Dear ECD Community,

We are very excited to re-start the ECD newsletters after a long pause and much prompting from the field. As was the case before, each newsletter will have a specific theme. The theme of our October 2011 issue is “ECD in Emergencies (ECDiE)”, which kicks off on page 2 with launch of the ECDiE Advocacy package, which was inaugurated by Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF.

In addition to selective pieces on the theme, each issue will also include news from country offices, regional offices, headquarters and partners. We are starting the “evidence series” to further increase our understanding and knowledge of ECD as a community. The “treasure trove of ECD tools and resources” is meant to serve as a regular source of information on a number of related topics. The newsletter also lists relevant events and calls for papers as well as provides links to documents and websites in each of the stories, where applicable.

One missing piece in this issue, which we would like to address in the next one, is news and stories from the field. Since the next issue is focused on the theme of “Disability in Early Childhood”, we would like to hear about your work in this area and how you are addressing disability through ECD interventions. Please send us your input by 10 November 2011.

Warm Regards,
ECD Team in NYHQ

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**ECD IN EMERGENCIES ISSUE**

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**OCTOBER 2011**

Special points of interest:

- * The Evidence Series
- * Treasure Trove of ECD Tools and Resources
- * Call for field stories on disability in ECD
- * Upcoming ECD Global Events

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**LAUNCH OF THE LANCET ECD SERIES**

The Lancet published a new Series on Early Childhood Development titled Invest Early: Early Childhood Development to Promote Development and Reduce Inequalities. The series includes two papers based on the work of 25 authors from around the world and a comment by Mr. Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF. This new series aims to identify gaps in implementation and coverage of interventions, calculate the economic costs of missed investment in early learning programmes, and present new evidence on the causes and effects of developmental inequities in early childhood. The authors conclude that early childhood is the most effective time to prevent inequalities before disparities widen, particularly for the poorest children. By investing in children’s early years, there are lifetime outcomes not only for individuals but for the wellbeing of societies. Click here for the World Bank webcast recording. Please also visit the Innocenti Research Center’s (IRC) website to view the Lancet ECD series related advocacy videos and Research Watch.
On 2 August 2011, Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director UNICEF, formally launched the ECDiE Advocacy Package titled *Early Childhood Development in Emergencies: Thriving Through Crisis by Playing and Learning*. The ECD Unit developed this publication to give a voice to children who have experienced some type of emergency situation in their lives as well as their parents, caregivers and UNICEF field staff. The package can also be used for resource mobilization and advocating for support for ECDiE among stakeholders. The contents of the advocacy package provide a range of perspectives and information on ECD interventions in emergency situations which include the following:

1) An introduction to ECDiE
2) Stories from four countries (DRC, Haiti, Myanmar, Pakistan) that have experienced the effects of natural disaster and war
3) Voices from the Field, which capture positive sentiments and reactions to the ECD Kits from children, caregivers, parents and UNICEF staff
4) Building Peace in Early Childhood which focuses on critical ECD interventions to enable children to become agents of change in their communities

An online version of the ECDiE advocacy package is available [here](#).

**CAPACITY BUILDING-ECD IN EMERGENCIES**

There were two major initiatives to build capacity development in the area of ECD in Emergencies (ECDiE).

**GLOBAL** - The first capacity building initiative was the global level Training of Master Trainers organized by the ECD Unit in NYHQ from 2-5 August, 2011 and inaugurated by Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director UNICEF. Twenty eight ECD practitioners attended this training, which included UNICEF Country and Regional Office staff from EAPRO, MENA, ROSA, TACRO, and WCARO, as well as practitioners from ChildFund International, Save the Children, INEE and Macquarie University. This training resulted in building a global roster of ECD professionals.

**REGIONAL** - The second major undertaking in ECDiE capacity development was the three-day workshop to facilitate the proper use of the ECD in Emergencies Kit and develop capacity in the overall ECDiE response, held from 22-24 August 2011 in Bangkok, jointly organized by NYHQ ECD Unit and UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO). The following countries participated in the workshop: Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.

Detailed reports and presentations from both these workshops can be found [here](#) under workshops & meetings.
The ECD Unit launched a 15-minute video “An Introduction to Early Childhood Development in Emergencies” at the Immediate Response Team Training in Brindisi, Italy in June 2011. This new resource includes presentation slides, supplementary video footage from Country Offices around the world, photographs, graphs, statistics and scientific evidence on ECDiE. This new tool can be used for basic ECD training and orientation to increase understanding of ECDiE. The video features Nurp Ker Ulkuor, Senior Advisor ECD and Head of ECD Unit in NYHQ, presenting various aspects of ECDiE, which include: 1) Challenges of ECD in emergencies 2) Why ECD in emergencies is important 3) Integrating ECD Responses into sector interventions 4) Partnerships in Emergencies A first of its kind, this video allows staff members not only to learn the fundamentals of ECDiE, but also provides the opportunity to stimulate creative thinking about ways to provide for young children during emergencies. The ECD NYHQ team would like to receive feedback from Regional and Country Offices on further refining the video by including experiences from different interventions on ECD in Emergencies. Please contact Vijaya Singh, ECD Specialist for feedback (vijsingh@unicef.org).

