

Terms of Reference (ToR)
for the
Early Childhood Development Working Group (ECDWG)
Revised in August 2021.

1. Background

Neuroscience has proven that the period in a child's life from conception to the start of school opens a critical and singular window of opportunity to shape the development of a child's brain. When children miss out on these once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to develop healthy brains and lives, we as a global community perpetuate intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and inequality.

When ECD was not a priority from the start of the influx, there was a lack of operational structures and technical expertise during program design and funding calls. Instead of seeing integrated services for the youngest, we saw cases referred to child protection or other sectors when the risks have become critical. A strong need was identified to make the case for prioritization of ECD from the outset, including capacities on surge teams and awareness raising among emergency donors of why the window of the early years is so critical and what we risk if we miss it. It also identified the need to improve tracking and identification of ECD needs in response plans to develop multi-year strategies across sectors. In this context at the end of 2019, following the proper process of Education Sector and ISCG, a new working group called ECD WG was evolved under Education Sector with open participation of other Sector/Sub Sectors that work for 0-5 age range children for their protection, learning and wellbeing. Prior to formation of ECDWG, a loosely structured ECD Learning Network was formed among the interested ECD agencies (PLAN, SCI, NRC,) in CXB in mid-2019 and facilitated several learning visits. We can say, this was the embryo of ECDWG.

The ECD Working Group works towards strengthening a network of organizations engaged in ECD for a combined voice and capacity in ECD to ensure quality ECD services for the Rohingya children in refugee camps as well as the children from the surrounding host communities in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh. The work of the ECD WG is aligned with the 2021 Joint Response Plan and a key component of the local education sector's framework, which is implemented in refugee camps and host communities in collaboration with relevant authorities [including the SAG, TWiG and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)]. However, the WG also engages with other relevant sectors to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to the delivery of ECD services to young, vulnerable children. [CPSS, Nutrition, Site Management, Health/SRHWG, WASH and CwC.]

2. Scope of ECD in ECDWG in Rohingya Response

The Bangladesh Government approved the "Comprehensive Policy for Early Childhood Care and Development" in 2013 where GoB referred ECCD from conception to age eight and this is applicable for all Bangladesh children.

UNESCO defines ECD as an integrated concept that cuts across multiple sectors – including health and nutrition, education, and social protection – and refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of young children. The definition of ECD includes children up to age 8 on the premise that a successful transition to primary school depends not only on the child's school readiness, but also on the readiness of schools to adapt to the specific needs of young learners in the early grades."

UNICEF defines Early Childhood Development as the period from conception up to primary school entry (5 years). The early childhood period encompasses several quite distinct phases: from 'conception to birth' and from 'birth to 3 years', with emphasis on the first 1,000 days (from conception to 24 months), followed by the 'preschool and pre-primary years (3 years to 5 or 6 years, or the age of school entry). This is a unique window of opportunity for children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, which occurs as the result of the interaction between the environment and the child.^{1,2}

The Education Sector acknowledges ECD as an integrated concept that cuts across multiple sectors including Education, Health & Nutrition, Protection and open to other sector interventions for the young children from conception to 5 yrs of age. Thus, ECD WG works for this age group children for their holistic development with a special focus on 3-5 years for school readiness.

3. Objective of the ECDWG

Overall objective of the WG is to strengthen the coordination and learning mechanism of the ECD agencies, donors and Government counterparts engaged in Rohingya Response under the guidance of Education Sector to ensure access to quality ECD services for all children 0-5 yrs in the Rohingya camps and host communities for their comprehensive development by making sure protective environment.

ECCD Working Group:

Specific objectives of the WG will be:

- I. Support members of the WG with necessary tools, guidelines, contents, materials and with technical assistance to plan, design and implement quality ECD programs for holistic child development.
- II. Work with the Education Sector to establish a common understanding and awareness of what "counts" as integrated ECD among stakeholders in line with ECDiE, Nurture and Care Framework and other guiding frameworks and identify gaps in the ECD in CXB including data gap in order to track services and support in advocacy to fill in the gaps.
- III. Strengthen network, maintain coordination with Education and other sectors and create learning opportunities and Build capacity of dedicated leadership for early childhood development programmes as well as implementing partners.

4. Frequency of meetings

The ECDWG will meet monthly to work towards achieving its objectives. However, ad hoc basis meetings can be held as needed and agreed by the members. All meetings are to be announced in advance with agenda and minutes documented and shared among the members.

