Going to Scale:

Early Childhood Development in Latin America

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Preface

This study describes how selected early childhood development programs of Latin America have achieved nationwide coverage and become sustainable. The research was conducted in 2008 upon the request of the World Bank as a background study for its book *The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Latin America,* published in 2009. The author is grateful to the World Bank for its support to conduct this unique study.

The background study of 165 pages was entitled *Going to Scale and Achieving Sustainability in Selected Early Childhood Programs of Latin America*. By the request of World Bank personnel, it included abundant data and charts. However, the excessive detail presented in the book made it challenging to read. The original study report can be obtained by contacting the author at: vargasbaron@hotmail.com

This more concise version of the study provides brief program descriptions, outlines key findings, and offers some tentative recommendations.

The author is grateful to Ms. Leslie Prpich who helped edit the report.

Dedication

**For my beloved daughters and sons
who are my greatest source of inspiration and support**

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Acknowledgments

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Part I: Introduction

Early childhood development is gaining ground as a key strategy to overcome poverty and socioeconomic inequities in Latin America. Compelling evidence (Heckman 2000 – 2006) that investing in young children and their parents can achieve high rates of return has convinced many of the region's leading economists and policy makers to expand investment in ECD. In 2001, Miguel Urrutia, Director of the Bank of the Republic of Colombia, concluded:

> Expanded formal education is a fundamental determinant to achieving rapid economic growth. In addition, early childhood development programs provide other valuable benefits, among them a greater equality of opportunity between men and women, higher rates of female labor participation, lower fertility rates, and better health.

In October 2007 a gathering of economists in San José, Costa Rica that included a Nobel Laureate, the Chilean Finance Minister, and a former Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs identified ECD as the most effective investment priority to solve the region's urgent social and economic problems. The meeting's press release stated:

> Promoting early childhood development is a regional solution that provides both immediate and long-term benefits ... Evidence shows that the benefits are substantially higher than the costs. (Consulta de San José 2007)

Abundant research demonstrates that to overcome poverty, improve educational outcomes and expand productivity, nations must "begin at the beginning" by providing quality programs for prenatal care and education, integrated ECD services, parenting education and support, child care and preschool education, and effective transitions to primary school.

Two primary questions frame discussions about investing in young children in Latin America:

- How can nations challenged by insufficient human, economic, institutional and training resources develop integrated ECD programs with nationwide coverage?

- What are the essential elements of ECD programs that have achieved large-scale growth and long-term sustainability?

Scope and purpose of this study

This study seeks to address the major gap in knowledge about national-level and pilot ECD programs in Latin America. On a practical level, it complements several existing program evaluations, cost-benefit studies and other research projects on ECD programs. It provides information about processes for planning, implementing, coordinating and evaluating ECD programs that are essential to achieving nationwide coverage and sustainability while maintaining adequate quality.

This study presents ten ECD programs, three of them pilot programs and seven that have gone to scale. No claim is made that the programs are representative of most ECD programs in Latin America. Rather, they were selected for this study because they met a series of criteria, including having developed internal and external evaluation systems and results.

The basic purpose of the study is to identify strategies, structures, processes, contents and financing approaches that have been used to design successful and sustainable ECD programs with national-level coverage. Two questionnaires were used to ask the same questions of a number of ECD program directors. Roughly comparable information was obtained on the programs, their organizational settings, how they go to scale, the types of barriers they face, and the strategies they use to overcome them.

Objectives

The following objectives guided the study's development:

- Identify and study national-level ECD programs in Latin America that have achieved positive results, as measured by evaluations that featured, to the extent possible, the use of control group designs.

- Identify and study a few successful pilot programs that have not achieved national-level coverage and assess why that has been the case.

- Identify conditions that may help to explain why some programs have achieved scale and sustainable financing while others of similar quality have not.

- Provide some concrete guidance to policymakers and practitioners on how to design, prepare, implement, monitor, evaluate and fund sustainable, quality ECD services.

- Offer recommendations on how nations might maximize the use of their human, organizational, financial and material resources to achieve broadly based child development, especially among vulnerable populations.

Leading questions

The following questions were posed to discover how best to bring ECD programs to scale and ensure their sustainability:

- What types of program and policy leadership and policy-making environments are necessary to develop scaled and sustainable programs?

- What are the characteristics of successful programs, especially those that have gone to scale?

- What have been the best and most effective ways to design and scale up national programs of acceptable quality?

- How can we best assess the quality of large-scale programs?

- What types of ECD investments should policy planners prioritize to overcome poverty and improve child development and educational outcomes?

- What new funding systems might nations develop to finance large-scale programs?

- What are the typical barriers that ECD programs face, and how have programs overcome them?

- Why have pilot programs of high quality been unable to go to scale?

- How might pilot programs be brought to scale in the future?

- How might the quality of pilot programs be preserved, and costs kept within national resource limitations, while taking them to scale?

Report overview

Part II of this report briefly describes the ten programs studied. Part III details program types, inputs, outputs and external contexts, with examples drawn from the programs studied. Part IV summarizes program directors' views on barriers to development and reasons for program success and sustainability. Parts V and VI present recommendations and areas for further research.

A note on terminology

UNICEF and the World Bank use the term ECD (early childhood development), and it will be used throughout this paper to refer to the full range of early childhood services. It is recognized that other authors use different but similar terms, for example:

- *Early childhood care and development* (ECCD) emphasizes the importance of both child development services and nurturing health, nutritional and child care provided in homes and centre-based services.

- *Early childhood education* or *early childhood care and education* (ECE or ECCE) are terms favored by UNESCO and by some specialists in the education sector to emphasize infant stimulation, child development, parent education, and especially preschool or pre-primary education.

- *Early childhood intervention* (ECI) refers to intensive and individualized services provided to vulnerable and at-risk children and families as well as children with developmental delays and disabilities. ECI program services will be identified clearly in the text.

Part II: Brief Program Descriptions

Ten leading ECD programs, listed in the chart below, were selected for this study. Seven of the programs have gone to scale at the national level. Of the three pilot programs, one has ended, one has been consolidated with another national-level program, and one continues to provide services and contribute actively to other early childhood programs. All of the selected programs have been evaluated for effectiveness and quality; several of those evaluations used control group designs.

CHILE	Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (**JUNJI**); the National Board of Preschools	national level
	Fundación Educacional para el Desarrollo Integral del Menor (Fundación **INTEGRA**); Educational Foundation for the Integrated Development of the Child (INTEGRA Foundation)	national level
	Conozca a Su Hijo (**CASH**); Know Your Child	pilot
COLOMBIA	Programa **Hogares Comunitarios**, Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar; Community Homes Program of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare	national level
	Familias en Acción; Families in Action	national level
HONDURAS	Atención Proyecto Nutrición y Protección Social; Integrated Community Attention to Children (**AIN-C**) and its Project for Nutrition and Social Protection	national level
	Madres Guías (Mother Guides) of the Christian Children's Fund of Honduras (CCF-H)	pilot
MEXICO	Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE)'s Programa **Educación Inicial** No-Escolarizada (Non-Formal Initial Education Program)	national level
	Programa de Desarrollo de **Oportunidades** (Program for the Development of Opportunities, formerly called "Progresa")	national level
PERU	Proyecto de Atención Integral a Niños y Niñas Menores de Seis Años de la Sierra Rural (**PAIN**); Project for Integrated Services to Children Less Than Six Years in the Rural Mountainous Region	pilot

Many promising Latin American programs were not selected for this study because they lacked rigorous external and internal evaluations. Others that had been evaluated were not chosen because directors were unable to respond or a similar program had already been selected. Only a limited number of programs could be studied. Also not included in this study were the many public and private preschool programs found in all countries of Latin America that rarely target low-income families, especially those living in rural areas.

A plethora of small pilot programs have been developed by NGOs throughout Latin America. Unfortunately, many valuable pilots ended before their contributions could be well documented, and many of their directors could not be located for this study. Several large-scale, well-evaluated programs have also closed, such as Proyecto Integral de Desarrollo Infantil (PIDI) and Kallpa Wawa of Bolivia. The recent earthquake in Peru made it impossible for the directors of Wawa Wasi and Programas No Escolarizados de Educación Inicial (PRONOIE) to respond to our questionnaire.

It is impossible to know to what extent the programs included in this study represent ECD trends in the region. A great many types of small programs exist and a comprehensive survey of ECD programs has not been undertaken. In a certain respect, the selected programs are not representative because all of their leaders are dedicated to continuous program monitoring and evaluation. As a result, they have been able to demonstrate positive program outcomes that have attracted considerable support in each case.

This study represents a beginning effort to identify those elements of program design, structure, processes and methods that may be essential for taking ECD programs to scale in a sustainable manner. Further research will be needed to determine whether the tentative lessons drawn from this review are useful for the ECD field in Latin America and elsewhere.

Because the emphasis of this concise review is on answering the leading questions noted in Part I by comparing similar elements across the programs, the program descriptions provided here are brief. Please refer to the original study (Vargas-Barón 2008) for more detailed information about the ten programs studied.

Chile

Chile has played a leading role in ECD in Latin America since the early 1970s. Its rich history of program development laid the foundation for recent policy advancements under the Bachelet government's Chile Crece Contigo program (Chile Grows with You). Each of the Chilean programs described below has expanded and improved their services under this intersectoral presidential initiative for social protection through child and family development and integrated services.

Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI) is a public-sector preschool program that began in 1970. JUNJI has successfully gone to scale and continues to expand its coverage. It serves urban, peri-urban, rural and indigenous families living in poverty and focuses on serving at-risk children and those with developmental delays.

With a combined strategy of parent education, child-centered early education, and support for working women, JUNJI's services include parent education and support, early stimulation, nutrition services, child assessments, early childhood intervention (ECI) services for children with delays and disabilities, crèches and preschool education, transition to primary school, and community participation. Extensive program standards and regulations have been developed for the program.

JUNJI is well established with a strong legal basis within the national constitution and it has its own law. The program is well knit into governmental policies, plans and processes; it coordinates with the planning, education, health, nutrition, sanitation and protection sectors. Its funding comes from the MOE and it also competes for international support to replicate its programs and provide training services in other countries. JUNJI is under the fiscal supervision of the MOE and the National Directorate of the Budget of the Presidency.

Fundación Educacional para el Desarrollo Integral del Menor (Fundación INTEGRA) was legally established in 1990 as a non-profit agency to provide crèches and preschools for children from birth to age 4 who are living in poverty. Teams of specialists at national and regional levels used a participatory planning methodology to design the program. INTEGRA has an unusual status. It was initiated as a private foundation by a First Lady but is government funded. Initially it was placed under the Ministry of the Interior and later the Ministry of Education, whose preschool regulations and curricula guide its program activities. The President of the Republic names its executive director. INTEGRA is also related to the Ministry of Finance, but its services are implemented with support from the Ministry of Education, from which it receives 97% of its funds. In addition, INTEGRA is funded by the National Service for Children (2.3%) and municipal subventions at the local level (amounts unknown).

INTEGRA targets urban, peri-urban and rural populations, and 91% of the families are in the lowest income categories. The program focuses on adolescent mothers, mothers who work or are looking for work, female heads of household, and socially vulnerable families.

INTEGRA leaders report that they respect and value cultural, geographical, linguistic and ethnic diversity. The program combines parent education with child services, and it has employed complete program development processes. Its services include assessment, early stimulation, nutrition services, crèches and preschool education at centers and/or through home visits, parent education and support, transition to primary school, sanitation services, social protection and community participation. Families participate actively in the preschools. Communities conduct consultations for planning, hold gatherings of neighbors, collaborate with the police and preschools for child protection, and build support networks for child rights and development.

Conozca a Su Hijo (CASH). In the 1980s, Ministry of Education professionals and other Chilean educational specialists collaborated with the Organization of American States (OAS) to design Programa Conozca a Su Hijo (Know Your Child Program) for poverty-stricken rural areas of Chile. CASH began as a pilot program and was not based on a prior model. A situation analysis was conducted in two rural communities; subsequently the program and its educational materials were developed and field-tested during a three-year pilot period. They then designed a strategy to apply the model at the national level and also sought expanded financial support.

In 1993, when CASH was founded as a pilot program at the national level, it was officially incorporated into the Division of General Education of the MOE as a part of the educational reform program for the Improvement of Educational Equity and Quality (MECE), with the goal of helping to expand and improve preschool education. In 2004, the Ministry of Planning assumed part of the responsibility for financing CASH in order to respond to growing demands of families served by the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program Sistema Chile Solidario for expanded preschool education, especially in rural areas. In 2007, the program was transferred again, this time to JUNJI, in the area of Family Programs with continuing budgetary support from the Ministry of Planning under Chile Crece Contigo as well as from JUNJI. CASH works closely with municipalities and community non-profit organizations to provide decentralized services.

The program targets rural mothers, preferably those belonging to Sistema Chile Solidario and/or indigenous mothers under the poverty line who have children 5 years or younger and who live in dispersed rural sectors that lack preschool education centers. CASH services include early stimulation, parent education and support, nutrition services, social protection, preschool education, ECI services for children with developmental delays or disabilities, and participatory activities with communities. A combined strategy of mother education and child services is used. No program standards have been developed as yet, but they are planned.

Colombia

Like Chile, Colombia has led the Latin American region in ECD since the early 1970s. The Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare – ICBF) conducted ground-breaking research on integrated health, nutrition and infant stimulation services demonstrating the importance of investment in integrated services for early childhood in families beset by severe poverty and malnutrition. This early action research led to the development of **Hogares Comunitarios** (Community Homes) throughout Colombia, extensive teacher training, and thousands of ECD projects in communities. Recent presidential interest in promoting a CCT program, Familias en Acción, is drawing some resources away from ICBF's direct services; however, initial results of the Familias en Acción program are leading planners for social protection to consider adding key ECD components into this CCT program.

ICBF designed the Hogares Comunitarios program in 1987 to serve pregnant women and children from birth to age 5, contribute to the eradication of poverty, and expand service coverage for working parents and vulnerable children.

ICBF is a semi-autonomous institute that was transferred from its former placement under the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Social Protection that now also includes the MOH. Partial

autonomy has been obtained through receiving extensive funding support from a national 3% payroll tax that is mandated by a series of national laws, accords and decrees (Vargas-Barón 2006a). Communities, NGOs, and workers' cooperatives also contribute to the program, but the amounts are not available. In addition, ICBF receives grants and contracts from national and international sources for special projects, some of which support aspects of the Hogares Comunitarios program.

Hogares Comunitarios targets urban, semi-urban and rural populations living in Levels 1 (severe poverty) and 2 (under the poverty level), with priority given to female-headed households, internally displaced families and indigenous families. A combined approach of parent education and child services is used. Services provided include basic education, parent education and support, early stimulation, nutrition and feeding services, health education and preventive health care, height/weight measurements, crèches, child care and preschool education, social protection, and community participation.

Founded in 1999, Programa **Familias en Acción** (Families in Action Program) is a CCT program located in Colombia's Directorate of Presidential Programs within the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation. It was developed by the National Department of Planning in collaboration with the World Bank, and it is based on the Mexican CCT program Oportunidades. Program leaders studied the Mexican program, made adjustments, and added new processes, such as the use of the Colombian targeting system. Discussions were held between the Department of Planning and the National Coordinating Unit of the program, and consultants from the World Bank helped to structure the program's instruments and processes. A pilot project was first conducted in 22 municipalities to field-test the program design, then it was scaled up to cover more municipalities until now it is close to achieving national-level coverage.

Familias en Acción targets pregnant women and mothers with children younger than 7. Families served are officially registered as displaced or live in Level 1 communities in urban, peri-urban, rural or indigenous areas of selected municipalities that have high levels of poverty.

Program services are given directly to mothers and indirectly to children. Thus, it is a parent-oriented program, but it is increasingly adopting a combined parent and child strategy. "Mother leaders" guide assemblies of participating mothers at workshops covering topics of health, nutrition, hygiene, contraception, child development and play, and literacy. Educational materials, learning toys and other items have been included in the program.

Cash transfers and nutritional supplements are conditioned on children's use of health services such as immunizations and controls regarding physical growth and development; older children are to be enrolled in school. Based on observing prevailing child and family needs, the program reported that it was planning to add a new program component to improve children's cognitive development. This represents a departure from the usual CCT program.

Honduras

Along with other Central American nations, Honduras has focused on nutritional interventions due to initial regional research on this topic in the 1970s and the prevailing need to combat malnutrition in the region. This continuing sectoral focus on nutrition is reflected in the national program described below. In contrast, the pilot program Madres Guías is an example of a successful integrated, community-based approach to ECD that includes nutrition education but provides the holistic services that rural communities require.

Atención Integral a la Niñez Comunitaria (AIN-C) was begun by the Ministry of Health in 1991 to address malnutrition in children under 5. Its volunteer-based services were expanded to reach close to national coverage; they now include health and nutrition services to improve child growth and prevent morbidity and malnutrition. The AIN-C program director is responsible for program implementation and results to the Department for Attention to the Family of the General Directorate for Health Promotion within the Secretariat of Health. The Secretariat of Health manages the AIN-C program and receives government funds for employees' salaries, basic recurrent costs and travel. Additional financing is provided by USAID, the World Bank, UNICEF

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and, in some regions, the IDB to follow up strategies that are managed at the regional level. The Secretariat of Finance (Hacienda) manages program finances. The program is related to national health policies such as the 2002 National Policy for Maternal and Infant Health. However, Honduras has not developed an integrated ECD policy as yet.

AIN-C's **Project for Nutrition and Social Protection** was developed in 2006 by the Secretariat of Health and the Programa de Asignación Familiar (Family Allowance Program – PRAF). The Department of Integrated Family Health coordinates the project within the Secretariat of Health, and the Secretariat provides normative guidance for the program. A Solidarity Network for reducing poverty in Honduras, led by the First Lady, also influences program implementation.

The project targets children from prenatal to age 2 from families living under the poverty line or in severe poverty in rural areas where high rates of malnutrition and child mortality are found. The project features a combined strategy of parent education and child services that are based on and complement the AIN-C Program. Services include prenatal education, support for the newborn child, newborn screening, nutrition services, preventive health education and services, parent education and support groups, and community participation. The program has not developed standards as yet.

The Christian Children's Fund of Honduras (CCF-H) founded **Madres Guías** in 1992. It provides continuous services for pregnant women and children from birth to age 4 or 6. The program is based on a highly participatory approach that builds on local cultures and childrearing patterns. For example, CCF-H has prepared a book on infant stimulation in accordance with local cultural patterns of childrearing. Local personnel train madres guías (mother guides), and training materials are adapted to the communities' language and sociocultural conditions. Early stimulation materials are made from objects each community secures, and stimulation activities occur at home using common household items.

The program is based on Comment 7 of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child that guarantees access to integrated services for children. The Code for Children and Adolescents of Honduras provides the program's legal basis and justifies its integrated approach.

The program serves rural, urban and peri-urban families living under the poverty line in departments and municipalities with the highest rates of child mortality, malnutrition, and at-risk, chronically ill and developmentally delayed children. It uses a combined strategy of parent education and child development. Services include prenatal education; newborn screening; child development assessments; individualized child and family development plans; early stimulation; parent education and support; nutrition services and school feeding; primary health services; community sanitation services; social protection services; crèches, child care and preschool education; transition to primary school; community participation; and basic education.

Madres Guías is the most comprehensive of the programs selected for this study. Program standards have been developed for home visits and the program assesses child development.

Mexico

Mexico has taken a multipronged approach to ECD, including both CCTs and sectoral, semi-integrated program services. Various traditional nutrition and health sector services in Mexico were found to have limited value, and some of their resources were diverted to support the CCT program described below. The education sector continues to reach out to rural and impoverished communities through parent education and community-based child development services.

Educación Inicial was founded in 1993 and is placed within the National Council for Educational Development (CONAFE). In 1994, CONAFE took on the management of Compensatory Programs that were based on experiences in community education, specifically for expanding preschool and primary school education in impoverished communities of Mexico. CONAFE's Unit for Compensatory Programs manages this program and channels it through State Coordinating Units for Educación Inicial to communities in 31 Mexican states. The National Constitution and a series of plans, laws, decrees and regulations provide a strong legal basis for the program.

