



ECDAN

Early Childhood Development Action Network

Early Childhood Care and Development Responsiveness Local Government Unit Assessment Tool (ERLAT)

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Introduction

Background

The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council is the primary agency supporting the Philippine government's ECCD programs which deals with policy making and program development on the national level. Local government units (LGUs), however, are mainly responsible for providing actual ECCD services because of the decentralized nature of this social service in the country. ECCD administration studies often focus on the quality of services by looking at the appropriateness of the intervention, content, and the capacity and level of commitment among service providers leaving a gap in the study of administrative structures and mechanisms themselves.

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of ECCD services worldwide already faced numerous problems such as the lack of funding, leaving many children unable to access high-quality ECCD services. Authors argue that while scientific, macroeconomic, and rights-based research that support the importance of quality ECCD programs and services are prolific, children in developing countries continue to live in states of poverty, disease, violence, and other risks.¹ The implementation of equitable, accessible, and quality ECCD programs and services that could alleviate these conditions, however, is dependent on structures and how these systems are governed. Moreover, governments continue to face challenges in developing and implementing ECCD policies. Some of these problems involve the lack of "political will", rapid turnover in government administration, decentralization without technical guidance for ECCD, extreme sectorality, inadequate attention to ECCD systems, and policy implementation itself.²

Using the lens of a crisis such as COVID-19 in the study of ECCD administration, while novel, can provide specific information on some rapid ways that government and civil society adapted through policy responses to the new roles and demands brought about by extraordinary times. Mapping the administration of ECCD governance can help identify critical elements of a system that works in the delivery of effective, sustainable, and scalable services. It can help locate ECCD policy responses to disruptions like COVID-19 in local governments and help understand the support that local governments and other involved agencies need in their efforts to deliver ECCD services.

The Early Childhood Care and Development Responsiveness Local Government Unit Assessment Tool (ERLAT) can be used by local governments to identify ECCD interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic, focused on enabling multi-sectoral structures and service delivery. Findings of the ERLAT can describe how existing ECCD services have been impacted by COVID-19, particularly how services and their delivery mechanisms have changed as a response to the pandemic. Furthermore, it can describe how LGUs used multi-sectoral and inter-agency approaches where ECCD players at various levels are clearly defined "i.e. families, communities, non-government/private sector, local government units and national government agencies".³ This baseline assessment can be used identifying gaps and weakness that LGUs need to work on towards toward strengthening and capacitating existing institutions to become more responsive to the needs of children and their families during disruptions. As many in the past have suggested that ECCD should be mainstreamed and should cut across sectors, what should be explored now is the extent to which those sectors are in conversation

¹ Britto et al., "Strengthening Systems for Integrated Early Childhood Development Services."

² Vargas-Barón and Diehl, "Early Childhood Diplomacy."

³ Manuel and Gregorio, "Legal Frameworks for Early Childhood Governance in the Philippines."

with one another, and whether or not they have the absorptive capacity to hold a conversation that can mainstream ECCD into existing institutions and local development plans.

Methodology

The development of the ERLAT began with an examination of key policy documents that determine the ECCD policy architecture, service provision and governance structures of the Metro Manila LGUs. In addition to this, reference data such as existing figures and statistics and other information found in public documents as well as those to be provided by local governments, government agencies and even non-government organizations were used. A literature review was also be conducted through systemic searches in various reputable publications in previous years to supplement the aforementioned. Following this, online and/or telephone interviews with key players such as local government officials, supporting government agencies and actual ECD service providers such as day care workers were conducted to verify and enrich information regarding actual practices and applied processes. All retrieved data were catalogued to develop parameters that describe how ECCD policies, programs, and activities designed and implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how these are located within the different levels of government and other partners.

Some questions answered in developing the ERLAT include:

- How was the ECCD policy landscape impacted by the disruption?
- How did ECCD actors from local government (city/municipal to barangay governments) at different levels respond to COVID-19?
- What mechanisms of action were activated during COVID?
- How has multi-sectoral coordination helped policy be put into action?

