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Learning
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and basic education begins then too, as we support children in their healthy development.

Parents
are the
child's first
teachers.

Supporting and educating parents and parents-to-be is a highly effective basic education strategy.

Support Early Childhood Care *and* Development

Investing in ECCD is investing in the whole child, with dividends that continue to pay off throughout the entire life cycle.

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The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development—a consortium of international organizations and regional networks that support research, policy and programming for young children 0–8 and their families in the Majority World.

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■ Early Childhood Care
and Development—
Contributing to Education for All

■ The Costs and Affordability
of Early Childhood Care and
Development Programmes

■ Financing Early Childhood
Programmes

■ Benefits of Early Childhood
Programmes; Complementary
ECCD Programming Strategies

Presented by:



The Consultative Group
on Early Childhood Care
and Development,
a consortium of international
organizations and regional
networks that support policy,
programming and research for
children 0-8 and their families in
the Majority World.

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Discussion Notes for the EFA Mid-decade Review

Amman, Jordan ■ June 16–19, 1996

▼ **In this pocket:**

Discussion Notes #

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Early Childhood Care and Development: Contributing to Education for All

“Every person—child, youth, and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.” These include “both essential learning tools, such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving, and the basic learning content (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.”

From the World Declaration on Education for All, 1990

When we remember that our goal is to build children’s capacities to become fully participating members of society, we are reminded to look at their whole development: their nutrition and health status, their environmental supports, the love and nurturing they receive, their opportunities to play, explore, learn, interact with materials, solve problems and participate in their communities. In the context of a whole life, it becomes clear that lifelong capacity rests on the foundation established in the first several years.

The Jomtien declaration affirmed that **learning begins at birth**. Thus it is important to realize that basic education

begins then too. What is more BASIC than a solid foundation for all later learning? While a focus on primary education is very important, **eight is too late** to start paying attention to children’s learning needs. By the time a child reaches school age, most key brain wiring, language abilities, physical capabilities and cognitive foundations have been set in place. Early Childhood Care and Development programmes play a crucial role in establishing basic education for all. In supporting the youngest children, it is especially important to recognize that **parents are the child’s first teachers**. Supporting and educating parents and parents-to-be is a highly effective basic education strategy.

Governments and civil society need to respond to learners’ needs right from the beginning, and to create programmatic activities that encourage children in their development. Through studies that have looked at the readiness of students to enter school, and the readiness of schools to receive students, research has shown that there is still much work to be done—both in supporting the youngest children so that they are ready to enter the formal school system, and in adapting school curricula and routines to the nature of the 6, 7, 8, and 9 year-old mind. In supporting school-aged children, it is important to recognize that children in this age range still need:

- ▶ objects to manipulate, and active learning in order to develop good thinking and problem-solving skills; and
- ▶ social situations which allow them true participation (rather than rote behaviour) in order to develop the social skills and values which allow them to contribute to their communities.

ECCD as a field has valuable experiences to share, including effective strategies for supporting young children in their development, supporting families, and of greatest interest to many primary level educators, helping to make schools more ready for learners and learners more

ready for school.

- A variety of programmes linking the early years with primary school have led to a re-thinking of curricula for the early primary years. In particular, it is important to help children make a transition from using their mother tongue to the language of instruction, when these are different. It is important to use the children’s culture as a basis for curriculum content. It is important for children to interact with each other and be helped to develop social skills. It is important for instruction to be flexible enough to work with children at their own level, recognizing that there will be differences in abilities, readiness for certain tasks, and styles of learning. Curricula which “weed out” incapable students begin the process of creating marginalized citizens. All children are capable of learning and developing in their own ways, and deserve support to become the best learners they can.
- Training programmes for preschool teachers and caregivers have been extended upward to include primary school teachers. The ability to understand child development and the benefits of active learning helps primary teachers expand and improve a child’s capacity to learn. Because ECCD training programmes address the integrated needs of children and how to support their development, they offer a good opportunity for early primary teachers to explore ways to consolidate the benefits of pre-school experience.
- The importance of nutrition has been integrated into a variety of model ECCD programmes that combine care of young children with learning, to the benefit of both. The holistic need for nurturing, nutrition and mental stimulation is often disregarded as children grow a bit older. However, research has shown that children learn better when better nourished, and receive nourishment better when it is in a caring context. The impact of “fuel” on the mind is powerful indeed. Educators too often limit their focus to children’s intellectual



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development, without understanding the roles that nutrition, physical health, physical activity and social/emotional supports play in enabling children (and adults!) to develop and learn.

- The ECCD focus on supporting parents—providing them with new skills and knowledge and forming social networks—can offer good models to primary educators seeking to address the needs of older children. In many cases, children fail at school because they have no support for schooling from home or there are too many pressures and problems at home. No amount of remedial education can help a child to overcome learning problems which stem from social pressures, lack of family support, inappropriate care or abuses. Children who are failing at school are often being failed in a larger social context, and they need support programmes which can address these larger issues, through helping families, encouraging their parents in their role as the child's first teacher, and addressing the non-curricular disruptions faced by many children which become obstacles to learning and development.

- Many fine curricular innovations, based on scientific research into how children learn, have been developed and tested for preschoolers in a variety of settings that demonstrate how teaching and learning can be an active, dynamic, participatory process. These teaching methods have been successfully extended up into the primary years with good long-term learning and development results.

- Partnerships have been developed between international donor agencies, international NGOs and local NGOs to promote grassroots programmes designed in collaboration with the parents and local communities they are serving. External partners often act as catalysts and brokers of resources, rather than as leaders in creating educational solutions that make sense on the local level.

- ECCD programmes have documented the human resources and supports necessary for building capacity to provide basic education—a climate of support for children and adults as well, a safe and sane environment, empowerment

of teachers and caregivers through greater status and/or better pay, opportunities for teachers and caregivers to grow professionally and personally in their work, community support to children and caregivers that goes beyond monetary support (including appreciation, volunteer efforts, availability of resources), provision of credentials and other recognitions to caregivers, teachers, and parents, and support to the institutions providing care by government, local citizens and other institutions.

Support Early Childhood Care and Development. Investing in ECCD is investing in the whole child, with dividends that continue to pay off throughout the entire life cycle. On the accompanying card we summarize the benefits of Early Childhood Programmes for children, adults, communities, institutions and society, and outline eight complementary programming strategies that support the establishment of basic education for all. ■

The Costs and Affordability of Early Childhood Care and Development Programmes

Messages:

1. Early Childhood Care and Development programmes are affordable.
2. The costs of ECCD should always be considered in relation to effects.
3. A variety of strategies exist for keeping costs low in relation to effects.
4. In general, ECCD is under-funded.

ECCD programmes are affordable because:

The range of costs among possible programme options varies a great deal, depending on how ambitious goals are, on the size of the programme envisioned, on the number of components or services integrated into the programme, on the model chosen, the intensity of the programme and the kind of staffing elected. There are many models and dimensions to choose from.

An ECCD programme can be constructed in parts or phases. Unlike building a dam, which involves a huge lump of investment all in one piece at the outset, an ECCD programme can be constructed over time, adding pieces to improve quality and extending the programme gradually to new populations.

It is possible to share costs. It is normal for the costs of an ECCD programme to be shared by the government, participating families and local communities, and

often by organized sectors of the civil society, the private sector and international organizations as well. Therefore, governments can look for ways to avoid large start-up costs and to spread out the recurrent costs of a programme.

Spending on ECCD can reduce other costs. If an ECCD programme can be shown to reduce costs in another programme (as, for example when repetition in primary school is reduced or when early attention reduces health costs later on), then overall expenditures will not increase.

An example of an affordable programme comes from Kenya where (in 1991) less than one-tenth of one percent of the education budget was spent for a community-based preschool programme reaching 900,000 children. This was possible because of the way the programme was designed—para-professionals staff the programme, children are in the programme for a limited time each day, the programme has been phased over time, and communities accept a major responsibility for sharing costs. At the same time the programme has sacrificed quality through what might be termed an under-investment by the central government in ECCD (see below).

The costs of ECCD should always be considered in relation to effects.

1. Returns on an investment in ECCD can be high. Even though the cost of an ECCD programme may seem to be relatively high, if it produces large effects and benefits to society as well as to the individuals involved, it will be worthwhile in both human and monetary terms. Research evidence suggests that this can be the case because ECCD not only leads to reduced costs in other programmes as suggested above, but can also: increase productivity in later life for those who have participated, help free parents and siblings to earn and learn, enhance social participation, and help to reduce economic and social inequalities (see "Benefits" card). In Brazil, the PROAPE programme paid for itself in terms of the reduction of

repetition and associated costs in primary school. The High/Scope Perry Preschool longitudinal study, comparing children who participated in a quality preschool programme with children who had not, has quantified the returns to the preschool programme as US\$7.16 for every US\$1.00 invested.

