WHAT IS THE EARLY YEARS FELLOWSHIP?

- Launched in 2016 to build capacity within countries and develop the next generation of leadership to scale-up investments in Early Childhood Development (ECD).

- Fellows work with the World Bank and Government for two years (20% extensive professional development).


Agenda

Presentation of Policy Overview Findings
- Rana Yacoub, Early Years Fellow, Egypt
- Rashida Ibrahim, Early Years Fellow, Ghana/Liberia/Sierra Leone
- Zeineb Ben Yahmed, Early Years Fellow, Tunisia

Short Q&A

Reflection on Fellows’ Experiences
- Alisa Currimjee, Early Years Fellow, Mozambique/Madagascar/Comoros/Mauritius
- Chuyu Song, Early Years Fellow, China and Mongolia
- Barbara Barbosa, Early Years Fellow, Brazil
- Soukaina Tazi, Early Years Fellow, Morocco

Q&A and Discussion
COVID-19 AND THE EARLY YEARS

A Cross-Country Overview of Impact and Responses in Early Childhood Development

A report prepared by the World Bank Early Years Fellows
HOW THE IDEA CAME TO BE

What can we as Fellows do to better understand the situation of young children and their families in the context of COVID-19?

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified the need to systematically document and provide insight into how the consequences and institutional responses to COVID-19 have affected young children’s lives during the first year of the pandemic in 2020.
OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY OVERVIEW

- To do a deep dive into the impact of COVID-19 on young children.
- Shed light on country level responses to the pandemic.
- Do it in a way that is globally relevant.
- Collect compelling evidence base for decision makers.
- Dual relevance for Fellows (learning & impact/contribution).
The report covers three sectors hugely affected by the pandemic:

1. Education and Learning;
2. Health and Nutrition;
3. Social Protection;
   + Cross-thematic section on children in vulnerable households

Emphasis in each sector on:

- Consequences of COVID-19 on young children
- Country responses to COVID-19
- World Bank responses to COVID-19
- Best practices and key takeaways
GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE REPORT:
26 LMI COUNTRIES / 4 CONTINENTS
METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Survey questionnaire was designed: 13 open-ended and 34 close ended questions.

Data collected in October 2020, in reference to the starting period, March 2020, when the WHO declared the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sources of data used to complete the survey: primary and secondary.

Data collected in consultation with government officials, World Bank country teams, and various stakeholders at country level.
LIMITATIONS

• **Imperfect information** available given the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

• **Limited time** for data-collection (one month).

• Findings should therefore be viewed as **preliminary**.
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
EDUCATION AND LEARNING
Among the countries covered in the survey, the pandemic has led to full school closures for children under the age of eight almost everywhere.

IMPACT: School closures during COVID-19

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
As schools closed, so did many of the accompanying services that children and families rely on.

**IMPACT: Consequences on other child-centered services delivered through schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School related services</th>
<th>Countries where the program was suspended</th>
<th>Countries where the program was adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School meals</td>
<td>North Macedonia, Tunisia, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, China, Mali, Central African Republic</td>
<td>Brazil, El Salvador, Burkina Faso, Gambia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services (Immunizations, Supplementation, Growth Monitoring, Deworming, Vision Screening)</td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Gambia, Cameroon, China</td>
<td>Madagascar, Uganda, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social net assistance – school attendance and health monitoring conditionalities</td>
<td>El Salvador (transfers for school attendance)</td>
<td>Egypt, North Macedonia, El Salvador (school supplies and uniforms in-kind transfer), Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCE services and other Services</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Philippines, Uganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
RESPONSE: Distance learning coverage for children ages 0 to 8

22 out of 26 countries did introduce some form of distance learning for young children. But only a third of them for the youngest age cohort (0-3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP (0-3)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP (4-5)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP (6-8)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
In almost half of the countries (10) it took more than 4 weeks to introduce distance learning for young children.

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
RESPONSE: Types of distance learning efforts

The three most predominant ways are:

- TV 18 countries
- Radio 15 countries
- Online learning 15 countries

More than 90 percent of all surveyed countries using at least one of them, and one-third using all three simultaneously.
RESPONSE: Types of distance learning efforts

One quarter of all distance learning initiatives came as a joint effort between Governments and Non-Governmental actors.
RESPONSE: E-learning platforms

- No e-learning platform: 7 (27%)
- National e-learning / without ECE content: 5 (19%)
- Other: 14 (54%)

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020

- 8 countries with no guidance for teachers: 57%
- 6 countries with guidance for teachers: 43%

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
RESPONSE: The reopening phase

At the time of data collection, October 2020, almost all countries had developed protocols for school reopening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of protocol</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene / soap</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social distancing</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinfecting and cleaning</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for cases</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for prevention</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for mental health</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action plan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
The World Bank’s Early Learning Partnership Trust Fund launched an emergency funding round to help teams support ECD within the COVID-19 response.

- In total, 29 high-quality proposals worth US$1.1 million were approved.

- Grants expected to reach 19 million parents and 19.3 million young children as direct beneficiaries.

