Training research staff for community-based early childhood development studies: Experience from rural Pakistan

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Purpose of Presentation

- To guide researchers incorporating child development outcomes in the LAMIC on training community based workers for reliable child development assessments.
Overview

• Purpose of our research and achievements
• Training procedures
• Quality assurance strategies
• Conclusion
Research Theme: *Tomorrow’s Child- Optimizing Children’s Development in Low and Middle Income Countries Through Locally Led Research*

• The purpose of our work is to:

  - promote children’s development and family psychosocial wellbeing in order to prepare children to be resilient, productive and engaged citizens.
  - raise the visibility of local ECD driven research through partnership, knowledge dissemination and capacity development
Research Portfolio

• In the last 7 years, our research portfolio includes greater focus on understanding risk and protective factors for child development in the LMIC including Pakistan, Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
Instruments Portfolio

- Portfolio of locally adapted instruments for assessment of child development.

- Direct child measures (BSID III, WPPSI III, EF Battery)
- Caregiver measures (SRQ 20)
- Parent-child interactions (OMCI)
- Early learning environments (HOME)
Team Portfolio

- Developed local capacity- Community Based Child Development Assessors (CCDAs)

  - To date about 70 assessors and 2 supervisors across 4 countries have been trained for child development assessments.
Training Procedures-An Example
Study and Setting

- **Study**: School Transition and Readiness (2012-2014)

- **Sample**: 1335 of 4-year old children and their mothers

- **Setting**: Naushero Feroze, Pakistan
# Child Development Battery

## Child Measures
- WPPSI III
- BSRA 3
- EF battery
- BOT 2
- SDQ

## Maternal Measures
- SRQ 20
- WASI 2
- EF Battery
- OMCI
- HOME

All measures adapted prior to use. The process took 6 months.
Child Development Team

- One senior psychologist-based on site for overseeing training and quality assurance.

- A team of 12 assessors, local data collectors with minimum 14 years of education and community experience.

- Recruited 6 months prior to roll-out for training.
Train in this order

- Basic child development concepts
- Basic methods concepts (e.g. adaptation, constructive feedback, peer-to-peer learning)
- Understanding of the study: Contribution to science and community
- Interview measures (SRQ 20, SDQ)
- Observation measures (HOME, OMCI)
- Direct child/mother assessments (BOT 2, WPPSI III, EF, WASI, BSRA)
Training Methods

• Interview measures
  – 2 day classroom training
  – Daily field practice in pairs
  – Discussion in daily debriefings
  – Supervised practice once a week per assessor
  – Clearance by the supervisor
• Observational measures (HOME)

  – A 3 day classroom training with discussion of each item
  – Daily discussion of one subscale and the scoring criteria for the items under supervision
  – Field practice in pairs
  – Once a week, supervised practice
  – Daily debriefings
  – Clearance
• Observation Measures (OMCI)

  – A 3 day classroom training with discussion of each item using videos
  – Field practice in pairs with one pair daily making video of practice
  – Once a week, supervised practice
  – Daily debriefings and scoring of the video
  – Clearance
Direct Measures e.g. WPPSI III

• 3-day classroom training: introduction and familiarity with material and record forms,
• Role plays to practice during training
• Daily practice of one subtest in pairs one child one tester in the office
• Field practice in pairs with children once fluent with administration
• Supervised practice once a week
• Daily debriefing
• Clearance
Lessons Learned for Training

• Preferable to recruit local team and build skills over time.
• Ensure training time of at least 2 months prior to roll-out with limited measures.
• Be creative-use different techniques for training for different kinds of measures.
• Use multiple methods.
• First practice in role plays before practice in field.
• Include considerations for training and reliability with a wider team.
• Supervised practice is an important strategy to ensure reliability. Practice yields fluency and supervised practice yields accuracy.
Quality Control During Implementation
QA/QC Procedures

• Daily Debriefing Meetings

  – Daily debriefing meetings led by on-site psychologist with once a week in-depth.
  – Weekly progress, issues and challenges and learning activities.
  – Documentation of the debriefing and email to supervisors for feedback.
Field Observations

• Field observation of each assessor at least once a month
• An opportunity for on job-coaching and inter-rater reliability.
• One to one feedback session by the supervisor
• Also matched scores
• Scores entered and checked for the trends for the month
• Issues with a CCDA or certain tool which requires a degree of subjectivity particularly observational measures, scoring of Vocabulary items, fine motor items
Video Reviews

• Videos reviews (monthly) by experts
• Noted strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for improvement
• Video reviews also used for learning by the team with the supervisor going through with the team
• Subsequently video reviews by the team (weekly) when the members were ready to reflect in about 6 months.
Refresher Training

• Refresher trainings based on team needs every 4-6 months.
• First few months work on general administration and scoring skills.
• Then focus on fine skills of building rapport with child, picking signs of the child, being sensitive and responsive.
• How to put child at ease through use of play and communication
Team Presentations and Journal Clubs

• Purpose was to build knowledge, confidence and a community of learning.
• Team presentations and journal clubs were included in the last few months.
• Members were divided in pairs and prepared presentations on different topics assigned.
• Articles were shared by the supervisors for discussion each week.
Building capacity of Supervisors

• Provision of feedback on reports, through monthly on-site visits.
• Training workshop on supervision skills.
• Research and critical reflection skills: development opportunities: write abstracts, participate in conferences and analysis workshops
• Professional development: online ECD courses
Lessons Learned for QA/QC

• Quality assurance strategies to ensure reliability SHOULD be in place.
• Use multiple strategies.
• Ensure detailed documentation of the strategies.
• Ensure feedback loop mechanism.
• Supportive Supervision is the key.
• Build capacity of your supervisors.
Conclusions

• Commit greater resources for capacity development for research in LMIC.

• *Teach beyond assessment administration* in order to maintain motivation, commitment, and sustainability of research staff.

• Well trained staff from the community enables to build relationship with the community.

• Moving forward, building ‘Communities of Practice’ for community-based child development researchers is critical.