Overview

Part I. Compelling Neuroscience Evidence
Part II. Situation of Children
Part III. SDG Process
Part IV. Why is ECD the Foundation of SDG
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Part I: Compelling Evidence

- In the 1st years of life the brain grows at the pace of 700 new neural connections per second-- a pace which is never achieved again
- By 3 years of age, a child brain is twice as active as an adult brain
- 50 - 75% of energy consumption in the first few years of life is allocated to brain development
- Of all the human species evolved on planet earth only we survived because of our adaptive brain development during early childhood
- 87% of brain weight is acquired by 3 years of age (1100 grams)
**Message 1:** The relationship between genes and environment is closer than ever before

**Message 2:** Timing matters - early intervention is the answer

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*Nelson, Fox & Zeanah (2013)*
**Message 3:**
Toxic stress during early childhood = lifelong impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE</td>
<td>Brief increase in heart rate, mild elevation in stress hormone, Cortisol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOLERABLE</td>
<td>Serious temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOXIC</td>
<td>Prolonged activation of stress response systems, in the absence of protective relationships</td>
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**Why neuroscience, now?**

- Confirming what we knew, however with greater precision and better data

- Evidence enhances achievement of results
  - It is not “something on the side” or an “extra” – it is foundational
  - It adds values and is part of the solution
Translating the Science into Practice

- **Good nutrition** to feed and nourish the brain during the sensitive periods of development.

- **Stimulation** and enrichment to spark neural connections to increase the brain’s capacity and function.

- **Safety and protection** to buffer against toxic stress.

In the words of UNICEF Executive Director

“What we are learning should ignite a revolution in how we think about and act on early childhood development”

Part II:
Situation of children
Part III:
SDG Process

MDGs Achievements

- Half a billion fewer people in extreme poverty
- Three million children’s lives saved
- Four out of five children get vaccinated
- Huge improvements in reduction of maternal mortality
- 590 million children attend primary school

Framework for Post-2015

Figure 1. An integrated framework for realizing the “future we want for all” in the post-2015 UN development agenda

Post-2015 Work Streams

- 1st Work Stream → High Level Panel
- 2nd Work Stream → Private Sector Compact
- 3rd Work Stream → Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- 4th Work Stream → Open Working Group
Where was ECD? 1st Work Stream

High Level Panel Report (May, 2013) Goals & Targets

- Empower Girls and Women to Achieve Gender Equality (reduction of gender based violence)
- Provide Quality Education and Life Long Learning (increase in % of children with access to pre-primary education)
- Ensure Healthy Lives (reduction in mortality and increase in immunization)
- Ensure food security and good nutrition (reduction in stunting, wasting and anemia by age 5 years)
- Ensure good governance and effective institutions (birth registration)
- Ensure Stable and Peaceful societies (reduction in violence against children)

*The age period is addressed – but do these goals and targets address “development?”*

Where was ECD? 3rd Work Stream


- Ensure effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood
  - All children under the age of 5 reach their developmental potential through access to quality early childhood development programs and policies
  - Sample indicators:
    - Suffer pre-term birth and low birth-weight
    - Stunted growth; Receiving nutrition interventions
    - Living in households above poverty
    - Rate of developmental delays
    - Access to 1 year quality pre-primary
    - Public spending
    - Basic competencies by age 8

Chavan, Yoshikawa, & Bahadur, 2013
Where was ECD? 4th Work Stream

- Mary 2015, ECD is included under the proposed goal #4 on equitable and inclusive quality education.

- ECD goal #4.2:
  “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html

How did we get this result? Position Papers

- Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development
  - A Transformative Solution: Reducing Poverty and Inequality through a post-2015 Early Childhood Development Goal

- Institute of Medicine (Aber, Klaus & Lombardi, 2013)
  - Reduce by half the number of children who fail to reach their developmental potential

- University of Northampton Early Years Summit (Ulkuer, 2013)
  - ECSD Goal: All young children develop their full potential - to become physically healthy, mentally alert, socially competent, emotionally sound and able to learn
How did we get this result? Partnerships & Champions

National Consultation on ECD on the post-2015 Agenda (January, 2013)
Champion: Mayor Topas, Istanbul
(Eminent Person, HLP)
“Child Development: Is the Future We Want for All Children”

Petition to Ban Ki Moon; Meeting with Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the SG on post-2015 (June 2014)
Champion: RT Hon. Dame Tessa Jowell
“Make ECD Central to the Post-2015 Development Framework”

How did we get this result? Collective Action

Early Childhood Development:
The Foundation for Sustainable Human Development for 2015 and Beyond
Side Event at the 12th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, New York, June 16, 2014

• 2013 – November ARNEC Annual Meeting (Singapore)
• 2014 – April Lego Ideas Conference (Billund, Denmark)
• 2014 – July OMEP World Assembly and International Conference (Cork, Ireland)
Unrelenting Advocacy: Breakfast of the Champions for Early Childhood Development

Breakfast of Champions for Early Child Development, hosted on 23 September 2014 at UN attended by more than 170 high-level individuals who committed to putting ECD at the center of sustainable development

UN Headquarters, New York
Tuesday, 23 September 2014

Political Commitment: Meeting of the Minds

A private gathering of thought leaders who are committed to prioritizing action on early childhood development.

