



OVERVIEW

World Bank Support to Early Childhood Development

AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION



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The full report and appendixes are available online at <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/report/wb-support-early-childhood-development>.



Careful observation and analysis of program data and the many issues impacting program efficacy reveals what works as well as what could work better. The knowledge gleaned is valuable to all who strive to ensure that World Bank goals are met and surpassed.

Cover photo: Alex Treadway/National Geographic/Getty Images.

acronyms and abbreviations

ECD	early childhood development
FY	fiscal year
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostics

All dollar amounts are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

acknowledgments

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highlights

overview

THE SUSTAINED BENEFITS OF early childhood interventions are well established in developed countries. Early development plays a major role in subsequent school performance, health, socialization, and future earnings. For children born into poverty, the equity enhancing impact of early childhood interventions holds the promise of overcoming social disadvantages and breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The World Bank's support to early childhood development (ECD) is well aligned with the Bank's twin goals of reducing extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

This evaluation by the Independent Evaluation Group examines the Bank's design and implementation of projects across sectors supporting ECD interventions to inform future operations and provide inputs to the new Global Practices and Cross-Cutting Solutions Areas. Its overarching messages are:

1 THE BANK'S ANALYTICAL WORK FOSTERS AN AWARENESS OF THE RATIONALE TO INVEST IN PEOPLE EARLY. This work expands the knowledge base, addresses key operational challenges, and pushes the frontiers of research on child-related policies and interventions. Overall, there is a balance between an integrated concept of early childhood development, child health, and child nutrition. In looking to the future, more attention is needed to create knowledge related to scale, quality models for early learning, financing of ECD, cost-effectiveness, and capacity building at all levels of government.

2 THE BANK LACKS A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT A COORDINATED APPROACH ACROSS GLOBAL PRACTICES TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN. In its absence, the Bank depends on the knowledge, initiative, and skills of individual staff members, leading to significant variation in approaches and intensity of investment across countries.

3 BASED ON WHAT IS KNOWN FROM RESEARCH, THE IMPACT OF THE BANK'S WORK COULD BE INCREASED BY CHANGING ITS FOCUS ON HEALTH AND SURVIVAL TO INCLUDE CHILD STIMULATION AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION. These sectors that would support an expanded focus have early entry points to reach vulnerable children and families beginning with the prenatal period. The Bank has made this shift in a few of the countries examined.

4 THE ROLE OF PARENTING IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL. More emphasis is needed on support for parent education and assistance programs, treatment of maternal depression, early detection of disabilities and developmental delays, and affordable quality childcare to enable workforce participation.

THE FINDINGS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS of the

evaluation are drawn from 16 field and desk case studies as well as analyses of the World Bank's early childhood development (ECD) portfolio and other sources of evidence to triangulate findings. Other sources of evidence are review of economic analysis; analytic work including Bank-supported impact evaluations; country strategies; results frameworks; Human Resources data; synthesis of ECD systematic reviews; and key informant interviews. The case studies were central to assessing experiences with the benefit of understanding the country context.

The period of evaluation covers the Bank's support to early childhood development interventions for young children and their families found in its lending and analytic and advisory work from FY00 to FY14. The evaluation examines the design of operations for consistency with the growing body of research around efforts that are likely to lead to beneficial changes in children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional development, and improve their readiness for school. Twenty-six systematic reviews related to ECD interventions were analyzed to assess whether the Bank is financing evidence-based interventions. In parallel with this evaluation, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) conducted a systematic review examining the impact of early childhood interventions on later outcomes, and some of its results are integrated herein.

Findings

Bank lending to support ECD interventions has increased since FY00, with ECD projects or components of projects in 106 countries. The lending was predominantly from Education; Health, Nutrition, and Population; and Social Protection sectors, but it is also increasingly from others such as Agriculture, Poverty Reduction and Governance, Social Development, and Water.