2. Low costs should not be sought for their own sake. This is an important conclusion from the previous point. If a per child cost of, let us say, \$10 produces few or no effects, it is obviously not a good investment, no matter how affordable that level of expenditure might be. But if a cost of \$150 per child produces a very great effect it may be an excellent investment for a government, even though it appears to be relatively high cost.

3. The level of expenditure is not directly related to quality. While there may be a correlation between cost and quality, simply putting a lot of money into a programme will not ensure desired outcomes. On the other hand, if the level of investment is too low then there is a likelihood that the programme will have little or no value.

A variety of strategies exist for keeping costs low in relation to effects.

These include:

- Focussing programmes on limited and disadvantaged populations;
- Establishing programmes in which trained para-professionals or family members are the principal caregivers and teachers;
- Identifying underutilized resources that can be incorporated (e.g., people of all ages; facilities that are used part time; recycled materials);
- Taking advantage of synergistic effects and existing infrastructure by incorporating ECCD into on-going programmes of health, nutrition, regional development, adult education, etc.
- Making use of media and popular channels of communication.



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In addition, governments can seek joint arrangements for covering costs—with communities, families, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. Such sharing can make a programme possible, but if not instituted carefully, it can be overdone, especially with respect to cost recovery schemes that demand too much of the poor and therefore make their participation impossible.

In general, ECCD is under-funded.

1. The returns justify greater investment. This point has been made above.

2. Budget percentages are low. For instance, the percentage of the educational budget of Jamaica that is allocated to early childhood programmes is about 2% whereas preschool-aged children represent almost 20% of the total number of children enrolled in various programmes for which the education sector is responsible.

3. Governments must recognize their role and responsibility for attention to children. This is so because times are changing and many of the arrangements for caring for children that existed in the past do not now exist, negatively affecting the growth and development of young children which, in turn, causes problems in school and society for these children later on. A social expenditure could help to remedy these growing problems. Accordingly, the idea that the family is exclusively responsible for children, a concept promoted primarily in the West, needs to be turned around, recapturing the principle that “it takes a village to raise a child”, with the government acting as a support to the village. This cannot be done without a willingness to give due priority to ECCD and to accept and absorb the costs implied. ■

Financing Early Childhood Programmes

The issue of who provides the financing and bears the costs becomes extremely important as ECCD programmes are implemented and expanded, and as additional resources are sought. In most ECCD projects or programmes, the real costs are a shared responsibility. The most common sources of support for ECCD programmes are:

- Parents/families
- Communities
- The Government (various levels)
- Private Sector (employers, philanthropists, private providers, and businesses)
- Social Sector (NGOs, churches, others)
- International institutions

Parents/Families and Communities.

Parents and communities provide support to ECCD programmes in a variety of ways. Sometimes this occurs through the contribution of labour to build a facility, make equipment and/or toys. It can also occur through the donation of food and/or time. At present, considerable emphasis is being placed on "cost recovery" from participants and on "privatizing" ECCD programmes. These strategies certainly have their place for certain elements of the general population. However, although part of the burden of support for ECCD programmes can be taken on by families and communities, it is unrealistic to expect that low income families and communities will be able to bear all the programme costs or sustain programmes over time.

Government financing. There are reasons that governments should subsidize ECCD programmes. First, it should be

kept in mind that the social benefits of participation in an ECCD programme considerably outweigh the private benefits. Second, if governments take seriously a commitment to direct programmes to low income families and children "at risk," then they must realize that the ability of both individuals and communities to cover costs will be limited and subsidies will be necessary.

The government also needs to recognize that contributions are already being made by both users and communities that are not normally registered in cost calculations (e.g. provision of a building, contributions of food, provision of labour). Thus, it is important not to over-burden users if the service is to be used and if the social as well as private effects are to be realized. In a recent case study of a rural preschool in Mexico, it was found that community members living at the survival margin withdrew their children from the preschool when they were obligated to donate a significant block of their time to the school as social service. The burden was too great, and the effect was counter-productive.

These lessons from experience run counter to the desires of many governments and funding agencies that seek to transfer the financing burden to communities and families over time. It suggests the need for new instruments of support and for an approach that emphasizes working in partnership. Possible sources of funding include:

REGULAR GOVERNMENT BUDGETS. This is most common source of financing for ECCD programmes, in most countries. The source of support for ECCD within the government budget varies considerably, depending on the type of programme and the main target group. Most commonly, support comes from the education budget. Funds for ECCD programmes can also be found within health, social welfare, women's programmes, rural or urban development, agriculture, and others.

The desire by governments to mobilize resources to finance programmes

and cover costs of social programmes, including ECCD programmes, is more important in determining the level of investment in such programmes than the actual cost of a particular programme. If a programme is really seen as a priority (whether for political reasons or because it is thought to be cost-effective), resources will be identified and mobilized—even if that means reallocating them from another programme.

In general, budget allocation to the early years is low and disproportionate to the representation of that group in the population at large. For instance, in Jamaica, approximately 2.5% of the education budget is for ECCD, but approximately 20% of the total number of children in the education system are in early education. In Mexico, the budget percentage reaches 5% of the total education budget but the number of children in preschools is about 10% of all children in the education system. **Thus it may be that the regular budget of the government is not being tapped at the level that is justified by the return on social investment that we assume will occur.**

In countries where educational and other social programmes are being decentralized, the power of local governments to obtain funds through local taxing is often still weak. Therefore, funding may still depend on the central government budget and on the bases for distributing part of that budget to states.

SPECIAL TAXES OR ACTIVITIES. In a number of countries, a special tax has been instituted, the proceeds from which are earmarked for support of early childhood programmes. The most notable example of this method of obtaining financing for ECCD is Colombia where a 3% payroll tax is collected from all enterprises over a certain size. The money from the tax is administered by the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF)*. This system taps private sector as well as public sector funds.

TRUST FUNDS. In Mauritius, a novel method for gathering together ECCD



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funds was established in which a trust fund was created, to which both the government and the private sector contribute. The idea of creating a Trust Fund in Mexico is being explored. The potential of trust fund schemes as a method of handling ECCD financing has not been realized.

Private Sector Donations and Philanthropy. Although philanthropy seems to be growing it has not been a major source of funds for ECCD programmes to date. Yet the provision of funds is not the only way that the private sector can make a contribution. It can provide 'in-kind' technical assistance, or products (e.g. computers in schools), and it can sponsor individual programmes. ■

Benefits of Early Childhood Programmes

FOR	CHANGES IN	NATURE OF THE CHANGE
Children	Psycho-social Development	improved cognitive development (thinking, reasoning); improved social development (relationship to others); improved emotional development (self image, security); improved language skills
	Health and Nutrition	increased chances of survival; reduced morbidity; improved hygiene; improved weight/height for age; improved micronutrient balance
	Progress and Performance in Primary School	higher chance of entering; less chance of repeating; higher learning and better performance
Adults	General knowledge	health and hygiene; nutrition (related to own status);
	Attitudes and Practices	leadership skills; health and hygiene; preventive medical practices; opportune treatment; nutrition; improved diet
	Relationships	improved self-esteem; better husband-wife; parent-child; child-child relationships
	Employment	caregivers freed to seek or improve employment; new employment opportunities created by programme; increased market for programme-related goods
Communities	Physical Environment	sanitation; spaces for play; new multi-purpose facilities;
	Social participation	improved solidarity; increased participation of women; community projects benefitting all
Institutions	Efficiency	better health attention through grouping or changed user practices; reduced repetition and dropout in schools;
	Effectiveness	greater coverage;
	Capacity	greater ability/confidence and/or changes in organization; improved methods and curriculum content
Society	Quality of Life	a healthier population, reduced days lost to sickness; a more literate, educated population; greater social participation; an improved labor force; reduced delinquency; reduced fertility and early births; reduced social inequalities



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Complementary ECCD Programming Strategies