United Nations General Assembly side event, New York (22 September, 2015)
In the words of Shakira…ECD Goodwill Ambassador

“Without making significant investment in early childhood development, millions of kids will be born into the same cycle of poverty and lack of opportunity”

On 22 September, 2015 at the UNGA side event “Meeting of the Minds”

In the words of the UN Secretary-General

“The Sustainable Development Goals recognize that early childhood development can help drive the transformation we hope to achieve over the next 15 years”

On 22 September, 2015 at the UNGA side event “Meeting of the Minds”
A pivotal moment in history for ECD

Part IV:
Why is ECD the Foundation of SDGs
Early Childhood Development is the indispensable foundation for sustainable development

SDGs are meant to work together
ECD as the foundation for the SDGs

Goal 1 - Eradicate Poverty

ECD has been documented to be one of the most cost-effective strategies for poverty alleviation.

Early in life, when the brain has the maximum capacity to develop in the fullness of its complexity children learn the skills that will help them flourish in a 21st century economy.
Goal 2 - End hunger and improve nutrition

Children who receive early stimulation with nutrition supplements have better outcomes than children who only receive nutrition supplements, thereby amplifying the impact of nutrition.

Furthermore, ECD interventions, buffer the negative effect of stress thereby improving absorption of nutritional intake.

Goal 3 - Ensure Healthy Lives

ECD interventions, early in life set a trajectory for good life long health, lower cardiovascular, non-communicable disease and well-being.

With ECD not only do children survive, they thrive.
Goal 4 - Ensure Life long learning

Learning begins at birth and ECD interventions have proved to be the foundation for later learning, academic success and productivity.

A study on increasing pre-school enrolment in 73 countries found higher future wages of $6 – $17 per dollar invested, indicating potential long-term benefits ranging from $11 to $34 billion.

Goal 5 - Achieve Gender Equality

The nexus between early childhood and women’s economic empowerment is clear.

Greater investment in quality, affordable child-care is linked with greater opportunities for women, economic advancement and empowerment.
Goal 8 - Promote decent work for all

Adequate child-care is a critical element of the decent work agenda and investments in professionalization of the early childhood workforce contribute to full and productive employment, especially for women.

Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

Inequality often begins, at birth, or even before birth. ECD is the powerful equalizer because it is that window of opportunity that can close the inequality gap.

Disadvantaged children who receive ECD services earn up to 25% more, as adults, compared to their peers who did not receive these services and almost catch up in earning to their non-disadvantaged peers.
Goal 16 - Promote peaceful societies

The neurobiology of early childhood has the potential to reduce violence and promote peace.

ECD interventions demonstrate lower rates of violence in the home and greater social cohesion in communities.

Goal 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation

Measurement of early childhood development, at global, regional and national levels can serve as a powerful tool to revitalize global partnerships.

UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) offers an index of items that allows us to measure outcomes for early childhood. This index has been implemented in over 50 countries and has provided population level data that is suitable to measure target 4.2 of the SDGs.
Part V: Implications for Implementation

ECD in the SDGs

ECD Targets

Target 2.2
By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older adults.

Target 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.

Target 16.2
End abuse, exploitation trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
Launch of the Action Network for Early Childhood Development

Goal: Help catalyze efforts by bringing together governments and partners to achieve a set of concrete results for ECD.

14 April 2016
World Bank Spring meetings, Washington D.C.

ECD Results Framework

- Increase the percentage of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial wellbeing (indicator 4.2.1, e.g., ECDI/MICS)

- End all forms of malnutrition, including achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age (SDG 2.2)

- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children (SDG 16.2) - Increase in the percentage of parents and caregivers engaged in early stimulation and early learning activities at home and reduce harsh disciplinary practices and neglect

- Increase participation rate in organized learning (1 year before official primary entry age) for all countries (SDG indicator 4.2.2)

- Increase in financing for ECD as a percentage of GDP (linked to multi-country efforts; measurement is being developed to track both costing and investments in systematic ways).
Action Network for ECD: 5 Core Actions

• Implementation and scale up of key multi-sectorial interventions
• Build capacity of workforce to deliver quality services
• Strengthen national data and evidence on ECD
• Support national level sustainable finance
• Advocacy

Opportunities Created by the SDGs

Validates the work of early childhood professionals around the globe

Creates the potential for a global movement to achieve a common set of results

Agreement can be achieved on a set of core actions

Affirms our commitment to give every child a fair chance to life from the start.