The Educación Inicial program targets pregnant women and the parents of children from birth to age 4 who live in rural, peri-urban and urban areas with high levels of marginalization and indigenous populations. The program uses a combined strategy of parent education and child services. Its services include prenatal education, parenting preparation, child assessments, early stimulation, parent education and support, and community participation. The program provides home visits, individual consultations and parent meetings.

Oportunidades is a CCT program founded in 1997 as a public-sector initiative of the Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL) that leads the program. The program was established with extensive legal support, including the national constitution, the General Law for Social Development, several decrees and official regulations. From its inception, Oportunidades has been a multisectoral effort that includes SEDESOL, the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, Secretariat of Health, Secretariat of Public Education that coordinates with CONAFE's Educación Inicial program, the Mexican Institute for Social Security and the National Population Council. All of these government agencies participate in the National Coordination Council for Oportunidades and are involved in program planning, implementation and coordination.

The National Coordination Office of Oportunidades implements the program in collaboration with State Secretariats of Education and Health in all Mexican states. The states are responsible for providing designated educational and health services to families enrolled in Oportunidades.

Oportunidades targets pregnant and lactating women and their children from birth to school entry and beyond, with a major emphasis on children from birth to age 2. The target populations are urban, peri-urban and rural families who are marginalized and living in conditions of severe poverty. The program is increasingly adopting a combined parent and child strategy through cooperative agreements with health, nutrition and educational services. Services include prenatal education and health care, support during childbirth, services for newborns, nutritional supplements for pregnant women and children from birth to age 2, child screening and assessments, parent education and support, primary health care services and protective services.

CCTs are conditioned on families' use of health and nutrition services and older children's primary and secondary school attendance. Community participation is also promoted. Funds are deposited in families' bank accounts, thereby linking very poor families to banking and credit institutions for the first time. As a result, many families are beginning to amass savings and make small investments in businesses and other vehicles, thus encouraging upward socioeconomic mobility (Székely 2007).

Peru

Peru has faced significant difficulties in reaching vulnerable young children. Unfortunately, due to a major earthquake, its large community-based ECD programs were unable to participate in this study. The pilot program described below reflects many of the difficulties – and the potential – that exist in addressing the early learning needs of children from marginalized, rural indigenous communities.

Placed deep within the MOE of Peru, the **Proyecto de Atención Integral a Niños y Niñas Menores de Seis Años de la Sierra Rural (PAIN)** program sought to develop culturally competent high-quality preschool education for rural highland indigenous families and children living in severe poverty. The program trained initial education teachers and community mother leaders called "animadoras" who had a secondary education. They were given additional training and were paid small stipends to work directly with parents and children in culturally appropriate ways. The program targeted children from three to six years of age. The animadoras served from 15 to 25 children at a time, depending on population density in each community. Services included culturally and linguistically appropriate preschool education; referrals to preventive and primary health care services; nutritional supplementation through a preschool feeding program; education in personal hygiene; and participatory community support and decision making. No

home visits or individual parent education services were provided, although parents attended occasional group sessions led by animadoras.

PAIN was the subject of a detailed external evaluation that found it to be successful in meeting several of its main objectives; however, it lost funding support and ended in 2004.

Part III: Comparative Analysis of ECD Programs

To provide initial guidance for policy planners, Part III offers examples drawn from the ten programs studied regarding organizational frameworks, processes, coordination systems, financing arrangements, external contexts and relations.

Part III is divided into four sections:

- Program types, sponsorship and sectoral support
- Program inputs
- Program outputs
- External contexts

Program types, sponsorship and sectoral support

The ten ECD programs included in this comparative study provide services for parents and children somewhere in the range of from pregnancy to 8 years of age, including one or more of the following services: education, health, nutrition, protective services and sanitation. This section provides a rapid overview of program types as a prelude to addressing inputs, outputs and external contexts.

Program types

Pilot

Literally thousands of pilot ECD programs have been developed in Latin America during the past 35 years. Some have disappeared; in many cases, valuable knowledge and experience was lost. The three pilot programs included in this study reflect some of the challenging circumstances of pilot programs.

- *PAIN (Peru)* was unable to retain its funding support. After four years of successful services it ended in 2004.

- *Conozca a Su Hijo (CASH; Chile)*. To survive and maximize program resources, this successful pilot was consolidated into a national program (JUNJI). The move allowed CASH to minimize administrative costs and maximize the use of funds for direct services, but the program lost its autonomy.

- *Madres Guías (Honduras)* continues to function as a successful major program supported by the Christian Children's Fund. However, its current level of support makes it difficult for this valuable program to expand its services without securing greatly expanded funding from public or other national or international sources.

Several pilot programs in the region that were evaluated and found to be of high quality have disappeared in recent years. For example, CINDE's PROMESA program ended after many years of innovative ECD activities in the Chocó region of Colombia. PROMESA's many lessons learned continue to influence ECD activities, not only in the Chocó but also in many other Colombian communities (Arango 2004).

The successful Kallpa Wawa ECD program of Bolivia also disappeared after several years of support from UNICEF. As with PAIN, these pilot programs were unsuccessful in gaining sufficient governmental support and diversified funding to become sustainable and go to scale. These programs were overly dependent on a few external donors that provided short- to medium-term support.

Exceptions to this rule are international groups and operating foundations that are committed to long-term program funding in low-income communities, such as Christian Children's Fund, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision and others. These international NGOs usually

depend on private donors and benefactors who are willing to provide long-term, sustainable funding for selected children or communities. However, the level of this support is rarely large enough to enable ECD programs to go to scale without significant additional funding from national governments or other donors. Increasingly, these organizations are seeking ways to become involved in national policy planning processes, and they are offering their programs as models for national implementation. Madres Guías is a good example of this approach. This CCF program is positively affecting national policy and specific public-sector education and health programs.

National scale

Programs that have gone to scale at the national level include JUNJI and INTEGRA (Chile), Hogares Comunitarios and Familias en Acción (Colombia), the AIN-C Program and its Nutrition and Social Protection Project (Honduras), and Educación Inicial and Oportunidades (Mexico). All of these programs were developed by the public sector, or, like INTEGRA and Hogares Comunitarios, are strongly linked to the public sector. Each of these programs has evolved significantly over the years, and all of them have been successful in securing long-term government support for their services.

Community and home-based programs

Community and home-based programs feature strong community participation to improve child and family development. These tend to be pilot programs with somewhat limited coverage, and many of them encounter a wide variety of barriers in going to scale in Latin America. Madres Guías of Honduras and CASH of Chile are examples of these programs.

Center-based programs

Center-based services that provide child care, preschool education and parent education abound in the region. They are publicly funded or supported by the private sector, NGOs, employees' cooperatives and other organizations. They are the most numerous ECD programs in the region. Educación Inicial of Mexico, Hogares Comunitarios of Colombia, INTEGRA and JUNJI of Chile, and PAIN of Peru are predominantly center-based early education programs.

Health/nutrition sector programs

Health-sector ECD programs usually use medically based models for child survival, nutrition and primary health care services to achieve improved child health and growth. Sometimes they include components for parent education and child development (AIN-C).

Conditional cash transfer programs

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs were originally developed to focus on school-age children and poverty eradication. However, evaluations are revealing some positive effects on child health and nutrition and, sometimes, aspects of child development such as physical growth. They have not been shown to impact child language, cognitive or social-emotional development (Fiszbein and Schady 2009). As a consequence, some CCT programs are diversifying their contents to include components for the psychosocial and cognitive development of young children (Familias en Acción and Oportunidades).

Program sponsorship

Three main types of ECD program sponsorship are found in most countries: private sector; civil society; and public sector.

Private-sector programs

None of the programs selected for this study pertains to the private sector, making the list unrepresentative of this major type of ECD program in the Latin American region. Many private preschools, clinics and social and economic development exist in Latin America and they provide a wide range of ECD services. Many of these programs serve middle- and upper-income families, but this is not always the case. For example, some corporations, employee cooperatives and

corporate foundations, such as Fundaçao Abrinq of Brazil and the CAFAM Caja de Compensación Familiar of Colombia, sponsor ECD programs for families living in poverty.

Civil-society programs

Only one of the programs studied, Madres Guías, is sponsored by a civil-society organization (CSO). In addition to its sponsor, Christian Children's Fund of Honduras, many international CSOs sponsor ECD programs in the region, including Save the Children USA, UK and Norway; Plan International; Caritas; World Vision; and others. In some countries, literally hundreds of national CSOs sponsor ECD programs.

Public-sector programs

Of the ten programs studied, nine are government sponsored. Three of these have special types of sponsorship arrangements:

- Hogares Comunitarios is located in the semi-autonomous Colombian Institute for Family Welfare; it is mainly supported by a 3% payroll tax that is levied on all private, civil-society and public organizations. ICBF is generally considered to pertain to the government, but in reality it is a large "parafiscal fund"; contracts with private-sector groups and grants from foundations help to establish it is a parastatal agency that can accept both public and private funds.

- In a somewhat similar way, CONAFE of Mexico, the sponsor of Educación Inicial No Escolarizada, is not a national Secretariat (ministry) but rather what is called a "decentralized agency" that is connected organically to the MOE. Some label it a parastatal organization, but for all intents and purposes, it is a part of the public education sector.

- In Chile, INTEGRA is related to the MOE, MOF and the Socio-Cultural Directorate of the Presidency, and virtually all of its funding is from the public sector. However, its legal status is that of a non-profit private foundation. A First Lady began INTEGRA in 1990, and initially it was placed under the Ministry of the Interior. Later it was moved to the MOE, and now it is funded almost entirely through the MOE and MOF.

A note on sponsorship

In Latin America many NGOs, foundations and private institutions have sponsored valuable ECD programs. Although no regional survey of such programs exists, they tend to be relatively small, short-lived, and low in coverage in terms of participants and geographical extension. Few of them have the funds or specialized personnel to conduct baseline studies and longitudinal evaluation projects that include control group designs. This may be part of the reason for their lack of success, but experience has shown – as in the PAIN case – that public-sector leadership is fully capable of disregarding good evaluation results.

Sectoral support
ECD programs may be sectoral, multisectoral or integrated across sectors.

- A *sectoral* program is one that is designed, managed and implemented entirely by one sector, such as the health or education sector.

- A *multisectoral* program is one where interagency agreements, regulations or guidelines are established to ensure interprogram coordination to achieve commonly held development goals, such as a collaborative nutrition, health and child protection program.

- An *integrated* program is one where health, nutrition, educational and other services are jointly funded, managed, implemented and evaluated as "seamless

services" at the local level. Integrated programs tend to be more cost-effective because usually only one entity manages the program.

A wide variety of sectoral support has been provided for the ten programs included in this study. Several programs are supported and funded through ministries of health or education; others, as noted above, have multisectoral support.

After many frictions between line ministries of health, education or social protection and, in the case of some countries, weaker ministries such as those for social solidarity, gender, urban or rural development, nations in Latin America and other world areas are beginning to place the central coordinating role for important national ECD programs in ministries of planning, finance, social protection or social development. These strong ministries tend to have better planners with higher levels of training and expertise. They are accustomed to hiring contractors to conduct high-quality evaluations. Increasingly, the leaders of these ministries understand the importance of investing in children to achieve the MDGs, reduce poverty, and attain EFA goals. In addition, these ministries have the convening power required to bring people from all sectors to the table, establish National ECD Councils, and forge a national consensus around critical issues such as:

- Which ministry will take the lead for ECD?

- Which ministry will guide education programs for children from birth to age 3 and their parents?

- How will ECD programs of various ministries coordinate and/or integrate their services?

- How can government maximize resources to achieve national goals for child and family development?

In Mexico, Chile and Colombia, new approaches to ministerial leadership and coordination are being used in an attempt to overcome sectoral boundaries, develop strategies more closely aligned with poverty reduction and national development goals, and meet key socioeconomic requirements.

Mexico's Secretariat for Social Development has led strong multisectoral coordination efforts and has attracted a high level of national and international support for its CCT program Oportunidades. Similarly, the Colombian Presidency and the National Planning Department developed the intersectoral Familias en Acción program that has secured major national and international support. In addition to obtaining new national budgetary funds and international loans, both of these programs secured part of their national counterpart funding by means of absorbing the budgets of weaker, less well-performing and less politically aligned government programs. In Chile, under Chile Crece Contigo, the Presidency, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Social Protection and Ministry of Finance are leading a strong multisectoral system that embraces the MOE, MOH, JUNJI, CASH and INTEGRA. They are on the way to securing significant international loans and support for their innovative approaches to overcoming intergenerational poverty and improving child development.

The semi-autonomous Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) that manages Hogares Comunitarios has a long history of development. It was established by a decree of President Carlos Lleras Restrepo and was delegated to the First Lady's Office and subsequently to the MOH. Recently, ICBF and the MOH were transferred to the Ministry of Social Protection. ICBF is an unusual case because of its separate, non-fungible payroll tax that provides a high level of long-term, relatively stable funding – or at least for as long as ICBF can resist other governmental agencies' incursions on its legal and financial basis.

Program inputs

The program inputs presented below help shape the support and developmental processes that enable some ECD programs to survive and cause others to fade away. Inputs selected include target ages; target populations; program orientation; program services and content areas;

conditional cash transfers; program coverage; program personnel; cultural competence; program curricula, materials, methods, media and training systems; and program financing.

Target ages
The target age groups for services from or through the ten ECD programs are:

- Prenatal to age 2 or 3 (AIN-C, Oportunidades)

- Prenatal to age 4 or 6 (Madres Guías, Hogares Comunitarios, Familias en Acción, Educación Inicial)

- Birth to age 4 or 6 (JUNJI, INTEGRA, CASH)

- Age 3 to 6 (PAIN)

Most preschool programs in Latin America begin at or after age 3, which is well after the important period of early brain growth and rapid child development. In stark contrast, and in line with recent research findings, six of the programs in this study provide services (or they condition cash payments on using services) beginning with the prenatal period. Three additional programs begin services shortly after birth. Thus, most of these leading Latin American ECD programs target the most important period for child development of prenatal or birth to age 3.

Target populations
Most public preschool programs in Latin America are not targeted but are universal in approach. In effect, however, many of them serve mainly the poor because middle- and upper-income families tend to use private preschools that they consider to be of higher quality. Public-sector health and nutrition programs for infants and toddlers in Latin America tend to be targeted for families living in poverty, as are many NGO- and CSO-sponsored programs for parenting education through home visits or center-based services. However, no survey of ECD in Latin America exists, and it is difficult to be sure that this is the case.

Several of the programs studied report that they face significant challenges in serving isolated, marginalized and dispersed families. Five of the programs purposefully target indigenous families, and this may signal a positive trend toward a greater openness in serving these previously marginalized communities. These programs appear to represent a turnaround in countries such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. However, it must be noted that Peru defunded PAIN, which targeted indigenous families, because the program lacked political support.

In general, all of the programs have made a sincere effort to target the most vulnerable and needy families in their countries. In some countries, statistical and mapping systems for targeting the severely poor are highly developed. However, in many Latin American countries, emphasis is still placed on expanding investment for expensive preschool education programs that are located mainly in urban areas and serve middle-income and other less vulnerable populations.

Program orientation
ECD programs may be characterized as:

- child oriented

- parent oriented

- child and parent oriented

One of the programs, Familias en Acción, is parent oriented but it will change soon to a combined approach through the addition of content regarding children's cognitive development. PAIN was mainly child oriented since it focused on serving preschool-age children and provided only a small amount of parent education.

The other eight programs use a strategy of combining parent education and support with child-oriented services. This finding demonstrates that combined child- and parent-oriented services prevail in this sample and that comprehensive approaches can achieve national-level coverage.

Program services and content areas

The programs studied offer a range of services. Six of the ECD services are quite comprehensive: JUNJI, CASH, INTEGRA, Hogares Comunitarios, Madres Guías, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Educación Inicial. The major types are listed below, with observations.

Early childhood intervention (ECI) services for children with developmental delays and disabilities	High levels of developmental delays have been found in young children in Chile (Molina 2006). For this reason, Chile is placing a major emphasis on developing ECI services and inclusive preschool and school education. JUNJI and CASH of Chile are the only programs that include ECI services for children with developmental delays and disabilities. To serve vulnerable infants, toddlers and children who may be malnourished, developmentally delayed or disabled, it is essential for nations to develop some form of intensive programming along the lines of ECI programs in Australia, Canada, Europe, parts of Eastern Europe, New Zealand, and the United States.
Parent education and support	Parent education is provided in all ten programs; some offer more comprehensive services in terms of content areas and intensity.
Home visiting programs	Only three of the programs have developed full home visiting programs: Madres Guías, Educación Inicial and INTEGRA, and the latter is still working on its home visiting capacity, as is JUNJI. In recent years, many ECD specialists have recommended that programs provide home visits and group sessions.
Growth measurement	Although four programs (Hogares Comunitarios, AIN-C, Madres Guías, Oportunidades) measure child growth as a nutritional assessment, only one of them (Madres Guías) also conducts assessments of child development.
Child development assessments	Only four programs conduct child development assessments (JUNJI, INTEGRA, Madres Guías and Educación Inicial. This area needs considerable work to improve nutritional, health and developmental screening, assessments and tracking systems.
Early stimulation and preschool education plus health and nutrition services	These services are provided in six programs (JUNJI, CASH, INTEGRA, Hogares Comunitarios, Madres Guías, PAIN); one provides limited early stimulation and nutrition services (Familias en Acción), two solely nutrition and health services (AIN-C and Oportunidades) and one solely prenatal, infant stimulation and parent education (Educación Inicial).
Health services and education	Nutritional services and/or feeding programs are provided in nine of the programs (all but Educación Inicial). This emphasis on nutrition is critical. Over the past 30 years, Chile has virtually eliminated child malnutrition and has developed and maintained strong preschool feeding programs. Other nations of the region are clearly seeking to improve child nutritional status. However, it is of concern to find that early stimulation is not yet fully included in the CCT programs Familias en Acción and Oportunidades. Both are beginning to develop program components for psychosocial

	stimulation and/or are seeking to coordinate more closely with allied programs for infant and child stimulation that could complement their services.
	To provide integrated ECD services, linkages between sectors should be formalized to ensure full service access and utilization.
Community participation	All ten programs include some form of community participation activities. Program directors and representatives emphasized the importance of community involvement, participation and empowerment. Community-based and participatory techniques that in the past were found only in pilot programs are now being used in these larger-scale programs.

Conditional cash transfers

Two of the ten programs are characterized mainly as CCT mechanisms: Oportunidades and Familias en Acción. Both programs have developed a limited number of direct services in addition to conditions for families to access and use specific health, nutrition and/or education services. Interestingly, other ECD programs operating in Mexico and Colombia (Educación Inicial and Hogares Comunitarios) mentioned that they collaborate with these large-scale CCT programs. Given these complementary services for parent and preschool education, some of the positive results reported by evaluators of CCT programs are undoubtedly due in part to these collaborations.

The two CCT programs are adding new services to meet evolving needs that have been identified through their monitoring and evaluation processes. On the basis of experience, Familias en Acción has already broadened its services considerably. It is conducting a pilot project to find out how best to add a cognitive component for child development to the program. Oportunidades has reinforced its community participation component, parent education, and other activities dealing with CCTs. This program appears to be increasingly aware of the need to expand its work in order to achieve holistic child development.

Program coverage

The three pilot programs ranged in size of program coverage from 3,917 to 9,677 children, with an average coverage of 7,049 children. In contrast, large-scale national programs ranged from 20,000 children (target for the AIN-C Project) to 5,000,000 families with at least one child (Oportunidades). Including Oportunidades, average large-scale program coverage is 1,150,760 children. Excluding Oportunidades, the average is still significant at 509,220 children.

Several programs conduct national statistics and mapping exercises to plan and achieve program coverage targets. Most of the large-scale ECD programs reviewed in this study have achieved significant program coverage, but most of them need to grow further if they are to reach all of their countries' vulnerable children. It is clear that the programs are struggling to maximize program coverage while also trying to improve quality.

Program personnel

Personnel structures varied greatly among the programs.

JUNJI (that now includes CASH), INTEGRA, Hogares Comunitarios, and Educación Inicial have large and highly articulated personnel systems. For its size, Madres Guías also has an astoundingly large and experienced community volunteer corps that plays many program roles. CCF-H's use of trainers of trainers is remarkable, and their continuous training system helps meet their support needs. The AIN-C Project, Familias en Acción, and CASH (within JUNJI) are still developing their personnel structures and systems.

