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LINKS

The NIHR Global Health Research Group on
Early Childhood Development for Peacebuilding

Developmental delay in times of crises and what we can do about it: The LINKS global health research programme

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DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

250m children (43%) under 5 years in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of developmental delays

Cumulative costs of these delays has been estimated to be up to twice what these countries spend on health care

There is a strong correlation between poverty and levels of conflict in these countries

Exposure to conflict alongside the impact of poverty significantly increases the risk of developmental delays among young children



OUR RESPONSE

LINKS is an international research network committed to supporting the development of early childhood development (ECD) programmes in low- and middle-income countries impacted by conflict.

Our work is driven by a belief that ECD programmes can not only play a key role in contributing to sustainable development but can also make a significant contribution to social cohesion.



OUR WORK

We are currently working with local researchers and NGOs to support the development of ECD programs in six low- and middle-income countries.

However, we are currently making plans to extend the network to include Colombia and Palestine.

The nature and focus for each ECD programme is different and reflects the particular contexts and needs of each country.

Whilst each program differs, they all seek to contribute to social cohesion.



OUR PARTNERS

We work in strategic partnership with UNICEF and with universities in each of our partner countries.

Our work is supported by global ECD experts at:

- Yale Child Study Center
- Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
- NYU Global TIES for Children Center
- Early Years – The Organisation for Young Children

We are affiliated with the Early Childhood Peace Consortium



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OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

A tentative logic model setting out how investment in ECD services can lead to social cohesion and sustaining peace ...

... and what key elements we believe need to be in place at each stage of the process

INVESTMENTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES
<p>Government Investment in ECD Services</p> <p>Clear Recognition of role of ECD in Contributing to Reduction in Divisions and Conflict</p> <p>ECD Policies Developed in Inclusive and Participatory Manner</p> <p>Explicit Goals to Address Divisions, Inequalities and Disadvantage</p>	<p>Design and Development of ECD Services</p> <p>Developed with Participation of Communities and Third Sector</p> <p>Explicit Focus on Social Cohesion and Sustaining Peace</p> <p>Designed with Clear Goals and Evidence-Based Theory of Change</p>	<p>Delivery of ECD Services</p> <p>High-Quality, Child-Centered Nurturing Environment</p> <p>Provided on Inclusive and Equitable Basis</p> <p>Active Engagement with Care-Givers and Community</p> <p>Provision Reflects and Celebrates Diversity</p> <p>Provision Challenges Prejudice and Divisions</p>	<p>Child, Care-Giver and Family Outcomes</p> <p>Improved Child Development Outcomes</p> <p>Improved Care-Giver Outcomes</p> <p>Improved Community Outcomes</p>	<p>Sustaining Peace Outcomes</p> <p>Increased Educational and Employment Opportunities</p> <p>Reduced Inequalities</p> <p>Increased Horizontal Social Cohesion</p> <p>Increased Vertical Social Cohesion</p>

Assumptions: Sufficient financial investment; fidelity of service delivery; high uptake.

External Factors and Risks: Role of media; degree of segregation; mistrust and prejudice; level of violence and conflict; humanitarian crises, change of government

PLANNED WORK FOR PALESTINE

Partnership between LINKS and the Palestinian Child Institute at An-Najah National University

First phase will focus on identifying and developing an ECD programme to meet the needs of Palestinian young children. This will include:

- Extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders
- Gathering high-quality baseline evidence of young children's developmental levels and need
- Reviewing and learning from the international evidence



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SUMMARY

By the end of our first phase (December 2020) we will have:

- Made a real difference to the lives of children, care-givers and communities in our partner countries
- A global evaluation and measurement tool to support ECD for social cohesion programming available on an open-access basis
- Contributed to the international evidence base on ECD for social cohesion and sustaining peace
- Enhanced and grown our international research network



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