PROGRAM APPROACH	BENEFICIARIES	OBJECTIVES	MODELS
1. Deliver a Service	The child 0–8	survival health/nutrition comprehensive development socialization rehabilitation child care school 'readiness'	Maternal/child health home day care center-based program 'add-on' centers preschools (formal; non-formal) comprehensive child development program religious schools
2. Educate Caregivers	parents/family members caregivers teachers/educators siblings elders	create awareness increase knowledge change attitudes improve/change practices enhance skills	home visiting parent education courses caregiver/teacher training Child-to-Child family life education
3. Promote Community Development	community members leaders/elders community health workers community organizers	create awareness mobilize for action change conditions take on ownership of program	social marketing social mobilization technical mobilization literacy programs school curriculum media
4. Strengthen National Resources and Capability	program personnel supervisors management staff professionals paraprofessionals researchers	increase knowledge enhance skills change behaviors strengthen and sustain organizations enhance local capability increase local/national resources develop local materials	organizational development training pre- and in-service training experimental/ demo projects collaborative cross-national research projects action research
5. Strengthen Demand and Awareness	policy makers general public professionals media	create awareness build political will increase demand change attitudes create an enabling environment	social marketing multi-media dissemination of knowledge advocacy
6. Develop National Child and Family Policies	policy makers families with young children society—over time	create awareness assess current policy for families young children identify gaps create supportive policy	relate national to international efforts (EFA, CRC) participatory policy development
7. Develop Supportive Legal & Regulatory Frameworks	policy makers legislators families with young children society—over time	increase awareness of rights and resources create supportive workplace assure quality child care implement protective environmental standards institute maternal/paternal leave	create alliances (women's groups, community groups, etc) innovative public/private collaboration tax incentives for private support of ECCD programs
8. Strengthen International Collaboration	donor agencies bilateral agencies foundations international NGOs	share experience distill knowledge maximize resources increase awareness increase resources maximize impact and effectiveness	Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development International Vitamin A Consultative Group Development for Africa Education (DAE) Save the Children Alliance

Improving Learning Achievement

Learning Achievement begins with a child ready and able to learn. A child's most important learning challenges and achievements occur before entering school. During the early years a child learns to walk and talk, to relate to people, to think and reason, to solve problems, and so much more. If these learning achievements do not occur (and at the right time) future learning in school and in later life will be more difficult. Thus learning achievement in school depends on earlier learning achievements. Research has shown that:

- ▶ proper attention to learning and development during the preschool years, through programmes of parental education as well as preschool and integrated child development programmes, can lead to greater achievement in primary school;
- ▶ attention to children in the early years can help to moderate or eradicate learning disabilities, delays and retardation;
- ▶ Children with a quality early childhood experience have a greater chance of staying in school, doing well, and making a contribution to society;
- ▶ Children with pre-school experience are less likely to repeat grades.

This is not only because such experiences provide the foundations for language, maths and problem-solving, but also because such experiences and programmes strengthen security, self-esteem and the ability to interact with and learn

from others. Therefore, if a child is going to achieve in later years, this initial investment is crucial. Furthermore, investment in early childhood programming has higher payoffs than investment at any other level of education.

What does research show can be applied at low cost? What has been tried out and with what success?

There are a variety of cost-effective early childhood education models that help improve learning. These include:

- **working with parents.** Parents are the child's first teachers and provide children with the experiences they need to develop their learning capacity. Parent programmes include such things as parent education, parent support groups, and home visiting programmes. One example is a mother-education project in Turkey that has been piloted, evaluated, and validated in a longitudinal research effort, showing that helping mothers develop greater parenting skills has long-term effects on children, including on their ability to learn and achieve. This programme has also demonstrated effective use of an adult education network to house and disseminate the mother education model on a broad scale throughout the country, adding in elements of mother literacy and retraining of unoccupied adult educators to provide the services.
- **adding an early childhood care and stimulation component to ongoing health or community development efforts, or adding health and nutrition to a child care setting, creating an integrated programme that meets the holistic needs of the child.** Research shows that care and nutrition have a synergistic effect, each enhancing the effects of the other on children's physical, mental and emotional development.
- **building on the local culture.** Community-based traditional caregivers can be trained in quality child care practices. This involves building on caregiving situations which are already provided in the community. An example comes from a programme in Mali where older women in the community serve as caregivers, with the help of youth. This group of caregivers received additional training to enhance their role and their ability to more fully respond to children's needs.
- **using media** such as radio to reach parents and caregivers with good childrearing information and informing the broader public as to the needs of young children and their families. Radio is being used effectively in the Philippines to reach hard-to-reach families with child development information.
- **providing information to older siblings who are frequently major caregivers in a household.** Child-to-Child programmes engage both older and younger children in new behaviours and new informational activities.
- **working with existing resources or networks** such as adult education programmes, women's programmes, community development efforts, adding to their 'curriculum' so that they can meet children's needs. This might involve adding a child development module to a literacy programme, for example.
- **addressing children's needs in conjunction with women's programmes.** This can be done through creating child care programmes that meet the needs of young children but also meet the needs of women for child care so that they can engage in income-producing activities. An example is a family day care home programme developed in Viet Nam as part of a women's credit scheme.
- **linking early childhood programmes with primary schools to facilitate children's transition into the primary school.** To facilitate learning achievement, schools and other educational programmes need to be **ready for the learners.** Primary teachers can be given training in how to provide children with developmentally-appropriate learning experiences. Curricula need to be adapted so that they take into account



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the child's mother tongue, the children's need for active learning, and the children's cultural and personal learning needs.

How can basic learning be measured?

A growing number of reliable and validated tests are available that measure a child's cognitive, language, social and emotional development status, adapted to the particular contexts in which they are being applied. In Chile, for instance, a locally-developed test has been designed to assess children's abilities. These measures are indicators of learning achieve-

ments during the early years. In many settings, however, appropriate and agreed-upon measures need to be developed. This is a crucial task as we approach the year 2000.

What can external partners do to help?

External partners can help provide information on models that have worked in other places. They can facilitate South-South networking and sharing of expertise and resources. They can help to publicize successful efforts and lessons learned so that others may benefit from them. They can promote funding models that

allow countries to help themselves, activate their own internal resources, and build equity (rather than debt) in their own future.

Resources and Partnerships for EFA

What investments have proved cost-effective in improving basic learning?

One very cost-effective strategy for improving basic learning in schools is to see that children are well prepared for the schools they will enter. Therefore, investment in the early years is itself a cost-effective strategy. Research has shown that children who participate in an early childhood programme are more likely to perform better in primary school (and in later life). For instance:

- A longitudinal study of Turkish children whose mothers had participated in a parental education programme were shown to do better than children whose mothers had not participated;
- In a review of 19 longitudinal studies conducted in Majority World countries comparing children who participated in early childhood programmes with those who did not, repetition rates were lower (and often very much lower) in 10 of the 14 studies for which repetition information was available. In one of the four for which there was no effect, promotion was automatic;
- The High/Scope Perry Preschool longitudinal study, comparing at age 27 children who participated in a quality preschool programme with children who had not, has quantified the returns to the preschool programme as \$7.16 for every \$1.00 invested.

From the research we see that a variety of models, including both home- and

centre-based, have been shown to be cost-effective. In addition, if a programme includes health and nutrition and education, and if it involves parents, it is more likely to be effective than if it does not.

What measures have been taken to increase the efficiency (lower unit costs) of basic education programmes?

As suggested above, one measure that has been taken to lower primary school unit costs has been to invest in early childhood care and development programmes, lowering the rate of repetition and increasing efficiency. Within early childhood programmes, strategies for lowering unit costs include:

- incorporating early childhood programmes into on-going programmes of adult education, health, nutrition, regional development, etc. taking advantage of existing infrastructures;
- establishing programmes in which trained para-professionals or family members are the principal caregivers and teachers;
- focussing programmes on a more limited and disadvantaged population;
- reallocating resources among and within sectors when it can be shown that the reallocation will result in cost savings. In the case of PROAPE in Brazil, investment in an early childhood programme cut costs in primary schools by reducing repetition enough that the costs savings at the primary level offset the costs of the early childhood programme.
- identifying underutilized resources that can be incorporated at low costs (e.g. involving people of all ages).
- making greater use of media and popular channels of communication.

What measures have been used to spread or recover costs?

- SEEKING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. It has been common for communities to take on an important part of the cost

burden for early childhood care and development programmes. This strategy has been successfully applied in large scale programmes in such locations as Kenya, Peru and Jamaica. Communities may cover costs of the facility and its upkeep, subsidize at least part of the salary of the para-professional, help in the preparation of materials and contribute to feeding children during their hours in the centres. In these instances the government is responsible for training, supervision, and provision of some materials and, at times, partial support of salaries.

