

# **ECD Measurement: Implications for ECD & ECI Policy**

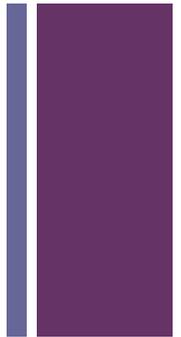
**Emily Vargas-Barón**

**The RISE Institute**



## Toward achieving global SDGs AND national ECD and ECI objectives

- Some nations will try to achieve and measure improved child development through using future measurement capacities of the SDGs
- However, ECD and ECI communities are currently challenged to improve national and global measurement capacities
- Nations will continue to place their own needs first
- Hopefully, they will adopt some SDG indicators and measures...
- Most likely, nations will set their own targets



## + Many nations have ECD policy instruments

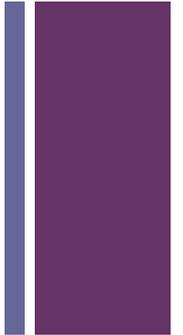
- 68 nations, as of June 2014, had one or more ECD policy instruments, 10 were reliably reported to have them, and 23 were preparing them.
- 60% of the 68 nations are lower and lower middle-income countries
- Not all of the ECD policy instruments included indicators; some have many indicators





## What types of ECD and ECI indicators are used in nations?

- **Operational/process indicators** (mainly inputs and outputs essential for policy implementation)
- **Outcome indicators** (mainly national; some are shared with other nations. Essential measures)
- MDGs lacked a global ECD indicator
- However, 7 of the 8 MDG Goals had 1 or more indicators related to a main ECD field: health, nutrition, sanitation, education and protection
- Many MDG indicators were measured at both national and global levels (e.g., infant mortality)





# SDGs: An opportunity to establish effective ECD & ECI outcome indicators



- **Poverty:** 1.2 (Young children living in poverty) 1.3 & 1.4 (services for children living in poverty), 1.5 (resources)
- **Nutrition & food security:** 2.1 (end hunger; access to food, 2.2 (end malnutrition, mothers & infants, stunting, etc.)
- **Health & well being:** 3.2 (reduce neonatal and child mortality), 3.8 (universal health coverage & services)
- **Education:** 4.2 (ECD); 4.5 (equity) 4a (learning environments); 4c (qualified teachers)
- **Gender:** 5.2 (gender-based violence against women and children)



## SDGs: an opportunity to establish effective ECD & ECI indicators (2)

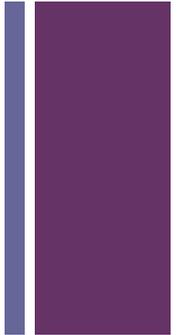


- **Water & sanitation:** 6.1 (drinkable water), 6.2 (good sanitation)
- **Reduce inequality within and between nations:** 10.2 (child rights)
- **Safe, resilient and sustainable settlements:** 11.7 (for women and children)
- **Peaceful & inclusive societies:** 16.2 (end child abuse), 16.9 (legal identity and birth registration)

# + Key issues

## *ECD specialists realize; others don't*

- 4.2: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to **quality early childhood development**, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”
- Child learning ≠ Child development
- Child learning is a sub-set of child development
- ECD is not just 1 to 2 years of pre-primary and school readiness
- ECD includes child health, nutrition, sanitation, education and rights/protection



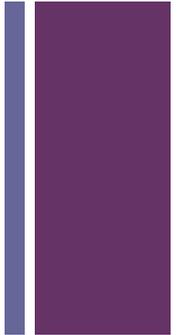
## + Key issues (2)

- **National, regional and municipal needs come first:**
  - Fragile birth status
  - Level of child development from infancy (by age bands); not only upon school entry
  - Malnutrition and chronic illnesses
  - Disabilities and atypical behaviors
  - High-risk status & child protection: Ethnic and linguistic groups, moderate to severe poverty, exclusion from basic social services, domestic and community violence, emergency situations (natural disasters, wars, IDPs and refugees), etc.
- **Ethical and rights considerations** regarding indicator selection (CRC, CRPD, child and family rights, confidentiality and informed consent, etc.)



## Key issues (3)

- Some nations (esp. in CEE/CIS) have measured only input and output indicators. Rarely used outcome indicators
- However, outcome indicators are essential to maximize service quality, equity, effectiveness and transparent accountability
- Most nations are interested in ECD and ECI indicators and measurement systems but lack requisite expertise
- **ECD MIS and/or M&E database systems** with manuals, instruments and guides are lacking or are imperfectly implemented; want feedback loop to annual planning
- Global ECI Survey: weakest area is lack of national ECI database systems





# Global and national challenges



- **Within National SDG Plans:** Which global ECD and ECI indicators should be included? Will ECD and ECI be remembered at all? Where will nations look for guidance?
- **Within existing ECD, ECE, ECI and IE policies: strategic plans and protocols/regulations:** Will nations adopt global ECD and ECI indicators as amendments to existing policy instruments?
- **Within new or updated EC policy instruments:** Which global and national input, output and outcome indicators, measures and targets might best be adopted?

# + Additional challenges

- Given the number and chaotic nature of the SDGs, “quick and dirty” indices are being developed and touted as “competent SDG measurement systems.” These include the *Social Progress Index and Peoples’ Report Card*. **This index completely leaves out ECD and marginalized populations.** More SDG “indices” are emerging...
- **ECD and ECI fields urgently need to become more prominent in the global discourse about measuring and achieving the SDGs!**
- ECD and ECI must become more proactive regarding:
  - National SDG planning
  - Selection and development of indicators, measures and targets at national, regional and local levels

# + Looking ahead...

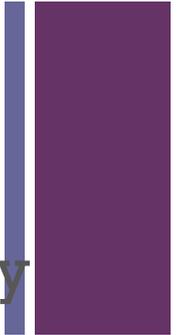
- New indicators must be added to the existing ones in order to be able to offer nations guidance and options: **a five-year development period ahead**
- Policy researchers and policy makers should participate in indicator development as well as measurement and child assessment specialists
- In order to provide effective guidance, a **research agenda** is required to develop appropriate and effective ECD and ECI indicators and database systems at national and global levels





# Measurement research agenda

- Population-level assessment of child development by age bands, including 9 months to 3 years: national, regional and municipal with national ECD & ECI database development
- Fragile birth status (low birth weight, prematurity, other rates)
- Parenting behaviors, and possibly attitudes
- Home environment and stimulation levels: a well-balanced and validated index is needed
- **Quality** of ECD and ECI personnel, training, services, homes and other environments



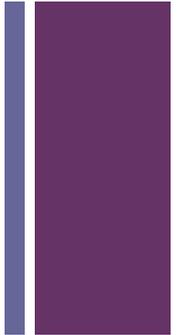
# + Research agenda (2)

- Child equity, intervention and protection: disability; ethnic and language status; families living in poverty and/or affected by war, natural disasters, domestic violence, substance abuse, etc.
- Health and nutrition **behaviors** related to child development, status and service access
- School readiness: instrument selection, modification or development?
- Birth registration and service access
- Comprehensive ECD and ECI database systems
- Targets for government support for ECD & ECI at all levels (national, regional, municipal budgets)





Leadership is needed for ECD, ECI and measurement, for example:



■ **“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”**

■ *Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia*