

Early Childhood Care and Development in the Syria and Iraq Humanitarian Responses

Mapping & Analysis

August 2017

Updated April 2018



Background

Despite increasing recognition of the importance of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in recent years, a critical gap in humanitarian responses has been observed with regard to mitigating the negative consequences of war and displacement on young children's overall development.

Early childhood (0-8 years) is the most important period in human life for physical, cognitive, emotional and social development, setting a strong foundation for a child's future trajectory. During this period, critical brain development occurs rapidly and depends on adequate protection, stimulation and nurturing care. Separation from parents or caregivers, witnessing violence, and everyday stressors in the child's environment can disrupt bonding and undermine healthy long-term social and emotional development. Evidence suggests that early childhood services, including those that support and guide parents, caregivers, and families in times of crisis, can mitigate the negative effects on young children and promote crucial resilience and development.

While promising work to support families is underway, unfortunately the provision of ECCD services in the Syria and Iraq response region (Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey) is only reaching a fraction of the total number of children in need.

To begin addressing this situation, Plan International, and the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, organized a one-day regional workshop on 23 August 2017 in Amman, Jordan.

The workshop on Early Childhood Care and Development in Emergencies was open to all No Lost Generation partners. The ultimate goal was to create a community of practice/coordination mechanism on ECCD.

Prior to the meeting a mapping and analysis of current or planned early childhood programs was undertaken. This mapping aims to determine who is doing what, where, as well as highlight common challenges, best practices, main gaps, recommendations and any other information that can help inform collaborative work going forward. Results of the mapping were presented during the meeting.

This report gathers the results of subsequent finalization phase that took place from January to April 2018. This aimed to give participating organisations a chance to review the draft, update their data and provide more information where needed. This also allowed to bring in additional organisations that were not initially part of the first draft.

Mapping methodology

The development of this mapping took place in four stages:

1. A message was sent to all No Lost Generation partners in June 2017 asking organisations implementing ECCD programs in response to the Syria and Iraq crises to fill out a 5Ws Snapshot matrix (Annex 1).

2. Based on the completed 5Ws Snapshots received, the consultant who developed the report (Mathilde Bienvenu) shared an interview guideline (Annex 2) with the nine organizations who demonstrated an interest in being part of this mapping.

3. Bilateral interviews were conducted in August 2017 with the following organisations:
 - Caritas
 - Finn Church Aid (FCA)
 - International Medical Corps (IMC)
 - International Rescue Committee (IRC)
 - Plan International (Plan Intl)
 - Save the Children (SC)
 - UNICEF Middle-East and North Africa Regional Office (UNICEF MENARO)
 - War Child-UK (WC-UK)
 - World Vision (WV)
4. The data collected was analysed and relevant information summarized in a draft report presented in Amman during the one-day regional workshop on 23 August 2017.
5. Following this meeting, a second phase of the mapping took place (January to April 2018) with the objective of gathering and including feedback from the different participating organisations as well as including organisations that did not originally take part in the first draft (Plan International Egypt, Plan International Lebanon and War Child Holland).

It is important to note that this report provides a non-exhaustive list of ECCD implementing actors in the Syria and Iraq response region. It does not include national organisations (e.g. activities by UNICEF's national offices), or community-based organisations (CBOs), both of whom play a critical role in responding to the ECCD needs of the refugee and displaced populations in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey*. The hope is that this exercise is a starting point for a continued tracking of programming by all relevant actors in future.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who have collaborated on the development of this mapping exercise. Thanks go first and foremost to Mathilde Bienvenu, who developed this report. The mapping exercise and report benefited from the support and combined efforts of Muna Abbas from Plan International as well as the Bernard van Leer Foundation who all played a central role in coordinating this process. Special thanks to them.

Thanks are also due to the individuals in each organisation who have taken the time for bilateral interviews and/or written correspondence providing critical information for the mapping. These individuals are Judith Hameseder and Layal Awwad (CARITAS), Jehan Zaben (FCA), Claire Whitney (IMC), Katie Murphy (IRC), Evelyn Botros (Plan International Egypt), Muna Abbas, Ibtisam Amara and Asma Alkhatib (Plan International Jordan), Marianne Samaha (Plan International Lebanon), Marianne O'Grady and Jeffrey Dow (Save the Children), Anthony MacDonald (UNICEF MENARO), Kenneth Miller (War Child Holland), Priscilla Yoon and Hadeel Abeidoh (War Child-UK) and Mark Chapple (World Vision). Further thanks go to the different staff in these organisations who have provided support to this exercise.

*Please note this report does not include activities in Syria outside of Damascus and rural Damascus.

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All images courtesy of Plan Jordan.

Acronyms

ARC.....	Arab Resource Collective
CBO.....	Community-based organisation
CFS.....	Child friendly space
CFLS.....	Child friendly learning space
CP.....	Child protection
ECD.....	Early childhood development
ECCD.....	Early childhood care and development
ECE.....	Early childhood education
FCA.....	Finn Church Aid
IDP.....	Internally displaced person
IMC.....	International Medical Corps
IRC.....	International Rescue Committee
KG.....	Kindergarten
M&E.....	Monitoring and evaluation
MEHE.....	Ministry of education and higher education (Lebanon)
MHPSS.....	Mental health and psychosocial support
MoE.....	Ministry of education
MoH.....	Ministry of health
NGO.....	Non-governmental organisation
Plan Intl.....	Plan International
SC.....	Save the Children
SOPs.....	Standard Operating Procedures
UNHCR.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASH.....	Water, sanitation and hygiene
3Ws.....	Who does What Where
5Ws.....	Who does What, Where, When and for Whom
WCH.....	War Child Holland
WC-UK.....	War Child UK
WV.....	World Vision

Introduction

This mapping provides a baseline overview of early childhood programming in the Syria and Iraq response region. The nine international organisations reported a total of 200 early childhood programmes (these were counted using the 5Ws spreadsheet as individual programmes in individual locations. In other words, in many cases the services are part of one initiative/project which is being implemented in multiple locations). The nature of these programs are described in slightly more detail in the organisational snapshots in this report.

As noted, this number most definitely does not capture the full range of services provided to families with young children. There are many other (especially national) organisations providing services that are not yet captured in this overview. There are also many critical basic health, nutrition, and WASH services that form part of comprehensive early childhood care that we know are missing from this overview – possibly because many NGOs categorise ‘Early Childhood Programming’ under Education or Child Protection, and as such many of the interviewees for this mapping sit in these departments rather than in health, nutrition, or WASH.

Nonetheless, the data show quite some work is being executed in the field (more than individual organisations thought was the case). It also gives some insight into characteristics and trends we can observe of these programs, which are listed below. This forms a good basis for coordination and collaboration to further expand much needed service provision for young children and their families.