- GRADUATED FEES. In some programmes, fees have been set on a sliding scale to recover partial programme costs. Caution: This strategy must be pursued with due attention to the real ability of families and community members to pay, taking into account contributions that are already being made in time and in kind. One result of introducing fees can be to assure that the poor do not participate.
- INCENTIVES have been provided to the private (profit-making) sector, to non-governmental institutions and to communities for offering programmes for children living in conditions that put them at risk. Incentives include providing funds on a matching basis, providing materials, linking programmes to the health system and/or credit schemes.

What measures have been adopted to shift additional public funding in support of basic education?

- EARMARKING OF PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT INCOME. For instance, Colombia supports early childhood programmes on a large scale with a 3% payroll tax.
- REALLOCATING RESOURCES. Resources can be reallocated across sectors (e.g. shifting defense funds to social services) or within sectors. Recognizing the greater return on early childhood development programmes, Chile shifted



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some funds from higher education to early childhood. The effect on higher education was minor because the shift represented a very small percent of the overall budget for higher education. The effect on early childhood programmes was great because the level of previous investment was very low.

- **CREATING SPECIAL PROGRAMMES,** This is accomplished sometimes with assistance from international donors. Over time these programmes must be incorporated into national budgets. An example is the parent education programme in Mexico.

What kinds of EFA partnerships have proved effective?

Effective partnerships in the ECCD field have been established by governments with communities, NGOs, the private sector and international organizations. (See Discussion Notes Number 5) Partnerships are complex. Roles and expectations need to be clear from the beginning in order for them to work. Yet they are an effective way of maximizing resources. Partnerships can happen at different levels and can include a few or a variety of organizations and interests. Effective part-

nerships may involve more than simply contributions of money. They may involve contributions "in kind" (communities provide buildings for ECCD programmes and food for the children; parents help to make materials and toys; private companies provide equipment, immunization sera, etc., without charging the programme). Partners may also provide ideas and technical advice, participating in the design and evaluation of programmes. Or partners may actually implement programmes.

How has the external funding been used to support or complement national efforts and with what results?

- External support is generally helpful in getting programmes underway. Over time, programme costs can be taken over by government, the private sector, communities and parents.
- External support can provide funding for things that the government does not have the resources to fund (e.g. overseas training, the production of materials, equipment to support new technologies, cross-country/regional exchanges).

An example comes from the Peruvian PRONOEI programme (1979-1984). When the programme began, USAID was budgeted to cover 47% of the costs; government 40%; and UNICEF 6%; with the community contributing 7%. Over time the proportion of costs covered by the different organizations shifted. By the fifth year USAID covered 18% of costs; government increased to 49%; UNICEF covered only 2%, a food programme was introduced that covered 9% of the costs; and the community contributed 23%. ■

Building Capacities to Provide Basic Education

In order for effective EFA programmes to be carried out, the institutions responsible for those programmes need to have the capability to support them. To do an adequate job these institutions need capable and motivated people, adequate facilities, equipment and materials; access to available technologies; and effective organization and management. In addition, institutions need access to knowledge and experience. The most important dimension of capacity-building is the human dimension. Therefore, attracting good people, training them and maintaining their motivation is central to building and sustaining capacity. Furthermore, to attract and maintain staff, proper incentive systems are needed.

What institutional reforms have been introduced to reach larger and more diverse categories of learners?

There are many reasons that not all children are being reached with basic education services. These include distance of learners from each other, cost, dispersion of the population, ethnicity, mobility during the year, language differences, and seasonal agriculture. Within the field of ECCD one general institutional reform allows for greater coverage and inclusion of a greater diversity of people: a shift from an exclusively formal approach in which it is assumed that children should be gathered in centres, to an approach in which the programme is brought to the

children, either through educating parents or by creating smaller and more dispersed centres (e.g. homes) or by using the media.

Within the formal system a key reform has been to focus attention on the quality of the primary school. Strategies have been introduced that help make teachers more responsive to the needs of children. This has been important in relation to ECCD programmes, since one of the anticipated outcomes of these programmes is that children will experience success at the primary school level. But if the school is not ready to receive the child, he/she is likely to repeat grades or leave school.

Primary schools have been upgraded through projects that link early childhood programmes with primary schools. The most effective efforts are those where joint training occurs that includes teachers, supervisors and administrators from the early childhood programmes and lower primary grades. An example comes from South Africa where within the Bophuthatswana school system a pre-school programme was developed as part of a larger school reform effort. Another example is the Joint Innovative Project (JIP) sponsored by UNESCO in China. Both projects focus on increased pre-school provision, curriculum continuity, teacher training, and community involvement. Thus the readiness issue is being addressed by focussing on all the essential elements in the child's environment—the family, the community, and the school as well as the child.

Other examples of reforms introduced to reach those not being reached include:

- ▶ developing linkages with non-governmental agencies that are working with these populations and having them provide the services;
- ▶ working inter-sectorally, (e.g. adding education components to health programmes serving remote areas where there is minimal education coverage);
- ▶ restructuring organizations to be more effective;
- ▶ redefining the roles and responsibilities of central, provincial and local

government, allowing for greater flexibility so that at the local level people are able to be more responsive to needs;

- ▶ providing education in the mother tongue when the child enters school, allowing time for the child to make the transition to the language of education.

What measures have been used to develop the human resources needed to provide quality basic education in and out of school for various age groups?

The primary strategy is the training of personnel—at all levels. Furthermore, training cannot be limited to only pre-service training. To be effective, there needs to be a combination of pre and in-service training as well as practical experience in order for skills, knowledge and competencies to be fully developed. This multi-pronged approach to training is required regardless of the age of the 'student' and whether programmes are formal or non-formal. In Kenya a system has been developed which provides training to teachers in service by offering training during school holidays and visiting trainees during the school year. Over time a physical and human infrastructure has been developed. This system has been strengthened through the training of trainers at the district level and the development of management, planning, training and evaluation skills at the national level, as well as through the provision of appropriate facilities and equipment.

Another example of capacity-building through training is the Training of Trainers for Africa initiative, supported by external donors, which provides training to lead trainers in a given country. They are then responsible for training other trainers in their country. They have also taken on the task of working with policymakers to frame supportive ECCD policy for the country.

How have the media assisted in delivering basic education?

Media has an important role to play in



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both increasing awareness of EFA issues and in providing information to parents, teachers/caregivers and children. Examples of important media efforts that help deliver basic education include:

- Distance education courses that provide training for teachers/caregivers;
- Radio programmes for parents, such as the one in the Philippines, developed in association with the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) parent education programme that introduced important child development information to parents through a talk-show format;
- Radio programmes designed to provide training for teachers and appropriate classroom activities for children such as a project established in Bolivia, which is now being adapted for South Africa.
- Television programmes which provide

developmentally appropriate activities for young children (à la Sesame Street), as in Nigeria and in the Philippines.

What roles have external partners played in capacity building?

External partners are very active in capacity-building. They are frequently able to provide in-country and overseas training for individuals so that they can gain the knowledge and skills required to operate institutions and programmes. They introduce new technologies and provide resources so that those technologies can be adapted to meet the needs of the local situation. They can fund the costs of facilities and equipment not available through government budgets. ■

Meeting the Basic Learning Needs of All

What measures have proved effective in expanding basic education opportunities to...

...young preschool children?

Integrated programmes of early childhood care and development (ECCD) and structured parent education programmes that promote good cognitive stimulation, loving exchange and communication, better family and parent support systems, and good health, nutrition and safety, provide the best foundations for lifelong learning.

...primary school-age children?

ECCD promotes school readiness in children; learners who are ready to learn enable teachers to be more effective. These learners stay in school longer, repeat fewer grades, and are more successful there. Daycare options for their younger siblings mean that primary school aged children are freed from child minding to attend to their own learning and development needs. In addition, early childhood programmes which support the family and the parents have a “filtering up” effect, meaning the older children are also likely to receive better attention and parenting.

...**adolescents?** The enthusiasm and energies of youth have to be channeled into productive activities that give them a sense of achievement, promote confidence, help build self-esteem and integrate them into supportive social contexts. ECCD efforts can provide such contexts for youth—engaging them in efforts to guide and teach young children, train-

ing them as young parents or parents-to-be in programmes that focus on their developmental needs as well as the needs of young children, giving them contexts where they can extend their literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills in the effort to help teach younger children, even engaging them in the community-building efforts that include setting priorities for a community, identifying ways that all members can contribute, and creating small enterprises to financially support and sustain ECCD programmes.

