Is the ELDS endorsed/ approved by government?	National legislative and regulatory instruments National policies and strategies on ECD



Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Criteria
ES5. Has the ELDS been integrated into ECE systems?	ES5.5. Are the ELDS applicable to all forms of ECE provision? (private, public, community, grade-0 etc.)?	National legislative and regulatory instruments National policies and strategies on ECD
	ES5.7. Have the ELDS been used in curriculum revision/development (ECE and lower primary)?	National curriculum documents for ECE and early primary curriculum
	ES5.8. Have the ELDS been used in inspection and supervision frameworks (ECE and lower primary)?	National inspection and supervision guidelines and tools for pre-school and for primary use
	ES5.9. Have the ELDS been used in professional development (ECE and lower primary)?	National training and assessment documents (inc. in-service) guiding practice in professional development
	ES5.10. Have the ELDS been used in any national, programme or project monitoring in ECE? Has monitoring/evaluation data informed policy and programming?	National ECE assessment scales, tools or M&E guidelines
	ES5.11. Have the ELDS been integrated into parenting education programmes?	National or sub-national materials for parenting programmes
ES6. Have UNICEF governance and management structures been effective in supporting these processes?	ES6.2. How effective are these mechanisms in evaluating intervention outputs, outcomes and impacts?	UNICEF governance and management structures, procedures and mechanisms Monitoring and evaluation results



Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Criteria
Impact		
IM1. Have ELDS and related system changes contributed to improved preschool practice?	IM1.2. Are teachers using ELDS to assess children’s individual developmental progress?	Records of assessments at national or sub-national levels
	IM1.4. Are there protocols and services to support children with identified developmental needs?	National or sub-national policy, protocols and service guidelines on supporting development in ECD
	IM1.8. Have inspectors and supervisors for ECE used ELDS-related products/tools to identify and target support to teachers, preschools/schools or individual children?	National or sub-national inspection and supervision guidelines and procedures
IM4. Since the introduction of ELDS and related system changes has there been an improvement in children’s developmental outcomes that contribute to school readiness?	IM4.2. Are children more able to benefit from primary education and to realise their potential?	National and sub-national statistical data on e.g. retention and repetition National or sub-national learning assessment data
Sustainability		
S2. Did UNICEF ELDS interventions contribute to sustainable changes?	S2.1. Were UNICEF interventions designed and implemented to ensure sustainability?	Guidelines on essential characteristics of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO)



APPENDIX 4.

SUMMARY OF BOOLEAN CODING OF COUNTRY QUESTIONS

During the country document review each country was marked as True, False or Unknown against the following questions covering context, activity and results pertaining to ELDS. Table 9 shows the counts of these results for each question.

TABLE A4.1 Summary of coding during country document review

OCA (Yes/No) question	True	False	UNKNOWN
CONTEXT			
1. Was there an ECE curriculum in place before the ELDS process started?	14	1	7
2. Were there teacher standards in place before ELDS?	5	4	13
3. Were there preschool standards in place before ELDS?	10	4	8
4. Were there outcome standards in place before ELDS?	6	7	9
5. Were there parenting standards in place before ELDS?	5	4	13
6. Was there an ECE policy in place before ELDS?	15	4	3
7. Was there a policy in place before ELDS started that incorporated the need for child outcome standards and assessing performance? (i.e. was there a policy mandate for ELDS)	15	5	2
8. Did UNICEF CO have an existing ECE programme?	19	2	1
9. Is there decentralised responsibility for ECE delivery?	16	4	2
ELDS ADVOCACY			
10. Was there an ELDS orientation workshop for national stakeholders with UNICEF HQ/RO support?	10	1	11
11. There was an advocacy plan in place for ELDS?	4	2	16
12. ELDS advocacy engaged government?	12	0	10
13. ELDS advocacy engaged NGOs?	9	0	13
14. ELDS advocacy engaged ECE professionals?	9	0	13
15. ELDS advocacy engaged sub-national authorities?	7	0	15
16. Clear purpose and need for ELDS identified at the start?	13	1	8
ELDS DEVELOPMENT			
17. Was the government/ministry part of the core overall leadership team for the ELDS development?	18	0	4
18. Was an advisory group established to guide the ELDS development process?	8	0	14
19. Did this advisory group have representatives from international development agencies?	11	0	11
20. Did this advisory group have representatives from national ministry of education?	13	0	9