Community direct-service personnel are paid in JUNJI, CASH, PAIN and some parts of the AIN-C Program. Volunteers work at the pleasure of community committees in Hogares Comunitarios, Familias en Acción, parts of AIN-C and Madres Guías. It appears that those programs that develop strong community organizations and select, guide, hire and dismiss community workers are able to maintain their volunteer systems. However, many believe that volunteer systems usually break down after a few months or years because volunteers cannot afford to continue working without any monetary or in-kind compensation. This topic requires more research.

When asked which posts were the most crucial for going to scale, programs mentioned either direct service providers or the specialists who provide them training and support, as follows:

- Professional preschool educators and assistants for project supervision (INTEGRA)

- Technical teams at all levels (CASH)

- Volunteers because they give permanency to program services (Madres Guías)

- Zonal coordinators and supervisors (Educación Inicial)

- Technical specialists at regional levels and "enlaces municipales" who belong to and are paid by municipalities (Familias en Acción)

Cultural competence

Abundant field experience in many world regions has shown that ECD and parent education programs will fail if they are not culturally competent and do not fit local patterns of childrearing and care. Participants rapidly sense if program contents do not meet their cultural expectations and do not fit their cultural values and cognitive domains. They "vote with their feet" and rapidly leave such programs.

All of the ECD programs selected for this study have been singularly successful in making their programs sufficiently culturally appropriate to gain the support of their participants. Their experiences provide a window into some of the approaches they use to ensure their programs will be culturally competent.

- JUNJI created a curriculum framework that guides educational activities in each preschool in accordance with the local culture. Program specialists developed a "cultural appropriateness" criterion of quality programs for indigenous communities and prepared culturally appropriate educational materials for these programs.

- CASH asks mothers to share their cultural knowledge regarding key themes. They have developed educational materials in the Mapudungun language of Mapuche families of Central Chile.

- The INTEGRA program respects and values diversity (cultural, geographical, linguistic, ethnic, etc.). It promotes the formation of close linkages with participating families to help their children know about and understand the context in which they live. The program carries out activities with children that are appropriate to their physical and sociocultural realities, and they seek to promote cultural preservation and pride.

- Hogares Comunitarios has adapted its guidelines to local communities and yet kept them in line with regional and national policies. They have established a committee for participation and social control that allows measures to be taken to fit services to community realities based on participants' recommendations, petitions or complaints about services. Program coordinators meet with service operators to make service adjustments in order to meet program objectives. They also work with representatives of municipalities to make joint proposals for program modifications.

- Familias en Acción has made major efforts to include ritual elements of each local culture in program activities. It promotes play and, as part of it, local folklore. Program personnel are taught to value questions and conversations about culture. For example, they emphasize the symbolic role of food as a gift. Program directors require that professionals conduct workshops in a way that opens a dialogue with participants rather than dictating to them.

- The AIN-C Project is developing a module on intercultural health for health personnel and NGO service providers that will implement project services.

- Madres Guías has prepared a book on infant stimulation in accordance with local cultural patterns of childrearing. It provides training programs for mother guides that are led by local personnel and specialists. It has adapted various training materials to the language and sociocultural setting of the community. Home visitors teach mothers how to use household objects to conduct stimulation activities.

- Educación Inicial uses indigenous educational promoters to give parent education sessions in the community's mother tongue. They also consider the learning pace and styles of each member of the operational chains that are formed to serve indigenous and other groups. The program designs its educational materials with images that reflect different cultural contexts so that beneficiaries can identify with them. Ultimately, they try to establish a close link with each community by respecting its culture and traditional organizations.

- Oportunidades developed different food distribution and training strategies according to the preferences of each rural or urban zone. The program uses locally trained personnel to provide workshops on health self-care in a language that participants understand. Program personnel often tell participants that the program does not belong to any political party or candidate, and that no one can place a condition on service provision in exchange for votes. The following statement from the Social Development Law is placed on all program materials: "This is a public program, separate from all political parties, and it is prohibited to use it for any purpose other than social development."

- PAIN selected, trained and supervised mother educators from each community who provided preschool services and community gatherings in the indigenous language of the home. The program derived curricula, materials and learning toys from indigenous knowledge, values and practices. They designed pedagogical activities that were based on children's experiences at home and in the community, organized learning spaces to reflect cultural norms and expressions, and prepared non-indigenous program participants in cultural knowledge and practices.

Program curricula, materials, methods, media and training systems
To develop educational programs well, program curricula, materials, teaching/learning methods and media need to be prepared, field-tested, revised, produced and applied flexibly. Each of the seven programs that have gone to scale has developed a wide array of educational and training materials and methods. As noted, they have gained significant experience in making them culturally appropriate.

However, relatively little is known about the state of the art of ECD curricula, materials, methods, media and training manuals in the Latin American region. This could be an area for future in-depth field research.

Training systems are essential. All ten programs include both pre-service and continuous in-service training. Of the two modes, the most important for ECD programs is continuous and frequent in-service training combined, as possible, with supervision, monitoring and evaluation. In-service training usually covers not only technical content areas regarding early stimulation,

parent education, health, nutrition, safety, sanitation and social protection, but also program management, coordination, financial management and a host of administrative policies. Continuous in-service training may be the most important guarantor of quality in ECD programs, but this hypothesis remains to be tested.

Program financing

Stable and sufficient program financing and accountable financial management practices are central to developing and managing large-scale ECD programs. Often these programs are encrusted within major government bureaucracies. Transparency can become an issue with large budgetary flows. When accounting issues arise, they can seriously damage a program that must be focused on the rapid, timely and accurate provision of funds for direct services. Several of the programs have made major efforts to ensure financial accountability and transparency.

Accounting systems

A responsive accounting system that is linked with other collaborating systems is essential for good program management, sustainability and going to scale. All ten programs developed or used effective accounting systems. However, problems can and did occur in some programs due to systems issues, bidding and purchasing challenges, interinstitutional compatibility problems, personnel turnover, or a lack of adequately trained human resources.

JUNJI's government accounting system ensures compatibility with its governmental funding sources and the accounting systems of other federal agencies. The program uses the National Information System for Financial Management (SIGFE) that is managed by JUNJI's Financial Resources Department. In the past, JUNJI encountered systemic problems regarding some automated databases and reports as well as some reconciliation problems. JUNJI has worked with SIGFE to make improvements; however, they still encounter some reporting problems. CASH now uses JUNJI's accounting system, and they did not mention any problems.

INTEGRA uses the accounting system of the Directorate of Administration and Finance, and it appears to be working well for them.

Hogares Comunitarios uses the accounting system of National Controller's Office of Colombia, and the Financial Directorate of ICBF manages this system. They report that no problems have been encountered.

Familias en Acción uses the Integrated System of Financial Information (SIIF) of the MOF and Public Credit. Acción Social of the Presidential Offices has an Accounting Department that handles all program transactions. They report no problems.

The AIN-C Project uses a system for external cooperating agencies and the national accounting system that is managed by MOH's Unit for Coverage Extension and Financing. This unit is currently being consolidated, and it is facing some organizational and human resource problems. Currently, there are a few problems with this accounting system related to the process of securing information.

As an international NGO, Madres Guías of CCF-H uses a fund accounting system. Each project is a separate cost center, and annual external audits are conducted. The director reports that no problems have been encountered in this accounting system.

Educación Inicial uses a governmental accounting system for federal public administration. The system has been used for several years, and the program has not encountered problems. However, being part of a separate system within government, it is not linked easily with other agencies.

Oportunidades did not provide any information on their accounting system.

PAIN used the MOE's accounting system that was managed by the unit responsible for IDB funds. It was reported that with respect to accounting processes, financial reporting required certain procedures that could not be conducted in rural areas. A system was developed for securing sworn declarations of expenditures, but the system was found to be bureaucratic and

restrictive for use in rural zones. Processes for purchasing materials in rural areas were complex and largely dysfunctional. When purchases were above a certain level, a public bidding process was required, making it impossible to purchase certain materials in a timely manner. Some materials could not be acquired because companies were unable to respond to formal requirements to submit a bid, leading to a loss of program budget and a lack of key materials.

Funding strategies and annual budgets

Most of the ten programs developed simple funding strategies with only one or two major funding approaches. The predominant types of support are public-sector and international funding. In addition, a few programs use grants and contracts. The payroll tax for ICBF's Hogares Comunitarios yields the largest income reported for of all the programs studied (US $226,132,155 in 2006). The payroll tax thus has been highly successful in securing funding support for ICBF; however, none of the other programs use this or any other type of tax as core support.

JUNJI has stable financing under the national Budget Law, and the program submits its annual budgetary requests to the government. The MOE and Ministry of Planning provide quite stable funding for CASH, and each municipality the program serves donates a professional to the program. INTEGRA also receives stable public financing from the MOE.

The AIN-C Project requests loans from international partners, and also receives what appear to be stable national funds. Madres Guías has stable core funding from CCF-International, and it also submits proposals for projects and donations from national and international organizations. Educación Inicial has quite stable funding from the Secretariat of Public Education and Mexican States. Oportunidades currently has stable funding from a variety of Secretariats and the IDB. Familias en Acción reports that its funds from the Presidency and the national treasury are fungible and unstable.

PAIN was dependent on a sub-component budget and external soft funding from IDB. It was unable to develop long-term stable or diversified funding. Program funds were fungible and unstable, making them prone to reallocation. PAIN's technical group tried to involve local governments through improving the infrastructure of PRONOEI service centers, and it made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain community contributions to implement the program with local resources in its program zone. It worked to target WFP lunches in program preschools. However, the Initial Education budget only foresaw the payment of personnel and would not continue to cover program costs. Finally, the small investment budget destined for local education units did not give priority to initial education.

In most of the ten programs, local costs, existing ministerial personnel and in-kind support were not reported. The only way to secure reliable information about programs' full budgets and expenditures would be to conduct detailed studies of costs and in-kind expenses through field visits.

Transfers and decentralization

Arrangements for financial transfers varied across the programs. None of the programs reported problems with transfers.

- JUNJI establishes agreements with municipalities and NGOs regarding capital and operational expenses. Transfers are made according to regional budgets, and are reported to be predictable with respect to scheduling and amount.

- CASH sends funds to the regions it serves according to an annual agreement. Funds for operational expenses are given as a grant, and monitoras are paid monthly. Transfers are reported to be timely and in the expected amounts.

- INTEGRA provides electronic transfers and stated that they are timely and in the correct amount.

- AIN-C reported that the Secretariat of Health handles all funds, and transfers are not made outside the health system.

- CCF's Madres Guías provides funds to program sites according to mutually agreed upon Operational Plans, and all payments are reported to be timely and in the correct amount.

- Educación Inicial forges agreements with its operational chain to pay for monthly salaries and training events. Electronic bank transfers are made on the basis of the program budget, and they are reported to be timely and correct.

- Oportunidades transfers funds to State Coordinators according to operational requirements, and they are reported to be predictable in their timing and amount.

- No funds were transferred by PAIN to its field sites since all project funds were handled centrally in the MOE.

- No response to this question was received from Hogares Comunitarios or Familias en Acción.

Chile, Peru, Colombia and other countries in Latin America are decentralizing many of their governmental services and sending large segments of ministerial budgets to regional and local units for their management. Ministries are struggling to find ways to help municipal groups plan and implement comprehensive and integrated ECD programs of acceptable quality. The management of government funds for all ECD services by local governmental units requires new approaches to municipal planning, accountability and transparency. For example, in Peru in addition to facing difficulties in managing services at local levels due to decentralization, the MOE's former budget for direct intervention activities was to be sent to regions and municipalities for their administration. As a result, people began to view the role of the MOE as only normative. Counterpart funding from national ministries could no longer be counted on for international loans or grants because those funds were being sent directly to regional or municipal governments for distribution, with or without clear guidance.

Similar situations are occurring in many Latin American nations – and throughout the world. As decentralization becomes more fully configured in years to come, new approaches for financial and program coordination between national, regional and local governments and NGOs will be needed.

Program outputs and processes

Although program inputs are critical to achieving basic short-term objectives, program outputs, outcomes and results spell the difference between short-term services or long-term sustainability. Program outcomes and processes reviewed in this study include the following: program and director persistence; program outputs; program development process; initial situation analysis; establishing objectives; program leadership, structure and community participation; program coordination; planning for program coverage growth; monitoring and evaluation systems; development of program standards; openness to innovation and change; program costs; feedback, continued planning and flexibility; and communication campaigns.

Program and director persistence

Persistence is a prime outcome for ECD programs because so many of them disappear after just a few years of operation. Not counting PAIN, the other nine programs have been in existence for an average of 16.8 years. The oldest program is JUNJI with 37 years and the newest is Familias en Acción with eight years. Of course there are many newer ECD programs in Latin America, but only programs that had been evaluated were selected for this study. The longevity of these programs reflects the major efforts that were made to ensure their sustainability.

In contrast to public-sector directors, the directors of NGOs, CSOs and presidential programs have remained in their positions the longest: an average of 12 years. Many of the directors of public agencies have been political appointees, and they have lasted an average of only 2.4 years. In certain respects, given the high rate of turnover at the top, it is surprising that these public-sector programs have survived. This may be a testament to efforts made to consolidate the

programs as well as to the technical and leadership skills of career program coordinators and deputies.

Program outputs

This study did not attempt to measure the quality of program outputs, but it is useful to review the programs' impact areas. These included improved birth outcomes, child nutrition and growth, health and preventive primary care, child psychosocial and cognitive development, parenting knowledge and skills, services for children with delays or disabilities, infant development in crèches, child learning and development in preschools, transition to primary school, community participation, protective services, sanitation or hygiene, and basic education for mothers.

Several programs stand out as more comprehensive in terms of program impacts: Madres Guías and Hogares Comunitarios, followed by INTEGRA, JUNJI/CASH, and Educación Inicial. Until the CCT programs Familias en Acción and Oportunidades expand their program components or their collaborating programs, they will be unable to make major impacts on child cognitive development and school readiness, although evaluation results show they are helpful in achieving some improved nutrition and health outcomes. The AIN-C model could benefit from forging alliances with programs such as Madres Guías to improve child psychosocial and cognitive development and prepare children for success in school.

Program development processes

The most important period of program development is the design and preparatory period. It is an age-old truth that a program can seek to achieve valid and valuable goals, but if its process for program development is not well structured, it will fail.

Programs' potential success may be predicted by assessing the completeness of their program development processes. The main questionnaire for ECD program directors was designed to gather information regarding key elements of a complete program development process for an ECD program with ambitions to go to scale and become sustainable. The following list includes several of these elements and then notes the number of programs that were found to have them.

- Baseline study/situation analysis is conducted to ensure the program meets child and family demands and needs and is well targeted. (5)

- Objectives are clear and appropriate. (10)

- Organizational structures, roles and responsibilities are well defined. (10)

- Program delivery system is well structured and effective at all levels. (9)

- Program leadership is clearly established and well linked with other entities. (9)

- Internal coordination system is strong and well articulated. (9)

- Personnel structure is developed with roles and responsibilities specified. (9)

- Process for selecting families/children is well developed and functional. (10)

- Geographic coverage plan is keyed to program objectives. (10)

- Program components and services are well designed. (10)

- Personnel training system (pre- and in-service) is well developed, functional and sufficiently robust to ensure the provision of quality services. (8)

- Efforts have been made to ensure the program is culturally competent, flexibly fits the local culture and meets local needs. (10)

- Educational contents, materials, methods and media are selected or designed and field-tested and can be produced and distributed at scale. (9)

- Supervisory system is well elaborated and effective. (8)

- Flexible evaluation and monitoring system is designed and field-tested. (10)

- Program standards or competencies are prepared and applied. (8)
- Systems to maintain program innovation are intentionally established. (10)
- Financial and accounting system is sound or is being improved. (10)
- Program feedback and revision system is developed and used for program improvement and growth over time. (9)
- Communication system with program participants, communities and nation is designed and implemented. (6)

Most – if not all – of these elements should be in place for an ECD program to achieve program scale and sustainability. Additional points regarding some of these elements will be discussed in the sections below.

PAIN, the program that did not survive, had eminently laudatory objectives and yet it also had some serious gaps in its design process. It lacked a fully articulated system for program delivery, a designated leader, links to key national and sectoral leaders, an intersectoral coordination system, an adequate in-service training system and a supervisory system at all levels. On the positive side, although PAIN did not prepare program standards, it developed a communications system, culturally appropriate services, and strong community support.

Another program is also instructive in this regard. CASH initially developed its own organizational structure, delivery system, personnel structure, training system and feedback system, but it was still in the process of program development when it was consolidated with the JUNJI program. As a consequence of this move, the stronger and more experienced JUNJI administration has supplemented or replaced part of CASH's systems, including its organizational structure at national and regional levels and its personnel, financial and accounting systems. Well structured program consolidation can help weaker programs strengthen their core elements and achieve scale, efficiency and greater effectiveness. Consolidation can also help to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximize the use of administrative, financial and personnel resources. Sometimes consolidation causes valuable lessons about effective programming to be lost due to internal dissensions and ill-considered staff reductions. Consolidations may be one way to achieve quality at scale, but great care must be taken to protect and preserve the strengths and knowledge of each institution. This is particularly the case when an NGO is consolidated with a public-sector institution.

The weakest of the program elements listed above are baseline studies, supervisory systems, staff training systems, program standards, and communications systems. The latter especially is an area for growth in the region. To build strong public support and reinforce key program messages, it will be necessary to focus more on this dimension in future years, especially to build public support for ECD policies in the hemisphere.

Initial situation analysis

PAIN conducted an initial baseline study in Upper Peru as a participatory diagnostic process. The study helped the program to identify the most needy populations to be served, critical education needs, and requirements for intersectoral collaboration for health and nutrition with education. It was reported that "the participatory diagnostic was fundamental in the design process because it permitted the team to understand better the complex social context of the program, and that contributed to changing the stereotypical view of rural families and children that they had. It opened channels of communication with families and communities." As noted above, several of the programs did not conduct baseline studies before they began the program design process.

Planners who aspire to take their programs to scale usually conduct baseline studies to learn about the socioeconomic status of children, families and communities and to build a database of key variables for conducting program evaluations. Newer ECD programs are instituting them (e.g., the AIN-C Project, Familias en Acción, PAIN and Oportunidades), often with guidance and funding from international agencies. Increasingly, they use researchers from national universities and independent institutes as external evaluators, as well as international specialists. Madres

Guías conducted its baseline study to help plan and design its program, identify the existing needs and problems of children and families, understand the communities' perceived needs for child development, and create a database for assessing program outputs, outcomes and results over time. The baseline study helped achieve program sustainability and long-term financial support from CCF-I.

Establishing objectives

All ten of the programs developed clear and comprehensive objectives that are appropriate for the services they render. Interestingly, almost all programs included objectives that were child-centered (9), family-focused (9), centered on program processes (10), and focused on coordination to achieve integrated services (8).

Program objectives usually change over time to permit program growth and refinement. The ability to flexibly adjust objectives reflects a program's capacity to learn from experience and meet evolving needs. Of the ten programs, three have not changed their initial objectives; one of the three is new and another program has ended. The remaining seven programs revised their objectives for the following reasons:

- To achieve a more precise and detailed statement of objectives. (5)

- To move from child-centered objectives to program- and coordination-centered objectives. (1)

- To focus more on community involvement. (1)

- To emphasize service provision. (1)

- To move from assistance-oriented to educational objectives with a focus on children. (1)

Seven agencies set their own objectives and three share this activity with other entities. Familias en Acción's National Coordinating Unit of Social Action Program of the Presidency works with representatives of the World Bank. The National Coordination Council of Oportunidades includes a wide array of partners who participate in setting objectives. INTEGRA's Executive Council works with the MOE's Planning Department to set objectives. Four of the agencies have changed the group that sets objectives over the years, sometimes reflecting changes in the agency's placement (e.g., CASH is now in JUNJI).

None of the program directors stated that participating parents or communities played a role in setting general program objectives. In other world areas, parents and communities often participate in setting and assessing program objectives.