...**adults/parents?** Parents are their children's first—and most consistent—teachers. Thus ECCD programmes can help them to gain better skills and awareness of this role—making them better resources and improving family relationships for years to come. In addition, ECCD programmes can offer a way out of the cycle of poverty and marginalization for children and perhaps for the family as well. Many ECCD programmes focus on strengthening parents, helping mothers to get more training and education, building literacy and numeracy skills in the context of supporting their children's emerging abilities. In addition, as parents learn new skills and gain confidence in their abilities to make good decisions for their children, they grow in consciousness of the other choices in their lives. They become better problem-solvers and more informed participants in community decisions.

...**for communities?** An integrated early childhood care and development project can bring together parents, community leaders, health workers, teachers and educators, extended family members, local NGOs, government representatives, outside donors, and others in the common goal of providing support to young children. ECCD programmes have proven in many places to be a catalyst for a whole range of community development projects. For example, in Malaysia it was found that “Childcare” was the first thing working parents requested of community developers, even before health care. When a locally relevant form of childcare is established in cooperation with the

community, it often provides the springboard for other community-based development efforts, including greater outreach to marginalized families, better health and sanitation practices (which benefit all) and projects such as adult literacy, non-formal education for street children, drug prevention programmes, and more.

What progress has been made—and how—in achieving gender equity in basic education programmes?

In many countries there is gender equity in access to and participation in ECCD programmes. Furthermore, girls that attend ECCD programmes are more likely to enter and continue in primary school. Thus a strategy for achieving gender equity is to begin by getting girls involved in ECCD programmes. (See Discussion Notes Number 8 for more information on gender issues.)

What measures have been used successfully to reach underserved and disadvantaged learners?

The early childhood care and development field has developed rich experience with innovative ways to reach underserved and disadvantaged learners. A wide range of non-formal educational programmes has been developed that address the needs of learners in diverse circumstances. These include:

- ▶ adding education components to health or community development projects to promote awareness of children's learning needs;
- ▶ establishing specialized programmes that meet the needs of a unique population. For example, the Mobile Creches programme in India which follows migrant worker families from site to site;
- ▶ developing home visiting models in which experienced parents support less-experienced parents;
- ▶ creating parent education programmes which train facilitators to work with parents in strengthening



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- them as their children's first teachers;
- supporting centre-based programmes organized in slums or squatter settings, which serve as rallying points for a whole variety of community-based efforts to promote basic education for all their citizens;
 - addressing the needs of both young and older children through child-to-child projects which bring the children together in educational exchanges that benefit both;
 - recognizing the value of intergenerational projects which support not only the youngest children, but also the members of their families and extended support systems in learning and developing new problem-solving skills;
 - establishing multi-cultural programmes that help young children integrate religious with secular learning, or bridge the gaps of experience often faced by multiple language or multiple cultural groups.
 - using literacy programmes which include child development and parenting information, as done in Honduras and Nepal.

How are the new (and old) information technologies being used to provide basic education in resource-poor environments?

Since the EFA Forum in Jomtien early childhood educators have developed a wealth of materials on various aspects of programme development. These resources are now available through print media, on videos, CD-roms, and the Internet, and through radio and television broadcasts. They are available in many languages and materials exist for both highly literate and marginally literate people working with children. Several training

methodologies have been developed to help caregivers, parents, teachers and trainers to understand and communicate the issues more effectively. Examples include:

- radio programmes that train home day care providers to become more effective teachers of young children;
- training of trainer materials, which help national trainers advocate for young children, train regional supervisors, promote quality programming for young children, and improve ECCD within their national context;
- television programmes and videos aimed at parents which can be adapted to a variety of cultural settings and situations;
- regional resource centres stocked with core materials and training personnel who can help communities strengthen their programming for young children in culturally and developmentally appropriate ways;
- information dissemination projects using puppets, drama, and interactive exercises to raise awareness about children's health and developmental concerns;
- mentoring programmes and exchanges between South groups which enable individuals to share their experiences with others.

How is the demand for basic education being stimulated by incentives, public information and promotional activities?

Early Childhood educators have been successful in many settings in promoting the establishment of policies which support young children and families. They have done this through activating various local and regional networks of interested NGOs as well as by working directly with gov-

ernment and ministry personnel. They have been able, in many settings, to work intersectorally to meet the integrated needs of young children and their families. They have worked with ministries and governments, addressing issues of taking successful efforts to scale, and providing coverage to larger populations of children through diverse but complementary programming strategies. As a result ECCD policies have been established in Malaysia, Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, the Philippines, and other countries are in the process of drafting appropriate policy.

The media and training projects mentioned above have helped to create demand and awareness in many cultures of the importance of the early years in terms of all later development. These efforts have concentrated on getting information on the importance of the early years to a broad audience, to both raise their awareness and increase the demand for ECCD services and to create an 'enabling environment' for young children and their families.

Increasing awareness and demand has been achieved through social marketing. It has also involved coalition-building and advocacy. And to further strengthen awareness, early childhood educators have worked to link national efforts to international efforts such as the Education for All initiative and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. ■

Working Together to Develop Basic Education: Governments and External Partners

Increasingly there is a realization that countries of the world are inter-dependent. Countries do not stand alone; they are part of a world community. Within that world community there is discussion of basic human rights, and within that the rights of children. Governments respond by creating National Plans of Action and establishing goals. However, not all countries have the financial and technical capacity to meet these goals. Thus, to support the implementation of a variety of programmes, governments should seek partnership with a variety of international agencies.

How can multilateral, bilateral and international non-governmental organizations work with

developing country governments as true partners in promoting basic education?

Today external donors can play several important roles in assisting governments in that task. They can:

- ▶ work with governments to address issues agreed upon in international arenas (EFA and the Convention on the Rights of the Child);
- ▶ act as catalysts by providing funds for activities that governments lack the resources to initiate. This can stimulate governments to take action;
- ▶ bring experience from other countries as examples of what might be done;
- ▶ provide technical resources not available within the country.

In true partnership each partner is respectful of the other and has a role to play; the roles are complementary. Within ECCD programmes examples of complementarity include instances where:

- ▶ external agencies provide funds for training of trainers and, perhaps, initial training, and governments provide funds for in-service training;
- ▶ external organizations provide funds for the building of facilities and governments provide equipment;
- ▶ governments take on the role of developing appropriate curriculum, and external donors fund the production of materials to support the curriculum;
- ▶ governments have funds to provide some foods for programmes, and the external donor contributes the resources (technical and/or financial) to fortify those foods to make them more nutritious.

- ▶ external organizations provide funds for programme development and the initial start-up costs, while government provides on-going support to programmes.

Governments differ in their openness to partnering with external donors. Sometimes this is due to an unwillingness to take on some of the 'conditions' of partnering offered by the external organization, and/or the fact that donors have been perceived as arrogant. At other times this may be due to lack of political will within the government to address a particular issue. Regardless of the situation, governments are encouraged to define their agenda before seeking partners and to determine their 'boundaries' in terms of what they will and will not accept from others, and under what conditions. ■



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Delivering Basic Education in Situations of Crisis and Transition

When a child is living in a war-torn region, in a region suffering from drought and famine, in a refugee camp, our first instincts are to think about survival: food, water, shelter, clothing. Yet often these crisis situations last for months, years and even generations. Children living in crisis can't wait. For the youngest children especially, the year, two years, four years children must wait mean unrecoverable losses in mental, physical and emotional development. Children in crisis and transition need more than just emergency aid—they need care, support for their development, and as much opportunity to learn as is possible.

Thus educators need to work together with emergency personnel, with aid workers, and with the support systems that address situations of crisis, to raise awareness of children's needs and to develop methods of educating children and attending to children that are appropriate for the conditions in which they live. Even the limited and frequently stressful activities of distributing food, attending to health and hygiene issues, reconstructing shelters, and interviewing people to understand what has happened to them offer opportunities to engage and teach children. Such opportunities are often ignored by aid workers whose

view of their mission does not include a commitment to children's longer-term development. Exemplary programmes have been developed in Angola, Croatia and Bosnia.

At a recent meeting at UNICEF, a group of people who work with children in situations of crisis generated the following list of principles and beliefs which they agreed should guide our responses to emergencies and unstable conditions:

1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a powerful programming and advocacy tool.

The CRC provides an affirmation by the international community that all rights for all children must be universally recognized and protected. The CRC is a powerful document that should be used for advocacy and as a legal framework for specific interventions aimed at the protection of children's rights.

2. The child is an organizing factor in responding to emergencies.

Because the CRC affirms the rights and value of the child, the conceptual framework for responding to emergency situations should be built around the survival, protection and development of children.

