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**Using the International Guide for Monitoring Child Development(GMCD) to Monitor and Promote Early Childhood Development (ECD)(0-3 Years) in Maharashtra**

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**Background:** Emerging scientific evidence reveals that responsive parenting, a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment provided to children in the first three years of life has life altering benefits including improved health, academic and socio-economic outcomes. Children in low resource communities from LAMI countries often miss this window of opportunity due to poor awareness among parents, inadequate resources trained in monitoring and promoting ECD, and poor access to available resources. This also precludes the early identification of developmental delays at an age when they can be mitigated or addressed appropriately thus allowing children to develop to their maximum potential. This paper aims to describe Ummeed's experience of implementing a program on promoting and monitoring ECD through CHWs at four low resource communities in Western India.

**Method:**Through the Early Childhood Champion (ECC) program, Ummeed partners with community based organizations to train their workforce of community health workers (CHWs) to monitor ECD, identify delays and risk factors early and support parents in promoting their children's development using simple play and communication strategies. The program entails four training modules delivered over one calendar year. Module 1 training, based on WHO's Care of Child Development framework is followed by Module 2, which is the standardized tool-International Guide for Monitoring Child Development (GMCD). The last two modules entail interventions related to the GMCD utilizing Vroom strategies and additional support for children with disabilities. The program offers implementation support through onsite and offsite contact with participants. CHWs engaged with caregivers through a predetermined algorithm of monthly home visits for promotion and monitoring ECD. Data utilized in this paper was shared by project supervisors in an ongoing manner and collated by Ummeed staff. Qualitative feedback was obtained through formal and informal meetings with caregivers.

**Results:** Forty-eight community health workers trained at four sites through the ECC program reached caregivers of 1984 children. Of the 1707 children who received at least one GMCD, 204 (6-20%) children were identified with developmental concerns and delays. Children identified with delays were connected with existing resources for intervention and received additional support from CHWs. 145 children demonstrated improvement with intervention. Caregivers reported increased awareness of ECD and were proactively engaging in play and communication activities with their children.

**Conclusion:**GMCD is a useful tool in early identification and mitigation of developmental delays.