Early Childhood Development

KNOWLEDGE GATHERING TEMPLATE

In the “G20 Initiative for Early Childhood Development”, G20 countries committed to share best practices and lessons learned through a platform that will be developed by ECDAN and will be operative by 2019.

G20 countries are invited to voluntarily submit projects, programs, policies, or similar initiatives implemented domestically, internationally or through official development assistance that are aimed Early Childhood Development, prioritizing those which address the issue in a multidimensional manner.

Countries are invited to share as many projects, programs, policies or initiatives as they wish to showcase, submitting one form per best practice.

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<th>Country Information</th>
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<td>(1) Country</td>
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China

(2) Project, Program, Policy, or Initiative name/title:

Early screening, referral and interventions of disabilities to advance early childhood development for children with disabilities

(3) Project, Program, Policy, or Initiative location

(3a) City: Nationwide           (3b) Country: China

General information

(4) Brief Description

Every child has the right reaching their full developmental potential, also for the newborns and young children with disabilities and developmental difficulties. Childhood disabilities impose a huge emotional and economic burden on the affected families and children.

The total number of children with disabilities (aged 0-17 years old) in China is estimated to be around 5 million, equivalent to a prevalence rate of 1.60%. The World Report on Disability (2011) estimates that amongst those aged 0–14 years, roughly 5.1% (93 million) live with a ‘moderate or severe’ disability. This prevalence rate is much higher than in China with an estimate of about 1.58% of children aged 0-14 years living with a ‘moderate or severe’ disability.

Unfortunately, the families with disable children often face many challenges and disadvantages to access and use the services and support including inadequate access to good-quality early identification,
inadequate referral to early childhood intervention services, and inadequate support for caregivers and family. While 73% of children with disabilities had needs for at least one rehabilitation service, only 23% of children with disabilities received at least one rehabilitation service in 2014.

China has put in place quite a comprehensive legal and policy framework in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. This includes the Law on the Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, five year National Disability Development Plans and more recently the Regulation on Disability Prevention, and the Regulation on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

To assist in the implementation of the above several policies as well as the National Action Plan for Children Development (2011-2020) and China's Rural Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (2011-2020), since 2012, The National Health Commission (NHC) and the China Disabled Persons’ Federation (CDPF) jointly launched the two national programmes successively to establish the workable mechanism and module for early detection, assessment and intervention of children with disabilities at the earliest possible time, as well as remove the finance barriers preventing the poor families to access the services to enable children with disabilities with good care and developmental opportunities during early childhood to reach their full potential. These largely reduced the future costs of education, medical care and other social spending of children with disabilities.

**Neonatal genetic metabolic diseases and hearing impairment screening**

In 2012, the neonatal disease screening project in poor areas was launched to provide screening of neonatal genetic metabolic diseases and neonatal hearing impairment with 120 RMB cash subside per newborn in the poverty-stricken areas, in order to early detect neonatal congenital disability and refer to the appropriate rehabilitation intervention. At the end of 2017, the central government invested the accumulative amount of 850 million RMB (125 million USD) to 354 poverty-stricken counties (municipalities, districts) in 21 provinces with about 6 million newborns benefited. The project has promoted the implementation of neonatal screening nationwide. At the end of 2017, to support the screening and coverage, there were 243 neonatal screening centers established, and the screening rate of neonatal genetic metabolic diseases increased to 97.5%. In 2018, the neonatal congenital heart disease was expanded and integrated to the screening scope in 24 provinces in order to early detect neonatal heart disease using the ‘double index approach’ developed by China.

**Community based disability screening for children under 6 years old**

In 2013-2014, The NHC and CDPF developed and tested the national guideline on community based disability screening for children under 6 years old in five provinces to inform national scaling up. In the pilot project, the screening of children with disabilities was integrated into the National Essential services package and implemented by the community’s primary health care facilities, with focusing on the vision, hearing, limb, intelligence and autism five categories of disabilities. Children with suspect disabilities detected from the community level were referred to high level facilities for diagnosis. The Disability institutes provides cash subsidies to cover rehabilitation for diagnosed children with disabilities.

Through the pilot, the mechanism of early detection, assessment and early intervention of children with disabilities as well as multi-sectoral cooperation, coordination and referral mechanisms in the health, disabled institute and other sectors, were established. The responsibilities were also clearly defined for each sector.
In March 2017, the NHC formally incorporated the child disability screening into the National Essential Public Health Service package financed by the government, which achieved long-term mechanisms for early screening of children with visual, hearing, limb (including cerebral palsy), intelligence, and autism five categories of disabilities.