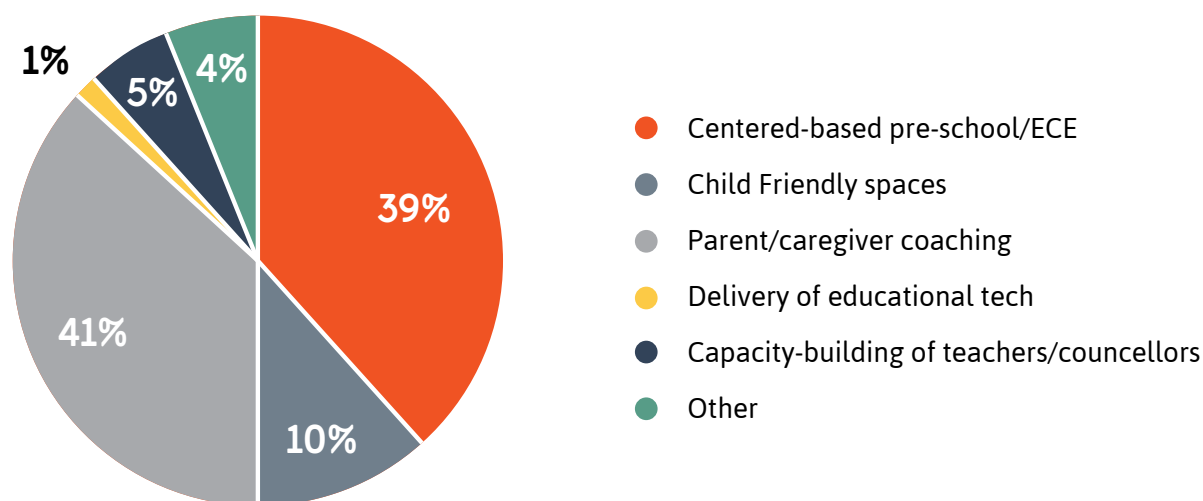
Types of services

As shown in the chart below, 80% of the reported programs provided either centre-based pre-school / early childhood education services for children 3 years and up, or parent/caregiver coaching programs. It should be noted that some of the parent coaching programs are not specifically focused on parents of young children.

The proportion of Child Friendly Spaces reported was surprisingly low, and at present it is unclear whether this shows these kinds of provisions are not very widespread, or that they are present but just not geared towards younger children. Only one program aimed to deliver educational technology.

Future updates to the mapping might enable a deeper understanding of the precise content of provisions, and include more specifically basic health (e.g. immunization), nutrition (e.g. breastfeeding support) and WASH services for the under 8s and their parents/caregivers which are clearly missing in this overview, yet do form a critical part of early childhood care and development.

Types of ECCD programs



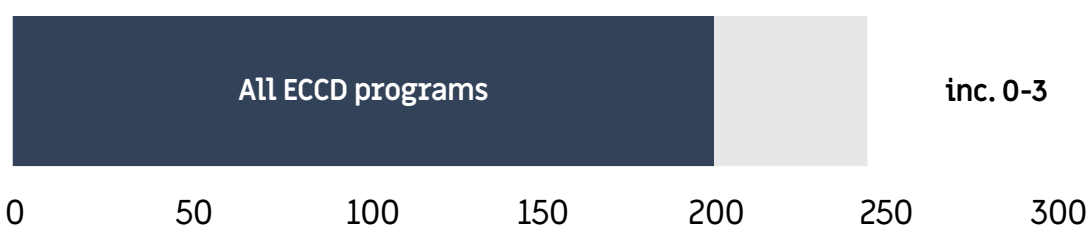
Reach of programs

There are large gaps in the data on numbers of children and parents reached. Some organisations were able to provide figures for some of their programs, but not for all. Others were unable to provide the data for any of their programmes, e.g. because they were counted across different departments.

In aggregate, this group of organisations was able to report they currently reach approximately 93,000 children across the Syria and Iraq response, and a little under 6,000 parents and caregivers. The reported reach of children per individual project varied between 7 to 60,000 children. While the true reach is undoubtedly much greater, it is certainly very far away from reaching the total of approximately 3 million children under 5, and their parents and caregivers that are known to find themselves caught up in the Syria and Iraq crises.

Focus on the first 1000 days

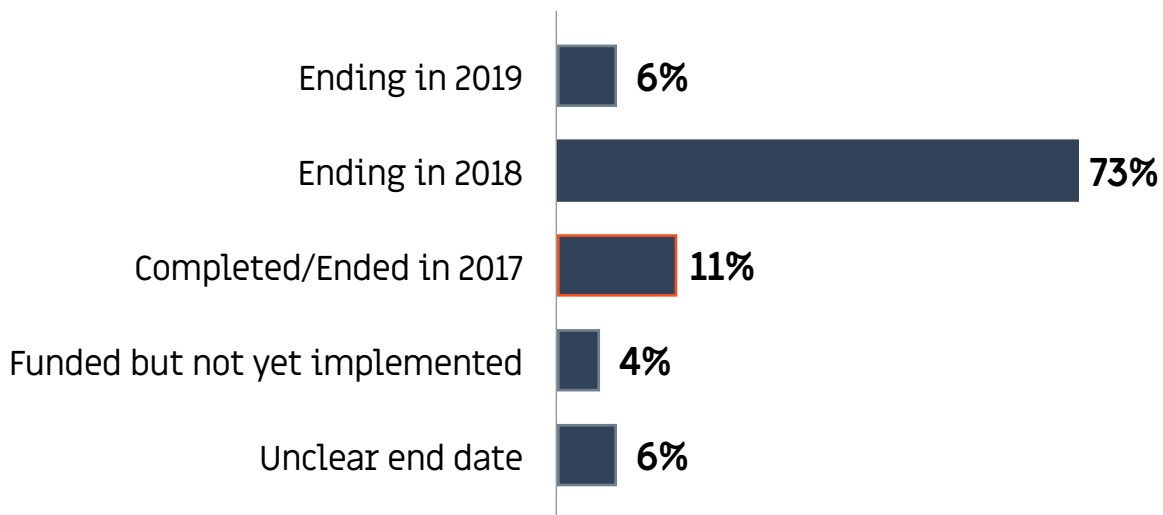
The science on early childhood development increasingly zooms in on the critical importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life (conception through to the first two years of life). The mapping tried to get insight into the proportion of ECCD programs with a specific focus on this youngest age group. This proved a challenge, as data does not tend to get disaggregated inside organisations or humanitarian working groups for the under 3s. Only 36 programmes (18%) were reported as having a specific focus on the zero to three age group.



Program sustainability

Finally, looking at the data, it becomes clear many programs are funded only for the short term. The vast majority of programs currently being implemented are scheduled to end this year. The data provided does not indicate a lot of funding is secured for the years to come. This clearly compromises the sustainability of ECCD programming in the longer term.

Program funding status



1. Snapshots - Mapping by country

The tables below capture in simple snapshots the 3Ws - Who is doing What and Where - in each of the countries affected by the Syria and Iraq crises (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Syria) as of April 2018.

These tables have been completed based on the 5Ws snapshots received from the organisations included. The main activities are categorized as follows:

- Center-based preschool and childcare services
- Child friendly spaces for play and recreation
- Parent and caregivers coaching
- Delivery of early learning content via educational technology
- Capacity-building of teachers and school counsellors

Egypt

	Center-based pre-school and childcare services	Child Friendly Spaces for Play and Recreation	Parent and Caregivers coaching	Delivery of early learning content via educational technology	Capacity building of teachers and school counsellors
Location?*	SC		SC		
Alexandria			PLAN INTL Egypt		
Cairo – Greater Cairo			PLAN INTL Egypt		PLAN INTL Egypt
Damietta			PLAN INTL Egypt		PLAN INTL Egypt

Iraq

	Center-based pre-school and childcare services	Child Friendly Spaces for Play and Recreation	Parent and Caregivers coaching	Delivery of early learning content via educational technology	Capacity building of teachers and school counsellors
Dahuk	SC	WV	IRC		
Kirkuk		WV			
Mosul		WV			