Table A4.1 (cont'd)

QCA (Yes/No) question	True	False	UNKNOWN
21. Did this advisory group have representatives from national ministry of health?	8	0	14
22. Did this advisory group have representatives from other national ministries?	8	0	14
23. Did this advisory group have representatives from early childhood academic experts?	7	0	15
24. Did this advisory group have representatives from early sub-national government agencies?	3	1	18
25. Did this advisory group have representatives from teacher education institutions?	4	1	17
26. Did this advisory group have representatives from the private sector?	2	2	18
27. Did this advisory group have representatives from NGOs?	11	0	11
28. Did this advisory group have representatives from others (specify in narrative)?	3	1	18
29. Was the ELDS writing process driven by a consultant?	1	10	11
30. Was the ELDS writing process driven by a local working group of stakeholders?	4	8	10
31. Was the ELDS writing process driven by a hybrid of consultant and working group inputs?	9	3	10
32. Was there consistency in the personnel leading the ELDS process?	3	3	16
33. Age validation done	11	2	9
34. Content validation done	13	2	7
35. Predictive validation done	1	6	15
36. Validation process included inspection body?	3	1	18
37. Validation process included ECE providers?	6	1	15
38. Validation process included ECE teachers?	10	1	11
39. Validation process included parents?	8	2	12
40. Validation process included children?	10	1	11
41. Adequate financing for ELDS development committed?	3	3	16
42. ELDS is 0-8?	2	18	2
43. Has the government officially signed-off the final ELDS document?	15	4	3
ELDS USE			
44. Plan in place for the use of ELDS?	10	0	12
45. Adequate funding in place for use of ELDS?	3	2	17
46. Is the ELDS enshrined in ECE policy or legislation?	8	4	10
47. Have the ELDS been used to support the review/development of ECE training curriculums?	11	0	11
48. Have the ELDS been used to support the review/development of inspection/supervision frameworks?	3	0	19
49. Have the ELDS been used to support the review/development of ECE curriculums?	15	0	7



Table A4.1 (cont'd)

QCA (Yes/No) question	True	False	UNKNOWN
50. Is ELDS used in public awareness campaigns?	3	0	19
51. Has the ELDS been translated into national languages?	12	0	10
52. Has ELDS been used in parenting programmes?	12	0	10
53. Has ELDS been used for national/programme monitoring?	12	0	10
54. Has ELDS been used to develop other standards/guidelines in ECE (e.g. teacher guidelines)?	7	0	15
55. Was there a capacity analysis carried out before introducing ELDS into different aspects of the ECE system?	2	1	19
56. Are there cross-sector arrangements in place at national level for early childhood development?	6	1	15
57. Have ELDS been used for aligning primary with ECE curriculum?	2	3	17
ELDS IN PRACTICE			
58. Has there been ELDS-related training for ECE teachers?	13	0	9
59. Has there been ELDS-related training for primary teachers?	1	2	19
60. Has there been ELDS-related training for inspectors/supervisors	4	0	18
61. Is there evidence that ECE teachers are using ELDS	7	0	15
62. Is there evidence that primary teachers are using ELDS	2	1	19
63. Is there evidence that inspectors are using ELDS in their inspection of preschools and support to ECE teachers?	1	0	21
64. Is there evidence that preschools are using ELDS concepts with parents	4	1	17



APPENDIX 5.

PROFILES OF THEMATIC FIELD VISIT COUNTRIES

Jordan

In a population of 7.5million (UIS, 2015) 341,000 are of pre-primary age (4 and 5 years old).

Three ministries—of education, health and social development—have responsibilities for young children and there are also overarching councils established under royal charters the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) and the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities. ECED is a high priority in strongly driven policies for education and it was a component of the Education Reform for a Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) projects funded by the World Bank, which built and equipped facilities, created and revised a curriculum, trained teachers etc. towards a long-term goal of universal kindergarten enrolment for the two years prior to primary.