All but two of the programs reported that they had achieved past and current objectives. PAIN and Hogares Comunitarios stated that they had partially met their initial objectives. As a result of its external evaluation, Hogares Comunitarios had revised its objectives. When the programs were asked how they knew they were achieving their objectives, they reported that they used evaluation results (7), supervisory and follow-up systems (4), level of expanded program coverage (3), and general assessments that showed they were meeting their core mission (2).

Program leadership, structure and community participation

Program leadership

Nine of the ten programs studied have titular directors that play strong institutional leadership roles. That leadership is usually shared to some degree with other related agencies. For example, the directors of the following programs work closely with the following institutions:

- The director of JUNJI works with the MOE and MOF.

- The director of CASH now works especially closely with JUNJI, with oversight from the Ministry of Planning.

- The director of INTEGRA works under guidelines from the MOE and the Socio-Cultural Directorate of the Presidency.

- The director of the AIN-C Project works with the AIN-C Program and the MOH Coordination of Project Planning and Evaluation Group as well as the Vice Minister for Health Networks.

- The Coordinator of Madres Guías works under the leadership of the Director of CCF-H and she coordinates with MOE's Pre-Basic program and CONEANFO regarding non-formal preschool education centers.

- The Director of Educación Inicial works within the Unit for Compensatory Programs of CONAFE and, through it, with the Secretariat of Public Education.

- The director leads the National Coordination Office of Oportunidades that is guided by a coalition of several ministries and agencies led by the Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL).

- The director of Hogares Comunitarios works with ICBF's Planning and Technical Directorate and coordinates with the Ministry of Social Protection, MOH and MOE.

- The director of Familias en Acción works with the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation and Colombia's National Planning Department.

- The technical management team of PAIN was placed under Educational Studies sub-component of the MOE Directorate for Initial and Primary Education.

In contrast to the other programs, PAIN lacked a formal director. Instead a technical management team was composed of MOE initial education specialists and consultants. Without a director, it was hard for PAIN to establish institutional relations and intersectoral coordination agreements or build program support. Essentially, the program became lost in the MOE bureaucracy. Although evaluations demonstrated it had achieved good results and was serving a priority population of indigenous families living in severe poverty, the program was unable to marshal the support it required to survive.

Program structures

The ten programs use a variety of structural systems to conduct activities at regional, municipal and local levels.

- JUNJI's central office provides financial support to 13 regional directorates that work directly with municipal governments and non-profit child care and preschool centers to provide services. Parents' Centers are developed and given legal status.

- CASH now uses the JUNJI decentralized administrative system to coordinate and support parent education and child development groups in dispersed rural communities.

- INTEGRA has central offices and regional offices that administer its crèches and preschools. In addition to national support, municipalities provide subventions and develop Parents' Centers that gain legal status and are expected to participate actively in the preschools.

- The AIN-C Program and Project use the structural system of the MOH, including Regional Health Directorates, Inter-Municipal Networks, and local health centers at municipal and community levels.

- Madres Guías uses its own CCF-H program system with a decentralized office in the region it serves. It also coordinates services with the MOH for health care; the MOE for pre-basic education; CONEANFO; Departmental Directorates of

Education; Regional Health Networks; and Mayors' Offices at the local level. In addition, Madres Guías has developed Parents' Committees and community groups that manage all direct services with families.

- Educación Inicial works with Unidades Coordinadoras de Educación Inicial in all Mexican states as well as with State Secretariats of Education that coordinate with municipal authorities.

- Oportunidades' central coordination offices work with its state coordination units and service and registration centers, who in turn work with municipal governments and Committees for Community Promotion.

- Hogares Comunitarios developed a system of regional and sectional centers that work with departmental governments, and Zonal Centers of the program at the municipal level. These Zonal Centers work with municipal governments to support the program's extensive community services. They create Parents' Associations and train mother educators of NGOs and cooperatives that provide direct services for children and families.

- Familias en Acción, located in the Presidency's Social Action Agency, has developed Regional Coordinating Units and is currently putting into place "enlaces municipales" who are seconded from local governments and are expected to ensure the provision of health and nutrition services.

- PAIN used the Initial Education grid of the MOE, including initial education specialists of the Regional Education Directorates, who worked directly with local Educational Management Units and initial education teachers.

Four of the programs grafted their organizational units into existing ministerial and other program systems, while the six other programs developed new and separate decentralized units. Six of the programs developed contractual agreements with non-governmental units such as NGOs (4), CDOs (2) or cooperatives (1) to provide services. These collaborations offer opportunities for bringing high-performing NGOs into programs to extend and upgrade governmental services through providing technical assistance and direct services.

Five of the programs reported that they had developed parent centers, parent groups, or parent associations that manage activities or provide direct services. Research on parent-led structures is needed to learn more about their roles, responsibilities, activities and results.

Community participation

Program directors listed a variety of areas for community participation:

- Community authorities and organizations help the program establish itself well and provide program services. (10)

- Communities help to provide educational activities. (9)

- Community members are selected by the community to be trained as mother educators, monitors, promoters, or community representatives who provide direct services to children and/or families. (9)

- Community members help to identify potential participants and conduct outreach activities. (9)

- Community members conduct program advocacy activities to support local services. (8)

- Community members conduct program oversight (evaluation, social accountability, oversight). (8)

- Communities donate program service sites and help to maintain them. (7)

It is striking to note the high level of reported community participation in the ten programs. It would be important, of course, to conduct field research to assess the amount, level and impact of community participation.

Program coordination

This section provides an overview of vertical and horizontal coordination systems. Also discussed below are some of the typical coordination challenges encountered by ECD programs and solutions they developed to address them. In addition, current challenges and strategies being used to deal with them are presented.

Given the institutional culture in Latin American bureaucracies, top-down vertical coordination predominates in the region, with less importance attached to bottom-up coordination.

Horizontal coordination is often as important as vertical coordination, but this area tends to be neglected internationally. It is striking to note that Madres Guías, JUNJI, CASH and Hogares Comunitarios have developed valuable horizontal coordination activities. Also, the two CCT programs, Familias en Acción and Oportunidades, are heavily dependent on strong horizontal coordination.

Past coordination challenges and some solutions

The ten programs reported many past challenges and the strategies they developed to deal with them.

Interministerial coordination. The program directors reported they had found it difficult to manage interministerial coordination especially with respect to child health, malnutrition and social protection. To deal with this, JUNJI designed and established integrated programs with other sectors and forged collaborations to conduct joint planning. The AIN-C Project shifted coordination tasks to the local level and placed specific roles and responsibilities in service providers' terms of reference.

To improve coordination between federal and state levels in Mexico, Oportunidades established state-level Technical Committees that aim to guarantee participation and financial support of the Secretariats of Health and Education.

To maintain previously established levels of coordination with health and nutrition programs in regions and communities after personnel in the operational chain of other agencies had been changed, PAIN sought to sensitize new personnel in other agencies by dedicating special time and work to this goal; however, they found the approach time consuming and ineffective.

To ensure that regional and municipal health and education services reported and certified participant service usage, Oportunidades established a certification system for the co-responsibility of health and education providers. They also conducted training activities to sensitize other sectors to the importance of coordinating closely with Oportunidades and faithfully certifying program participation. To improve food distribution to program participants, Oportunidades utilized its National Technical Coordination Committee to revise program operations and ensure food provision occurred according to previously established interagency agreements.

Coordination with municipal governments. Coordination with municipal governments proved challenging for several programs. The AIN-C Project sought to involve municipal governments in program implementation from the outset. To improve the articulation of the ECD program within ICBF and the municipalities they serve, Hogares Comunitarios established Development Councils for Social Policy in most municipalities, with committees for children and families.

Coordination with parents' groups and volunteers. To establish adequate levels of coordination between Parents' Committees and program beneficiaries, the Central Directorate of Madres Guías provided technical support and training to Parents' Committees on how to coordinate, make decisions, manage budgets, administer activities, manage personnel and conduct community communications. To select and train Parents' Committees and contract

personnel in accordance with program guidelines, Madres Guías ensured that program beneficiaries would democratically select the members of Parents' Committees. The Directorate also jointly developed a plan with the Parents' Committee for continuous training and support, focusing on each group's roles and responsibilities. To maintain the active participation of program volunteers, Madres Guías provided on-going program support for volunteers, offered them continuous training, gave special recognition to each volunteer, and sought to respect each community's cultures, values and patterns of childrearing.

Coordination to build decentralized ECD planning processes of good quality to develop and improve each community's capacity to provide quality ECD services. Madres Guías provided training and updates on child development and protection and offered continuous supervision and managerial support from the Parents' Committees and the Regional and National Offices.

Coordinating with contractors and NGOs. To coordinate with national, regional and local agencies to ensure their support for the program and the provision of quality services, Madres Guías established written cooperative agreements for program implementation and support with national NGOs and other contractors.

Intra-program coordination. Some programs initially lacked follow-up systems for operational activities in the field. Educación Inicial developed a strategy for supervising parents' sessions and monthly training workshops in accordance with a participatory research methodology. Hogares Comunitarios improved the training of mother educators in all service areas.

To overcome frequent rotations of key people in their program's operational chain, Educación Inicial trained the entire chain in basic program competencies so they would be able to use them wherever they were placed. To deal with resistance to change, the program endeavored to ensure that all staff would become aware of the importance of promoting parental participation in training activities for improving child-rearing abilities in homes affected by severe poverty.

To overcome communication challenges in rural areas, PAIN used rural community radio and bus drivers as messengers. They sent coordinators to work with local teachers; however, the latter proved to be difficult because of the distances involved and the many other duties of community-level coordinators.

Coordination for program advocacy. To build awareness about the program at all levels in the country, Educación Inicial planned and implemented strategies to promote the image and contents of the program. To increase financial support for the program, they improved its proposal-writing capability, program processes and financial and program accountability.

Current coordination challenges and strategies

The current coordination challenges detailed below are ones that more mature programs frequently face, such as policy and political changes, coordination with other programs, and securing long-term financial support.

Interministerial coordination and planning. To improve the quality of services provided to program participants by the health and education sectors, Oportunidades is defining quality indicators and conducting evaluations. To develop synergies with other agencies' emerging programs that seek to serve the same target populations, Oportunidades works closely with those agencies to create new interprogram coordination systems.

Coordination for program expansion. To expand service coverage rapidly and arrange for the location of new program services with other agencies offering similar services, JUNJI and INTEGRA are holding coordination meetings at national and regional levels and conducting mapping exercises with other programs to avoid unnecessary duplication. Educación Inicial is coordinating with other agencies to increase its coverage of families living in urban areas with severe poverty. To coordinate activities related to emerging national policies and programs for program expansion, JUNJI is holding interagency coordination meetings, sending program information to Chile Crece Contigo, and incorporating new national ECD policies into JUNJI's program guidelines.

To expand its program, Madres Guías is establishing implementation agreements with the MOE, MOH and other NGOs and developing training programs for their technical personnel and communities. They are adapting their core program components, including early stimulation, for use in other communities and ministerial programs and they are actively participating in interministerial committees for new ECD policy and program development. This is a model of how a competent pilot program can help to improve and extend programs pertaining to the public sector and other NGOs.

Coordination to improve program financing. To secure budgetary approval in a difficult budgetary situation, INTEGRA is seeking to present its budgets more rapidly than usual and to coordinate actively with the MOE, MOH and MOF.

Coordination with municipalities and managing decentralization. Within the context of program decentralization, Hogares Comunitarios is proposing that minimum guidelines for ECD services be provided to departments and municipalities. It is creating strategic alliances with the Attorney General in charge of decentralization and other agencies to ensure ECD will be included in municipal planning. To deal with issues of articulation and coordination between the program and the municipalities it serves, Hogares Comunitarios is strengthening the organization of Development Councils for Social Policy that it helped to develop at the municipal level. CASH is building continuous coordination systems with municipalities and sensitizing municipal leaders to the need to plan for ECD services.

Coordination for ECD policy planning. Madres Guías is helping to prepare the situation analysis for the National ECD Policy and participating in the intersectoral committee that is drafting the Policy. To integrate program strategies with the forthcoming National ECD Policy, Hogares Comunitarios is conducting training sessions about the Policy and adjusting its program guidelines to fit Policy strategies.

Coordination to improve program contents. To expand the use of their curriculum for infant stimulation, Madres Guías is helping other national and international agencies and local groups to adapt it to meet their needs. To create a strategic alliance with the MOE for improving program contents, Hogares Comunitarios is seeking to work with the MOE to implement its new service modalities and strengthen the pedagogical component of its program.

Improving internal program coordination systems. To improve and strengthen state-level program coordination offices, the central coordination offices of Educación Inicial are providing them systematic support and continuous advisory services for operational planning, management procedures, and evaluation processes. To provide follow-up for training sessions with parents, Educación Inicial is using advisory services and follow-up activities in accordance with competency-based methods. To reduce personnel mobility within the program's operational chain, Educación Inicial is conducting negotiations to ensure the provision of timely salary and program payments.

Planning for program coverage growth

Program directors were asked to describe the growth of their programs and specify when they began to go to scale.

- JUNJI began to go to scale in 1971, the year after it was founded. It experienced slow and steady growth for 15 years, followed by a major expansion after Pinochet's fall. The program began as an urban and peri-urban program and expanded to rural areas. It is now a leader of the national Chile Crece Contigo (CCC) policy.

- CASH began in 1992 as a rural program for isolated, dispersed and impoverished rural communities that lacked preschools and other ECD services. It grew slowly, but since its consolidation with JUNJI, it is growing more rapidly.

- INTEGRA began in 1990, and its annual growth plans guided its slow but steady expansion. Under President Bachelet, the program is expected to grow significantly from 74,242 children in 2006 to 113,000 children in 2008.

- Hogares Comunitarios (1987) began to go to scale virtually from the beginning by using the ICBF decentralized system to offer services in all regions of Colombia.

- Familias en Acción was initiated in 1999. By 2000, it had field operations in some rural areas; by 2005 it had expanded to urban areas. In 2005–2006, it expanded to cover most municipalities of Colombia, and it continues to increase its population coverage in those municipalities. To consolidate this growth and ensure the provision of expected services, it has to rely increasingly on municipal level linkages and groups.

- Within the AIN-C Program begun in 1997, the AIN-C Project initiated its field operations in 2006–2007, and it plans to go to scale by using MOH service grids.

- Madres Guías began in 1992 in rural, peri-urban and urban areas of one province of Honduras. When CCF-H expanded its services to another province, the program expanded its infrastructure of support services as well. It has not extended further due to funding limitations, but it is developing a series of strategic alliances with the MOH and MOE that might lead to rapid program adaptation and expansion.

- Educación Inicial (1993) was designed to go to scale initially as a rural and peri-urban program. The program expanded its services after a three-year pilot and now serves urban areas as well.

- Oportunidades began in 1997 in rural areas. It has experienced a rapid and sustained expansion in terms of families and geographic areas served. Since 2004, it reaches 5 million families.

- PAIN (2001) initiated its services in rural areas and expanded to other rural areas two years later. In 2004, PAIN lost its funding support from the MOE and the program was closed.

Monitoring and evaluation systems

Location of evaluation and control functions

The management of evaluation and control functions is important for complex ECD programs. Six of the ten programs routinely conduct independent evaluation and control activities (JUNJI, CASH, INTEGRA, Familias en Acción, Oportunidades, Educación Inicial). PAIN ended before it could establish continuous external evaluation and control process. The other programs mainly conduct their own internally managed evaluations with occasional external evaluations.

Internal and external evaluations

All of the programs developed extensive, regular internal monitoring and evaluation systems, and all of them have used external evaluators. For descriptions of the programs' monitoring and evaluation systems, please refer to the full-length study (Vargas-Barón, 2008).

Linkage of supervision with monitoring and evaluation

Eight program directors, including all but one of the large-scale programs, reported that supervision is combined with monitoring and evaluation activities. This demonstrates that linking supervision with monitoring and evaluation has been found to be functional in these mainly large-scale ECD programs.

Although there are no research results to confirm it, experience has shown that programs that combine supervision with monitoring and evaluation (and, where possible, with in-service training) are able to:

- Maximize the use of professional personnel.

- Reduce costs resulting from fielding separate supervisory and monitoring systems.

- Give supervisors opportunities to learn more about the needs, activities and services of personnel they supervise.

- Help supervisors provide focused and continuous technical assistance to program personnel regarding program implementation.

- Assist programs to gather better monitoring and evaluation data.

- Improve program services more rapidly.

Development of program standards

The development of program standards can be a two-edged sword. If they are appropriate, functional and flexible, standards can be quite effective. However, when standards are applied inflexibly or are used in a punitive manner, they can restrict program growth and innovation. Internationally, ECD program observers often lament the lack of program standards or their enforcement, especially when programs exhibit a poor quality of services and outcomes.

JUNJI, INTEGRA, Hogares Comunitarios, Familias en Acción, the AIN-C Project, Madres Guías, Educación Inicial and Oportunidades have developed program standards. CASH has not developed standards as yet but plans to do so. PAIN did not develop standards before it was closed, but the technical manager of the program stated that had the program lasted longer, they would have developed them.

Openness to innovation and change

All ten programs identified themselves as innovative and open to change. The directors stated that their projects maintain a spirit of innovation in ways that include:

- promoting professional autonomy for curriculum development, designing new educational projects, and adjusting program norms and services to meet population needs (JUNJI)

- conducting external evaluations, especially with respect to mothers and professionals (CASH)

- promoting continuous reflection on pedagogy and practice through its national and regional technical teams and local preschool teams (INTEGRA)

- modifying its program guidelines in accordance with legislative requirements, contractors who operate local services, and communities (Hogares Comunitarios)

- emphasizing the program's role in meeting problems to design future actions (Familias en Acción)

- employing a systematic process of program development with local providers and conducting evaluations on the quality of their work every six months (AIN-C)

- motivating their field workers, conducting participatory evaluations, and providing them continuous training on ECD (Madres Guías)

- conducting diagnostic studies that lead to the design of training activities based on identifying the needs of the operational chain; encouraging parents to conduct their own assessments to identify their needs and those of their children (Educación Inicial)

- continuous monitoring and evaluation to identify opportunities and bottlenecks in program design or operations; promoting technological innovations and integrated operational strategies (Oportunidades)

- taking a participatory approach with rural indigenous communities and using initial educators at every level (PAIN)

Program costs

Costs per participant in the ten programs ranged from $124 per mother and her children per year (CASH) to $214 per child per month (JUNJI). A chart on program costs is provided in the longer study; however, comparing costs per participant across programs is misleading for many reasons (Myers 2008). Furthermore, most figures reported did not include those pertaining to collaborating health, nutrition, protective and sanitation services; municipal-level coordination and auxiliary services; or in-kind costs. The one exception to the latter is Madres Guías that estimated the monetary value of the work of its volunteer mother guides in Honduras.

In general, costs for center-based crèches and preschool services (JUNJI, INTEGRA and Educación Inicial) tend to be higher than costs for home visits and parenting sessions. However, CASH, Hogares Comunitarios, Madres Guías and PAIN are center-based all or in part, but they managed to keep costs lower through the use of paid or unpaid community workers.

Administrative costs reported varied from 3% to 15%. Information on the cost of program monitoring and evaluation systems could not be obtained.

Feedback, continuous planning and flexibility

To ensure that programs are able to change and improve to meet emerging needs, built-in systems for program evaluation, feedback and continuous planning are essential. Some programs develop monitoring and evaluation systems but may lack a robust feedback system for continuous planning.

In JUNJI, monitoring and evaluation is continuous and participatory with many feedback moments. In addition, once a year the program's Directorate leads a major meeting to review results and give feedback for planning purposes. CASH did not respond to this question; however, the program now participates in JUNJI's feedback and planning system. INTEGRA developed an approach for systematic reflection at every level, including specialists in crèches and preschools, supervisors of field teams, heads of regional education programs and technical teams, and central technical advisors. They report that this comprehensive feedback system has strengthened their curricula and improved educational practices, teamwork and the quality of children's learning.

In Hogares Comunitarios, supervisors give regional feedback each four months to regional and central levels through the use of ICBF's Intranet system. The Directorate and Regional Offices use evaluation results to modify guidelines and procedures as needed. Familias en Acción developed a follow-up system that includes tools to generate indicators for program processes and goals, an external sample survey to measure the efficiency of program processes, and an impact evaluation that includes the application of a tool to measure the achievement of program objectives.