The project was in two phases: (1) the design phase which involves document reviews and key informant interviews and, (2) index construction and pilot-testing. The following table shows how the design phase served as a pre-research that informs the construction of the index:

<i>Phase 1: Design Phase</i>		<i>Phase 2: Tool Construction</i>	
Key Questions	Initial Categories	Index Parameters	Indicators to be Developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What services exist for young children and families? • How were these services interrupted by COVID-19? • How did ECCD actors address these disruptions? 	Services and ECCD Actors	Policies and Plans	Assessment of ECCD responsiveness during COVID as seen in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGU’s services in health, care, early education, nutrition, etc. • Official statements, pronouncements or documents issued related to ECCD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What platforms for multi-sectoral coordination on ECCD existed prior to COVID-19? • How did these platforms function during the pandemic? 	Structures and Service Delivery Mechanisms	People, Programs and Structures	Assessment of ECCD mainstreaming efforts during COVID based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of relevant stakeholders who lead ECCD mainstreaming • Enabling mechanisms such as budgets, policy structures, divisions, etc. that make ECCD mainstreaming possible • Programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) or what is being done

Purpose

Users of the ERLAT will be able to determine how existing ECCD services have been impacted by COVID-19, particularly how services and their delivery mechanisms have changed as a response to the pandemic. Furthermore, the ERLAT provides scoring that will allow users to identify the capacity of their local governments to mainstream ECCD into local development plans during disruptions, as well as to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Responses from the index can also be used by researchers to analyze best practices that can be replicated in other cities/settings.

Essentially, the ERLAT serves as a guide in gathering data, information, and documents regarding the efforts of LGUs in mainstreaming ECCD into their local development plants and COVID response as manifested in the delivery of services.

Features

The ERLAT was pre-tested in select LGUs in Metro Manila. Inputs provided by the LGU officers and service providers were used to refine the indicators and descriptors. It should also be noted that the ERLAT is heavily inspired by and adapted the design of the Gender-Responsive LGU (GeRL) assessment tool and the enhanced Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) of the Philippine Commission on Women.⁴

Parts of the ERLAT

The ERLAT comes with 3 Forms to completely conduct the assessment:

1. Form A: The ERLAT

The ERLAT proper consists of 2 parameters being assessed: (1) Policies and Plans, and (2) People, Structures, and Programs. The Policies and Plans parameter consists of 6 indicators. On the other hand, the People, Structures, and programs parameter consists of 12 indicators. Each of the indicators can be rated from 0 to 3 depending on the descriptor that best matches the situation of the LGU being assessed.

2. Form B: Scoring Sheet

The scoring sheet provided tallies the score given by the assessor per indicator and summarizes the scores for each parameter. The total score and the level is also logged onto this form.

3. Form C: LGU Action points

The final form for the ERLAT allows LGUs to list the gaps identified based on the results. This is where rudimentary proposals for interventions to address the gaps can be suggested, as well as a proposed schedule and office/department of the LGU that could best address this.

Guide to Using the ERLAT

The ERLAT is self-administered and can be used by actors such as mayors, barangay captains, heads of social services departments, ECCD division chiefs, barangay councilors on education, and other local government officials who work directly in the ECCD sector at the system-level. The following instructions provide a step-by-step guide in conducting the assessment:

⁴ Philippine Commission on Women, “Enhanced Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF)”; Philippine Commission on Women, “Gender Responsive LGU (GeRL) Ka Ba? Self-Assessment Manual.”

1. In providing a score for each indicator, the assessor/assessment team may consult relevant personnel who are in the best position to provide reliable information regarding the ECCD system and services of the LGU. The tool also enables service-level ECCD professionals such as daycare workers and child development teachers to contribute some answers or documents that can be used to verify the findings/data gathered.
2. A rating scale from 0 to 3 with a descriptor to guide the assessor in selecting the appropriate score is used for each indicator.
3. To score each indicator, mark the box of descriptor with a check when answering the form. Then, put the numerical value of each descriptor in the “Rating per Item” box.
4. After all the indicators have been scored, compute for the following:
 - Compute for the sub-average score for the indicators to get the score for each parameter being assessed.

 Sub-Average 1 = sum of scores of the six indicators of plans and policies / 6
 Sub-Average 2 = sum of scores of the 12 indicators of people, structures, and programs / 12
 - Compute for the total average of both parameters to get the score for the entire index.