Jordan

	Center-based pre-school and childcare services	Child Friendly Spaces for Play and Recreation	Parent and Caregivers coaching	Delivery of early learning content via educational technology	Capacity building of teachers and school counsellors
Amman	WC-UK, CARITAS, PLAN INTL Jordan (FCA), SC	CARITAS, WC-UK	PLAN INTL Jordan, WC-UK, SC		CARITAS, PLAN INTL Jordan
Balqa	CARITAS	CARITAS			CARITAS
Irbid	CARITAS	CARITAS, IMC			CARITAS
Jarash	CARITAS				
Karak	CARITAS	CARITAS			CARITAS
Madaba	CARITAS	CARITAS			CARITAS
Mafraq	WC-UK, CARITAS	CARITAS, WC-UK, IMC	WC-UK, IRC		CARITAS
Zarqa	WV, WC-UK (incl. EJC), CARITAS, PLAN INTL Jordan (FCA),	CARITAS, WV, WC-UK, IMC (incl. EJC)	WV, WC-UK (incl. EJC), IRC, PLAN INTL Jordan (FCA)	WV	CARITAS

Lebanon

	Center-based pre-school and childcare services	Child Friendly Spaces for Play and Recreation	Parent and Caregivers coaching	Delivery of early learning content via educational technology	Capacity building of teachers and school counsellors
Akkar	IRC		IRC		
Beirut	SC, CARITAS		SC		CARITAS, IRC, SC
Bekaa	IRC, SC, PLAN INTL Leb	IRC	IRC, SC, WV, PLAN INTL Leb		IRC, SC, WV
Hermel			IRC		
Mount Lebanon	IRC, SC, CARITAS		IRC, SC		CARITAS, IRC, SC
North Lebanon	IRC	IRC	IRC, WV, WCH		IRC, WV
South Lebanon			WV		IRC, WV
Tripoli	SC		IRC, SC		SC
Throughout Lebanon					IRC (UNWRA schools)

Turkey

	Center-based pre-school and childcare services	Child Friendly Spaces for Play and Recreation	Parent and Caregivers coaching	Delivery of early learning content via educational technology	Capacity building of teachers and school counsellors
None reported					

Syria

Any ECCD activity in Syria is detailed in the organisational profiles. Work done by organisations outside of Damascus and rural Damascus is not included in this report.

2. Detailed mapping by organisation

The following section provides more detail on the respective ECCD programs of each organisation in response to the Syria and Iraq crises. The content of this section was completed starting with the 5Ws Snapshots submitted by each organization, further developed through the bilateral interviews and finalized during the second phase of the mapping between January and April 2018.

Caritas



Countries of operation

Caritas provides early childhood care and development (ECCD) / early childhood education (ECE) activities in Jordan and Lebanon implemented by the national Caritas organisations Caritas Jordan and Caritas Lebanon.

Activities

In both countries, Caritas focuses on providing quality Kindergarten and transition to primary schools combined with MHPSS support for children and their parents when needed. Caritas projects involve the following activities:

- Enrollment of Kindergarten-aged children in Kindergartens (KG) – certified KGs in Lebanon and informal KGs in Jordan – including provision of transportation, snacks and educational material
- Teacher training of KG teachers
- Training for school staff (e.g. counsellors and bus escorts, etc.)
- Equipment of KG classrooms and play areas as well as general upgrades to KG facilities (WASH facilities, etc.)
- Psychosocial and Mental Health Support (MHPSS) for the children and parents/mothers of the children so that families benefit from holistic support.
 - MHPSS for children is part of the KG curriculum and supported by school counsellors/ social workers based in the school.
 - MHPSS for parents provided on demand and covers issues such as: How to respond to the needs of vulnerable children, Child Protection and Early Childhood Development. Support will vary depending on locations of the projects, donors, and needs from the parents (e.g. if implemented through group discussion, awareness sessions or individual follow-up).

Targets and locations

- **Lebanon:** ECCD/ ECE in 4 different certified KGs in Beirut (Bourj Hammoud, Sed el Bauchrieh), and Mount Lebanon (Ajaltoun, Qartaba). The target groups are vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese children aged 3-7. Around 30% are from Host Communities.
- **Jordan:** ECCD/ECE are implemented in 27 schools in the Governorates of Amman, Mafrq, Irbid, Zarqa, Balqa, Madaba and Karak. The target group is Syrian children aged 4-5.

In both countries, Caritas collaborates with certified KGs (in semi-private and private schools) to enroll vulnerable children, train KG teachers, equip classrooms and playgrounds, and provide psychosocial support and psychotherapy according to need through the availability of in-school social workers/ school counsellors and therapists and referral mechanisms. In Lebanon children are supported with school fees to enroll in certified KGs, in Jordan infrastructure of KGs is utilized by Caritas Jordan to implemented informal KGs in the afternoon.

In their agreements with schools, Caritas is leveraging existing KG infrastructure and qualified staff to further the availability of in-school social workers/ school counsellors.

Additionally, Caritas Jordan is running 10 Child-Friendly Spaces in 7 Governorates (Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa, Balqa, Madaba, Karak) accessible to children aged 4-11.

Within Caritas Austria's funding of ECE activities in Jordan and Lebanon, an applied research study was conducted on ECE/ECD for refugees in Lebanon and Jordan in partnership with the Center for Applied Research in Education at Lebanon's Notre Dame University.

Implementing partners

Caritas works in partnership with a network of semi-private and private (charity) schools.

of beneficiaries

Jordan 2017: 3,270 Syrian children aged 4-5 for ECE and around 10.000 Syrian children aged 4-11 in Child Friendly Spaces

Lebanon 2017: 200 Syrian and Lebanese children aged 3-5 for ECE

Countries of operation

At the moment, FCA has activities on ECCD in Jordan. It is considering including ECCD within its Education projects in Syria in the near future. FCA programs in Syria are in Education, mainly providing informal education and school rehabilitation (for school aged children 6-18).

Activities

FCA divides its activities into 3 main pillars (+1 on Nutrition included in the 'Knowledge' part):

1. Knowledge

FCA is providing educational and vocational skills training to youth. However, young mothers who would like to attend the vocational training skills were facing a challenge as they had young children at home. In partnership with Plan International Jordan, FCA now provides a safe learning environment to children 3-5 (ECCD center) while the mothers attend the training. FCA hosts 2 groups of 20-25 parents per day, with each group lasting 2.5-3 hours. FCA provides textbooks specifically designed for young age groups, and activities including lingual competencies, socio-emotional skills, cognitive skills.

Targets and locations

- Children 0-5 with a small nursery inside the ECCD center in Azraq camp in village 3
- Children 3-5 in the Youth Centre in Nuzha (East Amman)

2. Social Awareness

FCA provides regular awareness raising sessions that contain themes related to parents and to the community itself, such as protection, childhood care, human rights, children rights, health, nutrition. Sessions take place in the ECCD center and each group of 12-25 people attend 8 sessions per month to cover 8 topics.

Targets and location

- Parents and caregivers as well as extended communities.

3. Nursery

There is a small nursery in Azraq, mainly for babies and toddlers of 0 to 2 years old (caring for up to 7 babies). The nursery is for the children whose mothers are attending the Vocational training in Azraq camp village 3.

Implementing partners

FCA does direct implementation.

of beneficiaries

906 parents and 962 children in total over the two locations.

906 parents: 128 males + 841 females

962 children (3-5): 552 boys + 554 girls

The project ended in September 2017. However, the project was no-cost-extended till November.

