

Community case studies

Brazil

Brazil is an upper middle-income country but with substantial income inequalities. Over 40% of young children 0-8 live in low-income families. In urban areas, low-income families mainly live in densely populated low-income communities. These communities are often overcrowded, noisy, dangerous, and unhealthy. In Rio's hillside favelas, violence is endemic as two or more rival gangs of drug traffickers fight it out, militias (mainly off duty policemen) commit vigilante justice, and the regular police forces 'invade' rather than police the community, firing indiscriminately. Parents with jobs have difficulty finding ECE provision and sometimes are forced to lock their children in their homes or rely on older siblings' care. There are virtually no recreational spaces and those that exist are litter strewn and unsafe (Rizzini et al. 2017). While there is a national plan for early childhood and a Rio municipal plan, these plans are widely ignored.

The site for the community case study is Rocinha. Rocinha has a population of approximately 150000 and is a hillside community covering about 350 acres in Rio. It has 42 formal early childhood centres and preschools and several other organizations with children's programmes. A purposive sample of 17 centres showed a total enrolment of about 2000 children 0-5 years of age. Rocinha is densely populated, very poor and has very high rates of communicable diseases and violence. While close to middle income areas, its residents are discriminated against in those areas. Rocinha residents have, however, a very keen sense of belonging to the community and some families trace back a number of generations. CIESPI will develop its work in Rocinha, following the extended methodology in this proposal, and has the budget resources to

add the community of Sao Goncalo across the bay from Rio in Niteroi so as to recognise the differences and commonalities among different low-income communities.

Eswatini

The Kingdom of Eswatini is a low middle-income country facing major social challenges, such as high poverty and inequality; high unemployment, especially amongst youth, and a high rate of HIV/AIDS which has led to one of Africa's largest numbers of orphans and vulnerable children (Eswatini Central Statistical Office 2016). Only 21.6 % of the preschool going age children (i.e. 3-5 years) have access to ECE. Very recently Eswatini has included reference to Early Childhood, Development and Education (ECDE) in its National Education Sector Policy (2018), established an ECDE Inspectorate Unit, and ECDE teacher training. However, ECDE remains largely inaccessible for most children, with high costs from largely private providers and inadequate regulation of ECDE practitioners.

The site for the community case study is Msunduzi. Msunduzi grew out of people flocking to the capital Mbabane in search of employment but, with little work available, settling in the slum to make a living in one way or the other. Msunduzi has a high crime rate, high poverty levels (95%), unemployment is much higher than the national rate (79% against 23.4% national) and it has unsanitary living conditions (42%) (Heikkilä et al 2012). It has a population of approximately 25000 (Eswatini Central Statistical Office 2017): 921 aged 0-4 and 761 aged 5-9 (Ministry of Education & Training 2013). There are five ECE centres (preschools) all of which are owned and run as private business entities. Their enrolment varies from 30 to 65 children (Ministry of Education & Training 2013).

Palestine

Palestine is a lower middle-income country. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2017) there are around 4.7 million inhabitants living in the West Bank (1.9 million) and the Gaza Strip (2.8 million). Around 45% of the population are under 18 and around 17% of the population are children under 6 (PCBS 2017). 150 850 children (aged 3-5) are enrolled/engaged in early education activities/programmes (PCBS 2018). The political situation disrupts ECE development and creates psychological and economic difficulties for children and their families (UNICEF 2018). Children from vulnerable households are less likely to attend pre-primary education. Furthermore, children with disabilities experience severe exclusion from education compared to their peers (Save the Children 2017). Substantial investment of international agencies and Arab funders aim to improve the quality of the ECE sector. Although the early childhood sector is supervised by different bodies, the Palestinian authority has announced that ECE will be a priority area.

Al Masara is a small village located in the southwest of Bethlehem. It has about 1047 habitants, 555 of them are children under 18 (200 under 4 years). The community in this village faces crucial economic, social and health challenges as a result of limited mobility and access to resources due to the Israeli occupation.

The project aims at enriching the quality of child development and learning by providing opportunities for adults and children to learn together. To achieve so, the project utilizes creative methods such as arts, theater and critical dialogue.

South Africa

South Africa is a middle-income country, where access to wealth and services is very unequal and with half the population living in poverty. Nearly 4 million (out of 7 million) children under 6 live in the poorest 40% of households and 30% fall below the food poverty line. Public and domestic violence is widespread (e.g. VOCS 2015/16). ECD centres are the most common form of provision for children under 6 but a growing number of other programmes, aiming to increase access for poor and vulnerable children, are provided by the private sector and civil society organisations. Access to early learning programmes is least for the poorest children and ECE programmes in poor communities tend to be of lower quality than those in better off areas, due to poor staff training and lack of resources.

The site for the South African community case study is Vrygrond. Vrygrond community is close to Muizenberg in the Cape Peninsula. This community was one of South Africa's very first informal settlements and bears the legacy of many decades of inequality. According to Census 2011, the population is predominantly black African (62%) and Coloured (31%), and 61% of the population live in formal dwellings, the rest in shacks. It is estimated to have 42000 people and approximately 5000 children under the age of 6. In 2011, 24% of households did not have any individual earning an income. The community can be described as marginalised, with a large number of foreign national residents. Violence, crime, substance abuse malnutrition, and poverty are prevalent. In terms of ECD provision, in 2014, 70% of 0-5 year-old children did not have access to an early learning programme and about 20% attended home based crèches and childminders. Only 10% of children attended a registered ECD centre. An ECD non-profit working in the area is supporting 32 ECD centres to improve their programmes and infrastructure and enable them to register and be eligible for a state per child subsidy.