- 15 grants focusing on early learning and education, including 8 countries in this report.
READ@HOME INITIATIVE

Aims to deliver reading and learning materials to hard-to-reach homes along with support for parents and other caregivers to engage with children’s learning.

Implemented in 10 countries, including 3 in this report.

Partnering and building on efforts with UNICEF, GPE, UNESCO, USAID, ECE/Education-focused networks and NGOs
OPPORTUNITES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Countries need to continue ensuring that distance learning efforts are diverse and flexible enough to target even the most marginalized and deprived children.

Parenting support is crucial to ensure the success of distance learning efforts and should continue to be part of resilient ECE systems beyond COVID-19.

Countries have the responsibility to protect a certain level and quality of public financing in ECE during COVID-19, and over time, to increase investing in the early years of schooling.

Planning and moving towards a safe reopening of schools is urgently needed.
HEALTH AND NUTRITION
IMPACT: Provision of essential health and nutrition services during COVID-19

• Lockdowns and restrictions affected access to health care and nutrition services for women and children in 20 out of 26 countries

• All countries experienced a decline in utilization of health care services
IMPACT: Access to food

- Less than 20% of the countries surveyed experienced positive GDP growth and 1/3 experienced more than 5% reductions in real GDP growth.

- El Salvador experienced the largest reduction in real GDP, at 9%.

- 17 of the 26 countries surveyed experienced an increase in food prices (April to September 2020).

- Reduction in income and increase in food prices has impacted access to food, especially women and children.
RESPONSE: Types of technology strategies adapted for continued delivery of essential health and nutrition services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovative ways of delivering health and nutrition services</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Messages</td>
<td>Voice Messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
RESPONSE: Policies/strategies to increase food access by families

• Around 68% of countries surveyed initiated or modified food programs to provide adequate food supply and security.

• The most common form of support provided by countries include:
  • Food basket distribution (Rwanda, Uganda, Madagascar, Philippines)
  • Vouchers or cash to purchase food (Pakistan)
  • Establishment of emergency food processing and distribution (China)
  • Provision of agricultural inputs to support farmers (China, Egypt, Ethiopia)
  • Price stabilization and monitoring (China and Egypt)
Response focused on access to essential health and nutrition services, immunizations and strengthening of the health system for prevention, detection and responding to COVID-19.

- Additional Financing for increased access to health and nutrition services (Mozambique and Pakistan).

- New projects for detection, prevention and responding to COVID-19 (Ghana, Tunisia and Uganda).

- One ELP grant (Madagascar) for the development of Standard Operating Protocols aims to improve the quality of ECD services for infants and young children through the Scaling Lipid-based Nutrient Supplements (LNS) project.
OPPORTUNITIES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Prioritization of the delivery of essential health and nutrition services as countries continue to contain the pandemic
- Continue to use remote methodologies for delivery of health services
- Policies to ensure food access is very crucial as many countries struggle with rising food prices, reduction in income and movement restrictions
- Integration of malnutrition prevention and management in ongoing COVID-19 response for better repositioning of nutrition in COVID-19 prevention and management
SOCIAL PROTECTION
IMPACT: Country Level Shocks
IMPACT: Household Level Impact

Monitoring of Under-5 with No Supervision and on Domestic Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children under five with no supervision</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring on domestic violence</td>
<td>Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, North Macedonia, Philippines, Tunisia, Uganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
IMPACT: Affected Preventive Measures

- Birth Registration
- Home Visiting Programs
- System To Report Child Abuse and Protection
- Social Safety
RESPONSE: Social Protection Programs Initiated or Adjusted to protect ECD

- Guaranteed minimum income for poor parents of children aged zero to ten years (North Macedonia)
- A grant for people with disabilities (Uganda)
- Food distribution program (Rwanda)
- Safe shelters for women (Tunisia)
- Adaptation of the home visiting program (Brazil)
RESPONSE: Social Protection in Media Campaigns

Prevalence of ECD Messages in Media Campaigns

- Child protection: 70%
- Family wellbeing: 63%
- Positive caregiving: 56%
- Birth registration: 41%

Source: Early Years Fellows COVID-19 Survey, 2020
ECD was integrated into wider social protection programs. Main activities include:

• conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs,
• information campaigns,
• women empowerment
• birth registration

Tunisia COVID-19 Social Protection Emergency Response Support Project
Pakistan’s Securing Human Investments to Foster Transformation Project
Gambia Social Safety Net Project
Ethiopia’s Urban Productive Safety Net Project
OPPORTUNITIES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Data remain limited.

Despite evidence of increased reporting of domestic or gender-based violence, this phenomenon is not well addressed.

Cash transfers, which have helped alleviate the stresses that families have faced due to income shocks, may not be sufficient.
CONCLUSIONS
OPPORTUNITES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Young children (0-8) are one of the most vulnerable groups impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

More attention is needed to include the most marginalised groups when designing emergency responses.

The crisis may prove to be an opportunity to rebuild a stronger and more resilient education, health and social protection system.

To improve the effectiveness of responses, solutions may lie in the continuation of parenting programs across all sectors.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Time for questions and discussion