

Regional Meeting on Measurement of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Eastern and Southern Africa

Day 3 recap

24–27 October 2023
Kigali, Rwanda



Day 3 Summary

Objective 3: *Discuss the availability and integration of data at national and subnational levels, and how available information is being used to strengthen programme implementation.*

Using data to strengthen Systems

- **Purposes** of measurement: *to tell the story of children's development and to change the story of children's development*
- **Who should be generating and using data?** - *Multiple role players*- there must be **unity and purpose** among role players, ensuring **data is used coherently** to tell or change the story
- Need for **monitoring frameworks and tools aligned to the common goal**, ensuring there is **systematic data consolidation, analysis and use**
- **Need for Governments to integrate data into the information Management systems**
- **Solution (*Where do we start from?*):** Consolidate outcomes so that there are **shared national and specific sector goals** that are **aligned with sector plans and with SDGs**

How countries generate and use data to strengthen the systems (UG & SA)

- Various data bases/IMS used to generate and use data
- Challenge of integration of these IMS & Working on creating one-stop centre dashboard for ECDMIS (UG)
- Lessons on child outcomes data as an enabler of change within a dynamic ecosystem (SA)
 - **Tracking pre-school children** through the **Thrive by 5 Index**, assessed 5100 children of pre-school age
 - Data generated has been **used in various ways** including identifying levels of and readiness to pre-school entry, multiple deprivations and risks
 - Demonstrated how the data is being used in multiple ways to change the story e.g. **broadening the concept of the ECD ecosystem** to include families, government, civil society, funders, private sector, etc.

Routine Management Information Systems: Challenges and Opportunities

(ZA,UG,MW)

■ ENABLERS

- ✓ Existence of relevant policies and strategies;
- ✓ High level advocacy
- ✓ The five ONES principle (Policy, Strategy, M&E framework, Coordinating office, SBC)

■ CHALLENGES: *Data quality issues; Inadequate capacity to manage the system; Inadequate investment/resources*

■ ACTIONS

- ✓ Revision of MIS to incorporate ECD indicators
- ✓ Develop harmonized set of indicators
- ✓ Need for harmonized dashboard
- ✓ Simplification data capturing tools and interpretation for use at community level

Moving forward

■ The big issues

“Rich information but data poor ”

- ✓ Capacity is a big issue-no clear infrastructure in terms of human resource
- ✓ Data use remains a challenge
- ✓ Low investment for data generation and use

■ Solutions/Recommendations

- ✓ Need clear M&E frameworks with strong infrastructure to generate and analyze data
- ✓ Need for clear and fully functional national, sub-national level and facility Management information systems
- ✓ Invest in capacity – multidisciplinary teams
- ✓ Work with communication colleagues to help bring out our stories effectively

Breakout Sector Groups

- **Health1, Health2, Education, Multisectoral**
- **Plenary** came up with various themes including:
 - ECD data not centralized/How to strengthen ECD data systems
 - Strengthening sector coordination
 - Data utilization challenges
 - Intercountry collaboration as an opportunity
 - Quality as an issue in data generation for MIS
 - Comprehensiveness of ECD indicators within HMIS
 - Clarity on ECD data at global and national levels/Data harmonization
 - Use of data collected outside government systems

Monitoring Programme Implementation

- **Goal** of monitoring: to see **what has been done**, what has been **missed** and what **needs improving**.
- Practically we are concerned with the inputs; what are we providing as far as nurturing care is concerned, and how are we monitoring these inputs
- Move beyond monitoring because we have been told we must; we should monitor to assess whether we are **doing what we planned**, and if this **leads to the expected results**
- **What to monitor and how?** Key considerations: who are the **delivery agents**, what **service** is being provided, **to whom** are the services being delivered; to what degree have we ensured **stakeholder engagement**.
- NOTE: **quality is key!**

How countries monitor their programme implementation (ET, RW, MO)

- Varied methods—facility inspection tools and processes—*MELQO (ET)* *assessment of facilities against standards/ accreditation processes (RW)*, implementation research capturing dose, quality, experience and impact *(MO)*

Key Recommendations

- ✓ Government involvement and ownership is key
- ✓ Monitor to support improvement
- ✓ Capitalize on existing data sources
- ✓ Establish an information management system that is easily accessible

Monitoring Children's Development

Early Identification: Overview of and reflections on current measures and approaches (RW, MO)

- Key considerations on the **continuum between population level measurement and individual identification**
 - levels of tool precision, tool choice, population served, and measurement
- **Question is** how can we use **different** or the **same tools** to assess individual children at risk for or with neurodevelopmental impairment?
 - GSED, ECDI2030 and AIM ECD + research papers that can help with tool selection
 - Upcoming 2 country (Tanzania & Pakistan) study testing the diagnostic accuracy of GSED
- **Screening versus diagnostic tools**
 - Comprehensive tool that includes standards, developmental checklists, red flag checklist and care cards *(RW)*
 - Tools to detect risk or recognizable delay or disability *(RW)*
 - Adapted neurodevelopmental assessment tool (MDAT) *(MO)*
- **At what point** are you doing the assessment, and what is the **referral pathway?**
 - intersectoral process for identification and referral *(MO)*

Key Challenges & Moving Forward

■ **The big issues**

- ✓ Determining the “right” tool (precision, timing, cultural responsiveness)
- ✓ Cost/resources
- ✓ Ensuring identification and referral result in the intended outcome (ethical considerations, and community-defined issues—e.g. stigma)

■ **Solutions/Recommendations**

- ✓ Define from the beginning what early identification means for your country
- ✓ Focus on functional assessment rather than diagnosis
- ✓ Collaborate across sectors from the start

Thank you