INTEGRATING PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT INTO NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

Some 566,000 children are currently facing severe malnutrition in the horn of Africa. Under- and malnutrition in the wake of a disaster can inhibit physical, intellectual, social/emotional potential and cause lifelong disability. Psychosocial factors such as the lack of stimulation, poor mother-child interaction, and maternal depression can inhibit feeding and growth even when food supplements are provided. There is now a strong evidence base that programmes that combine food supplementation with a psychosocial stimulation component have greater positive impact than either intervention alone. These integrated programmes improve both physical and intellectual growth in young children and may also help decrease maternal depression.

Nutritional deficiencies and a lack of stimulation create a vicious cycle in which deprivation in one can result in further deprivation in the other. For example, a malnourished infant may show reduced psychomotor activity and engagement. As the child becomes more apathetic and less demanding, parents often provide less stimulation.

For more details on the evidence behind effectiveness of integrating ECD into nutrition interventions, read the WHO Paper titled “Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-Being among Children in Severe Food Shortage Situations”. To read more about how psychosocial support can be integrated into the nutrition emergency response and interventions in the Horn of Africa, please visit the INEE Blog.

ECD MAINSTREAMED IN INEE MINIMUM STANDARDS

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) recently published a Thematic Issue Brief on Early Childhood Development, which summarizes the mainstreaming of ECD in the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook. Examples of this include the following among others:

- Teaching and Learning
- Teachers and Other Education Personnel
- Education Policy

“...early child development programmes are those that provide direct learning experiences for children and their families, are high intensity, targeted towards younger and more disadvantaged children” - The Lancet
MARYAM RASHID JOINED THE ECD UNIT AS NEW KNOWLEDGE MANAGER

Maryam Rashid joined the ECD Unit in NYHQ as the Knowledge Manager starting the second week of August, 2011. Before starting her current assignment, Maryam was a Strategic Management and Analysis Consultant with the Programme Director’s Office in UNICEF New York. She comes to us with multifaceted skills and experience from both the private and the public sectors. Prior to her work at UNICEF, Maryam was a strategy consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers and previously worked at UNDP in Pakistan. Maryam began her career in Early Childhood Development in Pakistan as a teacher to first grade children from recent immigrant families from emergency countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, and Bosnia. In her work she also organized group-learning activities and met with parents to facilitate learning and building of important social skills for young children.

Maryam obtained her Master of Public Administration from Harvard University and her Master of Business Administration from Quaid-i-Azam University in Pakistan. She also holds a certification in Digital Media Marketing from New York University.

SIDE EVENT ON DISABILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Advocates and practitioners gathered on 8 September 2011 for a side event during the Conference of States Parties on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to discuss the importance of addressing disability in early childhood. Speakers included Dr. Nurper Ulkuer, Chief of UNICEF’s ECD Unit; Alana Officer, Coordinator of WHO Disability and Rehabilitation Team; Suzanne Bilello, Senior Public Information and Liaison Officer UNESCO; Connie Lauren-Bowie, Executive Director of Inclusion International; Susan McKay, Director of Disability Inclusive Development for AusAID; and Dr. Michael Guralnick a leading expert on disability in early childhood from the University of Washington. The discussion highlighted the pivotal role of families and outlined strategies to ensure not only children are ready for school, but also schools are ready for children with all abilities. Participants also agreed on the importance of role models and having measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination against children with disabilities. Please click here for more details.

ADDITIONAL DAY WITH THE REGIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORS ON ECD

The Regional Education Advisors (REAs) meeting during the week of 5 September was extended by one day to cover ECD on 10 September, 2011. In addition to CEE/CIS, ROSA, ESARO, MENA and WCARO, senior colleagues from four COs joined the ECD team in NYHQ. Colleagues from the Evaluation Office, Policy & Practice Group, as well as Education and Child Protection sections in Programmes, NYHQ also attended the meeting. Agenda included:

1) Findings of External Evaluation of the Dutch Programme
2) Feedback on Final Donor Report Template for the Dutch Funds
3) Update on Disabilities in Early Childhood
4) Findings and Next Steps on ECD Capacity Development Strategy
5) Update on Recent ECD in Emergencies Work

A detailed note for the record is available here.