In the AIN-C Project, health unit reports are sent monthly to intermunicipal, regional and national levels. Evaluations at regional and national levels are used to revise program plans twice a year. For Madres Guías, evaluations of preschools are conducted each semester and child assessments occur every two months. In addition, home visits are assessed. These data are used continuously to plan and revise the program.

Educación Inicial reviews coverage and service targets each month and trimester. Based on these reviews, advisory services and follow-up training workshops for parents are conducted, with a feedback loop to operational activities of the program. Oportunidades considers evaluation to be an essential part of achieving continuous results, assessing impacts and flexibly changing program services. Special attention is given to externally measuring program impact on beneficiaries and to making internal and external assessments of operational efficacy and efficiency.

PAIN developed a highly flexible and responsive system to meet the evolving needs of the communities it served. Community monitors held regular meetings with program parents and community authorities for program evaluation and planning. They often met with nearby communities to share innovations and strategies for overcoming difficulties.

Communication campaigns

Communications campaigns can be useful for ECD programs. However, they cannot substitute for direct services to children and families. Their main roles usually are to reinforce core program messages and help with program advocacy.

Six programs have developed communications campaigns to support their program strategies (JUNJI, AIN-C, Educación Inicial, Oportunidades, Hogares Comunitarios, PAIN). Four programs have not as yet (CASH, INTEGRA, Madres Guías, Familias en Acción) but noted the importance of doing so.

External context of programs

Many external factors affect the ability of ECD programs to go to scale and become sustainable. This section covers the following topics: policy environment; appeal to citizen commitment; national leadership for ECD; intersectoral planning and support; public-sector constraints; and external coordination.

Policy environment

The policy environment of ECD programs often spells the difference between success and failure. Depending on formal and informal national policies, a program will remain at the pilot level or grow to achieve national coverage. The policy environment can also have a major impact on whether or not a program becomes sustainable.

International impacts

At the global level, a variety of international policy statements make the argument that ECD is critical to national development and to fulfilling national commitments regarding child rights. Four of the most important instruments are Goal One of the Dakar Framework for Education for All (EFA; UNESCO 2000); Millennium Development Goals (MDG); Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Only two of the programs listed EFA Goal One as a point of policy support. It is clear that most of the ECD directors were unaware of the potential utility of this instrument in arguing that ECD services can help to increase enrolment, improve educational quality and student achievement, lower repetition and attrition rates, and increase primary and secondary school completion rates.

The PRS movement has had a greater impact on these programs even though relatively few Latin American nations have prepared PRS Plans. Nonetheless, most of the program directors state that they are seeking to lower poverty levels in their country. Seven directors mentioned that the PRS forms part of the policy that underpins their programs. One mentioned that the national PRS system is used as a basis for targeting the extremely poor in her country.

MDGs were mentioned by six of the program directors. At the level of indicators, seven of the eight MDGs relate directly or indirectly to ECD. As with PRS and EFA objectives, investment in ECD must be increased considerably for nations to achieve their MDG targets.

Only one director mentioned the CRC, and she also referred to the positive impact that United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is having on planning integrated ECD services in Honduras. If given adequate attention, national exercises for UNDAF, UN Common Country Assessments and One UN Plans could be helpful in supporting ECD policy planning and program development activities in the region.

National ECD policy

Only one of the five countries included in this study has an ECD Policy or Policy Framework. The three Chilean programs have already been positively affected by the new policy, Chile Crece Contigo (CCC). More work will be needed to ensure that this policy will be sustained under subsequent presidential administrations. Colombia is in the process of adopting both an ECD Policy (ICBF) and an Initial Education Plan (MOE). The director of Educación Inicial noted that interest is growing in developing an ECD Policy in Mexico. ECD policy planning is beginning to

move forward in Honduras with the preparation of a Situation Analysis using CCF's methodology and the establishment of a coordinating committee for policy planning.

Other national policies

The program directors noted that an array of other multisectoral and sectoral national policies support their programs:

- National Development Plans (6)
- Social Protection Policies (6)
- Initial Education Plans (6)
- Health Policies (5)
- Nutrition Policies (5)
- Education Policies or Plans (4)
- Sanitation Policies (2)
- Other multisectoral policies or plans (2)

According to the programs' relatedness to policies, they can be ranked as follows:

- Highly supported by multiple national policies: JUNJI and Hogares Comunitarios
- Moderately supported by a modest number of policies: INTEGRA, Educación Inicial, Oportunidades, AIN-C and Madres Guías
- Less well supported by national policies: PAIN, CASH and Familias en Acción

Legal basis

In addition to policy relevance, six of the programs use the national constitution or laws as the legal basis for their programs. Five programs depend on one or more decrees and four programs use national codes or regulations for children's services. The two non-profits derive their legal basis from codes for non-profits, and the AIN-C Project mentioned written agreements with the World Bank as part of its "legal basis" for continued government support.

Role of civil-society organizations and the private sector in ECD

All of the program directors stressed the importance of community participation in their programs, and many of them have formed or worked with existing CBOs. They noted that it is essential to convince local authorities to support the program and promote citizen participation.

However, only four programs, JUNJI, INTEGRA, the AIN-C Project and Hogares Comunitarios, mentioned working with CSOs as integral parts of their programs. Both of the large older programs, JUNJI and Hogares Comunitarios, contract with NGOs, community development organizations (CDOs) and Cajas de Compensación Familiar to help run service centers. These relationships are contractual rather than collaborative or for service coordination per se. Clearly these programs are only a few of the many ECD programs in Latin America, but they may reveal a trend toward public-private relationships that was discerned many years ago in Colombia (Arango and Nimnicht 1984).

None of the ten programs reported that they work with private-sector institutions. They may not be representative, but it is important to note that this sample contrasts with Brazil that has developed some strong private-sector foundations, such as the Fundaçao Abrinq, and with other world regions where a higher level of collaboration and coordination exists between government, CSOs and private organizations to achieve ECD goals (World Bank 2007).

This situation may help to explain in part why so many of the NGOs and private organizations that have founded ECD programs in Latin America have never been able to grow beyond the pilot stage or have quietly disappeared over time. Much work remains to be done in Latin America to

bring NGOs, CSOs and private-sector groups into public-private partnerships for child and family development, poverty reduction and improving equity.

Impacts on national policy

Directors were asked if their program had influenced national policies. Seven out of ten programs responded affirmatively:

- ECD Policy formulation (5)
- Contributing to PRS decision making and ensuring ECD is included in PRS plans (5)
- Helping with Initial Education Plans (4)
- Helping with Social Protection Policies (4)
- Helping with Health Policies (3)
- Assisting with ECD strategies for National Development Plans (2)
- Helping with Nutrition Policies (2)
- Helping with Education Plans (1)
- Helping with Sanitation Policies (1)
- Supporting planning to meet the MDGs (1)

ECD programs that are most sustainable collaborate with policy planning and implementation. Programs that are somewhat precarious, new or that have ended have not participated in policy planning processes.

Appeal to citizen commitment

Citizen commitment is difficult to measure, but it is critical in ensuring that ECD programs will have strong policy, political and community support. As a part of its service structure, each of the programs works diligently to achieve community involvement and empowerment.

National leadership for ECD

Four of the programs secured or currently have presidential support: Hogares Comunitarios (in the past); Familias en Acción (located in the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia); INTEGRA (begun by a prior President of Chile and maintained by President Bachelet); CASH and JUNJI (supported by the President's CCC program). Of course presidents change, and good programs are often thrust to one side by incoming administrations. However, if presidential initiatives are quickly codified into national policies, plans, laws, legislation, decrees and regulations, they have a much better chance of becoming permanent government programs.

Strong interministerial support has sustained other programs, including Oportunidades and Educación Inicial. Madres Guías is admired as a program, but because it belongs to an NGO, it has not been as successful in attracting long-term, consistent funding support from Secretaries of Education, Health or Protection. However, this situation may be changing due to the collaborative stance CCF-H has assumed. The AIN-C Project is strongly supported by Health Sector leadership and policies, and that may help it to achieve sustainability along with the AIN-C Program that has been sustainable in the medium term. However, both the AIN-C Program and Project depend heavily on outside funding support. PAIN was unable to gain and maintain national leadership support.

Intersectoral planning and support

The ten programs represent a wide array of sectoral and intersectoral support. For purposes of exposition, they have been separated into three types of programs: 1) programs with fully intersectoral and integrated services; 2) programs committed to intersectoral coordination while

maintaining separate sectoral services; and 3) programs with weak intersectoral relations and support.

Fully intersectoral and integrated services

Hogares Comunitarios began with a program design that included health services and nutritional supplements. It has forged interagency agreements for coordinated services throughout the country, including feeding services, nutrition education, immunizations, primary health care, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, sanitation activities as part of health services, and integrated family protection. The MOH and MOSP play leadership roles in Hogares Comunitarios. They strongly support the program and they play direct roles in the program at all levels. Basically, one service system is used to reach many of Colombia's most impoverished families, especially those living in violence zones where other agencies otherwise would be unable to serve them.

Madres Guías provides well-integrated services at the local level through parent education and pre-basic education. The health, nutrition and education sectors work in the program and coordinate with it at all levels. This program was designed as an integrated effort, and it has maintained this approach throughout its development.

Oportunidades has forged a strong intersectoral collaboration. Located in SEDESOL, the program includes in its core group for planning, program development and implementation the Secretariats of Education, Health, Finance and Public Credit as well as the Mexican Institute of Social Security and the National Population Council. The health, nutrition and education sectors work in the program at all levels. They coordinate with Oportunidades, make financial contributions, and participate in training, supervising, monitoring and revising it.

Programs committed to service coordination while maintaining separate sectoral services

JUNJI began as a single-sector service for preschool education, but it has worked hard to develop integrated services by adding health and nutrition services to its preschool program. JUNJI promotes healthy lifestyles and breastfeeding, distributes nutritional supplements through preschool feeding programs, and applies sanitation guidelines in its preschools. The health, nutrition, sanitation and justice sectors, protective services and women's services sectors support and collaborate with JUNJI but do not work in it.

Programs with weaker intersectoral relations and support

Through providing cash transfers and conditioned referrals to health, nutrition and education services, Familias en Acción seeks to improve health care and nutrition as well as prevent domestic violence. This program, supported by the presidency and the World Bank, lists the health and education sectors as sources of support; however, those sectors do not work in the program and they do not participate in planning, program implementation or coordination, with the exception of ICBF that is noted as a point of horizontal coordination.

The AIN-C Project is a single-sector initiative for nutrition and health. However, the director noted that at the local level, he is seeking to collaborate with the education sector, and he is incorporating coordination into the terms of reference for local service providers. Nonetheless, no roles for working, supporting or coordinating with other sectors are foreseen at national or regional levels.

Educación Inicial is deeply embedded in the education sector. It promotes the integrated development of children from families living in severe poverty and cultural isolation. The director is committed to working synergistically with other governmental agencies, and the health sector evaluates the program.

Although INTEGRA seeks to provide integrated services to children, it remains mainly an education program. It has forged some collaborative relationships with other sectors, including the health and nutrition sectors.

CASH focuses mainly on educational considerations for its parent education program. Health and nutrition sectors support the program but do not work in it. The program seeks to secure food supplements for impoverished rural families with young children.

PAIN faced significant problems at national, regional and local levels in getting representatives of the health and nutrition sectors to collaborate with their preschool program. They sought to secure school feeding and health services. In spite of their many efforts, intersectoral support was weak. It is particularly instructive to review PAIN's experience. PAIN had intersectoral support during the design period, when goods and funds from the WFP were expected to be provided. Support from other sectors seems to have "followed the money." After the WFP declined to provide food and other support for the program, many efforts were made to achieve intersectoral coordination to secure essential health and nutrition services for children living in poverty.

The program's former technical manager noted that the objectives for intersectoral collaboration with health and nutrition programs were not well achieved "because each institution had its own work plan and lacked experience in intersectoral activities. It was reported that in some zones there was more success, depending on the will of local personnel, but even there it was more in terms of general support than of co-responsibility. A mediator from the President of the Council of Ministers was brought in to formalize intersectoral work but … each sector had its own way of operating its programs, and those who attended were mainly technical teams of each sector and not those who could make decisions."

Another major problem was the high turnover of national and regional education, health and nutrition directors who were political appointees and not committed to a long-term coordination process. Program specialists developed a system to sensitize new directors previous coordination support, but they found it required too large an investment of time and energy.

Public-sector constraints
Some barriers to achieving large-scale program coverage and sustainability relate to bureaucratic, managerial and financial issues of the public sector.

Some of the constraints identified in these ten case studies and constructive approaches for dealing with them include the following:

- Some top-down administrative and financial processes are unable to change flexibly to meet municipal and community requirements. For example, PAIN had to manage all purchases of educational materials using a central bidding process that was inflexible and did not meet local requirements for materials.

- Ministries and other government agencies tend to have high levels of turnover of political positions and career personnel in posts that are critical to program implementation and maintenance. This affected PAIN and other programs in a negative manner. Older programs, such as JUNJI and Hogares Comunitarios, have learned how to maintain deputies and career personnel in key supportive posts.

- Ministerial coordination structures and systems were inadequate to meet the needs of some of the ECD programs. As a consequence, they developed their own decentralized coordination offices and systems parallel to or within ministerial systems.

- Frequent personnel transfers have caused problems for most of the programs. Successful programs, such as JUNJI and INTEGRA, have learned how to develop effective career ladders and maintain continuous program training processes. They also have developed brief training services to prepare new personnel in other sectors for positive intersectoral coordination.

- Slow administrative and financial processes have caused problems for some programs, such as PAIN and the CCT programs. PAIN was unable to effect systems change. However, CCT programs have been more successful in

developing new administrative procedures and rapid financial transfer systems both within government and through contracting with the private and NGO sectors for specific services.

- Inefficient and difficult communications processes in remote rural areas held back some program activities, as has been the case in CASH and PAIN. Those programs used a variety of approaches, from community radio and newspapers to face-to-face encounters. The latter, however, proved to be slow and expensive. Increasingly, programs are developing Internet capacities that help make communications with rural areas more rapid, frequent and effective.

- Madres Guías of CCF-H and other NGOs such as CINDE in Colombia have found it to be challenging to forge partnerships with public-sector agencies. Both of these major ECD programs have been successful in developing partnerships on the basis of service quality and their willingness to provide pro bono support. However, they and most NGOs and other CSOs lack the funding base to provide unlimited pro bono support. It is essential to develop innovative approaches for funding organizations such as these in order to create strong interinstitutional coordination and collaboration.

For a review of additional public-sector constraints, see the section "Barriers to Achieving Scale and Program Strategies to Overcome Them" in Part IV.

Many ECD directors and personnel expressed their commitment to revising and improving old bureaucratic structures. It is clear that they are doing both, but above all they are creating new program structures and processes within large bureaucracies that, through external evaluation and openness to change, are achieving major institutional shifts. Examples of these are the coordination systems of JUNJI, INTEGRA, Hogares Comunitarios, Familias en Acción (emerging), AIN-C, Educación Inicial, and Oportunidades.

External coordination

External coordination systems are tightly linked with internal coordination, and it proved impossible to tease them apart. For this reason, external coordination was included in the discussion of program coordination.

It is clear that external coordination has made the difference between success and failure in several programs. One program, PAIN of Peru, failed in part because its technical team was unable to secure external coordination between the MOE and MOH and other ministries and agencies. Other programs, such as JUNJI, Oportunidades and Hogares Comunitarios, have forged strong and enduring interinstitutional linkages.

Part IV: Program Directors' Views: Barriers to Development; Program Success; and Sustainability

Program directors were asked about their views regarding barriers to program development and the reasons for program success and sustainability. Their observations are helpful for understanding how programs go to scale.

Barriers to achieving scale and program strategies to overcome them

Each of the ECD programs has faced major barriers to achieving scale. It is instructive to review the array of solutions they developed to overcome them. In general, the programs demonstrated significant resilience and creativity in overcoming barriers to growth and sustainability.

JUNJI

Barrier: *budgetary limitations to expanding program coverage when they administered preschools directly.*

Solution: The program transferred funds to third parties to administer preschools, resulting in the establishment of 399 new crèches.

Barrier: *lack of an adequate infrastructure to set up crèches and preschools.*

Solution: They transferred funding for capital investments to municipalities who in turn managed the construction projects, resulting in 501 new crèches.

Conozca a Su Hijo (CASH)

Barrier: *funding ended after pilot.* CASH was initially designed and experimentally developed from 1982–1986 in an OAS and MOE project. To scale up CASH, an experimental design was implemented during 3 years with about 200 mothers in dispersed rural sectors. Parallel information on project results was sent to regional teams. Then the program was designed and teams were sensitized at all levels. Once OAS funding ended for the pilot phase, national funding for implementation was lacking.

Solution: In 1993, the program was presented to the project for educational reform program "Improvement of Educational Equity and Quality" (MECE) that was conducted by the MOE under an agreement with the World Bank. Financing was obtained for national-level implementation of CASH. Subsequently it was financed by MOE until 2006 when CASH was transferred to JUNJI. In 1993, MOE's 6 regional technical teams for preschool education were trained. During the second year, 13 regional teams were trained. By 1997, the program was incorporated into teams of community educators in municipalities where the program works, and by 2006, the program was being applied at the national level in 7 regions.

Barrier: *challenges in selecting and training educational agents called "monitoras" who were acceptable to the community*

Solution: Other mothers now select the monitoras in each community.

Barrier: *challenges regarding program consolidation and growth.*

To enable program replication, the program designs and produces materials for professionals, monitoras, and mothers. These materials are the pillars of the program.

Current barriers: *geographical dispersion of families, which makes it hard for them to attend group sessions, especially in the wintertime; the work schedules of rural women who do not have much free time for the program; lack of sufficient resources to expand program coverage rapidly.*

INTEGRA

Barrier: *time for program implementation.*	Solution: The program developed organizational skills for prioritizing tasks and resources.
Barrier: *the overwhelming number of program tasks at regional and central levels.*	Solutions: The program promoted team commitment, built an institutional identity, provided recognition for efforts made by program personnel, and tried to maximize the use of human and material resources.
Barrier: *initially faced low levels of personnel training and certification.*	Solution: INTEGRA developed a policy to: 1) improve academic and technical training for professionals; 2) provide continuous training for teams in preschool centers, and 3) encourage staff members without diplomas or certificates to become professionals.
Barrier: *needed more personnel training and upgrading.*	Solution: INTEGRA developed a program for the progressive training of regional teams and preschool centers in new preschool curricula and methods. As a result, 100% of INTEGRA's preschool centers were using the new curricula within two to three years.

Current barriers: *lack of sufficient personnel to assist with further program growth and ensure that new centers will be sustainable; difficulty in securing land to construct crèches and preschools.*

Hogares Comunitarios

Barrier: *the dispersion of population in rural areas that are difficult to access due to geography or violence.*	Solution: The program created Zonal Service Centers in each of the nation's municipalities.
Barrier: *the low educational levels of mother educators at the beginning of the program made it difficult to achieve program quality.*	Solution: Extensive training programs were provided. Hogares Comunitarios has trained mother educators, improved service spaces, and provided parent education and support.
Barrier: *challenges in going to scale.*	Solution: Placing program leadership and organization in the hands of the community allowed the program to serve communities throughout Colombia. In addition, the program was closely articulated with the National ICBF system for family welfare; more commitment from the system was sought.

Current barriers: *difficulties in travelling to some zones of the country due to violence; challenges with enrolling children into new programs; obtaining adequate locations for children's services; high costs related to program functioning; low levels of participation of some groups in the National System for Family Welfare in spite of efforts made in recent years; difficulties encountered in follow-up processes essential to enabling further program expansion.*

AIN-C Project

Barrier: *challenges in gaining credibility for its nutrition and social protection services.*	Solution: They developed a pilot project and created technical teams that were able to demonstrate positive results.
Barrier: *gaining control of the process of going to scale.*	Solution: They conducted a process of controlled and well-ordered expansion while also seeking to incorporate the program into national and municipal health plans. They are trying to include their strategy in service packages of the Secretariat of Health, and from the outset they are involving

municipal governments in program implementation activities. They are organizing the implementation process and most especially program follow-up activities to achieve program results. They are expanding the program by changing the functions of health and other personnel. Essentially, Secretariat of Health personnel are becoming supervisors, and consulting organizations are becoming the implementers.