 Total Average = Sub-Average 1 + Sub-Average 2 / 2
5. Transfer the computer scores to the scoring sheet provided in Form B.
6. Interpret the score according to the following chart:

LEVEL	SCORING RANGE	INTERPRETATION
Level 1	0-1.0	ECCD responsiveness during COVID-19 is at early stages
Level 2	1.1-2.0	Adequate manifestation and implementation of ECCD responsiveness was visible during COVID-19
Level 3	2.1-3.0	A systemic approach, moving towards institutionalization was manifested during COVID-19

7. Identify gaps and weaknesses. Provide proposals to these using Form C: LGU Action Points.

Annex 1
Form A:
ECCD Responsiveness LGU Assessment Tool
(ERLAT)

Rationale	I. Policies and Plans							
	Indicator	Descriptors and Rating Scale				Rating per Item	Means of Verification (MOV)/Remarks	
		0	1	2	3		Please provide the corresponding MOV for your rating:	
Conducive policy environment for ECCD	1. Presence of city/municipality ordinance/s on young children during COVID-19	LGU has no ordinance or policy on youth and/or children	Ordinance or policy for young children is subsumed within youth sector	Ordinance or policy specifically for young children is drafted	Ordinance or policy for young children is enacted with appropriate allocation of resources		3	Document or report showing how ordinance is implemented
							2	Draft of ordinance
							1	Enacted ordinance
							0	Explain why LGU has no ordinance
	2. Number of broad statements of intentions or aspirations reflecting the LGU's support for ECCD related activities during COVID-19	No statements supporting ECCD	At least 1 statement of support issued unofficially such as mentions in a meeting, informal announcement, etc.	1-2 statements of support for ECCD officially issued in the form of memoranda, speeches, etc.	3 or more statements officially issued		3	Copy of official statements or memorandum
							2	Copy of official statement such as those in public announcements, speeches, press releases
							1	Copy of unofficial statement such as those reflected in the minutes of the meeting
							0	Explain why LGU did not issue any statements of support for ECCD
Data-driven policy planning for ECCD	3. Availability of disaggregated data on young children for services and program planning during COVID-19	LGU has no disaggregated data on children nor has a data collection tool or template	LGU has a data collection tool or template, but has not been used	LGU uses data collected that is not sufficiently disaggregated	LGU collects data regularly that are sufficiently disaggregated		3	Title of program in which data was used and type of data collected and used
							2	
							1	Copy of tool or template
							0	Explain why LGU has no data

Installation of Enabling Mechanisms for ECCD Support	4. Adoption of an ECCD Agenda consisting of specific policies, programs and activities that accounts for needs during COVID-19	No ECCD agenda	ECCD agenda is drafted	ECCD agenda is adapted and used in planning	ECCD agenda is implemented, monitored, and evaluated		3	Document or report showing how agenda is implemented, monitored and evaluated	
							2	Adopted agenda with title and date of issuance	
							1	Draft of ECCD agenda	
							0	Explain why LGU has no agenda	
	5. Presence of ECCD programs during COVID-19	No/complete suspension of ECCD services during COVID-19	At least one ECCD service available and modified during COVID-19	More than one ECCD service provided and modified during COVID-19	Modification and continuation of all ECCD services during COVID-19			3	Documentation of implementation of services
								2	
								1	
								0	Explain why LGU did not have any programs during COVID
	6. Local Development Plans (LDPs) accounting for ECCD components affected by COVID-19	ECCD is not integrated into LDPs	Integration of ECCD in at least one LDP (e.g. AIP, LDIP, etc.) during/after COVID is drafted	Integration of ECCD in at least one LDP prior to COVID was activated	Integration of ECCD in at least one LDP prior to COVID is implemented, monitored, and evaluated			3	Document or report showing how LDP with ECCD component is implemented, monitored and evaluated
								2	Title of LDP with ECCD component and date of issuance
								1	Draft of LDP with ECCD component
								0	Explain why LGU has not integrated ECCD into LDPs