3. Holistic and integrated services are required to respond to children's needs.

Children's needs are holistic. Therefore adherence to holistic principles is critical for effective programming. Attention to physical and survival issues must be complemented by equal attention to psychosocial, emotional and developmental needs. Recognizing that these needs cut across sectoral lines, mechanisms must be created that establish programme linkages and complementary service delivery.

4. Education is a right that can catalyze and enable reconstruction.

Education can help organize responses to children in crisis and bring normalcy to disrupted lives. The provision of basic education, defined as a solid base of competencies, is critical not only to furthering children's development but to fostering psycho-social well-being. It can also provide possibilities for social reconstruction.

Creative approaches, flexible structures, innovative arrangements, enhanced curricula and supportive materials are fundamental elements of an educational strategy.

5. Essential relationships and primary caregivers must be supported.

Services must recognize and support the family as well as a range of non-traditional family units. They must support the diverse key relationships that provide care, comfort and protection to children in emergency situations. Key relationships vary depending on the ages and circumstances of the child.

6. Community-centered approaches are the most effective.

The recovery and renewal of communities devastated by war and violence can best be achieved within a framework that requires the community to take an active part in articulating problems and implementing solutions. Programmes must value, acknowledge and build upon indigenous knowledge, skills, and coping patterns of community members. In addition, in accordance with their age and maturity, children should also be involved in planning and decision-making.

7. Interventions should be aimed at transformation.

Crisis provides opportunities to do things differently. Solutions must combine a response to the immediate and short-term crisis with long-term preventive measures. Solutions should also build in strategies that address the underlying social and economic conditions in which the problems are rooted. Interventions must be created that empower communities and increase the long-term self-sufficiency of families and children.

8. Resources can be maximized through the creation of partnerships.

The magnitude of the crisis and scarcity of resources requires the formation of partnerships and a leveraging of existing resources. It is critical that there be a major movement away from donor driven development by promoting collaboration between all levels of the donor community and the host countries. Old alliances



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must be solidified and new alliances must be forged particularly those that recognize and build upon rather than erode existing national talent and resources.

9. An internationally-recognized ethical code should be the basis for action.

It is critical to maintain high ethical standards and constantly assess the intended and unintended impact of interventions. Cognizant that the special vulnerabilities of children and families living in extreme adversity are often exploited, donors and programmers must adhere to an international code of ethics that ensures that programmes heal rather than harm the children, families and communities they are designed to reach. ■

Building Partnerships between Government and Civil Society for the Provision of Basic Education

In most countries the development, management and funding of early childhood provision is the joint responsibility of the state, regional and local governments, the private sector, the community and parents. The role of civil society (in its various organized forms and institutions) is to support and/or critique and/or collaborate with government. Similarly the government should open itself to supporting—in different ways and at different levels—programmes initiated by and run by communities, NGOs, or religious institutions. Partnerships help maximize what both government and civil society have to offer.

What are the necessary conditions for the institutions of civil society, such as NGOs, unions, religious organizations, the media, etc., to work in partnership with the public authorities responsible for basic education?

The conditions for working together in harmony include:

- ▶ a common objective;
- ▶ an understanding that each is likely to have a different strategy and that those strategies can be complementary;
- ▶ recognition of and respect for what each has to offer;
- ▶ defined roles and responsibilities;
- ▶ available resources to support the separate activities.

Each of the groups within civil society has a role to play and they can be partnered with government for different purposes.

NGOs. NGOs frequently evolve in response to a need that government is not currently meeting as a result of lack of will, lack of infrastructure and/or lack of resources. NGOs generally work with populations that government services are not reaching—isolated rural communities, marginalized groups, the poorest of the poor, and they can try out new models in ways that large governments may have difficulty doing. Increasingly NGOs are partnering with government in the design and planning of programmes and in their evaluation as well as in the delivery of service structures to help achieve coverage in terms of basic education services. An example comes from Chile where NGOs sat together with government to evaluate children's programmes and to prepare a report on progress within Chile toward meeting the goals established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Unions. Unions are frequently involved in advocating for the rights of workers; they are also involved in creating and providing a range of social services. In some instances, they provide child care. An example comes from Singapore where a resource and training centre was begun by the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC), a collective of unions. While Singapore is a good example of what can be developed, at this point, unions' role in childcare has not been maximized, and their resources have, for the most part,

not been tapped.

Religious organizations. As with NGOs, religious organizations are often well-grounded in the community. They are aware of community needs and frequently have developed strategies for reaching populations generally under-served by more formal systems. Furthermore religious organizations may also be offering ECCD programmes (e.g. Koranic schools that provide preschool education in Morocco, and the religious education system in Indonesia that parallels the government structure). Religious institutions are also commonly part of networks—within the country and beyond—that can bring resources to bear on issues of basic education.

Media. Partnerships have also been created for the purposes of reaching hard-to-reach populations through partnering with technologies such as radio which allow for broader coverage in relation to EFA messages. In a programme in Bolivia, a bilateral donor and an international NGO joined with Bolivians in the creation of a radio programme used for the purposes of providing appropriate activities for children 3-5 years of age in family day care homes. The radio programmes are also a good way to train teachers who otherwise have little access to training.

Community-based organizations. Frequently there are organizations within the community that are involved in a variety of community development activities. One of the strengths of the ECCD field is that it has emphasized the importance of grounding programmes in the community. The emphasis is on community participation in the programme development process, from the statement of needs, goals and objectives through designing, implementing and evaluating the programme. Ultimately this decreases the community's dependency on the State.

Government partnering with civil society can begin with either the government or the community taking the initiative. Examples of each follow:



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■ **GOVERNMENT INITIATION.** The ECCD programme in the Philippines being promoted through the National Early Childhood Programme, was designed by government in consultation with communities. While the programme is essentially being initiated by the government, within the programme design, communities determine their needs and choose from a menu of options the specific ECCD components that they will implement in order to meet those needs.

■ **COMMUNITY INITIATION.** An example of a community-initiated basic learning activity that later received government support is a project in Zimbabwe where

an ECCD programme was first begun by an agricultural cooperative. The programme's success led to others in the area being interested in the model and receiving training. This then gave birth to the Kushanda Training Centre and the creation of rural pre-school training centres. The Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs provides support for these centres and makes use of them to train their staff.

When government partners with civil society, with programmes firmly rooted in the community, they are likely to be sustained. Specifically, community-based programmes: build local capacity to identify needs and seek solutions; create owner-

ship and accountability; encourage unity and strength within the community; enhance the probability that decisions will be implemented and that programmes will be maintained once initial outside support is withdrawn; and empower people to make decisions in relation to all aspects of their lives. ■

Promoting Basic Education for Girls and Women

"The preconditions for educational quality, equity and efficiency, are set in the early childhood years, making attention to early childhood care and development essential to the achievement of basic education goals." (EFA Framework, Paragraph 20)

Basic Education for Girls:

ECCD programmes affect gender inequality by:

- **providing a fair start to girls as well as boys.** It is not unusual to find that there are an equal number of boys and girls in early childhood programmes. Thus at this entry point into the educational system, boys and girls appear to be attending on a par with one another.
- **helping parents better perceive the capabilities of the girl child leading to a longer period of schooling.** When parents see that girls are just as capable of learning as boys, they are more likely to see the value of education for their daughter. A positive early childhood experience also helps the girl see that she can learn and reinforces her interest in attending primary school. Research on the ICDS programme in India indicates that girls who attended the ICDS programme are more likely to both enter primary school and continue in it than girls who did not attend the

ICDS programme.

- **providing role models of what women are able to do.** The great majority of those working in early childhood programmes are women. They provide a role model for young girls in terms of what they might be able to achieve as adults. The more status and prestige those working in an ECCD programme have, the more effective they will be in providing girls with positive role models.

Basic Education for Women

While women deserve an education in their own right, it is also true that when women are educated, the next generation benefits. Each year of education a girl receives correlates with her ability to provide better health and education for her own children. ECCD programmes support women's development by:

- **providing child care.** When child care is established within a community it can serve two purposes. It can provide appropriate care for the young child but it can also free women (and young girls) from their full-time child care responsibilities so that they can earn and learn. In this way early childhood programmes meet the intersecting needs of women and children.

How can the political commitment to provide basic education to all girls and women in a spirit of equity be translated into effective policies, reforms, programmes measures and behavior?

By understanding more about gender differences during the early childhood years and the obstacles to equity.

