

THE MINUTES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) SUB-CLUSTER MEETING

Venue: Lemigo Hotel, Kigali.
Date: October 31st, 2018
Chaired by: Dr. Asiimwe Anita, NECDP Coordinator
Co-Chaired by: Nathalie Hamoudi, Deputy Country Representative UNICEF

The meeting Agenda

- ◆ Opening & Welcoming Remarks;
- ◆ Presentation on work status from the 2 Technical working Groups
 1. Presentation on Nutrition and Wash
 2. Presentation on Parent Education, Early learning and Child Protection
- ◆ Feedback from Participant
- ◆ Parenting Curriculum Development
- ◆ Feedback from participant
- ◆ Structure of coordination mechanism
- ◆ Closing Remarks and way forward.

The meeting background

The ECD sub-cluster meeting was held at Lemigo Hotel on October 31st, 2018. This meeting brought together the representatives of the Government institutions, representatives of multilateral, bilateral agencies and missions, the Civil Society Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, the Private Sector, Media, International and National NGOs among others that intervene in Early Childhood development (ECD) domain in Rwanda.

The ECD sub-cluster meeting was chaired by National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) and Co-chaired by UNICEF. The main purpose of the meeting was to continue to strengthen the Early Childhood Development Sub-cluster as an important coordination and cooperation platform, as well as a part of the National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC).

Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Dr. Asimwe Anita, NECDP Coordinator, thanked and welcomed all participants of the meeting in her openings remarks. She emphasized on the World Bank's Human Capital Index that had recently come out with a new report in which Rwanda received a very low score. She urged all participant should continue to feel ownership of their work in sector to make sure that in the future can secure a good life for the children of Rwanda. She then once again thanked all those present for their participation and officially opened the meeting.

The presentation on Nutrition and Wash / USAID

Presented by both chair and co-chair (NECDP and USAID) the first presentation focused on the nutrition situation, the role of food, nutrition, and WASH TWG, as well as the approaches to address malnutrition.

Starting on the nutrition situation, the study sample included 6736 children (6-59 months), 2125 children (6-23 months) per district, and measured height and age, which were reported during the national screening in May 2018. The data showed that stunting among children under 5 years had decreased from 43% in 2015 to 35% on 2018. The prevalence of wasting remained stable at 2%, while the number of underweight children increased and the number of overweight children decreased. Since 2005, anemia among children has decreased from 52% to 37% and among women anemia has also slightly decreased from 26% in 2005 to 19% in 2014/2015. These numbers highlighted how important it is for women and children to eat at least three times a day, eating from one or preferably more food groups to achieve the Minimum Acceptable Diet.

In regards to the Water and Sanitation 75.2% of the population in Rwanda access to a clean water source, where urban access is 79% and 69% in rural areas. Further 74.5% have access to improved latrines facilities, where urban access is 83% and rural areas is 73%.

It was noted that integrated food security, nutrition and WASH working groups is going to work together to coordinate food security, nutrition and WASH implementation in Rwanda. Their current goals include to fill the research gap in nutrition (nutrition situation analysis frame work and decision tools), to enhance milk consumption, to do a comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis survey, as well as to review and update the national MIYCN behavior change nutrition tools.

Finally the presentation highlighted the key strategies to reduce malnutrition in Rwanda, which includes *Proper targeting* (Pregnant and lactating women, children 0-6 years and adolescent girls), *Availability, access, and consumption* of animal source proteins (eggs, milk, meat, fish), reinforcing CBNP program at community level to implement height for age visualization, introduce stunting indicators in the national monitoring systems, to promote dietary diversity for women and children and to improve hand washing practices.

Comments from Participants:

After the presentation, the participants were given an opportunity to discuss the topic at hand. Most questions were on the issue of malnutrition and *positive parenting*. One of the participant from FXB said that according to what they have seen in their work there is a big number of families that are not taking their responsibility in fighting against malnutrition, and that for this reason the Sugira Muryango program teaches families about their responsibilities, family relationships, nutrition, and hygiene.

Ildephonse Hitimana, a community Mobilizer for ECD- projects from Imbuto foundation, also mentioned positive parenting, and told other participant that when a child is not performing well in school it might be a negative impact from the malnutrition. He also emphasized the need to teach parents on how to develop their children's brain by providing all necessary nutrients and stimulants.

Concluding on this topic, Dr. Anita said that it is not the poverty but lack of education that is causing most of the problem, and that is why they are working with families in to educate couples, parents and all other people in fulfilling their responsibilities as parents and caretakers of children.

Presentation on the Parent Education, Early learning and child protection

Flavien Manishimwe, a Positive Parenting official from Umuhuza, gave the following presentation on the Parent Education, Early learning and child protection.

On parent education, he clarified that while parent education is one of the five priority pillars in ECD, there is still a high demand at community level, exceeding what current ECD facilities can offer. Considering the data indicators for ECD interventions in Rwanda, the current trend shows that only 63 % of 3-5 year old children are developmentally on track in literacy-numeracy, physical, socio-

emotional and learning domains. Further a KAP study from 2014 showed that nearly 50% of those interviewed expressed a belief that children need to be physically punished in order to grow up well. Additionally, men's participation is still low due to the misconception that only women are responsible for childcare.

He then moved on to talk about early learning, which he reminded the participants, starts from birth. Children under six years of age spend most of their time together with their parents at home, not being engaged in learning activities. He then emphasized to the need to sensitize parents on the importance of early learning.

On child protection it was noted that 35% of Rwandan children under five years of age are left alone without supervision, or with only other children (exposed to higher risks of accidents, abuse and neglect). Parents, care givers and the community in general need to be sensitized on the issue in order to be aware of child rights, especially children with disabilities, in order to ensure that they are not left behind.

Closing his presentation, Flavien Manishimwe recommended further collaboration among all stakeholders, including parents and the community in general. He also recommended to increase community awareness through home visits, capacity building, resource development, mobilization, and sensitization about ECD services.

Questions and Comments:

After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions, discuss and give comments. Freya Declercq, a HOD at the NECDP, said that it is important that we offer a full ECD package to prioritize our children no matter what. She continued to say that they are our responsibility and we have to make sure everything related to our children is going in the right direction, and that is why we are teaching and making the parents aware of their responsibilities toward their children.

Vincent Gahamanyi, Social Protection Specialist at UNICEF, said that we need to look at different categories of people in our communities. The extremely poor are not aware of the ECD- centers. They ask for help in the home based ECD centers, which are not able to help them all. When there is food these people can access it, but when there is no food they go back home without food. Even when the services are there they are not able to access them because of the limited

awareness and or financial resources, as when a family cannot afford to buy a jerrycan of water.

Dr. Anita Asiimwe, the NECDP Coordinator, added that the people who cannot afford a jerrycan are the people we need to prioritize and that it is our responsibility to identify and change those communities.

ECD National parenting curriculum

Dr. Joyce Musabe, a consultant representing Cambridge Education, was given the opportunity to present on work process to develop the national ECD Parenting Curriculum. Dr. Musabe started her presentation by noting that Rwanda established the national ECD policy and strategy plan in 2006. In regards to developing this new curriculum her team had already started with the literature review based on different guiding policies and documents. The next step would be to involve different stakeholders to review and discuss the findings from the literature review to improve the curriculum. Further field visits will be conducted in order to collect data from 10 out of 30 district, targeting 10 families in each district. After this, the team will sit down write the document, a process that will be based on stakeholder participation. Once the final document is validated, it will be disseminated. After closing the presentation there was no questions or comments.

The National Gender and Family Cluster / MIGEPROF

Nadja Piironen, a bilateral associate expert at MIGEPROF, was given the opportunity to present on the National Gender and Family Cluster structure.

Regarding the Membership, Nadja explained that the NGFC should ensure the representation of all institutions intervening in the area of gender equality and family promotion in all NST sectors, including the *Government Institutions, Multilateral and bilateral agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sectors, Local and international NGOs and other interested institution in intervening in gender equality or family promotion.*

Closing her presentation, she told the participants that following the division used internally within MIGEPROF, the NGF- sub clusters will be divided among the four thematic areas which are child protection, Early Childhood Development, Family promotion and GBV prevention, as well as Gender equality and Family Promotion.



Questions and Comments:

There were two questions raised after the presentation, first on how the sub-clusters are linked to national sectors, and secondly where MIGEPROF fall under which cluster?

Anita Responded in the following words “if we take the example of food and nutrition, we all know that agriculture is there for economic development, so within the sector of agriculture we make sure that we are part of it” she said. Secondly, Gender and family promotion is truly cross cutting, MIGEPROF do organize, participate and contribute to all these sub-cluster but the main reason is to make sure that gender is mainstreamed”.

Structure of Coordination Mechanism

The next activity will be the joint partnership meeting that is planned to be held on Wednesday 22nd of November 2018 the Gicumbi District. The invited participants are all NGO’s working in the area of Child Development in Gicumbi-directly or indirectly. Below is the Proposed Agenda:

- ◆ Objective of the One District Approach- NECDP to be presented by Dr. Anita;
- ◆ Partnership mapping report presentation UNICEF (Michael);
- ◆ Draft joint ODA work plan presentation (NECDP- Freya);
- ◆ ODA M&E Framework Presentation (UNICEF);
- ◆ ODA Coordination framework (NECDP);
- ◆ District commitment: speech by the District Mayor;
- ◆ Closing Remarks and official launch.

Closing Remarks and way forward / UNICEF

The meeting was closed Nathalie Hamoudi, Deputy Country Representative UNICEF. In her her closing remarks Hamoudi thanked all participants for the meeting and said she looked forward to work with everyone. She was impressed with what the government of Rwanda is achieving and with the progress made in ECD.

Minutes taken by:



Tumusiime Moses
Partnerships

NECDP

Minutes approved

by:



Nathalie Hamoudi **Anita Asimwe**
Deputy Country Coordinator
Representative

UNICEF

NECDP