WELCOMING MARYAM RASHID TO ECD UNIT AS NEW KNOWLEDGE MANAGER

There is a need to better articulate ECD in the overall emergency response, i.e. in contingency planning, disaster preparedness, and transition phase.” - Additional day with REAs on ECD

A picture from the side event on Disability in Early Childhood

Oliver Petrovic, ECD Policy & Advocacy Specialist, NYHQ

Maryam Rashid, ECD Knowledge Manager, NYHQ

A detailed note for the record is available here.
What Science Tells Us

- Early prenatal or postnatal experiences and exposures influence long-term outcomes by chemically altering the structure of genes.
- The brain is particularly responsive to experiences and environments during early development, which influences how well or poorly its architecture matures and functions. Adverse fetal and early childhood experiences can - and do - lead to physical and chemical changes in the brain that can last a lifetime.
- Modification of the epigenome caused by stress during fetal and child development affects how well or poorly we respond to stress as adults and can result in increased risk of adult disease.
- In addition to adverse experiences, a wide variety of chemicals, nutrients, and drugs are also capable of modifying the epigenome for long-lasting effects on gene expression.
- Recent research demonstrates that even after the epigenome has been modified, there may be ways to alter it again that actually can reverse negative changes and restore functioning.

Correcting Popular Misrepresentations of Science

- Contrary to popular belief, the genes inherited from one’s parents do not set a child’s future development in stone.
- Although frequently misunderstood, adverse fetal and early childhood experiences can—and do—lead to physical and chemical changes in the brain that can last a lifetime.
- Despite some marketing claims to the contrary, the ability of so-called enrichment programs to enhance otherwise healthy brain development is not known.
ECD in Emergencies

Early Childhood Development Kit Activity Guide
The ECD Activity Guide, composed of a handbook and activity sheets, is aimed at caregivers who organize activities with young children in UNICEF assisted ECD Centers or equivalent settings in temporary settlements. Responding to the developmental needs of 0-6 children together with their caregivers leads to a faster recovery and rehabilitation. Helping young children in organized learning/ECD centres also helps mothers/caregivers to overcome their own depression and distress. Caregivers can be parents, teachers and other professionals who can provide opportunities for young children to play, learn and gain self-esteem.

Early Childhood Development Kit Facilitators’ Guide
The Facilitators’ Guide was developed to support facilitators in training ECD care providers on how to use the ECD Kit when working with groups of 0-6 year old children in situations of conflict and natural disasters. It is meant to reinforce the Kit’s accompanying Activity Guide and provide trainers with ideas and guidance on working with caregivers on the holistic needs of young children. The Guide consists of nine sessions focused on essential skills, knowledge and attitudes that are important for the safe and effective implementation of the ECD Kit with children ages 0-6 years old.

Early Childhood Development Kit Coordinators’ Guide
The Coordinators’ Guide was developed to provide instruction and guidance on designing and implementing ECD activities in emergency situations. It is intended to equip coordinators with the knowledge and skills to effectively oversee the coordination and implementation of the ECD Emergency Kit. This includes instruction on the following: 1) conducting a situation analysis; 2) designing an ECD Kit intervention; 3) designing effective implementation strategies; 4) procurement of the Kit; and 5) monitoring and evaluating the deployment and utilization of the Kit. Guidance on how to participate in and contribute to trainings for facilitators and caregivers is also included.

Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces
Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) are widely used in emergencies as a first response to children’s needs and an entry point for working with affected communities. The Guidelines on CFSs define a framework for action to be implemented with sensitivity to child development and the distinct needs of girls and boys. Depending on the context, CFSs are also used for a variety of other purposes such as laying a foundation for restarting formal education, enabling wider work on issues such as child protection and early child development, stimulating efforts on disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Some of these activities extend beyond the emergency context into the early recovery period or even into longer-term development.

ECD and Preventing Violence

UNICEF’s Approach to Preventing Violence at Home
Co-authored by Susan Bissell, Karin Heissler, Jennifer Keane and Nurper Ulkuer, this article published in the Bernard van Leer Foundations’ journal titled “Early Childhood Matters”, explains UNICEF’s two pillar approach to preventing household violence. The article also highlights the challenges to data collection that must be overcome to improve our understanding of this very important issue affecting young children’s chances of survival and development.
News and Stories from the Field

Next issue of the ECD newsletter will focus on *Disability in Early Childhood*. We would like to hear from our colleagues in the field on how they have addressed disability in ECD interventions. Please email your comments, pictures, stories, and related news by 10 November, 2011 to Maryam Rashid (marashid@unicef.org).

COMMENTS

Please send any feedback about the content or format of this newsletter to Maryam Rashid (marashid@unicef.org) or Nurper Ullker (nulkuer@unicef.org).

SUBSCRIPTION

Please send an e-mail to Maryam Rashid (marashid@unicef.org) if you would like to be added or removed from the distribution list of this newsletter.

UPCOMING ECD GLOBAL EVENTS AND CALL FOR PAPERS

- **9th ISPCAN Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect**: New Delhi, India; 6-9 October 2011

- **Forum on the Lancet Series on ECD in developing countries**: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 18 October, 2011

- **CG Annual Consultation**: Singapore; 5-7 November, 2011

- **ARNEC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on ECD**: Singapore; 8-10 November 2011

- **Tackling child poverty through supporting and strengthening families**: 30 November - 2 December 2011 in Cardiff, Wales.