Current barriers: *The program reports that it does not have any implementation barriers. However, they foresee possible barriers regarding the program's long-term financial sustainability should it not be inserted into basic services of the Secretariat of Health.*

<u>Madres Guías</u>

Barrier: *gender issues related to negative values men held regarding women's roles.*	Solution: The program worked to convince men about the value of women's roles in improving child development.
Barrier: *low level of program coverage.*	Solution: They developed networks of women and men to promote community improvements and service expansion.
Barrier: *lack of program tools for community-level workers.*	Solution: They created or adapted tools for use at the community level.
Barrier: *initial low level of parental commitment to the program.*	Solution: They developed communication strategies to make mothers and fathers aware of the positive impact of early stimulation on their young children.
Barrier: *some community leaders were resistant to the program.*	Solution: They decided that the communities would exclusively manage the selection of community leaders for the program.
Barrier: *difficulties in going to scale at a low cost.*	Solutions: The first activities were conducted through contracting a consultant to train a few mother guides. However, the results were inadequate given the low number of women trained and the high cost of training. Then, a new strategy was developed to train educators of mother guides who in turn trained mothers. This strategy has yielded greater effectiveness, more program efficiency and a lower cost per unit of service.
Barrier: *a high rotation of volunteer and contracted personnel.*	Solution: The program makes immediate searches for replacements and provides rapid training.
Barrier: *challenges with the revision of instruments and manuals.*	Solution: A decision was made to revise them in Honduras in accordance with international advancements in ECD, thereby keeping contracted personnel and volunteers up-to-date in their knowledge.
Barrier: *difficult to access communities.*	Solution: When homes are widely dispersed, the program gathers community members in meetings held in the community nucleus instead of making separate home visits. The program director reports that they have achieved the same results as with individual visits but their contacts are somewhat more sporadic.
Barrier: *maternal illiteracy.*	Solution: Mother guides and other mothers have joined literacy programs, resulting in an improvement in their educational levels and a newly gained ability to help their children learn to read and write.

Current barriers: *the lack of a national ECD policy to enable program expansion; a lack of financing to expand the program to more municipalities; and the need for a communications strategy to disseminate more information about the program.*

<u>Educación Inicial</u>

Barrier: *a lack of uniformity in the operational cycles of the program.*	Solution: State-level strategies were developed in accordance with local operational needs. Then, the lack of timely payments for operational teams became an issue, and the program successfully convinced its administrators that timely payments were essential to maintaining personnel. Because of a high level of mobility of members of the operational chains, a system was developed to select personnel from their regions and recognize exemplary work.
Barrier: *centralized work approaches threatened local program development.*	Solution: Work sessions were held with local program offices to learn about their work processes and needs for timely and appropriate support.
Barrier: *local teams had difficulty using the socioeducational diagnostic tool that is used at the beginning of the operational cycle, especially because it had more information than they could assimilate and use.*	Solution: The program provided training to state-level teams on the methodology and how to use the information they gather.
Barrier: *challenges in going to scale.*	Solution: They decided to expand services more slowly and in accordance with indicators related to education and marginality. They developed a formative program model and ensured the operational chains participated actively in program development. They increased the dissemination of information about the program and this expanded the participation of parents and caregivers.
Barrier: *decrease in birth rate.*	Solution: The program moved some of its services to communities with higher population growth, thereby enabling it to meet its coverage goals.
Barrier: *low participation of fathers.*	Solution: The program increased its dissemination of information to fathers, resulting in a higher participation rate for fathers.
Barrier: *sociocultural resistance to the program.*	Solution: Local authorities were purposefully linked more closely to the program and communities have become aware of program benefits.

Current barriers: *high levels of migration to the United States and to urban zones and a consequent loss of program participants; continuing rotation of personnel in the operational chains; geographical dispersion of marginalized communities; low levels of childbirth make it difficult to meet program coverage goals; competition with other social programs that provide economic or monetary benefits.*

<u>Oportunidades</u>

Barrier: *achieving budgetary support was difficult at first.*	Solution: The program demonstrated positive evaluation results and attracted greater support.
Barrier: *changes of government.*	Solution: Efforts were made to institutionalize the program as well as continue to promote its evaluation results.

<u>PAIN</u>

Barriers: *lack of sufficient budget to expand and continue the program resulting from low national and local investment in initial education that only covers personnel expenses; lack of funds for essential program costs regarding training, monitoring and participatory evaluation.*

Attempted solution: The program tried to go through National and Regional Education Directorates to secure regional funding but it was not possible due to the low priority accorded to initial education. PAIN was unable to develop intersectoral co-responsibility for its program. Roundtables were held to discuss intersectoral work; however, only technical people came, rather than the decision makers needed to forge agreements. Also, the same people did not attend from session to session, making continuity impossible.

Barrier: *going to scale.*

Attempted solution: PAIN held roundtables, worked with Regional Directorates of Education that changed frequently, appealed to the President of the Council of Ministers, and presented the program to the Vice-Minister for Pedagogical Management. However, none of these efforts were successful, and the program was not funded beyond 2004.

Reasons for program success

ECD program directors and representatives gave a wide variety of reasons for success; those reasons are listed below. The number of programs that mentioned each reason is noted in parentheses. Interestingly, community-based services, performance quality, and personnel-related topics top the list. Financial, structural and program issues received fewer mentions. All of the topics mentioned are important, however, and they reflect the wide range of issues that ECD program directors and personnel must manage well to achieve success.

- Program responds to needs of the target population (7)
- Quality improvement and personnel quality (6)
- Cultural adaptation of program (6)
- Community-based strategy (5)
- Quality services and flexible service adjustment over time (5)
- Personnel training and dedication (5)
- Personnel – seniority, knowledge and retention (4)
- Internal and external evaluation (4)
- Child learning outcomes (4)
- Government priority and confidence in program (3)
- Technical support of personnel (3)
- Curricular design and evaluation (3)
- Creation of community networks (3)
- Systematic feedback and activity follow-up (3)
- Sound organizational structure, clearly defined program policies, and local management plans (2)
- Simple, easy to understand tools for use in communities (2)
- Focus on women's learning outcomes (2)
- Promotion of innovation (2)

- Community handles resources and implements program (1)
- Program fulfills mission and is based on previous successful program results (1)
- Competencies for preschool transition (1)
- Educational materials uniting personnel and participants and program dissemination at all levels (1)
- Financial continuity (1)

To expand on the reasons for success listed above, following are some comments from specific program directors:

JUNJI reported that achieving a high level of program quality was the most important reason for the success of its services. Ensuring that their educational services responded to the evolving needs of target populations was also critical. Making sure the program was a government priority was essential as well as using well-trained professional and technical personnel. The director also mentioned in-service training and the maintenance of key personnel and institutional knowledge over time, flexible adjustment of the program, and focusing on quality improvement.

CASH's director stated that having dedicated personnel, conserving its core professional team and gaining the confidence of authorities had been essential.

INTEGRA's director reported that success had been achieved by fulfilling its mission, offering quality services, developing a sound organizational structure with personnel and teams dedicated to the program mission, and developing clearly defined policies for training and career development. Also mentioned as important were developing INTEGRA's curricular design, conducting internal and external evaluations of their curricula, implementing effective program practices, and achieving child learning outcomes. The director also noted that a key element of their success at the local level is the development of preschool-level management plans with results statements, along with a feedback loop to the program's goals and processes.

Hogares Comunitarios's representatives emphasized that their success was due to community participation and organization through developing Parents' Associations to administer resources and implement the program. They also mentioned continuity in the allocation of financial resources for the program; credibility and widespread recognition of ICBF contributions; the quality and experience of the educational agents who work to improve the conditions of children and families; and the program's design that meets community needs to improve their children's lives in three basic components: integrated child development; improved nutrition; and community organization and participation. They emphasized that Hogares Comunitarios is a program of the community for the community.

The director of Familias en Acción noted that their impact evaluation was important for showing they were achieving success. The director also noted the program has given greater visibility to women with the least consumer capacity, enabling them to become interested in public matters and helping them to form groups and consider issues that concern them.

The director of the AIN-C Project believes its success will be the result of a community-based strategy that uses the internal strengths of communities to resolve problems related to child nutrition and mortality. Also, he noted that they are basing their activities on previous pilot project results that were successful in preventing malnutrition.

The director of Madres Guías listed the following as key reasons for success: creating community networks of mother guides; providing technical support to field personnel; promoting innovation; conducting systematic follow-up of each activity; and developing simple instruments that are culturally appropriate and easy to use in communities.

The director of Educación Inicial identified the following features of their program: preparing curricula and methods for developing children's competencies using everyday activities; training personnel regarding knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for childrearing and improving child development; promoting group work as a basis for continuous learning among parents;

developing competencies for a successful transition to preschool education; disseminating information at all levels; and developing educational materials that link program personnel with participants and help them feel they belong to the program.

PAIN's technical manager attributed its success to the dedication of its field teams and the level of dialogue established with families and communities. In addition, she mentioned conducting participatory diagnostic studies at the beginning of the program; adapting the program to local needs, schedules and activities; focusing on including local teams as integral parts of the program; empowering parents and other community members; networking with other communities to share innovations, challenges and progress; providing feedback to the central group; and including community members in program processes at local levels.

Keys to sustainability

When asked to provide their key approaches to achieving sustainability, most of the program directors mentioned the following strategies:

- Achieving child and family outcomes that meet parents' goals and needs.
- Having policy support and a legal basis for the program.
- Attaining strong community involvement and support.
- Providing good program management at all levels.
- Obtaining stable and secure funding.

In addition, CASH's director noted the importance of developing strategies for inserting and maintaining the program in communities through establishing agreements with municipalities, as well as having funding from MOE and (now) the Ministry of Planning.

INTEGRA's director believes having government place a high priority on ECD policy is essential, as well as assurance of budgetary support, management leadership with vision, and a national focus on poverty eradication. She mentioned that its education program helps achieve sustainability through implementing program curricula at all levels, enabling continuous reflection and program revision in preschool centers, providing in-service training and upgrading all educational personnel, and holding planning meetings in crèches and preschools.

Familias en Acción's director emphasized the program's incorporation as a governmental agency, its neutrality at the municipal level, the roles of mother leaders, and program design approaches (rites, food preparation, key questions) that all participating mothers can manage and understand.

AIN-C Project's director believes that sustainability is linked to the credibility of health personnel of the Secretariat of Health and the desire of monitors to continue with the program.

Madres Guías' director stated that sustainability has been achieved through community participation and the communities' conviction that early stimulation will be critical to their children's future success at school.

The director of Educación Inicial stated that communities are aware of the program's benefits for family and community life, and they realize that it provides new opportunities for learning and child development. She noted that parents could identify improvements in their child care-giving abilities, their children's development and their preparedness for school.

Oportunidades' director simply stated that the program's decentralized units make it sustainable.

On the basis of the foregoing analyses and comments provided by ECD program directors, a series of general results and recommendations for taking ECD programs to scale are presented in Parts V and VI.

Part V: Taking ECD Programs to Scale: Some Recommendations

As a consequence of international research, policy advocacy and evaluations of ECD programs in the region, Latin American governments increasingly accept the proposition that investing in ECD is centrally important to their countries.

This study identified and analyzed a discrete number of national-level and pilot ECD programs that have been carefully evaluated and have achieved positive results. The brief program descriptions in Part II and the analytic sections of Part III identified sectoral, cross-sectoral, institutional, personnel, training, funding and other conditions that help explain why some programs have achieved scale and sustainable financing while others have not. Part IV presented the views of leading ECD directors regarding program barriers, successes and sustainability.

Based on the ten programs included in the study and the author's experiences in planning programs that have gone to scale, this section provides some tentative recommendations for policy makers and practitioners on how to design sustainable large-scale ECD programs of good quality. It also offers some initial guidance regarding ways that nations and international agencies might maximize their resources to achieve broadly based child development, especially among vulnerable populations.

In contrast to valuable recent work of other researchers (Binswanger and Swaminathan 2003; Gillespie 2004; Kohl and Cooley 2005; Hartman and Linn 2008), this initial study on issues of scale did not apply a preexisting framework to the experiences of programs. Rather, it used detailed program data and information on directors' experiences to derive salient observations and recommendations. More research is required on the realities of national-level ECD programs to derive additional, more nuanced guidance. In this regard, the Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institute is conducting a multi-nation study on the scaling up of ECD programs that promises to expand our knowledge regarding this complex and important topic.

Recommendations

When addressing issues of scale and sustainability, many commentators have tended to focus mainly on the level and types of financial support. However, as this study has shown, characteristics intrinsic to the programs themselves in terms of inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes are just as important as financial sustainability.

The following discussion revolves around seven recommendations for developing high-quality and cost-effective ECD programs with large-scale coverage:

1. Secure and maintain strong leadership and policy support for ECD programs.

2. Design programs to go to scale from the outset.

3. Prepare and implement well-targeted, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and community-based ECD programs to enable them to go to scale.

4. Include internal and external procedures for program monitoring, evaluation, accountability, reporting and program revision.

5. Prepare a sound investment plan for going to scale and achieving sustainability.

6. Prepare to face typical barriers to achieving program expansion and quality by studying the experiences of other programs.

7. Develop partnerships with pilot programs sponsored by civil-society institutions and the private sector to achieve scale, quality and cultural competence.

1. Secure and maintain strong leadership and policy support for ECD programs.

In Latin America strong and clearly designated program leadership proved to be critical to developing large-scale, sustainable, stable and well-financed ECD programs. Additionally, ECD leaders need to develop policy, legal, political and financial support and develop close relationships with other agencies. These supporters will be key to maintaining the program over time.

Directors of NGOs and presidential programs tend to remain in their positions much longer than those of public agencies, who are often political appointees. Of the programs studied, public agencies made major efforts to consolidate their ECD programs through developing the technical and leadership skills of career deputy directors and program coordinators, thereby enabling long-term sustainability.

Successful ECD directors were willing to search for new solutions and strategies. They were open to considering partnerships and new forms of coordination and networking. Six of the seven large-scale programs have secured solid long-term support from national policies.

The ten directors also developed many useful strategies to deal with common coordination issues. Most of them learned to use coordination as a tool to ensure sustainability and improve the quality of their services.

Guidance for maintaining strong leadership and policy support

- **Ensure program leadership is clearly designated**. Program directors should be empowered to officially represent the program and to coordinate, negotiate and make formal agreements with partner agencies.

- **Select strong leaders who know how to consolidate programs.** The directors of public-sector programs should be career appointees experienced with large-scale programs. If they must be political appointees, they should have strong career deputy directors who know the program's history; have a technical understanding of ECD; understand the program's objectives, organization and activities; and are able to consolidate the program.

- **Build political support for the ECD program – with care.** It is particularly important for public-sector programs to secure strong, sustainable support from political and policy leaders. However, should the program become subject to partisan politics, it can be dangerous.

- **Seek presidential support.** Programs supported by presidents appear to have a better chance of becoming sustainable if they are also given a strong legal basis through legislation, constitutional references or other means. In some instances, it was demonstrated that continuing support from an international agency could help presidential programs survive from one administration to another.

- **Seek to build partnerships with outstanding leaders of civil-society or private-sector programs.** Directors of NGOs tend to remain in their positions much longer than those of public programs. Their skills, experience and dedication make them important resources and potentially valuable partners.

- **Select program directors who can generate innovative solutions to problems.** Directors should be selected in part for their willingness and ability to search for new solutions and strategies, and their openness to considering new interinstitutional coordination and partnership agreements. They and their deputies should be adept at leading collaborative activities, participating in ministerial-level meetings, negotiating effective contracts for service provision, and developing decentralized planning, coordination and implementation systems with regions and municipalities.

- **Ensure strong policy support for programs.** To the extent possible, ECD programs should be designed and implemented within the framework of a national ECD Policy or Policy Framework and other sectoral and multisectoral policies in ECD fields to help ensure program sustainability. Several Latin American nations lack an ECD Policy or Policy Framework. Without one, nations do not have an "umbrella statement" to establish a basis for increasing investment in ECD, building intersectoral coordination structures, expanding programs and improving program quality over time. Program leaders should conduct policy advocacy, present evidenced-based arguments for expanded investments in ECD services, and participate in developing national ECD Policies, ECD Strategic Plans and annual ECD Plans of Action.

2. Design programs to go to scale from the outset.

Intentionality has proven to be of critical importance to achieving large-scale coverage. From the outset, programs should use complete development processes to plan and develop their structures, curricula, materials, manuals, methods, training systems, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and systems for continuous revision and planning.

Several of the programs reviewed in this study were designed to go to scale from the outset. None of the pilot programs reviewed had been able to achieve national-level scale on their own, and the literature reveals few examples of pilot programs that have gone to scale in Latin America. However, one pilot program studied, CASH of Chile, may soon achieve scale through its consolidation with the national-level JUNJI program.

An ECD program's potential for success may be predicted by assessing the completeness of its program development processes (see this section of Part III). Except for the one pilot program that was discontinued, all of the other programs studied included virtually all elements of what are generally considered to be essential for a complete program development process. The weakest elements across the ten programs were the development of baseline studies, supervisory systems, staff training systems, program standards, and communications systems. The latter especially is an area for growth.

All ten of the programs were judged to have developed clear and comprehensive objectives that are appropriate for the services they render. Interestingly, almost all programs included objectives that were: child centered (9), family focused (9), centered on program processes (10), and emphasized coordination to achieve integrated services (8). Each of the seven large-scale programs designed, adapted and produced a wide array of curricula, as well as educational and training materials, manuals, and methods in line with their objectives. The objectives of several of the programs changed flexibly over time to enable program growth and refinement.

Eight of the ten programs established program standards. For program standards to be enforced, systems of accountability should be developed. JUNJI, for example, is implementing a Quality Evaluation System that includes a conceptual framework for assessing the quality of program processes and results in light of program standards. This system is linked to in-service training and continuous program oversight. Standards usually evolve over time, and this has been the experience of Hogares Comunitarios.

All seven of the national-level ECD programs included in this study have gone to scale in terms of both population and geographic coverage. They were sponsored solely or mainly by the public sector. None of them were principally designed, developed or managed by institutions of civil society or the private sector. INTEGRA's legal status is that of a private foundation but it is entirely funded by the public sector. The sponsoring ICBF is a semi-autonomous institute but its funds for Hogares Comunitarios come from legislation granting ICBF a 3% payroll tax, and ICBF is administratively located under Colombia's Ministry of Social Protection.

A wide variety of sectoral sponsorship was found, including not only education and health ministries but also protection, planning and finance ministries. It appears that strong support from Ministries of Planning and Finance may become critically important to the future expansion of

ECD in Latin America. Presidential leadership for ECD in Chile, Colombia and Mexico has been essential to program development in those countries. However, long-term policy and legal support will be essential for maintaining these programs. In some situations, presidential support could be detrimental to long-term efforts to expand and improve ECD services.

Six of the seven large-scale ECD programs have secured strong national policy support, often from several national policies for education, health, nutrition and protection. The one exception is the presidential CCT program of Colombia that has survived a change in administration and maintained extensive World Bank support. Seven of the programs reported that they had been able to impact the development of national policies. It is interesting to note that most sustainable ECD programs contribute to national policy planning and implementation processes.

In addition to policy support, to provide multisectoral or integrated services, ECD programs need to develop intersectoral agreements. The ten ECD programs represent a wide array of approaches for obtaining sectoral and intersectoral support. Two programs (Hogares Comunitarios and Madres Guías) were assessed to have fully integrated and intersectoral services. Another program, JUNJI, was strongly committed to intersectoral coordination while maintaining its separate sectoral status. The remaining programs had relatively less developed intersectoral relations and support although they all had forged collaborations with other sectors.

Six of the programs use the national constitution, official decrees or legislation as the legal basis for their programs. Five programs depend on one or more official decrees, and four programs use national codes or regulations for children's services. The two non-profits derive their legal basis from codes for non-profits. The AIN-C Project mentioned written agreements with the World Bank as part of its "legal basis" for continued governmental support, and, given the need to ensure long-term national support for its program, this could present a problem in the future.