Meanwhile a winterization event took place in the designated areas. The children were granted with warm winter clothes, socks, winter shoes etc., the numbers are as follows:

987 winterization were distributed

392 kits in Nuzha center

475 kits in Azraq camp village 3

30 kits in Azraq camp village 5

90 kits in Zaatari camp

*It is important to note that FCA is an implementing partner of Plan Intl Jordan. Overlap may exist between the ECCD activities and numbers of beneficiaries of the two organisations' snapshots.

International Medical Corps



Countries of operation

IMC reported ECCD programs in **Jordan** and **Syria**. IMC used to have funding for ECCD programs in Lebanon and Gaza.

Activities

IMC has 5 cross-cutting ECCD activities in the Middle East:

1. Early Childhood Development

Includes activities in shelters, clinics and community centers. IMC developed an ECCD curriculum and manual, adapted from a Canadian center curriculum "Learning through Play". IMC initially adapted it to the Middle East context and had it translated. After the conflict in Syria, the material was further developed and adapted based on the changes in the context.

Targets and location

- Adults: mothers/caregivers, pregnant women in Damascus and rural Damascus

2. Parents skills training for caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities

- a) IMC implements parent skills training for caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities in Jordan, based on an IMC structured curriculum.

Targets and locations

- Adult caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities.
- Services are currently unfunded and not yet implemented, with plans to implement in Jordan (Balqa, Jerash, Irbid and Mafraq) in any MHPSS or CP service point, and always integrated in IMC current programming. IMC also supports Makani spaces, where it reaches out to caregivers whose children attend the Makani spaces.

The above parents skills training has been funded, but not yet implemented in Syria (Damascus and rural Damascus).

- b) IMC has piloted a WHO Caregiver Skills Training program in Syria. The WHO curriculum is a more comprehensive training with more elaborate curriculum. It includes topics ranging from an introduction into developmental delays, to how to promote healthy development of the children. The materials were adapted for the Middle East by IMC's Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon teams.

Targets and locations

- Adult caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities (age 2-9).

This work has been funded and implemented in Syria (Damascus and rural Damascus) in 2017, and may be funded in Jordan in 2018.

3. Child Friendly Spaces

In Jordan, Makani spaces (Child Friendly Spaces) psychosocial support activities have been supported by IMC.

Targets and location

- Children 6-18 in UNICEF designed Makani spaces in Jordan (Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq). The CFS are supported directly by IMC via UNICEF Makani spaces and using UNICEF Makani manual; IMC is involved in the 3 components under Makani model: Life skills, Learning Support Services and Child Protection/ECD.

4. Social Inclusion

Social inclusion initiatives aim for children with disabilities to be included with their peers without disabilities in recreational and psychosocial support activities, using IMC developed guidance. In addition to awareness and educational sessions for caregivers, it includes problem solving and self-care and addressing behavioral problems with children, as well as activities for the caregivers.

Targets and location

- Children 3-15 in Syria (Damascus and rural Damascus).
- Caregivers of children with developmental disabilities and delays (Damascus and rural Damascus).

5. Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation services are provided in a community center (recreational activity center) for children

with disabilities along with their parents and includes psychosocial support.

Targets and locations

- Children 3-14 and their caregivers in Syria (Rural Damascus - Jaramana)

Implementing partners

of beneficiaries

Not available.

International Rescue Committee

Not updated - August 2017 version



Countries of operation

IRC works in **Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon**. IRC's Education programs in Iraq are not yet covering ECCD, but there are plans to include both ECE and parenting. Preparatory work is also underway to roll out a comprehensive program of ECCD support ("Sesame Seeds") in partnership with Sesame Workshop in coming years, following the award of MacArthur Foundation's 100 & Change grant.

Activities

IRC listed about 20 ECCD activities throughout Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Disaggregation is as follow:

- 17 activities in Lebanon (North Lebanon, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, Tripoli, Hemel and Arsal)
- 1 in Jordan (Zarqa)
- 2 in Syria (not yet started)

IRC has 3 main types of ECCD activities:

1. Early Childhood Education

Deliver play-based learning programs focused on providing critical pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and socio-emotional skills building activities in Child Friendly Spaces/Safe Healing Spaces where children are close to parents and communities. The number of hours and months' cover varies from location to location, ranging from 560 hours for an academic year, 280 hours for 4 months, 3 days/week for 7 months, and 300 hours or 3 days/week for 8 months and 340 hours.

From next year, IRC will have just one ECE model consisting of 3 days/week for 8 months to ensure contact with children for a longer duration.

Targets and locations

- Children aged 3-5 years old.

In Lebanon, implementation takes place in 4 sites in North Lebanon, and 4 sites in Bekaa.

2. Parenting programs

- a) Centre-based parenting skills curriculum: Focused on supporting ECE students outside of the classroom. An average of 10 parents per IRC learning center identified based on their interest, commitment and time availability. Parents are trained on critical home-based pre-literacy and pre-numeracy support and on the creation of a nurturing home environment with the IRC Families Makes the Difference curriculum.

Targets and locations

- Parents and caregivers of children 3-5 in IRC Learning Centres in 3 locations in North Lebanon and 1 location in Bekaa.
- b) Parenting skills home visits: A Home visiting program based on the “Reach Up and Learn” curriculum for children 0 to 3. Parents and children alike will be targeted to assist and encourage parents to play, interact and learn with their children. Volunteers, under the supervision of outreach officers located in Azraq camp, will introduce activities to the family that focuses on enhancing early childhood development. Volunteers will also be trained to detect and refer any families that are at risk inside the camp.

Targets and location

- 200 parents and caregivers of children 0-3 in Jordan (Zarqa)

3. Capacity Building on Parenting throughout Lebanon with UNRWA

Parenting skills curriculum to focus on decreasing violence in the home and parents’ psychosocial wellbeing. It includes the Parenting curriculum adapted from Lebanon “Families Make the Difference”. UNRWA school counselors then conduct the sessions with Palestinian caregivers of children attending school.

Targets and locations

- Parents and caregivers of children aged 0-5, 6-11, 12-17 throughout Lebanon in 24 UNRWA schools

Implementing partners

In Lebanon: IRC works with other NGOs and UNRWA.

In addition, IRC has a partnership with SC regarding training, and use of IDELA, and information sharing.

of beneficiaries

Not available.

Countries of operation

Plan International has ECCD programs in **Egypt, Jordan** and **Lebanon**. The main activities of Plan Intl in the region is ECCD targeting children aged 0-5, and mothers and fathers.

Activities

In Jordan, Plan International has 3 main types of ECCD activities which are offered using a variety of entry points including ECCD centers, Women and Family Clinics, Adults education programs/ vocational training (with FCA), and Livelihoods activities aimed at addressing Child Labour and home bound girls.

1. ECCD Centers and Parenting Programs

Plan International Jordan focusses on ECCD and parenting programs in the following areas:

Azraq camp: Plan International directly implements in Village3 (V3) in coordination with FCA by using FCA site to implement ECCD sessions for children aged 0-5 years old in Plan's center and parenting sessions in FCA's center. Entry point is the provision of vocational training to the mothers who bring their children to the ECCD center. The ECCD sessions are also open to all children in the neighboring areas. In Village5 (V5) Plan International implements these activities in their center.