Country experience points to progress with immunization and infant and child mortality, while high rates persist for maternal mortality and stunting within many of the examined countries. Stunting is associated with diminished

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development and extreme poverty. It is found in one-third to one-half of children under the age of five in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, and the Republic of Yemen. This suggests the continuing need for Bank support targeted to the development of children beginning at the prenatal stage.

The Bank has produced a body of analytical work devoted to topics such as maternal and child health, nutrition, and early childhood development. This knowledge work gives rise to subsequent lending, which shows the value of analytical work in creating awareness of the benefits of investing in young children. Country experience revealed the importance of the Bank's policy dialogue, suggesting that it can be leveraged in countries where the Bank has limited involvement to help other governments understand the importance of promoting the development of children.



ERLY TANTONIS/WORLD BANK

A Bank-supported program for children up to 6 years of age in Indonesia is integrated with other services, such as nutritious food for children, to provide comprehensive support to a child's development.

In looking to the future, several areas remain for the Bank to undertake to address key ECD operational challenges, such as cost effectiveness, scale, and quality models for early learning, stimulation, and childcare that support child development. As well, much more understanding is needed of the later-life effects of ECD interventions in low- and middle-income countries. Until investment occurs in longer-term monitoring of interventions, the Bank will not fully understand which interventions have sustained impact and greatest potential to stop the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

The Bank invests heavily in maternal and child health interventions especially to improve both survival rates and physical development. To truly break the cycle of poverty, however, children must also have the cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional maturity to be

able to succeed in school and in the workforce. Child stimulation in the first three years of life, parenting education and support, screening and treatment for disabilities, and reduction of maternal depression are largely overlooked by the Bank and other development partners. To apply the lessons learned from the findings of 26 systematic reviews and several influential impact evaluations, the Bank will need more investment in interventions such as parent support programs, childcare, early learning, and stimulation that lead to better cognitive and linguistic development as a necessary complement to health, nutrition, and social protection efforts. The challenge for the Bank and its partners will be to go beyond a focus on maternal and child health to ensure that health systems advance children's development.

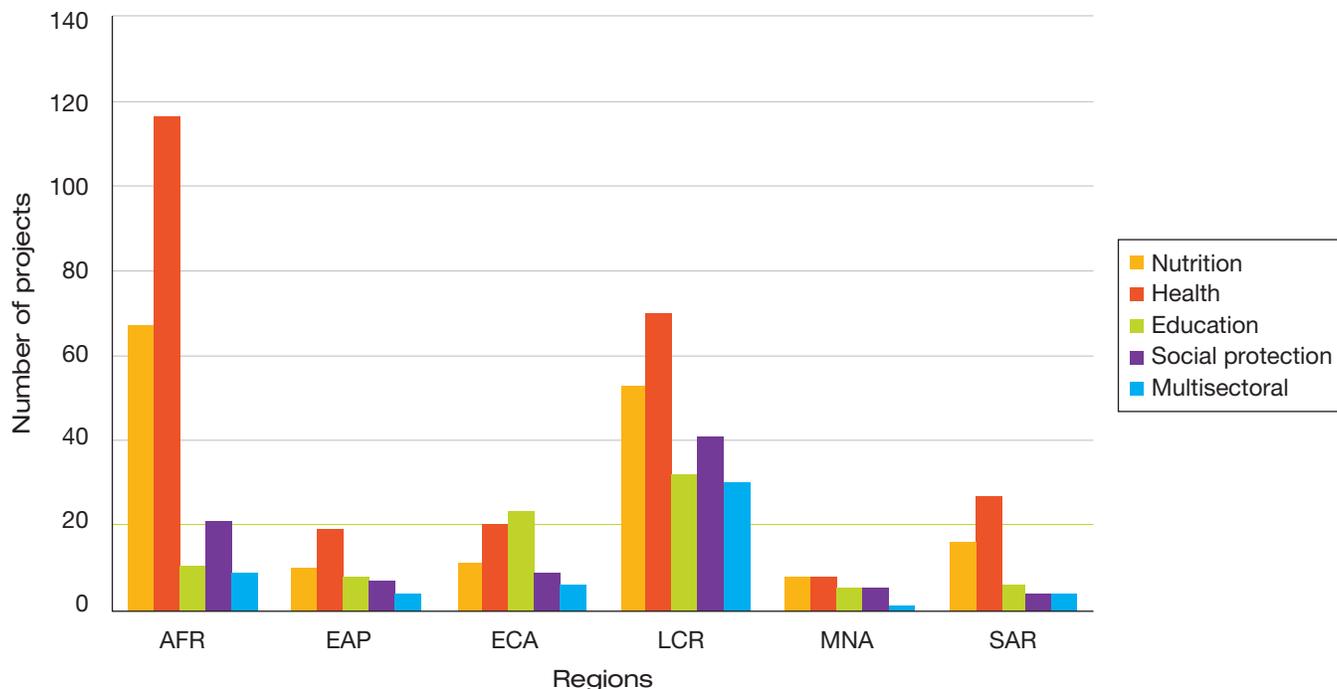
The World Development Reports of 2006, 2013, and 2015 highlight the importance of stimulation and giving