The study revealed a relatively low use of international policies favoring child development to support ECD programs. Policies listed included Goal One of the Dakar Framework for Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO 2000); Millennium Development Goals (MDG); Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Only two of the programs listed EFA Goal One as a point of policy support. Seven directors mentioned that the PRS forms part of the policy underpinning of their programs. The PRS movement has had a greater impact on these programs than EFA, even though relatively few Latin American nations have prepared PRS Plans. Nonetheless, most of the countries have national development plans that seek to lower poverty levels. Millennium Development Goals were mentioned by six of the program directors. Only one director mentioned the CRC.

Many international planners assert that investing in a communications program for program advocacy is essential to achieving program success. However, results from the ten programs do not confirm this assertion. Five programs conducted little or no program advocacy through communications, and the other five programs mainly focused on community-level communications to attract participants, maintain contact with their decentralized contractors, and reinforce program messages for participants. Only one, Educación Inicial, reported having a comprehensive and continuous communications system. It could be surmised that much more might be accomplished if large-scale, comprehensive and continuous communications systems were to be established by all ECD programs. However, a multiprogram communications project would be needed to test this hypothesis.

Guidance for designing programs to go to scale from the outset

- **Ensure that ECD programs are designed using complete program development processes.** Special attention should be given to the development of: baseline studies, supervisory systems, staff training systems, program standards, and communications systems, since these appear to be the weakest program areas.

- **Develop appropriate and flexible program objectives.** ECD programs that achieve scale or sustainability have clearly stated objectives related to key

services and/or expected results. Programs should be capable of changing their objectives over time to meet evolving conditions.

- **Establish quality assurance systems and program standards.** To go to scale, programs should establish and implement quality assurance systems, including program standards and systems of accountability to ensure that standards are used to guide program training, supervision, monitoring and evaluation activities. Program standards should flexibly evolve over time to meet emerging policy, program and participant needs at local, regional and national levels.

- **Pursue public-sector support.** From this sample of national-level ECD programs in Latin America, it appears that the best way to ensure long-term and stable support for large-scale ECD programs is to place them in the public sector and within public or semi-autonomous agencies that have strong mandates to develop cost-effective ECD services.

- **Create public-private partnerships.** Institutions of civil society and the private sector may find it advisable to pursue the establishment of public-private partnerships to link their ECD programs with public-sector programs from the outset or at as early a stage as possible to secure long-term, stable and sustainable program sponsorship, opportunities for coordination, and financial support. At the same time, care must be taken to protect the autonomy and legal status of civil-society and private organizations or they might be completely absorbed by the public sector. This might undercut their ability to innovate and provide flexible services and technical support to meet emerging needs.

- **Seek support from Ministries of Planning and Finance.** Public-sector ECD planners might consider placing priority on securing and strengthening the support of Ministries of Planning, Finance, and Social Development or Social Protection while also seeking to improve coordination with Ministries of Education, Health, Sanitation and Justice.

- **Develop intersectoral collaboration.** Intersectoral planning for integrated services should be pursued during the design period of programs that aspire to go to scale and continuously thereafter. The study revealed that it is difficult to establish intersectoral planning and integrated program work without building co-responsibility for the program's mission and objectives from the outset.

- **Develop formal interagency agreements to achieve integrated or intersectoral programming.** As appropriate, public, private and CSO program coordination and joint services should be affirmed officially through written agreements, legislation or norms, guidelines, regulations or protocols to help ensure the their sustainability.

- **Participate in policy planning and implementation processes.** Participation in policy development appears to be an essential role of large-scale ECD programs. This helps them become more sustainable and links them to emerging policies. It also appears to help them achieve national-level coverage.

- **Link ECD programs to international policies and instruments for children.** The programs selected for the study had some linkages to international instruments related to ECD. However, it appears that a greater effort should be made to use EFA Goal One, PRS, MDG, CRC, UNDAF, UN Common Country Assessments and One UN planning processes to support ECD policy planning and program development.

- **Develop a strong and enduring legal basis for ECD programs.** Long-term support for ECD programs should also be based on national laws, decrees, codes and regulations and, if possible, the national constitution.

- **Prepare a policy advocacy and social communications plan and system for the program.** Although apparently not absolutely essential to achieving program sustainability, it is advisable to develop a communications plan for conducting program advocacy activities, reaching target populations and promoting major program messages.

3. Prepare and implement well-targeted, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and community-based ECD programs to enable them to go to scale.

At this stage of development in Latin America, where many families still live in poverty, programs should target priority populations of vulnerable children. Current research points to the importance of early (prenatal to 3) ECD services, especially for vulnerable children and their families. In line with these findings, nine of the ten programs focus on the early period. These programs may not be typical of the broad array of ECD programs in Latin America, many of which are pre-primary programs that begin at or after age 3. The examples of the leading programs selected for this study will likely encourage other programs to establish or expand services to cover the period from conception to age 3.

The international literature on ECD underlines the importance of ultimately providing universal services but initially targeting them for each nation's most vulnerable children. Abundant research has shown that vulnerable children benefit the most from ECD services (UNESCO EFA GMR 2007). All of the ten programs place priority on targeting services to those populations that can gain the most from them: families with young children who are living in severe poverty or under the poverty line. Many of the programs sought to reach rural, marginalized and indigenous populations. Again, this is not typical of many ECD programs that serve urban, middle-income children in Latin America, but these large-scale programs demonstrate that Latin American nations are increasingly serving disadvantaged populations.

Excluding Oportunidades that serves 5,000,000 families, the remaining six large-scale programs reach an average population of 509,220 children, and they report success in accessing and serving their target populations. All of them, with the possible exception of Oportunidades, could grow further. Most of the large-scale programs use national statistics, systems that identify poverty zones, and mapping exercises to target their plans for program coverage.

ECD services should be comprehensive, including education, health, nutrition, protection and sanitation. To the extent possible, they should use integrated approaches to achieve quality and stated results. Only two of the programs studied are solely parent or child oriented. The other eight programs combine parent education and support with child-oriented services. To meet family and child development needs and achieve program goals, the programs found they had to provide more comprehensive services for vulnerable children and their families. However, only three of the programs use home visits as a program strategy.

Six of the ECD services were found to be quite comprehensive, but only two programs included early childhood intervention (ECI) services that are focused on vulnerable children with developmental delays, malnutrition or disabilities. To provide improved services for vulnerable children in Latin America, significant additional work to design and implement ECI programs will be needed in future years.

Most of the programs were found to lack adequate systems of combined nutritional, health and developmental screening and assessments, combined with tracking and follow-up services, especially for vulnerable children and high-risk parents.

All ten programs include some form of community participation activities. Program directors and representatives emphasized the importance of community involvement, participation and empowerment. Community-based and participatory techniques that in the past were found only in pilot programs are now being used in larger-scale programs. The two CCT programs are adding components to achieve more comprehensive child development services or are building stronger program collaborations that will supplement their services.

A high level of community participation in the ten ECD programs was reported with respect to program management and service provision; educational activities; program service personnel who become mother educators, monitors, promoters or community representatives; identification of potential participants and conducting of outreach activities; program advocacy and oversight activities; and provision and maintenance of program service sites.

All of the ECD programs selected for this study conducted activities aimed at ensuring they were culturally competent and would gain participant support. They included members of local cultures in the design process; ensured that all program contents, materials, methods, and media were culturally appropriate; and provided training for all program personnel, paid and unpaid, to prepare them to impart culturally competent services. Eight of the ten ECD programs studied included systems for both pre-service and continuous in-service training.

The personnel and coordination structures of all seven large-scale ECD programs are well articulated and have strong policy and administrative leadership. It appears to be impossible to have large-scale and cost-effective ECD programs with small and simply organized personnel structures. All of the programs have specialized professional staff members who manage the program, conduct training activities and supervise activities. Several programs contract with municipal CSOs or cooperatives, and most use paid or volunteer community personnel who provide services at the local level.

All ten programs developed or used preexisting structural systems to conduct and coordinate activities at regional, municipal and local levels. Six of the ten programs developed their own grid of decentralized units while the other programs grafted their programs into existing ministerial or other program systems. To provide services, six of the programs worked through non-governmental units such as NGOs (4), CDOs (2) or cooperatives (1). These contractual agreements offer opportunities to bring high-performing NGOs into large-scale ECD programs to extend and upgrade governmental services through providing technical assistance and direct services.

Given the institutional culture of Latin American bureaucracies, top-down vertical coordination predominates in the region, with less importance attached to bottom-up coordination; this is reflected in the public-sector ECD programs reviewed. Horizontal coordination is often as important as vertical coordination but it tends to be a neglected area of program coordination. It is striking to note that Madres Guías, JUNJI, CASH and Hogares Comunitarios have developed valuable horizontal coordination activities. Also, the two CCT programs, Familias en Acción and Oportunidades, depend heavily on horizontal coordination.

Guidance for preparing and implementing well-targeted, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and community-based programs to enable them to go to scale

- **Begin with prenatal to age 3.** ECD programs in Latin America should prioritize and seek to expand their services to assist children from conception to age 3.

- **Target vulnerable groups.** Nations are increasingly targeting population groups such as children living in poverty and in rural and indigenous communities.

- **Conduct mapping exercises for program development.** Programs should conduct mapping exercises to identify vulnerable populations and then ensure that targeted participants actually access and utilize services.

- **Ensure programs are child centered and family focused.** Comprehensive ECD programs usually provide services for both children and parents and include a broad array of services.

- **Provide ECI services.** ECD services that serve children with developmental delays, malnutrition or disabilities should provide more intensive, individualized, content-rich, family-focused and continuous services to help vulnerable children achieve their full potential.

- **Employ all modalities appropriate to achieve stated results.** Both home visiting and group sessions should be considered for use by most programs. A significant amount of work is needed to design, develop and evaluate large-scale and effective home visiting models in Latin America.

- **Ensure children are screened and assessed as needed.** Significantly more attention should be given to developing low-cost, effective systems of combined nutritional, health and developmental screening, assessments, tracking and follow-up services, especially for vulnerable children and high-risk parents.

- **Include community and parent participation in programs.** ECD programs should strive to ensure they are responsive to local needs by working closely with communities, giving them leadership roles, and involving them in service provision and oversight.

- **Develop ECD components or partnerships in CCT programs.** CCT programs may be able to achieve stronger results with respect to overcoming poverty and improving child development, child and family nutrition, health, and parenting knowledge, skills and behaviors if they add ECD components or establish partnerships with successful ECD programs.

- **Establish well-articulated personnel structures.** Strong policy and administrative leadership, team organization and well-developed management systems are essential for program success. Just as important is the use of professionals at national, regional and often municipal levels who are experienced in providing technical support, supervision and training workshops for local service providers. They are essential for expanding services and improving program quality.

- **Design sustainable volunteer systems.** To become sustainable, it appears that volunteer systems require strong community organization, many incentives, and frequent in-service training and technical support to guide them over time. Volunteer turnover remains a critical issue in all places using volunteers as mother educators, community educators or child caregivers. Consideration should be given to providing basic fees to such volunteers to enable them to support their own families while assisting others.

- **Use existing agency structures and coordination systems to the extent possible.** If ECD programs decide to use existing coordination systems, then structural roles, responsibilities and coordination activities should be clearly designated. However, to provide fully integrated ECD services at the local level, several large-scale programs found it necessary to develop new national, regional, municipal and community structures.

- **Develop bottom-up and horizontal as well as top-down coordination systems.** Vertical and horizontal coordination processes and contents should be developed at all levels: national, regional, municipal and local. Horizontal coordination is particularly important for sharing innovations widely and rapidly.

- **Develop culturally competent programs.** Programs should seek to build on and derive key components from positive cultural traditions and practices regarding child rearing, especially including the preparation of outreach systems, curricula, educational and training manuals, materials and methods. Derivational work on cultural practices and the development of educational materials and methods by pilot programs Madres Guías, PAIN and CASH are particularly valuable, and their methodologies could be used to guide and inspire other ECD programs.

- **Prepare a plan for scaling up the program.** Unless the program is a part of a large preexisting system into which it can develop its services, it will require at

least two to three years to pilot its initial services. Geographic and population coverage should be expanded slowly and cautiously, with attention given to consolidating core systems and building institutional capacity for growth.

- **Prepare all components needed for scaling up the program.** For a program to go to scale and be replicated in communities throughout a nation, it should plan, field-test, revise and produce all essential program components.

- **Design, field-test and continuously upgrade pre- and in-service training systems.** To go to scale, programs should develop training systems and program management manuals such as specialized manuals for home visits, assessments and screening, group sessions, child care and preschool education, evaluation and monitoring, program administration, and financial management. These training systems should be flexible and should feature continuous internal evaluation and revision in response to changing community and program needs.

- **Maintain a spirit of innovation and openness to change.** To achieve sustainability, ECD programs should purposefully foster continuous innovation and guided change for improvement through activities such as developing and modifying educational contents, materials and methods; conducting internal monitoring and evaluation and external evaluations; utilizing participatory processes that include program participants; providing continuous training and upgrading of personnel at all levels; revising management, regulations and standards to meet evolving needs at all levels; and collaborating with and conducting horizontal coordination and intersite exchanges with similar ECD programs nationally and internationally.

4. Include internal and external procedures for program monitoring, evaluation, accountability, reporting and program revision.

Accountability is essential to achieving successful, large-scale and sustainable ECD programs. To become accountable, all of the selected programs instituted extensive internal monitoring and evaluation systems with periodic reporting and review processes. Seven programs conducted comprehensive internal monitoring and evaluation.

Most of the programs also included program participants and communities in oversight activities and in processes for program management, review and revision. Specifically, eight programs used program participants as monitors and/or evaluators. Using participants as monitors and evaluators usually helps to ensure that programs respond to participants' and communities' needs and concerns.

All of the programs used external evaluators. Six developed systems to routinely fund independent evaluation and control activities. Program directors led or guided evaluation work in several of the programs. However, the role of directors in leading and participating in evaluation processes should be carefully reconsidered to ensure maximum objectivity and comprehensive results.

Linking supervision with monitoring and evaluation has been found to be functional in large-scale ECD programs, although field research is needed to confirm this finding and explain its impact.

To ensure programs change and improve to meet emerging needs, built-in monitoring and evaluation systems are needed not only for program evaluation, but also for reporting, feedback and continuous planning at all levels. Robust feedback systems for continuous planning are essential. All of the programs reviewed had developed a well-functioning system for reporting, follow-up and continuous program planning.

Guidance for program monitoring, evaluation, accountability, reporting and revision

- **Include comprehensive internal monitoring and evaluation systems in all ECD programs.** All ECD programs, large-scale or pilot, should be designed to

include comprehensive systems for internal monitoring and evaluation as well as regular reporting periods, feedback processes and continuous planning.

- **Ensure that procedures for community/participant oversight are developed and implemented effectively.** Community and participant oversight is essential to ensure accountability at the local level and adjust and revise services to meet evolving community needs.

- **Conduct periodic external evaluations.** External evaluations should be conducted regularly to assess program inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. External evaluators can help programs secure long-term support. A purposeful effort should be made to ensure that continuous evaluation and control functions are managed separately from executive offices or are conducted by independent organizations.

- **Assess cultural competence.** Monitoring and evaluation processes should include indicators regarding cultural competence to help ensure that program objectives for providing culturally appropriate services are being achieved.

- **Secure technical assistance and financial support for monitoring, evaluation and accountability practices.** Programs usually require technical guidance to conduct monitoring or evaluation activities. Technical assistance and training for evaluation and monitoring should be provided during the program design period and, at a minimum, annually thereafter.

- **Consider linking program supervision with monitoring and evaluation.** Programs should consider linking supervisory systems with monitoring and evaluation systems and in-service training to lower personnel costs, improve program quality and ensure supervision is well informed by research results.

- **Develop a continuous system for results reporting and feedback for program planning and revision.** Successful and sustainable pilot and large-scale ECD programs have continuous and comprehensive systems for program feedback and flexible program revision.

5. Prepare a sound investment plan for going to scale and achieving sustainability.

All but two of the programs studied are funded mainly from public-sector budgets pertaining to the public treasury, presidential offices, Ministries of Planning, Finance, Education, Health and Social Protection. Several of these programs receive or previously received international support from the World Bank or the IDB. Regarding the other two programs, Madres Guías is funded mainly, but not solely, by CCF-I. ICBF's Hogares Comunitarios receives its main support from a 3% payroll tax. Like France, Colombia uses this productive and efficient system of taxation that could support children's services in other nations. Hogares Comunitarios appears to have the largest budget of all of the programs studied.

It appears that for large-scale ECD programs, public-sector support that is stable and non-fungible has been essential. When funding was fungible, as in the case of PAIN, the program ended.

In all cases of large-scale external funding, a substantial amount of national counterpart support was present. However, in the case of AIN-C, where political support is essential, and Familias en Acción whose funds are fungible, it is unclear that sufficient national support will be available over the long term to maintain their current level of program coverage.

Essentially, most of the programs have used very limited approaches to funding. Most developed simple funding strategies with only one or two major sources of support. This lack of diversification is a concern, especially where strong legal and policy support is not assured.

Some pilot and large-scale programs selected for this study appear to be (or to have been) overly dependent on a few external donors that provided short- to medium-term support from international agencies. Exceptions to this rule are international groups and operating foundations that are committed to long-term program funding in developing countries, such as Christian Children's Fund, Save the Children Alliance, Plan International, World Vision and others. These international NGOs usually depend on private donors and benefactors to provide long-term sustainable funding for selected children or communities. However, the level of this support is rarely sufficient to enable programs to go to scale without significant additional funding from national governments, international agencies or other donors.

The large-scale public-sector ECD programs reviewed have made little use of corporate structures, but this is beginning to occur in the region. Currently, a few corporations and corporate foundations are helping civil-society and private-sector ECD programs in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela and other countries in the region.

Limited, incipient or no use has been made by large-scale programs of the following types of sources of funding that have been developed in other world regions:

- Fee sharing and special municipal subsidies for ECD services
- Self-developed income secured through the provision of technical advisory services, training workshops or materials sales and distribution
- Low-cost public-sector loans for ECD programs
- Civil-society and private-sector loans to ECD providers to develop child care centers or family child care services
- Dedicated income taxes for children's services
- Dedicated public lotteries
- Excise taxes on commodities and business tax concessions
- Taxes on natural resource extraction
- Early childhood benefits: vouchers, subsidies and tax credits for child services
- Fee sharing with parents, using a sliding scale for families living in poverty
- Scholarships or grants to marginalized or poverty-stricken groups to use child development services
- Civil-society and private-sector grants, contracts or funds to extend public-sector services
- Participant fees
- Employer provision of ECD services
- Support for ECD services from cooperatives of employers and/or employees
- National funds for integrated ECD services

Madres Guías, ICBF and JUNJI have been more inventive in this regard. They have used grants, contracts or self-generated income to a greater extent than other programs. Ample room exists for Latin American ECD programs to explore new and diversified funding approaches that could help ensure their long-term sustainability. (For a discussion of the above funding approaches, see Vargas-Barón 2007.)

Each of the national-level programs developed detailed national, regional and municipal plans to help ensure the careful targeting of services to the most vulnerable children living below the poverty level. To serve them expeditiously, most of the ECD programs developed transfer systems. The programs did not note any current problems with transfers, although one director stated that the program had experienced slow personnel payments at first. Experience has shown

that less mature ECD programs often encounter problems in ensuring that transfers are timely and in the correct amount.

Program costs were not well evaluated by most of the programs and substantial additional work will be needed in this regard. Cost per participant had been calculated by some of the programs but, with the exception of one program, they did not include in-kind and other non-monetized costs. Administrative costs were reported to be from 3% to 15%, which is within the usual accepted range for social service programs.

In addition to securing stable, non-fungible, sustainable financial support, the development and maintenance of transparent, well-managed accounting and financial systems, budgeting activities, and systems for financial transfers to regional and local levels have been critical.

Guidance for preparing a sound investment plan for going to scale and achieving sustainability

- **Prepare a sound financial plan.** Programs that are successful usually develop financial plans to obtain sustainable support for all aspects of program development from basic salaries and benefits to training and systems for innovation, monitoring and evaluation.

- **Develop stable, non-fungible, sustainable financial support.** Programs that aspire to go to scale should develop secure, long-term financial support and, to the extent possible, not become overly dependent on single sources of funding or international support.