Based on the pilot experience, the cost-effective analysis was conducted to inform the financial mechanism development of early detection, assessment and early intervention of children with disabilities. The cash subsidy policy and mechanisms for children with disabilities were introduced and implemented in China since 1 January 2016, to provide cash subsidies to cover living costs of vulnerable children with disabilities in poverty in 10 provinces. According to data CDPF published in April 2018, in 2017, this scheme is benefiting about 141,239 children aged 0-6 to receive basic rehabilitation services. Also in 2018, an additional the State Council Opinions on Strengthening Protection of Vulnerable Children, which defines children, who lack the required care and rehabilitation services, or face exclusion due to disabilities, as vulnerable children and outlines support to children with disabilities.

(5) **What are the expected results/impacts/beneficiaries of the project/program/policy/initiative?**

The main objectives of the programmes included:

1. Piloting and explore a workable mechanism of early detection, assessment and early intervention of children with disabilities in China to promote and achieve early development of children with disabilities.
2. Establishing and test multi-sectoral cooperation, coordination and referral mechanisms in the health, disabled institute and other sectors.
3. Developing a monitoring index system for screening and intervention of children with reasonable disabilities.

**Legal framework**

(6) *(Does the Project/Program/Initiative/Policy have an associated regulatory or legal framework?)*

The programmes were implemented under a comprehensive legal and policy framework in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including the Law on the Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, five year National Disability Development Plans, the Regulation on Disability Prevention, the Regulation on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities as well as the National Action Plan for Children Development (2011-2020) and China’s Rural Poverty Alleviation Action Plan(2011-2020).

**Implementation**

(7) **Implementation level** *(Is the Project/Program/Policy/Initiative implemented within the country's national territory or in support of other countries?)*

- Domestic ✓
- Sub-national / Community ✓
- Support of developing and low-income ☐
- National ✓
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nº of countries involved</th>
<th>(If Project/Program/Initiative/Policy is Regional/Global)</th>
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| City, Country, Region 1: | |
| City, Country, Region 2: | |
| City, Country, Region 3: | |
| City, Country, Region 4: | |
| City, Country, Region 5: | |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Under design</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
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<th>Action area/s (more than one answer possible)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Food Security and Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security and safety</td>
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<td>Other: children with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<th>Funding (more than one answer possible)</th>
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<td>National budget</td>
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<td>Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) or Development Financial Institutions (DFI)</td>
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<td>International Organizations (IOs)</td>
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Global Partnerships or Initiatives

Other: ___________

(15) Brief description of funding (e.g. name of funding institution or partnership, etc.)

The programmes were funded by the central government in China.

(16) Available funds (optional)

Monitoring and Evaluation

(17) Does the Project/Program/Initiative/Policy involve a monitoring / evaluation process?

✓ Yes

☐ No

(18) Brief description If “Yes”, briefly describe monitoring & evaluation process

A surveillance and monitoring system for children with disabilities, as well as a screening system for neonatal diseases, have been established in China to track case information from the screening, referral, and intervention of children and service utilization. The results are used to support the relevant policies development, implementation and effect evaluation.

(19) Are there any research studies completed, evaluation reports, or other reviews?

☐ Yes

✓ No

☐ Under development

(20) If “Yes” please provide links to relevant reports and studies

(21) If “Under development”, when will they be available?

(22) Lessons Learned (specific of the initiative and for general ECD application)
1. Community-based screening and referral mechanisms with health as a starting point particularly based on the primary health care, are the cost-effective way to ensure timeliness of screening, assessment and intervention for Children with disabilities. This affordable approach is an important entry point for multi-sectoral collaborations that reach very young children.

2. The financial subsidies to children with disabilities in poor areas effectively removed barriers and enhanced the universal coverage of relevant services, also contributed to promote urban-rural equity.

3. A joined-up government led strategy, assigning clear roles and responsibilities for implementing the national plan, and closely coordinated among different sectors and levels of government are needed to ensure quality and comprehensive care and support to children with disabilities.

4. Continued efforts and momentum are still needed for advocacy at all levels to highlight the urgent need to include children with disabilities in ECD initiatives and provide targeted health, nutrition and WASH services for them.

Contact Information

(23) Is there a Project/Program/Initiative/Policy website? Or a website where it is profiled?

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No
- [ ] Under development

(24) If “Yes”, please provide link to the website

(25) Contact Information

Mr. Wang Kerang
Division Director of Child Health, Department of Maternal and Child Health, National Health Commission
Tel: 86-10-62030738
Email: krwang2015@163.com

Supporting material

(26) Please provide links to or upload any further supporting materials, including: case studies, toolkits, photographs¹, and any other relevant materials to help illustrate the project

¹ Please bear in mind that individual members/countries are responsible for obtaining photographic permissions from the subject/s and from the photographer/owner.