Institutions for children aged 0 to 3 are called ‘nurseries’ and are under the Ministry of Health. Kindergartens for children aged 4 or 5 (i.e. in the two years before school entry) are labelled Kg1

and Kg2 respectively and are under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education’s policy is to increase public provision for Kg2 to provide a universal year. One-year kindergarten is normally provided within primary schools, but not all primary schools have facilities. Approximately 60% of eligible children are enrolled in Kg2 (ERfKE II Annual Report 2013, based on EMIS), about half of whom are in public institutions. There is now strong public pressure for the Kg2 universal pre-school year and in response there are initiatives to provide short preparatory enrichment for those children who are unable to attend.

There are public and private providers of pre-schooling at all levels; private providers are still significant at the kindergarten level and are very important at nursery level. However, there is limited government oversight of private providers.

Table A5.1 Jordan: important milestones in ECED and ELDS development and use

Before 2000	Early Years Evaluation (EYE) instrument used for population measures. Parenting initiatives started
1999	ECED as a national priority
2002/3	ELDS workshop and development
2004	ELDS produced
2006	Validation work. Education Development Index (EDI) introduced as population measure
2006/7	ELDS used to update Better Parenting programme
2007	Start of work by NCFA on 0-4 tools (standards, teacher education etc.)
2008	EDI instrument first administered after adoption under ERfKE

TABLE A5.2 ELDS and system change in Jordan

Area	What’s in place?	ELDS based or ELDS aligned?
Curriculum	2-year kindergarten curriculum (MOE) Nursery practice and curriculum (NCFA)	ELDS-aligned ELDS-based
Staff training	A pre-service curriculum/materials	ELDS-based
Classroom assessment tools	A record card School readiness end-of-year assessment	ELDS-aligned No
Supervision/inspection	No tools in place	No
Population assessment	Using EDI ¹³	No

¹³ The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a widely-used, population-based measure of children’s development, prepared and support by the Offord Center for Child Studies, Canada, <http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/index.html>



Mongolia

Mongolia has a population 2.796 million (2012) of which 306,000 are under 5 years old: 69% of the population live in urban or peri-urban areas; rural populations are often nomadic and very sparsely dispersed across the country, driving up the cost of service delivery and representing significant logistical and policy challenges.

The number of children attending pre-school education increased from 142,065 in 2009/2010 to 180,969 in 2012/2013 (UNICEF SitAn 2014). Attendance at pre-school is lower in rural areas than urban.

The Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection is responsible for child rights, care and protection, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for early childhood education (age 2-5 years old). The Government of Mongolia recently adopted a 12-year compulsory education cycle (moving from a primary enrolment age of 8 years old to enrolment at 6 years old) and the first six-year olds entered primary school in September 2008. Full kindergarten from age 2 (24 months) until 5 (59 months) is provided in purpose-built static kindergartens: there are insufficient places available for the number of pre-school age children.

There is an 'alternative' system to provide some pre-school education to those children not enrolled in kindergartens. This includes: shift systems in which kindergarten facilities are used at weekends or afternoons for extra classes; *ger*¹⁴ kindergartens, which can be fixed gers in the grounds of kindergartens or mobile gers set up temporarily in district centres within one aimag (province) and which typically provide one to two months' pre-school for mixed age groups (usually 4-5) during the summer months; and mobile teachers travelling around remote communities during spring

and summer to provide community level pre-school provision and training to parents in how to support their children's learning and development.

In 2013 there were 1,171 kindergartens in total of which 777 are state run and 394 privately run (314 of which are in Ulaanbaatar).

The use of the term 'standards' has created some unforeseen problems in terms of efficiency and effectiveness: standards are a familiar concept across all public sectors in Mongolia and so was readily adopted in ELDS development, but all other standards (including education) have been or are input or process standards. If government approves a standard it is automatically managed and operationalised by the National Standards and Inspection Agency and thus it moves out of the control and responsibility of the sectoral agencies – in this case MECS.

In 2014 the National Standards and Inspection Agency was taken to court over the ELDS standard by an NGO, which challenged the Agency on the following issues

- The standards are not clear
- Some indicators are not suitable for the age of the child
- Some terminology is not clear and needs explanation
- Some indicators are not measurable
- Parental support to children is not clearly defined

The Agency has only one education specialist and was not able to mount a sufficiently detailed or robust defence of ELDS, so the court has suspended the use of the ELDS standard until MECS prepares a complete defence, which will be based on the UNICEF-funded review of ELDS commissioned by MECS in April-May 2015.