Host community: Plan International delivers ECCD services for children aged 3-5 years old and parenting services in two ways:

- Direct implementation: Plan International implements directly in the MCCs in collaboration with MOH introducing parenting to MOH clinics for women and families. It is a comprehensive program including provision of safe spaces for children in the Health centers, training the community volunteers to work with children while their mothers are waiting for their turn to be examined. From October 2017 they are also working in Al Nuzha center in FCA site.
- Implementation through national partners (East Amman Charity (EAC), The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) and Manshyat Bani Hasan) and international partners such as FCA which implemented directly 2016 till September 2017

Children are offered two sessions a week for 3 months. The main topics include life skills and development domains, e.g. social emotional skills, cognitive skills, motor skills.

Parents attend 16 sessions on topics including ECD, nutrition, health, child protection, etc. The curriculum implemented is the HEPPP (Health, Education, Protection Parenting Program) developed by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC). Currently, HEPPP focuses on parenting, yet Plan Intl also works with children, based on a manual combining existing materials from Plan Intl, MoE and different resources. Plan Intl and ARC will collaborate to build a comprehensive program combining parenting and children's services in coming months. Plan International also agreed with War Child UK to use WC-UK manual. This includes training facilitators and caregivers.

1. Capacity Building

Plan International Jordan is conducting capacity building trainings for staff working in the ECCD and Parenting Programs in Azraq Camp and HCs. These trainings are delivered to Plan facilitators in Azraq Camp and facilitators working in entities who are partners with Plan Intl.

3. Coordination

Coordination is an essential part of Plan ECCD programming in Jordan.

Implementing partners

FCA has been Plan Intl implementing partner however, Plan Intl moved towards direct implementation and Plan Intl and FCA towards a collaborative model. In host communities, Plan Intl implements through local CBOs.

of beneficiaries

Estimates are that 1,700 children (0-5) have been reached in all locations in Jordan: 1,000 with FCA and 700 with two CBOs. A total of about 700 parents throughout all locations in Jordan.

*Note that some of the ECCD activities and number of beneficiaries presented under Plan International Jordan may overlap with those presented under FCA.

Plan International - Lebanon



Activities

In Lebanon, Plan International has similar activities as the one taking place in Jordan, with local CBOs supporting ECCD centers providing parenting programs, including:

- Providing ECE for Palestinian refugee children from Lebanon and Syria
- Providing recreational activities to children
- Engaging parents in their children's learning

This project has been implemented from August 2016 to August 2017.

Targets and locations

- Children and parents in Al-Jaleel Camp in Baalbeck (Bekaa)

Implementing partners

In Lebanon, Plan Intl works with Inaash Association for the Development of the Palestinian Camps.

of beneficiaries

584 beneficiaries were reached in total including 284 mothers and 291 children aged 3 to 5 years (146 boys and 145 girls).

Plan International - Egypt



Activities

In Egypt, Plan International has various activities that support ECCD.

1. Parents and Adult education (positive parenting)

The sessions are delivered to parents of children from 0-5 years old from both Syrian refugee and Egyptian host community. Parents are organized in parenting cycles. The content is delivered through 8 or 12 sessions depending on the project's timeframe. Although fathers are targeted as well, the majority of the participants in the parenting cycles are mothers. Sessions aim to raise parents' knowledge, skills on child growth, development and early stimulation, as well as on the importance of the early years of a child's life. Parenting cycles also support parents' ability to provide responsive care and positive discipline that benefit children. The content of the sessions is taken from Plan Egypt's parenting manual.

Locations: Greater Cairo; Damietta and Alexandria

2. Capacity building for ECCD professionals

The aim is to equip ECCD facilitators with knowledge, skills and practices to have a deeper understanding of child development and early education issues and provide rich, meaningful educational experiences for all children and families in their care; including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; engage children with different abilities and backgrounds; connect with a diverse array of families; and do so with greater demands for accountability.

Locations: Cairo and Damietta

3. Improve learning environment including WASH and sanitation facilities

The aim is to improve the health and learning performance of school-aged children – and, by extension, that of their families – by reducing the incidence of water and sanitation-related diseases. Support classrooms with learning materials to be fully integrated with life skills education, focusing on key hygiene behaviors for schoolchildren and using participatory teaching techniques; Outreach to families and the wider community.

Locations: Alexandria; Greater Cairo (Sharkia) and Damietta

ECCD program encompasses a number of entry points like: Community-based care centers, Preschools/lower, primary schools/non-formal early-learning spaces, Parents/caregivers, Caregivers in childcare centers, Teachers, preschool administrators.

Implementing partners

Plan Egypt works through local Community Development Associations (CDAs): Skynaa CDA, Life maker CDA, Sydi Ali Al Samak CDA, Tadamon and the Islamic Charitable Society.

of beneficiaries

The activities reached about:

of mothers (0-5): 300

of children: 2246, 1348 girls and 898 boys

of facilitators: 180

Save the Children



Countries of operation

Save the Children has active ECCD programs in **Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon** and **Syria**.

Egypt: Activities

In Egypt, SC works with refugee and host communities parents and children. It has 2 main types of activities:

1. Parenting

Parenting sessions are held once every two/three weeks. These focus on giving parents positive parenting messages on early cognitive stimulation, and child protection messages. Parents are also targeted with ELM at Home activities.

Targets and locations

- Parents and caregivers (total reach): 8165

2. Pre-school/childcare

Games and activities for 0-3 year old children to with their parents. Preschool is delivered in centers; some of these are host community-based, but for the most part they are both within refugee communities and in host communities with a combination of beneficiaries from both communities. SC is using IDELA to measure child outcomes in Egypt. Programming utilized SC's ELM materials for center-based programming.

Targets and locations

- Children 0-3; 3-6 and sometimes 3-7 (total reach): 3686

3. Coordination

Egypt: Implementing partners

Not available.

Egypt: # of beneficiaries

Parents/Adults: 8165

Children: 3686

Iraq: Activities

SC has a large Education portfolio in Iraq and is planning to start and ECD program in the country. There is a pilot program starting in April of 2018 in Dohuk Governorate targeting 30 children in 2 ECCD centers, based on SC's ELM methodology.

Lebanon: Activities

In Lebanon, SC offers ECE and parenting services:

1. ECE

SC is supporting ECE through teacher training materials, staffing and transportation. In non-formal settlement camps that are relatively small, SC is delivering center-based activities. SC is using the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) curriculum for the ECE component. SC is also using very informal art engagement based on the HEART approach for children to build esteem.

2. Parenting

SC engages parents on positive discipline as well as cognitive stimulation, playing and learning at home. Parenting sessions are group-based - sometimes in a school or in a settlement where parents can easily meet. SC uses IDELA in Lebanon, in addition to the ELM at Home package targeting parents and caregivers.

Targets and locations

- 3 to 5 years old children for ECE services, and parents/caregivers in Tripoli, Beeka, Mount Lebanon, and Beirut. At the moment SC is not implementing activities targeting 0-3 years old but may start programs for this group in the next year.

Lebanon: Implementing partners

Not available.

Lebanon: # of beneficiaries

Children: 4041
Parents/Adults: 416

Jordan: Activities

In Jordan, SC has two main ECD activities:

1. Pre-school/ECE

For its pre-school/ECE programming, SC has its own content teacher training. SC is currently implementing teacher training packages based on its “Early Literacy and Mathematics” – ELM – curriculum. IDELA is used, as is material from the government curriculum.

2. Parenting

Parent support programs are complementary to pre-school in Jordan. Group-based sessions with parents/mothers are implemented, with a strong focus on stress reduction.

Targets and locations

- Children 3-5 years old, and the parents of preschool children in the camps and Amman. Limited work on children 0-3 years old, but potential to engage with caregivers/parents at clinic settings and health services in Jordan in the near future.