parents the tools they need for optimal parent-child interactions. The World Development Report of 2012 highlights the importance of twin-generational approaches to women's economic empowerment and support to their children's development through quality childcare. However, synergies have not been established between the Bank's work in gender and early childhood development. Parental support programs that teach parents how to stimulate their children's development and childcare are contained in few Bank operations, suggesting the need for more attention. Within several of the countries examined for this evaluation, opportunities to advance country capacity to support the early development of children (prenatal to three years) were missed.

Interventions promoting children's development were more evident for children three years and older through investments in preprimary education. However, these programs are typically for three, four, five, and six year olds, which is a late entry point to begin to stimulate children's language, cognitive, and socioemotional development, particularly if other services are not available. A notable design shift has occurred in preprimary education operations. They are comprehensively trying to improve quality, but more work is needed to develop quality models that can be brought to scale. Issues related to salary and retention of preprimary teachers emerged in several countries.

Several African countries have received little to no nutrition support, despite stunting rates ranging from 39 to 55 percent. Thus, there is need for alignment between the Bank's interventions and country needs to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, to equalize

FIGURE 1 | Type of ECD Interventions in Projects by Region, FY00–14



Source: IEG Coding of appraisal documents and IEG project completion reviews.

Note: AFR = Africa; EAP = East Asia and Pacific; ECA = Europe and Central Asia; LCR= Latin America and the Caribbean; MNA = Middle East and North Africa; SAR = South Asia.

The challenge for the Bank and its partners will be to go beyond a focus on maternal and child health to ensure that health systems advance children’s development.

opportunities for human capital development, and to contribute to economic growth. There is also a need to properly integrate ECD interventions into the Bank’s planning cycle in country partnership frameworks.

Organizational Challenges

One challenge to advancing coordinated ECD work is the organizational structure of most development agencies, including the Bank, partnership programs, and most government ministries. Sector-based structures tend to look for sectoral entry points for engagement and work with the relevant public sector authorities. A review of ECD standalone projects (FY00–14) that have IEG ratings suggests the

Bank has moved away from integrated programming to operations dealing with one ministry, which has facilitated improved performance ratings. Analysis of the portfolio and Human Resources data show that the Bank predominantly implements ECD interventions on a sector-by-sector basis, including design and implementation, with the exception of operations containing child protection interventions. With sectoral implementation, an internal structure within the Bank doesn’t yet exist to coordinate sectoral interventions and capitalize on opportunities to create synergies between initiatives in gender and child development as well as integrate interventions for the poorest and most vulnerable within existing entry points whether in their homes,

TABLE 1 | Evidence Map of ECD Interventions Supported by Bank Investment and Policy Operations in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, FY00-14