¹⁴ Portable dwelling used by Central Asian nomads



TABLE A5.3 Mongolia: important milestones in ECED and ELDS development and use

2005	Shanghai Going Global Regional Conference attended by staff from UNICEF, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection and the Health Ministry.
2006	First national workshop for national ELDS technical team
2007	ELDS in first draft
2008-2010	Validation (age and content)
2010	ELDS revised and circulated widely in draft for comment
2011	ELDS approved as Mongolian national standard
2012	UNICEF training of trainers and subsequent in-service training courses using UNICEF manuals for teachers and parents meant that all serving kindergarten teachers were trained in using ELDS
2012	New ECE curriculum based closely on ELDS – in use in kindergartens

TABLE A5.4 ELDS and system changes in Mongolia

Area	What's in place?	ELDS based or ELDS aligned?
Curriculum	New ECD curriculum (2012) in widespread use. Simplified ECD curriculum for the 'alternative' system also widely in use	ELDS-based ELDS-based
Staff training	A pre-service curriculum/materials	Yes, used system-wide
Classroom assessment tools	Children's progress report books used by teachers School readiness end of year assessment	ELDS-aligned No
Supervision/inspection	Checklist used by State Inspection Agency to assess kindergartens	ELDS-based
Population assessment	No tools in place	



Philippines

The Philippines has a population of 98 million with a pre-primary population of 2.25 million (UIS, 2013). It is undertaking major system changes affecting early childhood provision, building on a national project in the early 2000s with funding from the Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

Policy initiatives include enforcement of a compulsory kindergarten year (for age 5) and development of a kindergarten-to-year-12 curriculum as a coherent whole, putting kindergarten under the control of the national Department for Education. Institutional changes

were also effected through the Early Years Act which created the ECCD Council, removing responsibilities from the Council for Welfare of Children. These have led to confused responsibilities at national level. The ECCD council has devoted most resources to developing model day-care centres (National Child Development Centers) with a role as resource centres. The main responsibility for day-care centres (age 3 and 4) is under the local government’s social welfare officials with national links to the national Department for Social Welfare and Development.

TABLE A5.5 Philippines: important milestones in ECED and ELDS development and use

<2000	ADB/WB project. Facilities etc. but also created ECCD checklist tool
2000	ECCD Act. The State to provide a system for ECCD
2003-2008	ELDS development and validation process
2009/2010	National Early Learning Framework (NELF) designed to reflect and disseminate an official understanding of EC programmes. Includes the ELDS as an Annex (the only published version)
2009	Creation of the ECCD Council
2012	Basic Education Act introduced kindergarten to year 12 schooling
2013	Early Years Act
2013	Policy on implementation of the School Readiness Year End Assessment

TABLE A5.6 ELDS and system changes in Philippines

Area	What’s in place?	ELDS based or ELDS aligned?
Curriculum	1 year Kg curriculum (MOE)	ELDS-aligned
	New day care (0 to 4) curriculum	ELDS-aligned
Staff training	A pre-service curriculum/materials	No
Classroom assessment tools	ECCD checklist	No
	School readiness end-of-year assessment	No
Supervision/inspection	No tools in place	
Population assessment	No tools in place	



South Africa

The population of South Africa is estimated at 54 million (July 2014), with 5.7m aged between 0 and 4 years. In 2013 only 1,695,000 children between the ages 0 and 4 (33% of the total population of this age group) were attending 'ECD centres', either day-care centres, crèches, playgroups, nursery schools, or pre-primary schools. Access to ECD is increasing, according to the draft ECD policy, though it is acknowledged that early learning programmes are not universally available nor equitably accessible to all children.

The Children's Act No 38 of 2005 (effective from 2010) provided a comprehensive framework for provision of social services for children in South Africa. Norms and standards for the provisioning of ECED programmes are set out in the Act's regulations. The national Department of Social Development (DSD) oversees implementation of programmes under this Act and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is

responsible for programme content, curricular development and support.