Rationale	II. People, Structures, and Programs							
	Indicator	Descriptors and Rating Scale				Rating per Item	Means of Verification (MOV)/Remarks	
		0	1	2	3		Please provide the corresponding MOV for your rating:	
Installation of Enabling Mechanisms for ECCD Support	1. Existence of an ECCD Focal Point System (FPS) or some other ECCD mechanism before/during the pandemic	No ECCD FPS	1 focal person is assigned as ECCD FPS	ECCD FPS structure is established but is performing with limited functions	ECCD FPS structure is established and is performing with full functionality		3	Document or report enumerating actual functions/accomplishments of the ECCD FPS
							2	Document, report or testimonies enumerating challenges faced by the ECCD FPS
							1	Name the appointed ECCD FPP and roles/functions assumed
							0	Explain why LGU has not established an ECCD FPS
	2. Functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) during the pandemic	LCPC does not exist	LCPC is existing but not functional	Established LCPC is performing with limited functions	LCPC performing all functions based on recently issued policy by oversight agency/ies		3	Document or report enumerating actual functions/accomplishments of the LCPC
							2	Document, report or testimonies enumerating challenges faced by the LCPC
							1	Explain why LCPC is not functional
							0	Explain why LCPC does not exist
	3. Presence of an ECCD committee in the Local Sanggunian during the pandemic	ECCD is not represented in the Local Sanggunian	ECCD is integrated into another committee of the Local Sanggunian	ECCD is represented as a separate sector, but without a separate committee	ECCD has a separate committee in the Local Sanggunian		3	Documentation of ECCD committee in the Local Sanggunian
							2	Documentation of ECCD accomplishments in the Local Sanggunian

							1	Documentation of committee where ECCD is integrated	
							0	Explain why ECCD is not represented in the Local Sanggunian	
	4. Collaboration with relevant organizations on ECCD activities during the pandemic	No collaboration with relevant organizations	Collaboration with relevant organizations initiated planning of new or enhanced programs, projects, and activities for the ECCD sector during COVID-19	Collaboration with relevant organizations resulted in new or enhanced programs, projects, and activities for the ECCD sector that were implemented during COVID-19	Collaboration with relevant organizations resulted in new or enhanced programs, projects, and activities for the ECCD sector that were planned, implemented, and evaluated during COVID-19; planning for the next cycle has begun		3	Documentation of collaboration such as a progress or accomplishment report	
2									
1									
0							Explain why LGU did not collaborate with organizations		
Institutional Commitment to ECCD	5. Presence of training/learning programs on ECCD for families and other constituents during the pandemic	No training on ECCD provided by the LGU or other partners	At least 1 training conducted	More than 1 training conducted, with limited participants	More than 1 training, which was open to all constituents, was conducted		3	Documentation on conducted training programs such as project brief	
							2		
							1		
							0	Explain why training on ECCD was not conducted during the pandemic	
	6. Presence of training on ECCD for staff during the pandemic	No training on ECCD provided by the LGU or other partners	At least 1 training conducted	More than 1 training conducted, with limited participants	More than 1 training conducted where most, if not all, ECCD staff were able to participate			3	Documentation on conducted training programs such as project brief
								2	
								1	
								0	Explain why training on ECCD was not conducted during the pandemic

7. Support for ECCD service delivery personnel in the form of additional training on remote/alternative learning, mental health support, etc. during the pandemic	No additional support programs were provided by the LGU or other partners	At least 1 support program was conducted	More than 1 support program conducted, with limited participants	More than 1 support program conducted where most, if not all, ECCD staff were able to participate		3	Documentation on conducted additional support programs such as project brief	
						2		
						1		
						0		Explain why additional support programs were not conducted during the pandemic
8. Clear utilization and allocation of ECCD budget during the pandemic	LGU has no policy or guidelines on the on the utilization and allocation of the ECCD budget during COVID-19	Guidelines on the utilization and allocation of the ECCD budget during COVID-19 were drafted	Guidelines on the utilization and allocation of the ECCD budget during COVID-19 were adapted and used	Guidelines on the utilization and allocation of the ECCD budget during COVID-19 were adapted and used, and ECCD activities accounted for in an accomplishment report for 2020		3	Accomplishment report	
						2		Copy of guidelines
						1		Copy of draft
						0		Explain why no policy or guidelines have been issued
9. Availability of services and facilities for children at risk, and CWDs during the pandemic	All services and facilities were completely suspended during the pandemic	At least one service or facility provided by the LGU was modified for remote/alternative delivery during the pandemic	2 or more services and facilities provided by the LGU were modified for remote/alternative delivery during the pandemic	All services and facilities provided by the LGU were modified for remote/alternative delivery during the pandemic		3	Documentation of implementation of services	
						2		
						1		
						0		Explain why LGU did not have any services for children at risk and CWDs during COVID
10. Availability of scholarships or allowances for marginalized children/families during the pandemic	No scholarships or allowances were provided by the LGU	Recipients of scholarships or allowances were reduced during COVID-19	Scholarships or allowances for marginalized children/families were continuous during the pandemic	Scholarships or allowances for marginalized children/families were enhanced during the pandemic		3	Documentation of scholarships/allowances provided	
						2		
						1		
						0		Explain why LGU suspended provision of scholarships/allowances