Share of Bank projects (percent)	Interventions	Child outcome domain			
		Physical development	Cognitive and language development	Socioemotional development	Mortality and morbidity
10	Exclusive breastfeeding	—	—	—	—
18	Micronutrients, vitamins, fortified food	—	—	—	—
6	Therapeutic zinc supplementation for diarrhea	—	—	—	—
9	Education about optimal feeding practices and complementary feeding	—	—	—	—
7	Supplementary feeding	—	—	—	—
17	Growth monitoring and promotion	—	—	—	—
26	Pregnancy and delivery interventions	—	—	—	—
13	Malaria prevention	—	—	—	—
26	Immunization	—	—	—	—
8	Hygiene and hand washing, water and sanitation	—	—	—	—
4	Deworming	—	—	—	—
15	Quality early childhood and preprimary programs	—	—	—	—
5	Childcare	—	—	—	—
12	Parent support program	—	—	—	—
8	Conditional cash transfer	—	—	—	—
3	Unconditional cash transfer	—	—	—	—

Source: IEG coding of appraisal documents and IEG project completion reviews; IEG synthesis of systematic reviews of ECD interventions.

Note: Purple = positive impact across majority of studies; green = mixed evidence showing positive, negative, and null effects across studies; — = no systematic review has examined the intervention's impact on child development outcomes.

communities, or health clinics. When cross-sector coordination does occur, it derives from staff initiative rather than organizational structure, inhibiting broader adoption of best practice.

The Bank has sector strategies around health, education, and social protection that feature early childhood development and individually address elements. Other sector strategies note their direct or indirect contribution to children's development, but gaps remain, and some aspects are unclear. Thus, sectors show considerable variation in their approaches and in the presence of specific interventions to support child development. There is also a marked disparity in the attention given across Global Practices and Regions to development of the youngest children, those up to three years of age. Overlapping implementation of ECD interventions has occurred across Global Practices, suggesting the need for clear lines of responsibility and coordinated approach for ECD in the Bank. Under the new Bank reorganization, a first step has been taken by the Education Global Practice to create an ECD global solution area by formalizing the ECD Community of Practice with a global lead.

There is significant need for more harmonized monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of ECD interventions across the Bank. This evaluation is not able to provide any aggregation of changes in outputs or outcomes because no consistency exists in the Bank's M&E. The Bank also tends to focus on outputs of service provision, rather than outcomes, as ECD interventions typically comprise a portion of the project. This sharply limits the ability to draw out evidence from its work, particularly in relation to piloting and

scaling up. It should be recognized that impact evaluations of Bank operations demonstrated changes in the nutritional status of children. Three out of four projects evaluated showed improvements across several domains of children's development. These findings suggest that when interventions are implemented well, they can have a life altering impact on children.

New Opportunities

Diagnostics about children and their development were not inputs to the preparation of the country strategies, except in one country. The Bank's new model of country-level engagement and systematic country diagnostics can provide a mechanism both to assess the situation of children and ensure the Bank's support is reaching countries with high stunting rates and to identify a government's interest. Many country strategies made no mention of ECD interventions in countries where the Bank financed them; most of these cases were in relation to nutrition with half of them in the Africa Region.

Regional experience reveals promising aspects of the Bank's engagement in ECD, such as using social protection programs to reach vulnerable families to improve the early development of children—those younger than three years old. As well, the Child Health and Development Passport was used by health care workers in Jamaica to provide parents with a regular assessment of developmental milestones and screening of disabilities during well-child health clinic visits. The work in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region may serve to provide lessons learned for other Regions. All of the countries examined have included early entry points, with child development

interventions aimed at vulnerable families, and have capitalized on work across sectors. All of the available evidence points to the importance of the quality of parenting, yet most of the parental support programs financed by the Bank are contained in operations in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region. The Region uses more multisector teams in its ECD operations. It supports a balanced set of interventions, and the level of nutrition support was aligned with country need. The variation across Regions may point to disparities among deployed staff in relation to their understanding of how to advance child development.

The Sustainable Development Goals are expected to have early childhood development and stunting targets, which is a signal from the international community to countries about the importance of supporting the development of young children. One implication for the Bank and other partners is that they will need to provide support across health, nutrition, social protection, and education—as well as other Global Practices and Cross-Cutting Solutions Areas—to reach these targets. This represents an opportunity for the Bank to play a leading role with its partners and capitalize on the complementary work with its partners that was evident in countries visited by IEG.