Jordan: Implementing partners

Not available.

Jordan: # of beneficiaries

Children: 4704

Parents/Adults: 723

UNICEF Middle East North Africa (MENA) Regional Office*



Countries of operation

UNICEF has programs in **Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria.**

Activities

UNICEF has ECCD programs in two areas:

1. Early Childhood Education

Most of the UNICEF countries in the region are working on Early Childhood Education with a specific focus on children aged 5 to 6 years old i.e. one year before they enter primary school.

The main ECE focus countries in the Syria and Iraq response are Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.

2. Parenting programs

UNICEF has parenting programs running in all countries affected by the Syria and Iraq crises, working with parents and teachers to address violence. UNICEF has an integrated approach designed closely between Child Protection, Education, WASH, Health and Nutrition sectors. These parenting sessions are held in schools, at home, and in centers, including primary health centers. UNICEF is using the model of Continuum of Care focused on the first 1,000 days.

Moving forward, all UNICEF country offices in the region with a Country Program Document (CPD) starting in 2018 have prioritized ECCD.

Also, there is growing engagement of UNICEF country offices in the Middle East region on ECCD. Over the years there has been increase in recruitment of ECCD specialists and focal points.

*UNICEF country office activities are to be included in a mapping of national organisations' ECCD activities.

Implementing partners

Not available.

#of beneficiaries

Not available.

War Child – Holland



Countries of operation

War Child Holland in **Lebanon** has been actively responding to the Syria emergency crisis since early 2012. War Child is a member of the psychosocial working group and provides protection and psychosocial support services to Syrian children. War Child works directly with children while also addressing parenting and the family environment.

Lebanon: Activities

Among the different projects that WCH is currently implementing in Lebanon, the Caregiver Support **Intervention (CSI)** aims to improve parental wellbeing and strengthen positive parenting in order to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of children.

The CSI is a selective prevention program, offered to all interested parents/caregivers rather than targeting only clinically distressed parents. It draws on evidence-based methods of stress management, emotion regulation, and positive parenting.

CSI is a group-based, 9-session weekly intervention and so far, the CSI has been run in small-scale implementation both in Gaza (6 groups, 30 women and 30 men) and Lebanon (3 groups with 12 women each in Akkar district, Northern Lebanon, in the spring 2017).

Focus group data showed good cultural fit, high participant interest and commitment (no drop outs in 9 groups, with a majority attending all of the sessions), and good utilization of all intervention components. Participants linked the CSI and its specific components to reductions in stress, an improved capacity to cope with feelings of frustration, anger, and sadness, and improved relationships with their children and spouses.

Way forward: WCH recently received a grant to further develop and rigorously evaluate the CSI with Syrian refugees in northern Lebanon. Additional material has been added to make the CSI more relevant to parents of very young children. It addresses ECD through two pathways: strengthening parental wellbeing, and strengthening positive parenting with specific content for early childhood.

Evaluation: Following a small scale “practice run” planned this spring, involving 60-80 parents, a pilot randomized control trial will be conducted with 120 parents (60 per study arm) later in 2018.

In 2019, a full RCT will be conducted with an estimated 400 parents/caregivers (200 per study arm). Contingent on getting positive results for the CSI, WCH expects to eventually scale it up and make it an integral element of War Child Holland’s multilevel Care System.

Lebanon: Implementing partners

Lebanon: # of beneficiaries

Intended beneficiaries are currently low because this is currently being developed as part of an intervention research process, with formative, pilot, and full testing all planned for this and next year.

War Child – UK



Countries of operation

War Child UK works in Jordan, and Iraq. In Iraq there is no ECCD activity at the moment but WC-Iraq is interested in replicating what is currently done in terms of ECCD in Jordan.

Jordan: Activities

1. Centre-based pre-school services

Focused on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. Two levels of ECCD are offered; each for 4 months. This curriculum is being implemented in Amman, Mafraq and Zarqa.

The ECCD curriculum was developed further, instead of each child completing two cycles (ECCD 1 and ECCD 2) for 4 months each, attending the classes three times a week, WCUK developed a condensed ECCD curriculum that allows children to complete the full curriculum in four months, by attending the classes five times a week. This new condensed curriculum is currently being implemented in EJC camp.

Targets and locations

- Children 4-6 years old in Amman, Mafraq, Zarqa, and EJC

2. Parent component for ECCD

Aimed at providing caregivers with the tools and skills to support their children's development at home (children who are captured in Activity 1).

WC-UK, with experts from the Ministry of Education have also recently developed a parenting component for ECCD with the objective to train the parents on how to best support their children on literacy and numeracy at home. WC-UK just got the training material approved by the MoE. Training is done and the component is currently implemented in Mafraq, Zarqa, and EJC.

Targets and locations

- Parents of children 4-6 captured above in Mafraq, Zarqa, and EJC

3. Child friendly spaces for play and recreation

Targets and locations

- Children of 4-18 years old in Amman, Mafraq, Zarqa, and EJC

4. Parents and caregivers positive parenting sessions

a) War Child offers a parenting program from IRC called 'Positive Parenting'. It is focused on positive parenting to foster healthy development of children. Topics include understanding parental stress, coping strategies, impact of parenting, positive behavior, communicating with children, nurturing children, understanding children social needs, providing support to children with PSS needs.

b) WC-UK is also using 'Parents Deal', which is a WC Holland curriculum. It is a PSS and Lifeskills methodology that also focuses on early childhood development.

Targets and locations

- Parents and caregivers in Amman, Mafraq, and Zarqa

Jordan: Locations

in 2 camps (Zaatari and EJC), and in 5 centers in host communities: 2 centres in Amman through local community based organisations; 2 centres in Zarqa through local community based organisations as well and 1 center in Mafraq.

Jordan: Implementing partners

In host communities, WC-UK partners in Zarqa and Mafraq are local community based organizations. Moreover, WC-UK partnered with War Child Canada to oversee the implementation in the two Amman community based organization locations. WC-UK implements directly in the refugee camps.

Jordan: # of beneficiaries

Estimates are: For ECCD classes from 4-6: WC-UK reached about 1590 children through the 7 centers
For parenting component for ECCD class: WC-UK reached 200 caregivers during the pilot program
For the PSS and positive parenting: WC-UK 864 caregivers for both as often parents would do both sessions.

World Vision



Not updated - August 2017 version

Countries of operation

World Vision works in **Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon** and **Syria**..

Iraq: Activities

1. Child Friendly Learning Space

WV has one static and one mobile center. Children have different activities such as drama, physical activity, drawing and coloring, storytelling, psych-drama, song learning.

Targets and locations

- Children aged 4-8; 9-13 and 14-18 in Krikuc off camp. 900 children in static, and 300 in mobile center are reached.

2. Emergency Child Friendly learning Space

WV operates 1 mobile and 4 static emergency CFLS. Teams do activities such as drama, sports, arts, theatre and PSS, as well as case management. WV targets girls and boys in static center with these activities. There are 3 shifts per day with 25 children each (5 days a week). Each child will attend 2 times per week, during 4 cycles of 3 months.

Targets and locations

- Children aged 4-8; 9-13 and 14-18 in Hassansham camp. 3,000 children are reached in the static centre. The mobile team will reach out to the whole camp populations (15,000 children).

3. Responding to Psychosocial Needs

WV established one static CFS to deliver emergency PSS & PFA distressed boys and girls affected by conflict in Mosul.