5. Structure of the ECDWG

The ECDWG sits under the Education Sector but engagement and coordination with other relevant sectors is essential. This engagement will include, but not be limited to, the following sectors or inter-sectoral groups:

¹ Based on Shonkoff, Jack P., et al., 'The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress', Pediatrics, vol. 129, no. 1, January 2012, pp. 232–246, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/129/1/e232.full.pdf>

² UNICEF (2017). UNICEF's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from: https://sites.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/FINAL_ECD_Programme_Guidance._September._2017.pdf

CPSS, Nutrition, Health and CwC. Moreover, working with the camps and host communities will require thorough consultation and communication with the relevant GoB and local government authorities, and will be strategized on through the ECDWG.

ECDWG is housed under the Education Sector, and it will be guided and managed by the Education Sector mechanism, SAG for Education and ISCG. So the ToR, SOP, Annual Activity plan, voting, membership, any major decisions, products/deliverables need concurrence of the Education Sector including SAG. Any deliverables ECDWG Coordinators will present and update at the Education Sector meeting and Education Sector Coordinators will also be participating in the ECD WG meetings and support the Coordinators as required.

6. ECD WG Leadership

Two organizations from the Education Sector members elected by the ECDWG members with direct voting will be leading the ECDWG as Co-chairs on an annual basis, one will be from INGOs and another will be from Bangladeshi NGOs properly registered with the NGOAB. The elected ECDWG Co-Chair agencies will be responsible for efficient management, facilitation and functioning of the ECDWG in collaboration with the members under the guidance of the Education Sector. The elected Co-chairs will be nominating one Coordinator from each Co-chair organization to perform these responsibilities.

Criteria and responsibilities of the co-chair Organizations are:

- ❖ Co-chair organization must be a member of the **Education Sector**, one from INGO/UN and another from Bangladeshi NGO and commitment to humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership, sector-specific guidance and internationally recognized program standards and ECD programming technical expertise
 - ❖ Each Co-Chair agency must be willing to appoint/depute one ECDWG Coordinator from their ECD/Education program based in CXB, with the commitment by the relevant senior leadership of the organization to backstop to achieve the WG objectives.
 - ❖ Capacity and willingness to identify and deliver strategic priorities ECDiE and contribute to the Education sector's strategic response plan and activities,
 - ❖ Commitment to work cooperatively with other sector partners to ensure an optimal and strategic use of available resources, and share information on organizational resources.
 - ❖ Drive the agenda of the ECDWG to achieve the above objectives including by leading WG meetings and identifying member volunteers to lead on individual tasks;
 - ❖ Set the agenda for meetings and schedule and issue meeting notices accordingly and share meeting minutes and relevant docs.
 - ❖ Collect ECD resources and organize, and maintenance of the ECDWG drive with all relevant documents and references, including maintenance of the ECDWG mailing list;
 - ❖ Interest for coordination through communication with all ECDWG members, Education sector and other sectors to keep alignment.
 - ❖ Support for financial planning to ensure outcome of the working group
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- ❖ Share ECD related updates, new knowledge and information in CXB.
 - ❖ Coordinate with other stakeholders and platforms within the Education Sector and regular attendance at the Education Sector Working Group Co-chairs and other relevant meetings;

7. ECDWG Membership

Membership and Participation in the ECDWG is on an organizational basis, so each organization holds 1 voting power. Representatives from International, national, and local NGOs, UN agencies and Government will be part of the ECDWG who have programmatic presence and staff in Rohingya Response in CXB. Nominated by the organizations International, national, and local NGOs, UN agencies and Government, the members of the ECD WG are the staff members of those organisations working for ECD, committed to provide time and energy, including any of its sub-sectors, in Rohingya Response in Cox's Bazar (Camps and /or Host community). Members must represent the different sectors related to ECD, including early education, child protection, nutrition, health and other relevant and interested sectors.

Membership will be approved by the Education Sector and the list will be added to the Member list in the ECDWG google drive in Education Folder. It is also expected that following the Education Sector protocol, each member organization would select one person as its first attendee in the ECDWG but also can select a second attendee in the template (attached as Annex) for the ECDWG's record in the google drive. When difficult decisions need to be made by the ECD WG, members will hold 1 vote each and 50+% of votes is required for a proposal to be accepted by the WG Coordinators.