ECED services and provisioning, coordination and implementation for children from birth to 4 years are the responsibility of the DSD, which has social workers as its field staff who then need to be trained in programme and pedagogy for young children. However, the main providers of ECED services to this age group are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), required to register their centres and facilities with the DSD.

Children from 5 to 6 years old are provided for in 'pre-reception' (pre-grade r) and 'reception' (grade r) years of primary school under the responsibility of the DBE. Currently, grade r is universal in some provinces though not yet compulsory; pre-grade r is likely to be universal but not compulsory by 2019 and is offered at community sites, pre-schools or attached to a state primary school.

TABLE A5.7 South Africa: important milestones in ECED and ELDS development and use

2003	ELDS development: South Africa was one of the pilot countries
2009	The national ELDS (NELDS), including age and content validation, completed and ready for introduction to the ECD sector
2010	The Children's Act 38, begun in 2005, became effective in 2010. Crèches/ECD centres now had to meet quality programming requirements based on NELDS in order to be accepted for registration and funding from the DSD
2011	Diagnostic review of the ECD sector
2012-13	Consultations on the National Curriculum Framework, which was the curriculum document based on, and going further than, NELDS
Oct 2012 to April 2013	Guidance on programme registration based on NELDS as per The Children's Act rolled out by DSD to all provinces
On going	The National ECD policy is currently at the inter-Ministerial Committee stage and expected to be adopted in 2016

TABLE A5.8 ELDS and system changes in South Africa

Area	What's in place?	ELDS based or ELDS aligned?
Curriculum	National Curriculum Framework	NELDS-based
Staff training	A pre-service curriculum/materials	No
Classroom assessment tools	Children's progress report books used by teachers School readiness end of year assessment	No No
Supervision/inspection	Observation tools in place	NELDS-aligned
Population assessment	No tools in place	



APPENDIX 6.

LIST OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

UNICEF HQ and ROs

Sam Bickel	Senior Adviser, Evaluation and Research	Evaluation Office
Kathleen Letshabo	Evaluation Specialist	Evaluation Office
Pia Britto	Senior Adviser	ECD
Abiyhan Jung Rana	Education Specialist	Education
Jo Bourne	Associate Director	Education
Manuel Cardoso	Education Specialist	Education
Deepa Grover	ECD Adviser	CEE/CIS RO
Pablo Stansbery	ECD Adviser	ESARO
Chemba Raghavan	Education Specialist	EAPRO
Maria Elena Ubedo	ECD Adviser	LACRO
Leotes Helin	Education Specialist	ROSA
Moncef Moalla	Deputy Representative	CO Djibouti (previously MENA RO)

External consultants to UNICEF

Sharon Lynne Kagan	Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy/Co-Director, National Center for Children & Families	Teachers College, Columbia University
Pamela Wridt	Director, Children's Environments Research Group	City University of New York

Jordan

Dr. Suha Tabbal	Consultant
Dr. Omaima Amour	Chair, Child International Center for Early Learning and Development
Dr. Alia Arabia	Ministry of Education (MOE), Head of ECD Department
Ms. Ibtisam Amara	Former MOE lead on EC in ERfKE
Dr. Maliha	MOE, Training Department
Dr. Ziad Abdulkareem Al-Nsour	MOE, Director of Professional Development Policies
Principal and teachers	Princess Alia Kindergarten
Principal and teachers	Princess Rahma Primary School
Ms. Manar Shukri	Reading and Mathematics Project (RAMP), ex National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA)
Principal and teachers	Ramtha kindergarten
Principal and teachers	Ramtha primary schools
Susan Ayari	UNICEF, Chief of Education
Maha B. Homsy	UNICEF, Chief of Child Protection



Jordan (cont'd)

Buthayna Al-Katib	UNICEF, Health and Nutrition Specialist
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Hania Ahad Khanji	NCFA, Childhood Sepcialist
Fawaz Almazrawi	Islamic Centre Charity Society (ICCS), Head of Development Programmes
Principal and parents	ICCS Centre, Amman
Emad Ababneh	National Centre for Human Resource Development, Researcher
Mahmoud Jbour	Ministry of Social Development, Family and Child Department
Dr. Hanan Najmi:	Ministry of Health, Head of the Maternal & Child Health Directorate
Khawla Fayyad	UNICEF, Child Protection Consultant.
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Mongolia