Recommendations

The IEG makes four recommendations based on the major findings of the evaluation. They are directed to Senior Bank Management, Global Practices, Country Management Units, the Development Economics Vice Presidency, and Impact Evaluation Hubs in the Bank (see chapters for details).

They aim to enhance effectiveness of the Bank's future work on early childhood development and thus contribute to the attainment of its twin goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Ensure that future organizational arrangements for ECD, such as the proposed "ECD global solution area" are able to provide a well-coordinated and strategic framework for ECD, with clarity on leadership, ability to join up on issues across Global Practices and Cross-Cutting Solutions Areas, and appropriate staff and resources for effective ECD programming.
- Adopt the practice of using diagnostics in the preparation of systematic country diagnostics to determine ECD need—identifying when ECD should be made a country priority and coordinating the relevant support across Global Practices and Cross-Cutting Solutions Areas.
- Increase knowledge to address key ECD operational challenges with respect to scaling up, cost-effectiveness, quality models to promote early learning and stimulation, financing of ECD, and capacity building at all levels of government.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of ECD interventions during and after project closure to strengthen evidence on their medium- and long-term impact. Common ECD indicators should be developed and tracked across Bank operations to permit aggregation of results across Bank projects. In addition, follow-up studies should be undertaken to better understand the long-term impact of ECD interventions.

In looking to the future, several areas remain for the Bank to undertake to address key ECD operational challenges. ...

management response

MANAGEMENT WELCOMES the report on World Bank Support to Early

Childhood Development by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). The evaluation is timely given the increased focus on early childhood development (ECD) within the Bank over the last five years as well as in the broader development community, both in terms of operational and analytical work. The evaluation is also useful given the World Bank Group's transition to a Global Practice (GP) model and the emphasis on ECD as a priority area for collaboration between Global Practices. The evaluation provides an opportunity to consolidate lessons learned and discuss options for further developing and strengthening this agenda.

Broad concurrence with conclusions and recommendations. Management welcomes IEG's emphasis on the importance of a strategic framework and organizational structure to strengthen ECD work, and notes that the elements of this structure are now essentially in place. The Bank has developed tools for ECD diagnostics to inform Strategic Country Diagnostics, which will be used where appropriate, based on country demand and priorities. Management agrees with the areas identified by IEG for further investments in knowledge work. Steps have been taken to strengthen work in these areas through new initiatives. Finally, Management agrees with the importance of monitoring and evaluation for ECD work, including for assessing the medium- and long-term impact of ECD policies and interventions. Steps are already being taken in that direction. The suggestion to develop key indicators to track results across Bank projects is welcome. Given the wide variety of ECD interventions and outcomes (e.g., education, health, and nutrition), such indicators could be developed by broad type of intervention. Work is underway in this area, in collaboration with a number of external partners, as part of the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes Initiative to construct a global set of indicators for ECD.

Main Findings

Deepening of the Bank's analytical work on ECD. Management appreciates IEG's positive assessment of the Bank's contribution to the ECD agenda and knowledge base. Going forward, the next step for knowledge work should include a deeper assessment of how and when to scale up ECD interventions while maintaining quality and cost-effectiveness and building government capacity for scaling up and monitoring and evaluation. Recent efforts by the Bank in that direction include: (i) the Early Learning Partnership, a program initially based in the Africa Region being scaled up globally; (ii) a stronger emphasis on cost-effectiveness and scaling up by the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund; and (iii) investment in capacity

building on ECD by the Education Staff Development Program.

