(Event is at the Partners’ Forum, Dec 12-13)

**Early Childhood Development: Achieving the Best Start to Life through Cross- Sectoral Action**

The [4th Partners’ Forum](http://www.partnersforum2018.com/), convened by the [Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH)](http://www.pmnch.org/) and the Government of India will take place in New Delhi on 12-13 December 2018. An ECD concurrent session is being organized around the theme of **Multisectoral Collaboration.** This session will underscore the importance of multi-sectoral interventions for ECD, which are age-appropriate, target multiple risks, and build upon existing delivery platforms for ease of scale-up. The session will also incorporate a call to action to prioritize thrive with survive, to give every child the best start to life.

**Key Messages**

**Message #1:** Early childhood development can be fortified through coordinated actions across multiple sectors including health, nutrition, education, child and social protection. Whole-of-government approaches that support coordination at the highest levels of governance have shown to be effective in driving forward the agenda at national, sub-national and local levels.

**Message #2:** Enabling environments for early childhood development result from the seamless interaction between policies, services, empowered communities, and enabled caregivers who have adequate time and resources to care for their children. Changing demographics call for attention to risks and protective factors in all settings.

**Message #3:** Interventions for early childhood development influence throughout the life course. The early years, starting from pregnancy, are a critical period during which the health sector has a special role to play to ensure that children, and their caregivers, are reached by effective interventions and can transition to formal education with optimal cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional skills and potential.

**Message #4:** Investing in the early years is one of the [smartest actions](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dafxTR5qiIY) a country can take to break the cycle of poverty, address inequality, and boost productivity. The cost of inaction can exceed current expenditures in health and education by two to three-fold. Governments need to redouble efforts, specifically focusing on the early years, as the foundation for building the human capital will continue to benefit current and future generations.

**Proposed Speakers**

* Moderator: Lisa Witter, *Co-Founder and Executive Chairman,* Apolitical
* Panelists:
  + Dr. Helia Molina, *Dean, Faculty of Clinical Sciences*, University of Santiago, Chile Creche Contigo
  + Ilona Renner, *Research Manager*, National Centre on Early Prevention, Germany
  + Manoj Jhalani, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
  + Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, *Minister of Health*, Uganda
  + Senator, The Honourable Ruel B. Reid, CD., JP., *Minister of Education, Youth and Information,* Jamaica
  + Helga Fogstad, *Executive Director*, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)
  + Elizabeth Lule, *Executive Director*, Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN)