

# **Five-Year Strategic Plan**

**Early Childhood Development Task Force of the  
Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities**

**2015 - 2020**

**March 2015**

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**Early Childhood Development Task Force of the**  
**Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities**

**I. Background**

To prepare the Strategic Plan of the Early Childhood Development Task Force on Children with Disabilities (ECDtf), a Strategic Planning Task Team was formed, composed of Cecilia Breinbauer, Emily Vargas-Barón and Don Wertlieb. Three consultants supported this effort: Rusudan Borchorishvili (Georgia); Rebecca Chelimo (Kenya); and Elizabeth Neuville (Keystone, USA).

With funding support from the Early Childhood Program of the Open Society Foundations, the Task Team has accomplished the following activities:

- Designed, reviewed, revised and conducted an international survey conducted via Survey Monkey to secure ideas, suggestions, and priorities regarding the future vision, mission, objectives, and strategies of the ECDtf.
- Sent the survey to all currently registered members of the ECDtf.
- Produced and distributed a preliminary report on survey results to all ECDtf members for their information and to elicit further comments.
- Based on survey data, prepared and distributed a draft five-year Strategic Plan, secured comments, conducted a webinar to obtain more suggestions, and revised the Strategic Plan.
- Prepared and distributed the final version of the five-year Strategic Plan.

**II. Main Purposes of the Strategic Plan**

The main purposes of the five-year Strategic Plan of the Early Childhood Development Task Force on Children with Disabilities (ECDtf) are to:

- Assist members of the ECDtf to prioritize among possible strategies, activities and services, with a focus on implementing 4 to 5 major initiatives in 2015 - 2016;
- Guide the initial organizational and programmatic steps for the development of the ECDtf;
- Provide a framework to identify members' areas of interest for contributing to the ECDtf and for forming small working teams, as may be needed.

**III. Fundamental Goal of ECDtf**

The ECDtf seeks to serve professionals, national governments, global and regional networks and agencies, and civil society organizations that share our goal of expanding and improving inclusive early childhood development services and policies for children from birth to eight years of age who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.

#### **IV. The Five-Year Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan is divided into the following sections:

1. Vision Statement
2. Mission Statement
3. Core Objectives
4. Strategic Priorities
5. Activities and Services

##### **1. The Vision Statement**

To help ensure that children with developmental delays and disabilities will achieve their full potential, the ECDtf will promote cross-sectoral policies, programs and practices from preconception to eight years of age in all nations to establish and expand high-quality and integrated services for early childhood intervention in natural environments and to enhance the inclusion and equitable participation of young children and families in education, health, nutrition, and protection services, including in emergency situations.

##### **2. The Mission Statement**

To Achieve the Vision, the ECDtf will:

- Conduct policy advocacy and communications;
- Foster knowledge development through the provision of documents, tools, processes, research and studies;
- Advance pre- and in-service training for professional development and for personnel working in community-based services;
- Support the improvement and expansion of high-quality and inclusive services;
- Enable networking, knowledge transfer and information exchanges;
- Promote epidemiologic studies to understand the number and characteristics of children with developmental delays and disabilities in order to facilitate early identification, policy development and timely interventions;
- Encourage early identification through outreach, developmental surveillance and screening;
- Promote the rights of young children and their families, including the provision of parenting education and support;
- Work to increase funding worldwide to support services for young children with developmental delays and disabilities.

##### **3. Core Objectives**

The core objectives of the ECDtf will be to:

1. Increase policy advocacy for ECI and inclusive ECD services at global, regional, national and community levels.
2. Expand knowledge development by producing and encouraging the preparation of new documents, tools, processes, research and studies.
3. Train more specialists and paraprofessionals for ECI and inclusive ECD services through improving and expanding pre- and in-service training.
4. Help children achieve their full potential and support their parents and families through expanding and improving ECI and inclusive ECD services.
5. Assist nations to identify children at high risk of developmental delays and disabilities by establishing national early identification services informed by developmental and disability surveillance and screening and multidisciplinary assessment.
6. Develop new international, regional and national networks, partnerships and systems for knowledge transfer and international exchange.

7. Promote the rights of young children with developmental delays and disabilities and advance the rights of their families.
8. Obtain sustainable funding support for the ECDtf.

#### **4. Strategic Priorities**

The following strategic priorities will guide the development of the ECDtf and its activities. The Strategic Priorities are listed by their identifying topic heading and their rank order, according to the recent ECDtf member survey.

##### **Strategic Priority 1:**

##### **Policy advocacy and leadership through communications**

Promote and conduct international policy advocacy and leadership through planning and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy and awareness campaign for ECI and inclusive ECD services and broad and balanced participation.

##### **Strategic Priority 2:**

##### **Knowledge development: documents, tools, processes, research and studies**

Promote knowledge development through preparing or encouraging the preparation of documents, tools, policy and program development processes, research and studies that will advance the priorities and themes of the ECDtf.

##### **Strategic Priority 3:**

##### **Capacity building and pre- and in-service training**

Promote capacity building especially through the development of pre- and in-service training systems for professionals and non-professionals who work in early childhood intervention, inclusive early childhood development, care and education systems, and rehabilitation services.

##### **Strategic Priority 4:**

##### **Improvement and expansion of inclusive services**

Promote the development, improvement and expansion of early childhood intervention services and inclusive early childhood programs and policies, with a special focus on inclusive education.

##### **Strategic Priority 5:**

##### **Early identification through developmental surveillance and screening**

Promote the development of national systems of early identification through developmental surveillance, screening and multidisciplinary assessment of developmental delays, disabilities, atypical behaviors, biological and other risks and protective factors.

##### **Strategic Priority 6:**

##### **Networking, knowledge transfer and information exchanges**

Promote international, regional and national networking, partnerships, knowledge transfer and information exchange.

##### **Strategic Priority 7:**

##### **Rights of young children and families**

Provide support for the full implementation of the CRPD and CRC for young children and their families.

**Strategic Priority 8:  
Financial support for ECDtf activities and programs**

Secure funding to support the work of the ECDtf.

**5. Activities and Services for 2015-2016**

The activities and services listed for 2015-2016 are considered to be of the highest priority. In 2017, the ECDtf will develop a second Strategic Plan that will address additional activities and services that could not be included in this first Strategic Plan.

**Strategic Priority 1:  
Policy advocacy and leadership through communications**

Promote and conduct international policy advocacy and leadership through planning and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy and awareness campaign for promoting ECI and inclusive ECD services and broad and balanced participation.

**Activity 1.1:** Establish an ECDtf for CWD Advocacy Team that will design, develop and conduct an advocacy campaign to promote national policies and systems of services for early childhood intervention, inclusive early and preschool education, and other inclusive ECD services

**Activity 1.2.** Develop a Policy Advocacy Package and a delivery mechanism for national stakeholders and decision makers on the importance and cost-effectiveness of investing in continuous services for early childhood intervention, inclusive education and ECD.

**Activity 1.3:** Plan and conduct policy webinars and roundtables to encourage inter-sectoral collaboration among education, health and protection ministries in nations of all regions to develop high-quality early childhood intervention and inclusive ECD services.

**Activity 1.4:** Design and develop an ECDtf for CWD website and a newsletter in at least three languages for policy planners, professionals, emergency personnel, and communities on early childhood intervention and inclusive ECD services, good practices, lessons learned, research studies and key documents.

**Strategic Priority 2:  
Knowledge development: documents, tools, processes, research and studies**

Promote knowledge development through preparing or encouraging the preparation of documents, tools, policy and program development processes, research and studies that will advance the priorities and themes of the ECDtf.

**Activity 2.1:** Conduct assessments and reviews regarding needs for developing global, regional and national policies, programs and related educational materials, tools and processes for ECI, inclusive education, inclusive ECD and other services.

**Activity 2.2:** Develop and widely disseminate regular policy briefs on ECDtf topics, including good practices, lessons learned, state-of-the-art tools, service and personnel standards, research and evaluation systems, child tracking systems, culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and other topics.

**Activity 2.3:** Promote the development of national baseline epidemiologic studies on the prevalence of developmental delays and disabilities, including degree of severity, functional impairment and preventable risk factors for these conditions, especially in low and middle-income nations.

**Activity 2.4:** Work with member entities to plan and conduct seminars, workshops and roundtables on key evaluation, monitoring and research topics at global, regional and national levels, and prepare and disseminate reports on each event.

**Strategic Priority 3:  
Capacity building and pre- and in-service training**

Promote capacity building especially through the development of pre- and in-service training systems for professionals and non-professionals who work in early childhood intervention, inclusive early childhood development, care and education systems, and rehabilitation services.

**Activity 3.1:** Promote the planning and development of regional training workshops and high-level seminars on ECI and inclusive ECD services in collaboration with higher education and inter-institutional partners, and disseminate reports and follow-up on regional and national impacts.

**Activity 3.2:** Promote the design, development, provision and evaluation of pre- and in-service training systems for early intervention specialists, teachers for inclusive preschool education, specialists for inclusive ECD services, and medical and rehabilitation personnel.

**Activity 3.3:** Develop training manuals, materials, tools and a virtual training program for nations to use to train and supervise personnel for ECI and inclusive education services.

**Strategic Priority 4:  
Improvement and expansion of inclusive services**

Promote the development, improvement and expansion of early childhood intervention services and inclusive early childhood programs and policies, with a special focus on inclusive education.