Strategic framework and organizational structure for ECD. Management agrees with the importance of a strategic framework and organizational structure for ECD work, for which the elements are now essentially in place. As the IEG evaluation recognizes, ECD is more prominent than in the past in the strategic frameworks of the main Global Practices involved in ECD work, including Education, Health, and Nutrition and Social Protection. The Bank has also provided to staff and governments guidance documents on multisectoral ECD policies and interventions—including the Systems Approach for Better Education Results ECD diagnostic tool on policies and a Guide on Investing in Young Children for high returns for interventions. In terms of organizational structure, as noted by IEG, ECD has been identified as one of the five core thematic areas under the Education Global Practice with a dedicated global solutions lead that will help coordinate work on ECD across relevant GPs. The global solutions lead will also work with program leaders on the ground in coordinating ECD programming to respond to country needs.

Child health and survival versus child stimulation and development. Management agrees with the importance of child stimulation and development interventions and with the need to reach vulnerable children and families as early as possible. Management further appreciates IEG's recognition that a focus on child stimulations and development is present in operational work. However, it is important to note that depending on country context, not all ECD operations necessarily need to be multisectoral. As to the recommendation to change focus from child health and survival to other domains, it could be misinterpreted. The idea is not to deny

importance of ensuring child health and survival, given that these are preliminary and the necessary conditions to a successful life, but to indeed go further.

Role of parenting in child development. Management agrees with the importance of interventions supporting parenting as well as other areas such as affordable child care. At the same time, the IEG evaluation could have better reflected on recent work done by the Bank in several of these areas. As an example, the Niger Social Safety Nets Program is a social protection project financed by the International Development Association. Parents receive a cash transfer (not conditional) and accompanying parenting education information. Initial evaluation results have been positive. The project will run through 2017 and reach 80,000 households with cash transfers and 200,000 households with parenting education information. This model is now being used or being considered for application in several other sub-Saharan African countries and is a good example of a project emphasizing the role of parenting with strong collaboration between the Social Protection and Education Global Practices.

Methodology and Data

Robustness of trends in the operational and analytical portfolio. The evaluation is based on a useful analysis of different data sources. Yet, some of the data sources could have been analyzed in more depth, and more comparisons of the IEG evaluation findings with previous work would have helped the interpretation and to establish the robustness of the IEG findings and recommendations. For example, the IEG evaluation mentions a review published in late 2014 of trends in the Bank's operational and analytical portfolio for Education, Health, and Social Protection. More detailed analysis of the

differences between the two evaluations and samples of projects considered would have been useful to ensure the robustness of the IEG findings. For instance, the trends documented in the 2014 review indicate a much larger increase in commitments to ECD in recent years by the three Global Practices than suggested by the IEG report.

Need for additional information to help interpret the results. Background information would help to interpret some of the statistics provided in the IEG report, such as the share of country strategies mentioning ECD projects, the share of ECD operations with an economic or financial analysis, or the average time spent by staff in preparing and supervising ECD projects. It would be useful to know how the findings for ECD projects compare to what is observed for the Bank's lending portfolio as a whole (or relevant portions therein). It would also have helped to know to what extent limitations in the Bank's processes and investments in ECD in some countries are a reflection of characteristics of the Bank or those of client governments, given the fact that ECD is inherently a complex area with multiple ministries and agencies involved in any single country.

Other important areas for future ECD work. The report missed an opportunity to focus on a few important questions the World Bank Group is grappling with in its effort to strengthen its ECD work in the future. One such question is how the Bank could leverage its work with partner agencies. Other agencies are very active and becoming more active in this field. This is the case particularly for the United Nation's Children Fund and the World Health Organization as well as the Global Partnership for Education (for preprimary education), the Inter-American Development Bank,

and a number of large foundations. Work is needed to strengthen the global architecture for ECD. The World Bank Group will contribute to such work by participating in various initiatives and by helping to map the activities of the various partners on the ground so as to build synergies.