Criteria and responsibilities of member organizations /institutions:

- ❖ International, national and local NGOs, UN agencies and Government are eligible to be the member of the ECDWG who have programmatic presence (funding, TA, Management, implementation, research) and staff in Rohingya Response in CXB.
- ❖ The organization's interest in actively participating in ECDWG and commitment to supporting and contributing to the achievement of the goals, objectives and annual deliverables of the ECDWG.
- ❖ Institutional experience in the ECD, ECD in emergencies and/or early recovery relevant to the objectives of the ECDWG, including other sectors supporting the delivery of an appropriate ECD response
- ❖ Willingness to share expertise, technical materials, and work in a collaborative manner
- ❖ Select one or two qualified representatives who have direct experience in ECD in emergencies and early recovery contexts (programmatic, management/coordination, advisory), to represent the organization in the ECDWG.
- ❖ Member organization to assume the costs of their representatives to participate in the WG activities, including travel/hotel/per diem costs for attendance at the meeting/workshops and time away from regular work.
- ❖ Member representatives to ensure organizational buy-in, support to influence decision makers and donors:
- ❖ Member organization's implementation will address the WG materials guideline for their implementation aligned WG.
- ❖ Facilitating communication or linkages with government counterparts (e.g. RRRRC and CiC for camps; and relevant ministries for host communities, such as MoPME, MoWCA, Shishu Academy, MoH/Civil Surgeon Office, Institute of Public Health and Nutrition (IPHN), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), etc.) in consultation with the Education and other Sectors when required.

8. Activities and deliverables

ECDWG leadership tenure is for one year, so it is more likely to develop a one-year activity plan with deliverable and time line for each duration. However, the WG might decide to develop a longer-term plan with one-year commitment. Every year the newly elected leadership organization with the WG members will develop/review the annual plan and share with the Education Sector and member organizations. Activity plans for each leadership tenure will be saved in the ECDWG google drive for every member's ready reference. A planning template is attached in Annex 1. At the end of each tenure a review will be done by the departing Coordinators and accomplishments and challenges will be documented and presented in the google drive. For activities and deliverables INEE and ECDiE guidelines will be points of references along with other relevant references.

- **Timeline:** Two years/ Up to June 2023.

9. Amendments to the ToR

These terms of reference will periodically be amended, in particular when there are substantial changes in the context and situation on the ground.

ECD WG – Activity Plan:

Objectives	Activity	Timeline	Status
I. Support members of the WG with necessary tools, guidelines, contents, materials and with technical assistance to plan, design and implement quality ECD programs for holistic child development	1.1. Update and structure all existing ECD WG sub-folders in the Education Sector Google drive to prepare an easily accessible Resource Hub with all ECD resources including frameworks, learning and program packages, research and advocacy documents etc. available with the members and internationally.	By Dec 2021	
	1.2. Collect available resources of ECD and review existing manuals, and ECD training packages for ECD facilitators as agreed with the members.	By Dec 2021	
	1.3 Assistance to plan, design and implement quality ECD programs for Education Sector Partners	Continue	
II. Work with the Education Sector to establish a common understanding and awareness of what	2.1. Conduct a mapping exercise of existing ECD programmes, and structure a gap analysis in crisis-affected host communities in Ukhyia and Teknaf based on GoB strategic objectives and in collaboration with relevant GoB officials	By December 2021	

<p>“counts” as integrated ECD among stakeholders in line with ECDiE, Nurture and Care Framework and other guiding frameworks and identify gaps in the ECD in CXB including data gap in order to track services and support in advocacy to fill in the gaps.</p>	<p>2.2. Advocate for ECD-relevant data collection across sectors to ensure that relevant data is available for the establishment of new and/or collaborative programming in the future by meeting with relevant sector IM teams and/or doing a gap analysis on data needs</p>	<p>By March 2022 and continue</p>	
	<p>2.3. Promote information sharing across sectors of ECD data and programming information through the establishment and sharing of regular briefs on ECD, the frequency and content of which is to be agreed upon by members</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	
	<p>2.4. Review of existing and develop quality monitoring tools and guideline.</p>	<p>By March 2022</p>	
<p>III. Strengthen network, maintain coordination with Education and other sectors and create learning opportunities and Build capacity of dedicated leadership for early childhood development programmes as well as implementing partners</p>	<p>3.1. Update resource pool for field monitoring, training facilitation as a part capacity building initiative for ECD partners</p>	<p>By Dec 2021</p>	
	<p>3.2. Sharing evidence towards ECD by global and national (e.g male/ father engagement, play based learning, community contributions, Technology based ECD etc.)</p>	<p>Continue</p>	
	<p>3.3. Attach with national and international ECD network and representing ECDWG organising webinar/ meeting/ workshop etc.</p>	<p>continuing</p>	