**Activity 4.1:** Support the development of national systems for ECI through bringing together key ECI actors to identify ways to collaborate and assist nations to develop national systems for ECI and then conduct at least three initiatives to carry out their recommendations.

**Activity 4.2:** Promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational process through encouraging the development of programs to train teachers, especially from minority ethnic and linguistic groups, about how to implement inclusive preschool and primary school education systems for children with disabilities.

**Activity 4.3:** Promote the systematization of plans and service packages for supporting young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families during and after emergencies and disasters.

**Strategic Priority 5:  
Early identification through developmental surveillance and screening**

Promote the development of national systems of early identification through developmental surveillance, screening and multidisciplinary assessment of developmental delays, disabilities, atypical behaviors, biological and other risks and protective factors.

**Activity 5.1:** Encourage the selection and adaptation or the preparation of low-cost instruments for developmental surveillance, screening and multidisciplinary assessment to ensure uniform methodologies are implemented across countries; lists of tools used in countries are compiled; and training videos for administering tools appropriately are developed.

**Activity 5.2:** Promote the development of low or no-cost training systems to train community members, preschool teachers, nurses, physicians and others to conduct developmental screenings and multidisciplinary assessments.

**Activity 5.3:** Encourage the creation of Child Tracking and Referral Systems that will ensure children with special needs in health and ECI systems are referred to inclusive comprehensive educational, clinical and social services.

**Strategic Priority 6:  
Networking, knowledge transfer and information exchanges**

Promote international, regional and national networking, partnerships, knowledge transfer and information exchange.

**Activity 6.1:** Establish a global network and promote the development of regional and national networks and partnerships for the timely sharing of best practices and research findings among diverse stakeholders thereby creating a Virtual Community of Practice on Inclusive ECD for children with disabilities that will facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources and technical assistance.

**Activity 6.2:** Utilize the ECDtf website, social media, a blog and webinars to promote knowledge transfer and information exchanges regarding ECI and inclusive ECD services, with special attention to including documents in as many languages as possible.

**Activity 6.3:** Present symposia or panel presentations at relevant global, regional and national conferences to exchange knowledge and expand support for inclusive education and ECI.

**Strategic Priority 7:  
Rights of young children and their families**

Provide support for the full implementation of the CRPD and CRC for young children and their families.

**Activity 7.1:** Develop modules for use in training programs to prepare future personnel in the basic elements of child rights in ECI and inclusive education services.

**Activity 7.2:** Support advocacy for CRPD and CRC through working with national systems to move all young orphans and social orphans, and especially those with developmental delays and disabilities, out of institutions and into inclusive family and service settings.

**Activity 7.3:** Promote the training of families of children with disabilities about child rights, ECI strategies and inclusive education through producing materials for families in primary health care and other settings.

**Strategic Priority 8:  
Financial support for the ECDtf activities and programs**

Secure funding to support the work of the ECDtf.

**Activity 8.1:** Create a Fundraising Plan for ECDtf, identify key players and champions for ECDtf/ CWD activities, and submit at least five proposals per year to potential funding sources.

**Activity 8.2:** Identify promising partnerships and opportunities for resource development and fundraising.

**V. Next Steps**

The level of funding support for the ECDtf will impact what we shall be able to accomplish. It is anticipated that the following major activities will be undertaken during 2015-2016:

- Expand and establish the membership of the ECDtf, with special attention to:
  - Including more persons with disabilities and the parents and families of children with developmental delays and disabilities;
  - Securing greater representation from all world regions; and
  - Inviting additional types of institutions and professional associations to join ECDtf.
- Draft bylaws for ECDtf management of the ECDtf, with a focus on ensuring leadership and sustainability.
- Search for additional sources of funding to support ECDtf priorities.



- Begin high priority projects that are selected by our members and receive funding support. Priority projects might include:
  - Development of the ECDtf website, with special attention to including as many languages as possible;
  - Expansion and improvement of the format of the ECDtf Newsletter;
  - Establishment of an ECDtf Advocacy Team and the commencement of advocacy activities;
  - Promotion of existing efforts to improve global accessibility to open-access or low-cost measurement tools that are culturally adapted and validated for assessment, screening and research, including children at risk for and affected by developmental delays and disabilities;
  - Development of an Action Plan to secure funding for ECDtf projects highlighted in the Strategic Plan;
  - Development of 3 to 4 policy briefs each year and placement on the ECDtf website;
  - Encouragement of ECDtf members to present talks and hold gatherings on behalf of ECDtf at international, regional and national meetings.
  
- More activities will be undertaken, depending upon opportunities that arise during 2015-2016.