Another critical challenge is how to better prioritize interventions in low-income contexts to reach the most vulnerable children, including in fragile and conflict-affected situations. As an example of steps taken in that direction, promoting equity is one of the key criteria for the activities to be carried out in the recently expanded Early Learning Partnership. Countries that have benefitted from the Partnership include Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Finally, as suggested by the IEG evaluation, as the World Bank Group works with countries to promote better access to essential ECD interventions, it will be critical to pay attention to quality. Emerging evidence suggests that if young children are put in poor quality programs, this may do more harm than good.

management action record

Systematic Country Diagnostics

IEG FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS While there has been an increase in the number of country strategies containing ECD interventions between FY05 and FY13, there were a number of countries where ECD interventions were financed yet country strategies made no mention of them, suggesting that the Bank did not detect borrowers' interest in ECD. There are several countries in Africa with stunting rates ranging from 39 to 55 percent (which is an indicator associated with delays in children's development) where the Bank has had little to no involvement in nutrition.

The Bank's new model of country level engagement and Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCD) can provide mechanisms for the Bank to assess the situation of children in the country and identify the most needed intervention, and the alignment with other partners.

IEG RECOMMENDATIONS Adopt the practice of using diagnostics in the preparation of SCD to determine ECD need—identifying when ECD should be made a country priority and coordinating the relevant support across GPs and CCSAs.

ACCEPTANCE BY MANAGEMENT WB: Partially agree

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE The Bank has developed tools for ECD diagnostic work, including the Systems Approach for Better Education Results ECD and a guide on essential ECD interventions. These tools can be used to inform SCD where appropriate, based on country demands and priorities, but should not be mandated for every country.

Knowledge

IEG FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS The Bank is obtaining evidence on effectiveness of interventions—what does and does not work. However, TTLs and clients need practical knowledge—what is the minimum you need to do and the most cost-effective way to do it. Several areas remain for the Bank to address—scaling up, cost-effectiveness, quality early learning models (i.e., childcare, stimulation, and preprimary education), financing of ECD, and capacity building at all levels of government.

IEG RECOMMENDATIONS Increase knowledge to address key ECD operational challenges with respect to scaling up, cost-effectiveness, quality models to promote early learning and stimulation, financing of ECD, and capacity building at all levels of government.

ACCEPTANCE BY MANAGEMENT WB: Agree

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE These areas for investments in knowledge have been identified by management. Initiatives in that direction include the scaling-up of the Early Learning Partnership, a new emphasis on cost-effectiveness and scaling up by the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund, and investments in capacity building through the Education Staff Development Program.

(Continued on the following page.)

Coordination

IEG FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS Multisector teams rarely supervise early childhood development (ECD) interventions, except for operations containing child protection interventions. Synergies have not been established between the World Bank's work in gender and early childhood development. The absence of a coordinating function within the Bank meant that coordination occurred in only a few of the countries that were visited by IEG. When cross-sector coordination occurred, it was based on staff initiative rather than organizational practices. In its absence the Bank depends on the knowledge, initiative, and skills of individual staff members, leading to significant variation in approaches and intensity of investment across countries. While sector strategies mention early childhood development and individually address ECD elements, there are gaps. A strategic framework would bring clarity in relation to the following aspects: (i) who is in charge of ECD and responsible for coordinating within the Bank and partners; (ii) what is the Bank's approach toward the development of children; (iii) what is the Bank's long-term vision; and (iv) how will the Bank position itself so that it will be an important player in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to ECD.

IEG RECOMMENDATIONS Ensure that future organizational arrangements for ECD such as the proposed "ECD global solutions area" are able to provide a well-coordinated and strategic framework for ECD, with clarity on leadership, ability to join up on issues across Global Practices (GPs) and Cross-Cutting Solutions Areas (CCSAs), and appropriate staff and resources for effective ECD programming.