Targets and locations

- 2,880 children in Chamakor IDP camp

4. Child Protection and Education

Child Friendly Space (CFS) as a first line response to offer Child Protection services in emergencies, such as psychological first aid (PFA) and psychosocial support (PSS) in East Mosul.

Here, CFS are transformed into a Child Friendly Learning Space (CFLS). During this phase the center continues the PSS and recreational activities for children, youth and mothers. However, considering the importance of education, complementary classes will be offered to the children and youth based on the needs identified in collaboration with the directorate of education.

Targets and locations

- Children aged 4-8; 9-13 and 14-18 in Qinawa camp/Dahuk

5. Improving quality education and social cohesion for children

Activities focus on: social cohesion and life skills activities, functioning school-based management approaches in line with national policy, and establishment and training of mothers and students groups.

Targets and locations

- Children 0-18 in Kirkuk (49 schools)

Jordan: Activities

In Jordan, WV is concentrating its ECCD response for children aged 4-5 and 6-12. WV is planning to extend their parenting programs in Jordan, awaiting approval.

1. Centre based pre-school and childcare services

Early childhood education in WV Early Childhood Education Centre

Targets and locations

- 600 children aged 4-5 in Azraq camp

2. Child friendly spaces for play and recreation

WV runs 8 CFS centres with activities such as drama, sports, arts, theatre & PSS, running 8 months cycles.

Targets and locations

- 66 children aged 4-5 in each cycle in Amman, Zarqa, Mafraq and Irbid

3. Delivery of early learning content via educational technology

Delivery and evaluation of Edu4Apps games, as well as delivery of other digital early learning content at the WV Early Childhood Education Centre.

Targets and locations

- Children 6-12 in Azraq camp

4. Parent and caregiver coaching

Parenting sessions for parents/caregivers of the children attending the WV Early Childhood Education Centre in Azraq Camp.

Targets and locations

- Parents/caregivers of children aged 4-5 attending the ECE Centre in Azraq

Lebanon: Activities

World Vision Lebanon has a holistic ECCD approach targeting children aged from 0 to 6 and their caregivers. This approach focuses on three main pillars: the parents, the teachers and the community.

1. Parenting

WV develops the parental skills of caregivers through the Go Baby Go! model. By enhancing parental skills on Early Childhood Development and by ensuring a stimulating home environment, experiences are optimized by parents to alleviate the lack of access to formal education services. Parents are trained using the Go Baby Go! model in 15 sessions. The curriculum focuses on increasing the knowledge and developing the skills of parents on health, early stimulation, protection and education of children with a specific focus on the engagement of fathers.

Targets and locations

- Parents of children aged 0-6 in North Lebanon, Bekaa, South Lebanon

2. ECE: Capacity building For Teachers and Outreach workers, and equipping of ECE learning centers

WV develops teachers' capacities to safeguard the social-emotional balance of the children. Capacity building includes child development, ECE planning, Go Baby Go, play based approaches, manufacturing of toys, manufacturing of stories, ages and stages questionnaire, home visits. WV also equips Early Learning Centers as per the national ECCD standards.

Targets and locations

- Teachers of children aged 0-6 in North Lebanon, Bekaa, South Lebanon

3. Referrals: Early identification and referral of children to available services

Using ASQ as an early detection tool for children with developmental delays, outreach workers and teachers identify children and refer them to available health, protection and specialized services available in the area of the intervention.

Targets and locations

- Children: 0-6 in North Lebanon, Bekaa, South Lebanon

4. Advocacy

Finally, WV initiates local and national level advocacy. WV creates local ECCD committees, and trains them on the Go Baby Go! model and ECCD standards, in order to advocate for the improvement of the ECCD services within the community. WV participates in the national Community-based ECCD committee, the Education working groups, the Arab Network of Early Childhood Education.

Targets and locations

- Children aged 0-6 in South Lebanon

Implementing partners

Not available.

of beneficiaries

Not available.

3. The ECCD environment in the Syria and Iraq Humanitarian Response

3.1 Needs and gaps

According to the interviews conducted, ECCD has not received the attention it deserves in the humanitarian response to the Iraq and Syria crises in the past years.

All respondents listed a variety of Early Childhood Care and Development needs related specifically to the nature of the Syria and Iraq crises. First of all, the **general lack of ECCD service provision** appeared as one of the common points between all the interviews. **Quality** and **access** came across as major needs as well.

Across the region there has been so far very limited supply in terms of ECCD provision and services are not offered at scale in any public provision. Geographically, as shown in the country snapshots, almost none of the organisations consulted reported providing ECCD services in Egypt or Turkey.

In terms of target groups - none of the organisations interviewed mentioned needs specifically for **children aged 0-3** and fewer reported implementing targeted activities for this age group, compared to programming for slightly older children. This appears as a critical gap in the overall ECCD response.

There is a **significant demand for preschool, childcare and parenting support** among the refugee populations. School readiness and coaching and support specifically targeted at parents came out strongly as points that need further attention and commitment.

Various assessments from the organisations interviewed showed a critical lack of foundational pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills in children aged 6-8 years old. There is a strong need for preparatory pre-numeracy and pre-literacy programming. A small number of organisations are starting to deliver some early learning content using educational technology, which – if proven effective – holds promise to reach more children and parents with critical content. Children are said to face barriers once they join the formal education system, if they have not benefited from Kindergarten classes. Gaps result in areas such as reading, language, and school adjustment. Also, Kindergarten is a key age for psychosocial/ psychotherapeutical interventions targeting children living under stress, trauma or who have experienced abuse.

On the parenting side, caregivers have experienced a high level of stress and quite often do not have the resources to get the support they need. Their lives have been disrupted. The stress, displacement and breakdown of normal support systems compromises their ability to provide the nurturing care their children need. Some of them are not sure how to respond to their children signs of distress.

When parenting programs aiming to support and coach parents exist, it seems that each organization is implementing its own program without clear general guidelines or frameworks specific to the context.

3.2 Monitoring coverage of ECCD

As stated above, interviewees agreed that the supply of early childhood services is limited in the current response, and far from meeting the demand that exists. How large the gap in coverage is exactly, however, is difficult to establish due to a lack of quality data.

When asked about the number of children or parents that have been reached by their ECCD interventions, only four out of nine organisations interviewed were able to provide figures. A reason commonly cited was that this data was not readily available, for example because it gets reported under different areas of programming.

When it comes to reporting their ECCD activities to formal structures (e.g. the 3RP) established under the humanitarian Cluster approach, the organisations interviewed report across the three following areas:

- Education
- Child Protection
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

The lack of coordination and inter-sectoral collaboration with regard to ECCD means critical data regarding number of beneficiaries reached by ECCD services becomes challenging to get.

One of the respondent referred to data collection on ECCD as a “big gap” in the current response and some also expressed frustration that reporting activities under different working groups/clusters is detrimental to the coordination of all ECCD activities as not all organisations implementing ECCD activities attend all sector meetings.

A final note on data collection coming out of this mapping is the challenge for most organisations interviewed to provide data on the costs of their intervention per child or per parent/family. While some have performed cost analysis of their ECCD interventions, most have not. This is an additional challenge with potential consequences for donor buy-in and subsequent funding of ECCD services.

3.3 Challenges analysis

The below section focuses on the common challenges faced by organisations implementing ECCD programs in the Iraq and Syria response. The section lists both general challenges, and those observed in the field by the ECCD programs staff.