Judith Bruno	Deputy Representative	UNICEF CO
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Khurelmaa Dashdorj	M&E Officer	
Bolorchimeg	Education Officer	
Amaraa	Child Protection Officer	
Surenchieg V	Health specialist	
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Baavgai K	Head of Department for Family, Women and Children's Development	Ministry of Population Development and Social Welfare
Dolgormaa J	Head, Child and Family Development Department	National Authority for Children
Sarankhuu G	Specialist	
Oinbayar	Child Protection Specialist	
Ganchimeg	Health Specialist	
Soyolgerel	Former EC Health Specialist	Ministry of Health
Bolormaa Z	ECE Specialist	
Itgel Lonjid	Education Programme Manager	Asian Development Bank
Bandii R	Education Development Specialist	
Delgermaa	Education Specialist	State Inspection Agency, Education Department
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Tserennadmid		
Altansuvd		
Oyunbileg		
Narantsetseg		



Mongolia (cont'd)

Batkhuuyag	ELDS Review Team	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
Boldsuren		
Tungalag		
Tungalag Ch	Social Sector Manager	World Bank
Narmandakh A	Director	Association for Early Childhood Development
Enkhtuya	ECD Specialist	Bayanzurkh District, Ulaanbaatar
Purevsuren	Elementary Methodologist, 48 th Secondary School	
Chinbat	Methodologist, 22 nd Kindergarten	
Bayarmaa Mongontuul	Teachers	
Gereltuya S	Principal, 62 nd Kindergarten	
Baigalmaa	Teacher, 62 nd Kindergarten	
Batjargal	Director	
Baigalmaa	Head Education Department	Bayankhongor Province
Oyungerel	ECD Specialist	
Batbayar	Head Department of Social Development	
Chuluuntsetseg	Education Specialist	
Ayurzana	Principal, Preschool and Kindergarten Complex	
Oyuntsetseg	Principal, Model Kindergarten	
Munkhzul	Teacher, Model Kindergarten	
Principal and teachers	Ulziit Soum Kindergarten	
Oyunsaikhan	Methodologist	Tuv Province Education Department
Principal and teachers	Sergelen Soum's Kindergarten	
Gereltuya Ts	Education Program Manager	Save the Children Japan
Purev-Ochir Ch	Board member	Early Childhood Professionals Association

Philippines

National		
Hideko Miyagawa	Chief, Education	UNICEF CO Philippines
Augusto Rodriguez	Chief, Social Policy	
Pysche Olayvar	ECD Specialist	
Cecil Arcadio	ECD Officer	
Maria Lourdes de Vera-Mateo	Chief, Education (retired)	
Mercedes Chavez	ECD Specialist (retired)	
Dr. Teresita G. Inciong	Executive Director, ECCD Council Secretariat and Vice-Chair, ECCD Council Governing Board	Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council Secretariat



Philippines (cont'd)