ACCEPTANCE BY MANAGEMENT WB: Agree

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE The elements of a strategic framework for ECD are now essentially in place. ECD is more prominent than in the past in the strategic areas of focus for the main Global Practices involved in ECD work. Guidance on multisectoral ECD policies interventions has also been developed. ECD will benefit from a dedicated global solutions lead for leadership and cross-GP coordination. In countries, program leaders play an important role and the global solutions lead will work closely with them in coordinating ECD programming to respond to country needs. However, staff and resource allocation will be decided based on the overall resource envelope, client's demand, and strategic priorities across all sectors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

IEG FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS This evaluation is not able to provide any aggregation of changes in outputs or outcomes, as there is no consistency in the Bank's monitoring and evaluation. Within the Results Frameworks analyzed, outputs rather than outcomes were typically tracked. When outcomes were noted, they were health measures such as infant, child or maternal mortality rates, which are not attributed solely to the interventions and do not capture impacts on children's development. Twenty percent of Results Frameworks from investment lending planned to measure changes in at least one child development domain. There is a huge need for more harmonized monitoring and evaluation of ECD interventions across the Bank, as well as need for tracer studies to be employed more frequently in projects, and follow-up studies to better understand the long-term impact of ECD interventions.

IEG RECOMMENDATIONS Improve monitoring and evaluation of ECD interventions during and after project closure to strengthen evidence on their medium- and long-term impact. Common ECD indicators should be developed and tracked across Bank operations to permit aggregation of results across Bank projects. In addition, follow-up studies should be undertaken to better understand the long-term impact of ECD interventions.

ACCEPTANCE BY MANAGEMENT WB: Agree

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE The Bank has been a leader in the area of impact evaluations for ECD intervention, in part through the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund, and this work will continue to be supported. In addition the Bank will continue to work with external partners on ways to better monitor ECD outcomes, including through the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes Initiative that aims to construct a global set of indicators for ECD. Given the wide variety of ECD interventions and outcomes (e.g., education, health, nutrition), such indicators could be developed by broad type of intervention.

chairperson's summary: committee on development effectiveness

The Subcommittee of the Committee on Development Effectiveness considered the Independent Evaluation Group's (IEG's) evaluation entitled, *World Bank Support to Early Childhood Development and Draft Management Response*.

The Committee welcomed IEG's timely review and its emphasis on the importance of having a multisectoral and holistic view of early childhood development (ECD). Members broadly concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the report and called for more effective collaboration across the World Bank Group, including within the Global Practices (GPs) and the International Finance Corporation. They underscored the need for the World Bank Group to take a leadership role and increase collaboration efforts with external partners, including but not limited to the United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund, and International Labour Organization. Members discussed the report's finding of a fragmentation in the Bank's ECD approach, yet recognized the complexity of trying to fit ECD within a GP or ministry structure (that is organized by sector) particularly given that that ECD demands the attention of the education, health, and social protection practices, et alia. Members noted that ECD work carried out in the Bank is multisectoral in nature and appreciated Management's confirmation that the ECD Global Solutions Group that is being formed will work across sectors. Members were pleased to learn that Management was also working across governmental institutions to address ECD issues and that the Education, Health and Nutrition, and Social Protection GPs had developed a guide for Bank Group staff on 25 essential ECD interventions.

The Committee commended the Bank on its ECD work, particularly in knowledge work and in operations, to advance the discussion beyond child survival to child thriving. They inquired about the Bank Group's plans going forward in the areas of quality of child care, labor force participation by women, maternal health care, and parenting skills. They underscored the importance of focusing on the most vulnerable children in low-income countries, including in fragile and conflict-affected states. Members highlighted the importance of ECD diagnostic work in preparation of Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCD) to assess and identify key challenges and opportunities of the client country and recognized that ECD analysis should not be mandatory, noting that Management should have clear criteria of when ECD analysis should be carried out. Members welcomed Management's assurance that Bank Group teams take a holistic look at what is needed in the country context, including an overall assessment of ECD needs, and that emphasis will be placed on working with governments to illustrate that ECD is the right investment. Members highlighted the need to better articulate capacity building of client and service providers and overall ownership of clients. They were encouraged that ECD impact evaluations recently approved under the strategic Impact Evaluation Fund will be providing cost-effectiveness evidence, including benefits of scaling up pilot ECD interventions, which will be key to further promote early childhood development in client countries.

Alejandro T. Foxley
CHAIRPERSON

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The full report and appendixes are available online at <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/report/wb-support-early-childhood-development>.