Many studies of childrearing practices that might provide insight into gender differences—where they begin and how they are shaped—have not included gender as a variable. A series of studies is currently underway that is looking specifically at gender issues for children under the age of 6. The studies are taking place in Morocco, Mali, Bolivia, Jamaica, India and Indonesia, and are being coordinated by the Consultative Group on Early

Childhood Care and Development, with funding from USAID and others.

By conducting research on what happens for boys and girls within the context of an early childhood programme to know if there are differential treatment and/or messages being given.

OBSERVE CLASSROOM PRACTICE. What do teachers do to promote gender inequity? One study found that boys were rewarded more often for correct answers and when they gave incorrect answers, they were helped more often to get the right answer.

REVIEW CURRICULUM AND MEDIA TO SEE WHAT MESSAGES ARE BEING GIVEN. For example in a set of interactive radio scripts (that reach people of all ages), it was found that in the programmes the sexes did the following:

MALES

- solved problems analytically
- spoke for the group
- distributed tasks
- made final decisions
- were adventuresome
- were inquisitive
- were mischievous
- were usually fearless

FEMALES

- often used intuition
- 'helped' in activities
- were on the receiving end of actions, rather than instigating them
- were wary of technology
- were often frightened

Similar differences are found in reviewing stories used in ECCD programmes. This information should provide the basis for curricular reforms and for teacher training reforms so that gender roles present more variation for boys and girls.

By creating experimental ECCD programmes designed specifically to address gender inequities, and evaluate the results. Data from this type of experiment would inform planners and policy-makers about alternative strategies that could be explored to promote equity.



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This would then lead to the creation of a range of ECCD programmes that could be implemented to help achieve equity.

By undertaking information, education and communication (IEC) activities to promote an awareness of issues related to gender. Socialization practices are difficult to change. A first step in the process is awareness. This is achieved by using a range of IEC strategies to help people identify and understand the issue and then to promote appropriate strategies. ■

Developing Learning Skills in Early Childhood

Learning begins at birth. During the first 6 years of life the basic foundation for all later learning is established. In the best of all possible worlds, during those early years the child gains knowledge and develops competencies that are the underpinning of later learning. The child develops language and learns to express him/herself. The child develops relationship with adults and other children and social skills that are the basis for adapting to the school and living within a society. The child has experiences that develop pre-math and pre-reading and pre-writing skills, and develops the ability to solve problems and make decisions. The child learns to think and reason. To acquire these skills and competencies children need the following:

- Protection from physical danger
- Adequate nutrition and health care
- An adult with whom to form an attachment
- An adult who can understand and respond to their signals
- Things to look at, touch, hear, smell, taste
- A chance to develop some independence
- Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves
- Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects
- Opportunities to develop motor skills
- Encouragement of language through conversation, storytelling, singing
- Activities which will develop a positive

- sense of mastery
- Opportunities to learn cooperation, helping, sharing
- Hands-on exploration for learning through action
- Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices
- Encouragement to develop self-control, persistence in completing projects
- Support for their sense of self-worth and pride in accomplishments
- Opportunities for self-expression and creativity

What can communities and governments do, even with limited financial resources, to promote early childhood development activities that stimulate children's capacities to learn?

First, develop community-based programmes, based on what exists within the community. Communities should be involved in developing the ECCD programme in relation to self-defined needs, designing how it will operate, running the programme, providing resources for the programme (through fees or in-kind contributions) and evaluating it. The more the community is involved at all stages, the greater the 'ownership' of the programme and thus the greater the likelihood that it will be sustained.

Second, provide support to parents. During the early years the child's primary environment is the home, and **parents are the child's first teachers.** Therefore a critical strategy is to provide support to parents in their parenting role. Parents and families have primary responsibility for meeting the needs of young children. In a rapidly changing world, which puts new demands on parents and breaks down traditional support systems, parents need support. They need to be able to share their ideas and concerns with others; they need information about what can be done to raise a healthy child. Programmes should be built on the positive ways in which children are currently cared for, with new ideas being intro-

duced to replace negative practices.

There are a variety of strategies that have been developed to provide parents with information and support. They include:

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES. When done well, they build on the strength of families, putting greater emphasis on the role of parents in supporting children's early learning and development. Parent education is offered through:

DISCUSSION GROUPS: These include opportunities for parents to come together to discuss child development and their role in the process. A good example is the Padres y Hijos Programme in Chile where parents come together to discuss topics that they themselves have decided are important.

PARENT TRAINING: Here the objective is to provide parents with specific skills and activities that they can use in their interactions with the child. The programme is delivered through home visits and/or through parent discussion groups. An example is the Mother Education Programme in Turkey. Another example is a home visiting programme in Sri Lanka where parents are shown the ways in which daily activities support children's learning skills and provide parents with ways to extend the activities to make them even more useful is supporting the development of children's knowledge and understanding.

MASS MEDIA: Another way to provide parents with information is through radio programmes. A good example is a radio series developed for the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) Programme in the Philippines. The radio programme, created in 1992, known as *ECCD School on the Air*, consisted of drama, songs, and a talk-show. The programme changed in 1994 to a more informal presentation. Now known as *The Filipino Family on the Air*, it consists of a 30-minute magazine format. Television is another important medium. Adaptations of Sesame Street, for example, and locally-based programmes such as "Batibot" in the Philippines provide activities for young



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children and educate adults.

Third, include parents in school-based learning. Research indicates that the most effective programmes are those where staff treat parents as partners and engage in extensive outreach to parents, such as conducting home visits on a regular basis, to learn from parents and to help them understand the curriculum and their children's development. Within the primary school programme there need to be opportunities for school staff to communicate with parents about the programme and the child. Children's learning is enhanced when parent-teacher relationships are characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. An example is an experiment in parent management of schools in El Salvador.

When parents understand what hap-

pens in the school, when they feel a part of the child's life in school, they are more likely to value education and to encourage their children to continue in school. When the school is foreign to the parents they are likely to distance themselves from it and not provide their children with support they need to continue. ■

Enhancing the Role of the Teacher

How can the classroom teacher and other educators be adequately prepared for, and supported in, their important function in the teaching-learning process so that they can diagnose and meet each student's basic learning needs?

Realizing the need to upgrade the competencies, create incentives and improve the welfare of teachers/caregivers, several strategies have been developed within early childhood programmes to enhance the role of the teacher through the provision of real or perceived benefits such as:

- ▶ a recruitment and selection process which promotes the position as critical to the children and community;
- ▶ extensive initial training, continuous in-service training and substantial feedback from supervisors;
- ▶ treating caregivers/teachers as people by responding in training and supervision to personal as well as professional needs;
- ▶ a credentialling scheme that provides an entry-point and a career path associated with training and experience;
- ▶ "in kind" benefits in terms of food for the family;
- ▶ prestige and position within the community (In the Philippines the teachers are the ones who count the votes at election time. This gives them considerable prestige in the community.);
- ▶ publicity and repeated public prizes for good performance;
- ▶ a marketable skill (This can be detrimental to the programme if caregivers seek other jobs once they

acquire the skills. Nonetheless, it is one of the things that will draw people to the job.);

- ▶ the high level of job satisfaction due to the variety of tasks involved, the level of discretion allowed for teachers/caregivers to direct their own work and the satisfying relationships with community members;
- ▶ willingness by the state, when job security and fringe benefits began to be an issue, to upgrade the status of teachers through a process of selection and further training; and
- ▶ adequate pay and benefits.

Teachers worldwide are undervalued, under-paid and un-attended (i.e once trained they are frequently on their own). Those caring for/teaching the youngest children get paid the least. Low pay reflects a societal bias toward expecting women to volunteer their labor as caregivers simply because it is part of their maternal role. Teachers in primary grades do not fare much better. Often salaries are not large enough to sustain families and teachers have to seek a second and sometimes a third job.

In most ECCD programmes, as in most social programmes, salaries constitute the major cost (although food costs may also loom large in ECCD programmes). For that reason, every attempt is usually made to find ways to restrict or reduce salary costs. This may be seen as necessary from a budgetary viewpoint, but can be counterproductive from a cost-effectiveness point of view.

The most common strategy applied to reduce caregiver salary costs is to seek volunteer labor. This may be done in the strict sense that no remuneration is provided, but more often, the "volunteers," who actually deliver the service, are given a small amount of money which may be labeled an honorarium. This amount is usually well below a minimum wage and usually represents considerable sacrifice on the part of the caregivers. The volunteer strategy is often combined with the selection of caregivers from the community who lack formal training and who then receive some para-professional training.

