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Abstract title: The Early Child Development and child rights; where do they cross path?

The science of Early Child Development gained remarkable attention and recognition during the last few decades of the past century. By 2000s it was established that the early years mark a precious window of opportunity that can be used to set the tone of health, development, educational achievement, economic productivity and social competence of the individuals for the balance of their lives. The shift in the paradigm of health care from treatment to prevention helped this recognition further. In the early 2000s, the built momentum for ECD was amplified when the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinant of Health recognized ECD as a potent Social Determinate of Health and recommended investment on ECD as a practical approach to improving population health and health inequities.

Background: On the other hand, the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (the Convention) in 1989 at the UN General Assembly, was followed by an unprecedented ratification by almost every country in the world. In 2005 the Committee authoritatively reiterated the commitment of the states to their young children (children 0-8 years old) through the development of General Comment 7: Implementing Rights in Early Childhood (GC7). In 2006, GC7 was operationalized through the use of indicators framework by an international group who was invited by and worked under the auspices of the Committee for over a decade. The resultant tool was the Early Childhood Rights Indicators, ECRI (also known as indicators of General comment 7). Since then ECRI has been piloted/used in some low, middle and high-income countries. The central objective of GC7, ECRI, as well as the CRC, is to improve the developmental outcomes of [young] children through the fulfillment of children's rights to life, protection, provisions, and participation.

In accordance with article 44 of CRC, the States parties to the Convention are under international legal obligation to submit a periodical report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) on the progress in the status of children's rights within their States. Under the CRC governments are accountable to work towards and report on the progressive improvements in the implementation of the CRC. Comprehensive and roper data collection is germane to the fulfillment of such accountability. Tools as ECRI assist governments with the task of implementing but also monitoring the implementation of the CRC during the early years (children 0-8 years old).

Despite the commonalities in the core objectives of the CRC and the ECD community, the two fields of child rights and ECD have remained and worked and remained in silos. The ECRI tool, combining the science of ECD and human rights, facilitates the bridging of these two fields. This presentation provides an overview of the science of ECD, and child rights and where their paths cross. It will present a summary of the principles upon which the ECRI is built, the process of developing the ECRI as a useful data collection tool to improve the state of child rights as well as ECD, and what is hoped to be achieved by this tool. The presentation will close by introducing GlobalChild, a large international initiative that building upon ECRI embarks on the task of operationalizing the entire CRC to develop a comprehensive child rights monitoring platform.

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