	11. Availability of alternative learning programs for marginalized children during the pandemic	No alternative learning programs were provided by the LGU	Alternative learning programs were reduced during COVID-19	Alternative learning programs were continuous during the pandemic	Alternative learning programs for marginalized children were enhanced during the pandemic		3	Documentation of implementation of alternative learning programs
							2	
							1	
	12. Functionality of ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers in the LGU during the pandemic	All ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers were completely suspended during the pandemic	Few ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers were modified for remote/alternative delivery such as mobile or peer support during the pandemic operated with limited functionality by the LGU during the pandemic	Many ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers were modified for remote/alternative delivery during the pandemic operated with limited functionality by the LGU during the pandemic	All ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers were modified for remote/alternative delivery during the pandemic remained fully functional during the pandemic		3	Enumeration and documentation of functionality of ECCD facilities
							2	
							1	
						0	Explain why LGU did not have any alternative learning programs during COVID	
						0	Explain why LGU did not have any functional ECCD facilities during COVID	

Annex 2

Form B: ERLAT Scoring Sheet

LGU Assessed:

Date Administered:

Inclusive Period of Assessment:

Key Areas		Score
I.	Policies and Plans	
1.	Presence of city/municipality ordinance/s on young children during COVID-19	
2.	Number of broad statements of intentions or aspirations reflecting the LGU's support for ECCD related activities during COVID-19	
3.	Availability of disaggregated data on young children for services and program planning during COVID-19	
4.	Adoption of an ECCD Agenda consisting of specific policies, programs and activities that accounts for needs during COVID-19	
5.	Presence of ECCD programs during COVID-19	
6.	Local Development Plans (LDPs) accounting for ECCD components affected by COVID-19	
<i>Sub-Total:</i>		
<i>Sub-Average for Policies and Plans:</i>		
II.	People, Structures, and Programs	
1.	Existence of an ECCD Focal Point System (FPS) or some other ECCD mechanism before/during the pandemic	
2.	Functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) during the pandemic	
3.	Presence of an ECCD committee in the Local Sanggunian during the pandemic	
4.	Collaboration with relevant organizations on ECCD activities during the pandemic	
5.	Presence of training/learning programs on ECCD for families and other constituents during the pandemic	
6.	Presence of training on ECCD for staff during the pandemic	
7.	Support for ECCD service delivery personnel in the form of additional training on remote/alternative learning, mental health support, etc. during the pandemic	
8.	Clear utilization and allocation of ECCD budget during the pandemic	
9.	Availability of services and facilities for children at risk, and CWDs during the pandemic	
10.	Availability of scholarships or allowances for marginalized children/families during the pandemic	
11.	Availability of alternative learning programs for marginalized children during the pandemic	
12.	Functionality of ECCD facilities such as lying-in clinics and daycare centers in the LGU during the pandemic	
<i>Sub-Total:</i>		
<i>Sub-Average for People, Structures, and Programs:</i>		
TOTAL AVERAGE		
Over-all Level:		

Annex 3

Form C: LGU Action Points

Identify and list down gaps with corresponding interventions that the LGU can commit to.

Gaps	Interventions	Target Schedule	Office Responsible
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

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