This "volunteer" approach has worked well in some settings in the short run. Over a longer period of time, however, it has led to high rates of discontent, usually resulting in some sort of union or quasi-union organization and in high rates of turnover. The honorarium is seen as a low and unfair salary and the sense of volunteerism is usually lost over a period of a few years. In addition, the approach is criticized as a form of exploitation of women, due to the fact that in most programmes, almost 100 percent of the caregivers are women. It is argued by some that this low-cost, para-professional strategy also leads to poor quality attention in the centres.

To promote comparable wages between men and women, it can be argued that teachers/ caregivers hired under "non-formal" arrangements should receive at least a minimum salary and should have access to social benefits. Salaries should also increase as training and experience accrues, just as would be the case in the formal education system, for instance. More programmes are beginning to follow these salary and benefits ideas, but resistance arises because it increases costs for so-called non-formal programmes.

The level of pay has cost and quality impacts within basic education programmes. First, high turnover is likely if workers receive low or no salaries. High turnover rates reduce returns to training and increase training costs. Furthermore, increased time dedicated to recruitment and training by project managers decreases administrative effectiveness. Therefore, low pay may actually cost more in the long run. Second, although evaluations of non-formal programmes assert that para-professionals can and do care for children in a way that produces desired developmental effects while also responding to custodial needs, even when paid less than minimum wage, it is probable that low pay will serve as a disincentive to the provision of quality service and will negatively influence the quality of the applicant pool of caregivers. ■



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Applying Educational Research for Better Learning

What research findings can be applied now to enhance basic learning, particularly in resource-poor environments?

There is a wealth of research available on the impact of the early years on later growth and development. This research comes from the fields of anthropology, developmental psychology, medicine, sociology and education. It provides insights into the types of changes that children undergo during the early years and what supports are required from the environment to promote growth, development and learning.

It is well established, scientifically, that the early years are critical in the formation of intelligence, personality, and social behavior, and that the effects of early neglect can be cumulative. Research would suggest that there are critical points in children's development where it is important to ensure that children are having the kinds of experiences that support their growth and development. The field of molecular biology brings new understandings of the way the nervous system functions, the ways in which the brain develops, and the impact of the environment on that development. For example,

- brain development taking place before age one is more rapid and extensive than previously realized.

The months immediately after birth are critical in terms of brain maturation. During this time the number of synapses—the connections that allow learning to take place—increase twenty-fold.

- development of the brain is much more vulnerable to environmental influence than suspected. Nutrition is the most obvious example, but the quality of interaction and a child's cumulative experience (health, nutrition, care and stimulation) during the first 18 months lead to developmental outcomes, which for children from poor environments may result in irreversible deficits.
- the influence of the early environment on brain development is long-lasting. Children's early exposure to good nutrition, toys and stimulating interaction with others has a positive impact on children's brain functions at age 15, as compared to peers who lacked this early input, and the effects appear to be cumulative.
- the environment affects not only the number of brain cells and the number of connections, but the ways in which they are 'wired'. The brain uses its experience with the world to refine the way it functions. Early experiences are important in shaping the way the brain works.
- there is evidence of the negative impact of stress during the early years on brain function. Children who experience extreme stress in their earliest years are at greater risk for developing a variety of cognitive, behavioral and emotional difficulties.

In sum, much of the brain is already formed at birth and, during the first two years of life, most of the growth of brain cells occurs, accompanied by the structuring of neural connections. By age 6, most of these connections are made (or not, as the case may be). Thus, providing opportunities for complex perceptual and motor experiences at an early age favorably affects various learning abilities in later life. Such opportunities can even compen-

sate, at least partly, for deficits associated with early malnutrition.

Other research continues to accumulate, indicating that the early years are critical in the development of intelligence, personality, and social behavior. For example,

- Children are born with physical, social and psychological capacities allowing them to communicate, learn and develop. If these capacities are not recognized and supported they will wither rather than improve.
- Children whose caregivers interact with them in consistent, caring ways will be better nourished and less apt to be sick than children who do not receive such care.
- Establishing a loving relationship in the early months of life has been shown to affect the ability later in life of a person to love and to establish permanent relationships.
- Longitudinal studies demonstrate long-term effects with a variety of intervention programmes. These effects go beyond the learning of basic abilities to include: improved school attendance and performance, reduced repetition, increased employment and reduced delinquency during the teenage years and reduced teenage pregnancy.
- Improving a young child's health and nutrition, and providing opportunities for stimulating interaction and early education can bring a high economic return to society as well as to the individual.
- Investment in early development can help to reduce economic and social inequities. Children living in conditions of poverty and/or discrimination often fall behind their more fortunate peers in some aspects of their development at an early age. This reinforces existing differences. In the short run, investments in programmes of early childhood care and development can reduce (but seldom eliminate) the growing gaps in development, and therefore can reduce the differential consequences. Indeed,



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there is increasing evidence that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds can profit more from good early childhood programmes than more advantaged children.

- Early childhood programmes can have inter-generational effects. To the extent that programmes of early childhood care and development affect subsequent education, the evidence suggests that they will also have an effect on fertility and population growth.
- There are also multiplier effects. Especially in the case of programmes of parental education, the immediate effects on one child will carry over to the raising of additional children.

How can researchers and providers of basic education work more effectively together to improve capacities to deliver good quality instruction and learning facilities?

Developing linkages between academics and practitioners through workshops, projects, and communication systems will facilitate greater interaction. This will help researchers identify issues that need further study and give practitioners information they need to create more effective programmes. Another way for practitioners and researchers to work together is for practitioners to participate directly in research projects and/or to carry out their own research, using their daily practice as the subject of research. ■

Meeting Basic Learning Needs of Youth and Adults

What should and can be done, especially in poor communities, to develop and support basic learning programmes for young people and adults?

In poor communities, where there is not enough money to provide direct programming for people at all points in the learning cycle, Early Childhood Care and Development programmes can be designed to serve as a vehicle to reach the whole family, and offer basic learning opportunities for youth and adults as well as young children. For example:

- ▶ Parent support programmes can include adult literacy components. These offer built-in motivations for parents to learn to read in the context of becoming better teachers for their children.
- ▶ Daycare programmes can include vocational training opportunities for mothers. They can also provide support in developing community-based enterprises that will both finance the care and help individual parents learn new marketable skills.
- ▶ Childcare programmes can include training and supports for older siblings who have been acting as caregivers with little or no guidance. They can also free these siblings to pursue other goals and activities.
- ▶ Preschools can train parents to serve

in a variety of supportive roles that enable them to gain new skills and participate more fully with their peers.

- ▶ Parent-to-parent programmes can help mothers gain confidence and help them to develop practical skills such as planning, presenting ideas, working with people, utilizing community resources, interacting with government agencies, etc.

By the same token, programmes targeting older children, youth and adults can also be designed to enhance young children's development and strengthen the whole family or community:

SCHOOL CHILDREN AND OLDER SIBLINGS can be involved in teaching and caring for younger children creatively, through school-based Child-to-Child approaches. They can be mobilized to support their community through mapping and gathering data in regard to issues such as child health, school health and pupil absenteeism; they can be guided in designing and producing programmes for younger children (both artistic "shows" and participatory activities that include younger children). They can be engaged in reading to younger children and writing books for them. They can participate in community-based "child-watch" committees, helping to monitor the health and safety of the younger children.

YOUTH (PARENTS-TO-BE), especially adolescents who will soon marry and have children, can be given information and skills through family life education related to good parenting and child development. They can be active participants in programmes which seek to define families' needs and respond to them, in ways that can benefit the entire community.

PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEW MOTHERS are generally very motivated to learn the knowledge and skills related to prenatal health and care of the very young child (e.g. maternal nutrition, breast-feeding and weaning, growth monitoring). Programmes which address this population have the potential to improve the quality of life for both mothers and their

newborn children.

MOTHERS, FATHERS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS can be taught a broad range of skills, in the context of parenting training. Parenting programmes can address not only methods of stimulating and caring for children, but also monitoring physical, cognitive and psycho-social development of young children. They can also address issues of communication, planning, problem-solving, use of local resources, family planning, financial management, personal development, and more. Many of the skills of good parenting can transfer to other arenas if taught in a flexible way.

Because Early Childhood Care and Development crosses many sectoral lines including health, education, community development and planning, urban affairs, and social welfare, it offers an opportunity to plant the seeds of Basic Education for All in many minds. If caregivers, teachers, adult educators, community, civic, and government leaders, religious leaders, women's associations, NGOs and donors all learn to see the child as a whole individual with diverse talents and needs, and as an important investment and resource, then they are more likely to protect that investment as he or she grows to become a youth, adult and fully participating member of society. ■



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