Overarching challenges

Lack of ECCD visibility in the humanitarian response system

A general observation from all the interviews conducted is that there is a clear lack of ECCD visibility in the current response. The focus of most programs remains on children 5-12 years old.

Also, it has been observed multiple times that *“the humanitarian system is almost exclusively focused on survival”* and ECCD is not considered as important as other areas. This feeds into the other challenges listed below including a lack of donor buy-in and funding.

Donor buy-in and funding

A commonly reported gap is the lack of donor buy-in. Since *“Everything in the response is donor-driven”* there should be more of an effort made to ensure donors understand the importance of early childhood.

“A lot of donors still don’t quite understand the significance of ECD and how an early intervention can help and mitigate other interventions later on: this is quite compelling” reported one interviewee.

An obvious consequence of this lack of donor buy-in is the lack of funding. Funding is the number one challenge reported by nearly all participants in the mapping. It is important to note however that if funding in itself is an issue, long-term funding is actually where the critical gap is.

“It is essential that donors and governments understand that it actually costs money to run good EC programs and that it should not be focused on the short-term but on the long-term”.

In addition, it was reported that it is getting difficult to get longer term funding especially for research and learning to demonstrate impact.

Another frequently reported bottleneck related to donors is the fact that they usually aim to reach a maximum number of beneficiaries which can negatively impact the quality of the services offered. Some partners reported that they were tempted to sacrifice the length of their ECCD/ECE programs to cover more children for example, or to have only one level of ECE instead of two so that they could reach a double number of children in the same amount of time.

Another reported consequence of this race for numbers is that since it is “easier to target numbers” in other areas of the response, there is a risk that organisations will favor providing services in these areas instead of ECCD.

Coordination and cross-sectoral collaboration

With the lack of visibility comes the lack of coordination in the ECCD area and vice versa. Most organisations interviewed did not know which other actor was also running ECCD programs in the same area of operations and all interviewees reported that the lack of coordination was a crucial gap in the current response. 70% of interviewed reported Coordination as ‘critically needed’ and the remaining 30% found it ‘needed’.

“More openness and collaboration would help a lot”

“Having some kind of Task Force/Working Group would be extremely beneficial”

If coordination is critical, the lack of cross-sectoral collaboration has also been identified as a key challenge. *“How do we work effectively across sectors?”* is a question that came back often during the bilateral discussions. The absence of coordination and inter-sectoral collaboration makes it difficult to identify who is leading the ECCD agenda in the current response.

The mapping exercise was welcomed by all participants as a first step towards a more coordinated approach. Most organisations interviewed expressed the need to create 'momentum' related to ECCD coordination in the current response.

Challenges implementing ECCD programs in the field

Policy framework

4 of the 9 organisations interviewed mentioned the policy framework within which organisations operate as a critical challenge. Engaging and working with the governments in the region has been on multiple occasions reported as quite difficult.

In Lebanon for example, NGOs have been participating in the revision of the ECE curriculum and learning standards, but a "lack of transparency" on the process was reported as a challenge.

A general feeling was that the organisations interviewed are in the hands of Governments who tend to change policies, oversight, and receptiveness towards the organisations that are operating in their countries.

Engaging parents, particularly fathers

Engaging with fathers came up as a critical difficulty. The problem is particularly pronounced in host communities, where fathers are more often engaged in professional activities compared to those in refugee camps, where fathers have more time to allocate to ECCD services. There is a strong interest to find ways to engage men, and develop activities to attract them.

The level of education of the parents is also reported as an issue at times. In some locations, it could be difficult to reach out to them with written materials, hence the importance of activity-based activities.

Finally, it has also been reported that occasionally it could be challenging to convince parents of the importance of providing psychosocial Support to their children.

Coping with the high demand from the parents/caregivers

Most of the respondents reported that parents are eager to have their children participate in ECCD activities and services. The demand for preschool, childcare and parenting support among the refugee population is very high. Unfortunately, the limited amount of service provision makes it impossible to reach all parents and children in need.

The waiting lists are endless and some parents have been reported to drop off their children in front of the ECCD centers in cases when their children could not be registered.

The provision of qualified ECCD human resources

A common positive remark from nearly all respondents is that human resources in the Syria and Iraq crises are not as great a challenge as it often is in other humanitarian responses. Finding people with qualifications in ECCD/ECE is - if not easy - at least feasible.

However, a few challenges related to human resources did emerge:

- Qualified ECCD persons in Iraq and Syria are more difficult to find than in Jordan and Lebanon.
- Skilled ECCD staff is also a challenge to recruit in rural communities (vs. urban communities) and in refugee camps (vs. in host communities).
- People may have a lot of qualifications in the region, but they may not have the required professional experience.
- Labour laws, especially in Jordan and Lebanon, are quite restrictive when it comes to hiring refugees. This forces organisations to recruit refugees as 'volunteers' which is not ideal.
- Finally, all organisations implementing ECCD programs reported that they provide all new staff with specific trainings with the risk that the staff would leave to work for other organisations where the salary is higher.

The transition into the formal education system

It has been reported that getting children to access formal education after ECE activities can be a challenge. Sometimes there is just no space in the schools in the communities.

"Children are losing what they gain in preschool if they don't go to formal education".

Transportation

Some organisations mentioned that transportation is a major issue for the implementation of ECCD activities on a daily basis. When the implementing partner does not provide transportation, the beneficiaries do not access the services.

4. Recommendations and next steps

This section provides recommendations and suggested next steps with regard to the mapping, as well as the set-up of a coordination mechanism on ECCD for the Syria and Iraq humanitarian response.

4.1 Recommendations and next steps on the mapping

This mapping was drafted to help inform the meeting of No Lost Generation meetings in Amman on 23 August 2017. It was then refined, updated and finalized between January and March 2018 to include feedback from the different participating organisations as well as include Plan Intl Lebanon, Plan Intl Egypt and War Child Holland. It serves as a starting point, yet in order for this mapping to be comprehensive and of operational use, the following steps will be needed:

- a) Organisations captured in this mapping to add information on their activities and locations on an ongoing basis
- b) Organisations to provide missing data on costs and number of beneficiaries reached if possible
- c) National organisations' activities need to be captured
- d) Agreement to be reached on the data the 5Ws should capture on a regular basis
- e) Designate an organisation who will be in charge of consolidating the data (this could be done on a rotational basis) and agree a process by which updating will happen

4.2 Recommendations and next steps on setting up the ECCD coordination mechanism

Bilateral interviews surfaced the recommendations and action points below with regard to the set-up of an ECCD coordination mechanism in the response to the Syria and Iraq crises. Efforts to establish such a group are already underway at the time of publication of this report, co-led by Plan Jordan and the National Council on Family Affairs (NCFA) in Jordan.

Composition

Interviewees made recommendations to:

- a) Include national organisations and CBOs working/implementing ECCD
- b) Include government counterparts
- c) Include all sectors and organisations reaching young children in order to mainstream the ECCD agenda and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration (Health, Nutrition, WASH, but also Cash, Basic Needs, etc.)

Key activities

Key activities of the ECCD Coordination mechanism should include:

- a) Advocacy for donor buy-in and stable multi-year funding
- b) Engagement with government counterparts and ministries
- c) Cross-sectoral engagement
- d) Support of the ECCD research agenda
- e) Collect and share best practices
- f) Develop quality standards
- g) Share information, lessons learned, curriculum, tools (including M&E tools), costing models
- h) Update the ECCD mapping of service providers
- i) Support with trainings
- j) Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for organisations interested in starting an ECCD program