Dr. Juliet A. Gregorio Simeona Ebol	Consultant, Curriculum for 0-4 Consultant, Capacity Building for Child Development Teachers	ECCD
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Victoria Navida Miramel Laxa Marites Lumanlan	Social Welfare Officer V, Policy Development and Planning Bureau Social Welfare Officer IV, Protective Services Bureau Training Specialist III, Capacity Building Bureau	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
Alpha Larga	Planning Officer III	Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC)
Lourdes K. Ledesma, Ph.D.	Clinical Neuropsychologist	Ledesma Center for Neuropsychological Services
Elizabeth Ventura, Ph.D.	Partner Consultant, Validation of the Philippine ELDS	Psychology Department University of the Philippines
Maria Rita Lucas, Ph.D.	Head, Education Program	Centro Escolar University
Blesilda Rios	President	Community ECCD Colleges
Brenda Martinez	Program Director	Narito Munting Puso (NGO for children)
Local Government/sub-national		
Teresita Pillas Dr. Pecos Camarines Merlinda Ibusag Luningning A. Adona Celia O. Gaoiran Teresita D. Bandavia Lorna B. Duran Edna S. Bueno Arlon A. Ilano Ellalyn Abutal Emma Arrubio Vicky Tamba Donnalyn Sison Florence Lacanilao	Social Welfare & Development Officer City Health Officer Day Care Worker Officer Day Care Worker (special needs children) Day Care Worker Day Care Worker Day Care Worker Day Care Worker Encoder(ECCD-IS) School Principal Kindergarten Supervisor Grade 1 Teacher Kindergarten Teacher Kindergarten Parent/Mother	Manadaluyong City Hall Integrated Day Care Centers Welfareville Compound, Brgy. Addition Hills, Mandaluyong Nueve de Febrero Elementary School, Mandaluyong
Patria Agcaoili	Social Welfare & Development Officer	City Government of Malabon
Elsie G. Cerveza Cecille Guevarra	Health Administrator, City Health Department and Executive Director, Health, Education and Welfare Coordinating Council ECCD Focal Person	City Government of Malabon
Aldrin Ferrer Melissa Ferrer	Child Development Teacher Child Development Teacher	Hulong Duhat National Child Development Center Tugatog National Child Development Center



Philippines (cont'd)

Hon. Dante D. Torres Marybeth Ortiz Dr. Ma. Isabel Caliling	Municipal Mayor Social Welfare Development Officer Health Officer	Municipal Government of Guagua, Province of Pampanga
Elsa Castro Regilda Domingo	Day Care Worker Day Care Parent/Mother	Great Skill Day Care Center, Barangay San Nicolas, Guagua
Dr. Leonardo Zapanta Norilee Baluyot	Division Superintendent Kindergarten Program Coordinator/ Education Program Specialist III Public Schools District Supervisor	Department of Education School Division, San Fernando City, Province of Pampanga
Madilyn V. Ayson Marilou Gonzales Agnes Guevarra Josenia Lazatin Rolando Salaysay Cheyenne Sumandal Johanna Marie Miranda Rosalie Miranda	Principal III Master Teacher Teacher III Education Program Specialist II Kindergarten Teacher Kindergarten Teacher Kindergarten Teacher	Sta. Ana Elementary School Sta. Ana, Pampanga

South Africa

Andre Viviers	ECD specialist	UNICEF, Pretoria
Professor Ebrahim	Co-author National Curriculum Framework	University of South Africa
Marie Louise Samuels	Director ECD	Department of Basic Education, Pretoria
Octavia Sithole	ECD Specialist	
Louise Erasmus		Department of Social Development, Pretoria
Magdelize van Vuuren	NGO using NELDS and NCF as a basis for ECD practitioner training	Silverlakes, Pretoria
Social responsibility team at Hollard	ECD practitioner training programmes (Kago Ya Bana)	Guateng
	District Official Foundation Phase	Gauteng Department of Education, Sedibeng district
	Principal	Kago Ya Bana mentored ECD site, Mid Vaal
	ECD centre monitor/mentor	Mid Vaal municipality
	Programme development manager at off site ECD service provider	Johannesburg
Free State Department of Education officials initiating practitioner training in province	Department of Basic Education (ECD) pilot project focused on the mediation of National Curriculum Framework to practitioners Practitioners and principals at 3 of the pilot ECD sites	
		Bloemfontein



South Africa (cont'd)

	Head of NGO (TREE) providing ECD support services and training	KwaZulu Natal
	Head of NGO, Hillcrest	
	Head of Durban-based NGO	
Professor Linda Richter	Member of the Government commissioned team, tasked with researching and designing the draft National ECD Policy	
Principal, practitioners and children	Rural KwaZulu Natal ECD centre.	
Principal, practitioners and children at	Township KwaZulu Natal ECD centre.	
Officials from Department of Social Development	Cape Town	Western Cape
Staff	Inclusive Education, NGO	
Staff	NGO (Grassroots) a major ECD service – provider in Western Cape	
Principal and teachers	ECD centre, Cape Town	
Principal and teachers	ECD centre in township, Cape Town	
Director and staff	ECD Directorate in Johannesburg	Gauteng Department of Education
Head	NGO (developed an ECD website)	



APPENDIX 7.

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