

Policy Brief

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Don't Regret, Invest Now

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Now more than ever, there is the need to shift from isolated approaches in international development to a holistic whole child-school community approach, particularly in low-income and crisis settings. The traditional sector-specific approach may not effectively address the multifaceted challenges faced by children in adversity. An approach that integrates various interventions underlines the significance of nurturing all aspects of a child's well-being, encompassing social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and creative dimensions.

13%

Return on Investment (ROI) per Child

per annum through better education, economic, health, and social outcomes

\$1.2T

Dollars wasted due to Illiteracy

Costs the global economy \$1.2T

1000

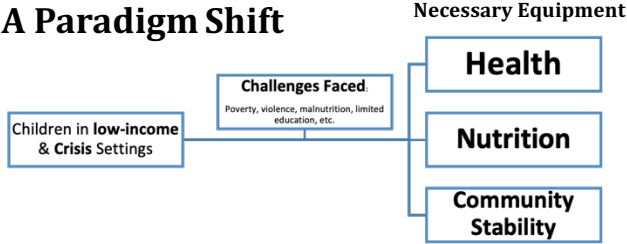
Days is What You have to Change a Baby's Life

Sets the foundation for a child's physical and mental health --> For Life Success

Why The Rush? Bilateral donors allocate international development and relief funding based on specific sectors or sub-sectors. The traditional tunnel vision approach focuses on individual areas such as child survival, maternal health, education, and more. However, emerging evidence suggests that isolated sector interventions may fall short in altering the life trajectories of children growing up in challenging circumstances. A more effective approach involves considering the holistic development of the child and integrating

various interventions for a comprehensive impact. As the international development landscape **continues to rapidly evolve**, it is essential to adapt our strategies to **best meet the needs of the children and youth affected by poverty, conflict, and other adversities**. Diving into the rationale for a shift towards a whole child-school community approach, examining the limitations of the existing siloed approach, and highlighting the potentially transformative impact of an integrated strategy we hope to encourage whole-child development approaches.

A Paradigm Shift



Impactful Change Starts Now In the pursuit of transforming the lives of children growing up in adversity, we stand at a critical juncture. The choices we make today will resonate across generations, shaping not only the immediate future but the destiny of those yet to come. The previously mentioned benefits with a whole child approach underscores the transformative potential of a whole child-school community approach and how, by investing in this approach, we set in motion a ripple effect of positive change.

The Power of Generational Impact Imagine a child, nurtured holistically, their needs met, and their potential unlocked. This child grows into an empowered individual, equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to overcome challenges. As this individual steps into adulthood, they carry with them the legacy of empowerment. They become parents, mentors, educators, and community leaders.

The impact does not stop with them. The values instilled, the education received, and the support experienced permeate through their interactions with the next generation. Their children, and the children in their communities, benefit from this learned approach, this legacy of holistic development. They, too, grow into empowered adults, continuing the cycle of positive change.

Empowering the Now for a Better Tomorrow

Now, more than ever, we have the knowledge, resources, and understanding to make this shift towards a whole child-school community approach. It's not just a paradigm shift; it's a

Benefits of a Whole Child-School Community Approach

Comprehensive Development
Addressing all dimensions of a child's well-being ensures a more comprehensive and effective intervention strategy. A child who is emotionally and physically healthy, academically engaged, and socially connected is more likely to succeed and thrive.

Breaking the Cycle of Adversity
Integrating interventions can break the cycle of poverty and adversity. By providing a holistic support system that addresses the underlying causes of challenges, we empower children to overcome their circumstances and build a brighter future.

Improved Academic Performance
A conducive and supportive environment positively impacts a child's learning abilities and academic performance. When a child's physical and emotional needs are met, they can focus better on their education, leading to improved academic outcomes.

Enhanced Social & Emotional Skills
The approach fosters social interactions, emotional growth, and character development, contributing to a well-rounded individual.

Long-term Impact
Investing in a child's overall development yields long-term benefits, creating responsible and contributing members of society.

Our Call to Action We are not just advocating for a policy change; we are urging a societal shift, a change in mindset and approach. Every child, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the chance to reach their full potential. By adopting a whole child-school community approach, we set in motion a transformation that will shape the future.

Holistic Developmental Gains The Reach Up Early Childhood Parenting Program in Jamaica serves as a prime example of the profound and far-reaching benefits that can result from comprehensive child development initiatives. This program, through its emphasis on parental engagement and home-based early stimulation, not only contributes to immediate improvements in a child's well-being but also demonstrates remarkable long-term impacts. Research has indicated that children who participate in this program tend to achieve higher levels of education and attain improved socio-economic status in adulthood. This is a testament to how nurturing early childhood development can have a lasting and transformative effect on an individual's life trajectory.

Improved Physical Health and School

Attendance The integration of WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) programs within school and community activities represents a multifaceted approach to addressing the well-being of children. This integrated approach not only focuses on the physical health and hygiene of children but also has a substantial impact on their overall development. By ensuring access to clean water and sanitation facilities, these programs contribute to a reduction in undernutrition, which, in turn, results in improved health and a notable increase in school attendance. Furthermore, these initiatives also play a crucial role in

transformative leap that transcends individual lives and extends to communities and societies at large.

We have the tools to break the cycle of adversity. By providing children with comprehensive support, we not only ensure their success but also equip them to break free from the shackles of poverty and adversity. This freedom is what empowers them to invest in their children, setting off a cycle of progress that amplifies with each generation.

Recommendations

Policy Integration
Advocate for policy changes that promote integration and collaboration between different sectors and agencies to support a whole child-school community approach.

Resource Allocation
Encourage bilateral donors like USAID and DEVCO to allocate resources specifically for holistic child development programs, emphasizing the multiplier effect and long-term benefits.

Partnership & Collaboration
Foster partnerships between governments, NGOs, schools, communities, and international organizations to collectively implement and support whole child development initiatives.

Awareness & Advocacy
Raise awareness among policymakers and the public about the effectiveness of the whole child-school community approach through targeted advocacy campaigns and educational initiatives.

This brief calls on policymakers, educators, families, and communities to unite in this cause. Let us rally around this approach, understanding that our investments today will determine the course of generations to come. It's a collective effort, a shared responsibility, and an acknowledgment that change begins now.

preserving the dignity of children, an often-overlooked aspect of child development.

Higher Economic Return The economic perspective of investing in early childhood development is equally compelling. Rigorous research has shown that dedicating resources to high-quality early childhood programs can yield a substantial 13% return on investment per child, per annum. This impressive return is not merely financial; it encompasses improved educational outcomes, economic productivity, better health, and more positive social outcomes. By allocating resources wisely in the early stages of a child's life, we can lay a solid foundation for future success and well-being, thus reducing the burden on society in the long run.

Adapt Now Adopting a Whole Child-School Community approach is a progressive step towards ensuring that children in low-income and crisis settings receive the multi-dimensional support they require for holistic development. It not only aligns with the broader objective of poverty alleviation but also contributes to building resilient and thriving communities. The European Union, through its directorate-general-for-international-cooperation-and-development-dg-devco, is well-positioned to champion this paradigm shift, catalyzing a more sustainable and impactful child development agenda globally.

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