- **Seek to diversify funding support, even though core support may appear to be stable and secure.** For institutions of civil society or the private sector to attain scale, diversification will be essential. Consideration should be given to using some of the additional funding approaches listed above, especially the payroll tax that has been successfully used in France and Colombia to fund large-scale ECD programs.

- **Assess program costs carefully.** It is critical to assess costs per participant and per community in relation to program outcomes through conducting field research to address not only monetary expenditures but also in-kind costs and the value of volunteers. Attention should be given to keeping administrative costs well under 15%.

- **Conduct program mapping exercises and financial simulations.** Mapping exercises to identify vulnerable populations and financial simulations should be conducted to attain the highest possible coverage while ensuring program quality is maintained.

- **Ensure budget development and financial systems are well articulated at all levels.** Nations should develop clearly articulated roles, responsibilities, guidelines and coordination systems for integrated ECD financial planning at regional and municipal levels. Without such guidance, comprehensive services for young children may go unfunded, be of poor quality or lack essential elements.

- **Design secure systems for the transfer of funds from national to regional and municipal levels.** ECD programs should ensure transfer systems are efficient, transparent, timely and accountable.

- **Develop a well-functioning and responsive accounting system.** A well-functioning accounting system is essential for good program management, sustainability, and going to scale.

- **Ensure compatibility with other financial systems.** When the program works in an integrated or coordinated manner with other ministries or ECD programs, to the extent possible, the program's accounting system should be linked with the collaborating systems.

- **Develop flexible and decentralized procurement systems.** Procurement problems can occur at national, regional and, especially, municipal levels, including bidding and purchasing challenges.

6. Prepare to face typical barriers to achieving program expansion and quality by studying the experiences of other programs.

Because only three pilot programs were reviewed, it is impossible to ascertain why most pilot programs have been unable to go to scale in Latin America. Madres Guías worked to develop a comprehensive program model that could go to scale in Honduras. The program director noted that their only real barrier to achieving this goal has been the lack of sufficient financial support to expand their services to additional regions in Honduras. At first the program found it challenging to forge partnerships with public-sector health and education agencies, but they have succeeded in developing those partnerships because of the quality of their services and their willingness to provide technical support. As yet, large-scale public-sector funding has not been forthcoming.

Most NGOs and other CSOs lack the funding base to provide pro bono support to the public sector. Thus, it has been essential for them to develop innovative approaches for funding programs and creating strong interinstitutional coordination.

Through its consolidation with JUNJI, CASH has been able to go to scale in more rural areas of Chile, and it no longer faces major barriers to expansion. PAIN disappeared principally due to lack of financial support; however, had it continued, additional work would have been required to develop various aspects of its program in order for it to have gone to scale. Its evaluation showed that its services were valuable, and the program could be reinstituted at a later date to continue serving impoverished and marginalized indigenous communities.

With respect to large-scale ECD programs of the public sector, many of the barriers they faced in expanding coverage and achieving sustainability related to bureaucratic, managerial and financial issues of the public sector. These and other barriers are listed below along with some of the strategies they used to overcome them.

Guidance for overcoming barriers in order to go to scale and achieve sustainability

- **Barrier:** Pilot programs lack policy, political and financial support to go to scale. **Strategy:** Consider consolidating the pilot program within a larger public-sector program or develop interagency agreements and secure grants and contracts to expand services.

- **Barrier:** Top-down administrative and financial processes limit the decentralization of program services to the municipal level. **Strategy:** PAIN was unable to overcome this problem but other programs developed decentralized administrative and financial structures with clear lines of command, roles and responsibilities, guidance and regulations to ensure accountability and transparency.

- **Barrier:** High levels of turnover of political positions and career personnel in posts can inhibit and restrict program implementation and maintenance. **Strategy:** Older programs, such as JUNJI and Hogares Comunitarios, have learned to maintain deputies and career personnel in key managerial posts.

- **Barrier:** Ministerial coordination structures and systems do not meet program needs. **Strategy:** Several large-scale programs developed separate decentralized coordination offices and systems that are parallel to or nested within ministerial systems.

- **Barrier:** Frequent personnel transfers from position to position, level to level and sector to sector caused problems for most programs. **Strategy:** JUNJI and INTEGRA learned to develop effective career ladders and maintain continuous program training processes. They also developed rapid training services to

prepare new personnel in other sectors for positive intersectoral coordination. When Educación Inicial experienced a high level of mobility of the members of its operational chains, they developed a system to select personnel from their regions and recognize exemplary work.

- **Barrier:** Slow administrative and financial processes have caused problems for some programs. **Strategy:** CCT programs have been especially successful in developing new administrative procedures and rapid financial transfer systems, both within government and through contracting with NGOs for services to beneficiaries and private-sector contractors to conduct financial transfers. When Educación Inicial faced a lack of timely payments for operational teams, the program convinced its administrators that timely payments were essential to maintain personnel.

- **Barrier:** Inefficient and difficult ministerial communications processes in remote rural areas hindered some program activities. **Strategy:** A variety of approaches have been used to overcome communications barriers, from community radio and rural newspapers to face-to-face meetings. Increasingly, programs are developing Internet capacities to communicate with rural areas more effectively.

- **Barrier:** Systems for dealing with public-sector constraints are lacking. **Strategy:** Special attention should be given in each country to identifying public-sector constraints that affect large-scale ECD programs. ECD councils or committees should be established to help ECD programs find ways to bypass bureaucratic restrictions and improve civil service procedures.

- **Barrier:** Budgetary and infrastructural limitations to expanding program coverage were encountered when ECD programs attempted to continue to administer preschools directly. **Strategy:** JUNJI decided to transfer funds to third parties to administer preschools. They also transferred funds to municipalities that managed construction projects and helped JUNJI achieve coverage goals.

- **Barrier:** Securing financial support. **Strategy:** To survive and grow the pilot program, CASH collaborated with various MOE programs and finally consolidated with JUNJI within the MOE system.

- **Barrier:** Difficulties in identifying community workers. **Strategy:** CASH, Madres Guías, AIN-C and Hogares Comunitarios provided basic criteria for selection but left the selection of community personnel strictly to community-level parent groups. All reported good results from this strategy.

- **Barrier:** Programs faced a lack of appropriate and up-to-date educational materials and program manuals. **Strategies:** Virtually all programs have developed new materials and manuals for professionals, monitoras, and mothers. This barrier should be anticipated and culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and manuals should be rapidly designed, field-tested and produced. Madres Guías developed easy-to-use culturally appropriate tools, educational materials and manuals for community-level workers. To keep community personnel up to date in ECD advancements, CCF developed a system for continuously revising educational materials. CASH reported that using strategies and contents that "rescue" local cultures offers rural women an opportunity for social participation. Their educational materials are designed to permit monitoras to work by themselves in a sequenced way with a clear understanding of the materials, methodologies and activities. Their strategy includes an internal formative evaluation system that flexibly fits different geographical and cultural zones. JUNJI and INTEGRA used a validated curricular design, expert assistance to field-test educational materials, gradual and progressive curricular implementation, and periodic training, upgrading and

advisory services to regional and center-based teams, along with diagnostics of the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

- **Barrier:** Program operational units and participants experienced difficulty meeting centrally established program schedules. **Strategy:** All of the programs adjusted their service schedules to fit participants' work and family schedules.

- **Barrier:** A lack of congruence between national and state program schedules. **Strategy:** Educación Inicial decided that state-level strategies should be developed in accordance with local operational needs. Work sessions were held with local program offices to learn about their work processes and needs for timely and appropriate support.

- **Barrier:** Difficulties in meeting implementation requirements in a timely manner, especially at national and regional levels. **Strategies:** INTEGRA developed organizational skills for prioritizing tasks and resources, promoted team commitment, built an institutional identity, provided recognition for efforts made by program personnel, and tried to maximize the use of human and material resources. Educación Inicial expanded services to states slowly and in accordance with indicators related to education and marginality. They developed a formative program model and ensured the operational chains participated actively in program development. They increased the dissemination of information about the program, and this expanded the participation of parents and caregivers.

- **Barrier:** Low levels of personnel training and certification. **Strategies:** INTEGRA developed a policy to improve academic and technical training for professionals, provide continuous training for teams in preschool centers, and encourage staff members without diplomas or certificates to become professionals. Later, INTEGRA developed a program to train regional teams and preschool centers in new preschool curricula and methods, resulting in their quick adoption and use. All programs instituted in-service training systems. Hogares Comunitarios and Madres Guías provided frequent in-service training, supervision and literacy training for community workers. Madres Guías observed an improvement of mothers' educational levels and a newly gained ability to help their children learn to read and write.

- **Barrier:** Difficulty in serving dispersed, isolated rural populations. **Strategies:** Hogares Comunitarios created Zonal Service Centers in each of the nation's municipalities. CASH brought parents together in municipal centers. Educación Inicial used home outreach. In rural areas with dispersed populations, Madres Guías invited community members to meetings held in the community nucleus instead of making separate home visits.

- **Barrier:** Overcoming rural resistance to program activities, including violence in some zones. **Strategies:** Hogares Comunitarios and Madres Guías, among others, placed local-level program leadership and organization in the hands of communities, along with a training package on objectives, activities, roles and responsibilities. Madres Guías initially faced gender issues in communities and worked successfully to convince men about the value of women's roles in improving child development. They also used communication strategies to make mothers and fathers aware of the positive impact of early stimulation on their young children. In Educación Inicial, a low participation of fathers plagued the program. The program increased its dissemination of information to communities, resulting in a higher participation rate for fathers. This program also experienced some sociocultural resistance to the program. To deal with it, local authorities were linked more closely to the program, and communities were made aware of program benefits for their children and families.

- **Barrier:** National-level resistance to program approaches. (For example, PAIN faced many barriers including the lack of sufficient budget to expand and continue the program resulting from low national and local investment in initial education and a lack of funds for essential program costs regarding training, monitoring and participatory evaluation.) **Strategies:** AIN-C gained credibility for its nutrition and social protection services through developing a pilot project and creating technical teams that were able to demonstrate positive results. They then sought to incorporate the program into national and municipal health plans and service packages of the Secretariat of Health. They involved municipal governments from the outset in program implementation activities. To take the program to scale, they systematized the strategy, organized the implementation process, and conducted follow-up activities to achieve program results. Oportunidades demonstrated positive evaluation results and attracted greater support. When changes of government threatened the program, efforts were made to institutionalize it and continue to promote its evaluation results.

- **Barrier:** Previous roles of technical personnel did not fit emerging personnel needs for program expansion. **Strategies:** AIN-C changed the roles of technical personnel from providing direct services to supervising consulting organizations that were contracted to provide program services. Madres Guías initially used consultants to train mother guides but this proved to be very costly. They then developed a strategy wherein program staff trained national educators who trained and supervised mother guides who in turn worked with mothers and children. This trainer of trainers approach was reported to yield greater program effectiveness and efficiency as well as a lower cost per unit of service.

- **Barrier:** Difficulties in expanding program coverage at the community level while maintaining program personnel. **Strategy:** Madres Guías developed networks of women and men to promote community improvements. To deal with a high rotation of volunteer and contracted personnel, the program made immediate searches for replacements and provided rapid training.

- **Barrier:** Lack of a communications strategy. **Strategy:** Oportunidades developed a comprehensive plan that has met their requirements for outreach, providing information to participants, and maintaining political and community support for the program.

7. Develop partnerships with pilot programs sponsored by institutions of civil society and the private sector to achieve scale, quality and cultural competence.

The three pilot programs were unable to go to scale at the national level. Thousands of pilot ECD programs exist in Latin America, and these three programs are too few to draw hard and fast conclusions regarding pilots. Much more research is needed on this topic. However, some interesting observations can be made.

CASH is listed as a private foundation, however, it has been funded entirely by the public sector. Its funding has remained stable and the program has grown since it was consolidated with JUNJI. Program consolidation may be one route to consider for enabling the experience and systems of successful pilot programs to be expanded to national-level coverage.

The Ministry of Education in Peru developed PAIN. Once funding support from the Ministry and IDB ended, this program that had been evaluated to be successful in terms of achieving its program outcomes disappeared. It did not make a major impact on Peru's initial education system.

Madres Guías, one of Latin America's largest and most successful ECD pilot programs, is mainly supported by the international NGO CCF. It features comprehensive, community-based services and it has achieved full sustainability. It has developed a series of enduring linkages with the Secretariats of Education and Health as well as many national NGOs and international agencies.

Its record of collaboration and generous technical support and training services for other organizations' programs for children is outstanding.

However, Madres Guías cannot expand its services further without increased funding support. For this reason it is establishing implementation agreements with the MOE, MOH and other NGOs. It is providing training programs for Honduran technical personnel and communities and adapting core program components, including early stimulation, for use in other communities and ministerial programs. The program is participating actively in interministerial committees for ECD policy and program development.

Madres Guías provides a model of how a competent pilot program can help improve and expand programs pertaining to the public sector and other NGOs. Its cost-effective services have attracted considerable interest, and it is poised to expand its program through a combination of public-sector support and collaboration with key international donors. This experience in scaling up could be instructive for future studies regarding the large-scale expansion of ECD programs sponsored by civil-society institutions.

CINDE's PROGRESA, not included in this study, is an example of a highly successful but unsustainable program developed by a national NGO. PROGRESA was unable to reach national-level scale due primarily to a lack of financial and public-sector support. While some aspects of PROGRESA influenced ICBF's Hogares Comunitarios, that program is considerably different from the PROGRESA program. The original program has disappeared, but it influenced a host of enduring child and family development efforts in the Chocó and other regions of Colombia. In addition, CINDE developed a doctoral-level ECD program at the University of Manizales, it provides extensive technical assistance to Colombian and Latin American ECD programs, and it conducts many training workshops and studies each year. CINDE also serves as the Secretariat of the Red Primera Infancia, an extensive ECD network of networks for Latin America and Brazil that assists its members with technical support, provides a valuable website, and holds regional workshops and conferences. Thus, although PROGRESA did not go to scale in Colombia, CINDE has continued to make major contributions to ECD development in Colombia, Latin America and other world regions.

It was particularly striking that the seven large-scale ECD programs studied made relatively few mentions of collaborations with national and international NGOs. Although all of the program directors stressed the importance of community participation in their programs and many of them worked with existing CBOs, only four of the seven large-scale programs (JUNJI, INTEGRA, the AIN-C Project and Hogares Comunitarios) mentioned working with CSOs as integral parts of their programs. Both of the larger and older programs, JUNJI and Hogares Comunitarios, contract with NGOs, CDOs and employee cooperatives to help run service centers. These programs are only a few of the many ECD programs in Latin America, but they may reveal a trend toward public-private contractual relationships.

None of the ten programs reported that they work directly with private-sector institutions. These collaborations are beginning to occur in the Latin American region, and they are likely to increase over time.

Public-sector ECD programs have missed many opportunities to work with civil-society and private-sector programs. This situation may help to explain in part why so many of the NGOs and private-sector organizations that have founded ECD programs in Latin America have never been able to grow beyond the pilot stage or have quietly disappeared. Much work remains to be done in the region to bring NGOs, CSOs and private-sector groups into public-private partnerships for child and family development, poverty reduction and improving equity.

Guidance for developing partnerships with pilot programs sponsored by institutions of civil society and the private sector to achieve scale, quality and cultural competence

- **Develop more contractual relationships with NGOs and CSOs.** As noted, contractual relationships with NGOs and CSOs may be a path for bringing the knowledge and capacity of those organizations into the public-sector ECD systems.

- **Consolidate programs when merited, mutually beneficial and cost-effective to help them go to scale.** The consolidation of CASH into JUNJI has been mutually beneficial to date. Care should be taken to avoid using consolidation to reduce *necessary* duplication or to eliminate high-quality programs from competition for funding support. Most program directors initially resist consolidation, but when it creates a common vision, reduces redundant administrative costs, and improves program structures and quality, consolidation can be cost-effective.

- **Consider new ways to coordinate with private-sector ECD organizations.** Employee cooperatives, employer-supported ECD programs, and private-sector preschools, crèches and health clinics provide an array of ECD programs in Latin America. Although traditionally they have worked separately from the public sector, it may be time to consider developing new collaborations unified around a common vision for child and family development.

- **Develop additional types of public-private partnerships.** Partnerships could be created to capitalize on and extend the impact of valuable CSO and private-sector innovations, contents and methods; build stronger linkages with communities served by these organizations; expand program coverage more rapidly by using existing service networks; and maximize the use of each nation's experienced human resources and training systems.

- **Promote policy commitment for bringing successful pilot programs to scale.** The policy and political support that is needed to bring pilot programs to scale has been lacking. Potentially, pilot programs could be expanded through the provision of financial support at national, regional and municipal levels, as has been the case with some innovative primary school models developed by NGOs or universities (for example, Escuela Nueva [NGO] and Escuelas que Educan y Sanan [universities] in Colombia). To develop political and policy support for bringing pilot programs to scale, it will be necessary to identify and select promising programs in each nation and analyze their capacity. Intersectoral planning committees may be needed to help revise and add essential structures and elements to bring the pilots to scale.

- **Encourage international agencies and banks to support pilot efforts that are designed to go to scale and are ready to do so.** Programs such as Madres Guías are ready to go to scale with relatively few additions. International donors in collaboration with national governments could consider this option for achieving greater ECD coverage and more comprehensive and culturally competent services. Special attention should be paid to maintaining program quality through supporting recurrent and capital costs and also pre- and in-service training, educational materials and media, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and continuing innovation.

- **Help other pilot programs to prepare to go to scale.** Other programs, such as PAIN, that lack complete program development processes nonetheless have provided valuable program services. They could be supported to complete their design and piloting processes to help them go to scale.

Part VI: Moving Forward

This study seeks to initiate a discourse on the vitally important topic of achieving scale and long-term sustainability for ECD programs. Topics covered in this paper merit in-depth field research. Interviews and observations at all levels of ECD programs should be conducted. Policy planners and other decision makers should participate in assessing program sustainability and processes for going to scale.

Support should be given to future ECD programs to ensure that situation analyses and baseline studies are conducted before they are designed. Although pilot initiatives may be undertaken during the first two to three years of program implementation, programs should be designed from the outset to go to scale. With this in mind, all baseline data that will be needed for long-term program evaluation and research should be gathered. Comprehensive baseline studies include the needs, challenges and preferences of the target population; human, institutional and training resources to carry out the program; financial resources potentially available for the program; and a policy analysis to identify all relevant policies, plans, legislation and decrees that may affect the program. At the same time, situation analyses should seek to ensure that programs will meet communities' expectations and felt and perceived needs. Special attention should be given to designing and conducting external evaluation research studies that feature longitudinal control group designs.

Research topics that especially merit attention include:

- Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies of ECD programs

- Paid community personnel and volunteer systems: their effectiveness and sustainability

- ECD curricula, materials, methods, media and training manuals

- Pre- and in-service training systems

- Parent participation and community-led structures, activities and oversight systems

- Coordination actors, structures, processes and results

- Combined systems for supervision, in-service training, and monitoring and evaluation.

With respect to international support for bringing ECD programs to scale, greater emphasis should be placed on providing macro-level policy guidance to help nations build the organizational and coordination structures and legal bases needed to enable continued ECD policy and program development, expand national investment in young children, and prepare systems for intersectoral planning and co-responsibility.

In addition, international agencies should significantly expand their investments in ECD programs in Latin America. They could offer technical assistance at the beginning of program development to ensure that programs are designed to go to scale and become sustainable. They could encourage the establishment of national commitments to provide diversified, stable, non-fungible financing and administrative support to help ensure program sustainability.

International agencies should work with national governments and with programs sponsored by civil-society and private-sector organizations, including pilot programs that have achieved promising results. In some instances, this may mean helping to ensure such programs gain a seat at the table during ECD policy and program planning processes. In other cases, the pilot programs might be helped to share some of their program components and skills with public-sector programs. For this to occur, help could be provided to develop contractual agreements for advisory services, pre- and in-service training workshops, service provision in line with pilot programs' abilities, and, in some cases, program monitoring, evaluation and follow-up activities.

Governments could select highly successful pilot programs conducted by civil-society or private sector organizations for rapid expansion. Usually, but not always, this entails considerable investment and effort to complete the program's design. International agencies could provide technical and financial support for these efforts.

International agencies could expand their support for international, regional and national ECD networks that play critical roles in promoting the exchange of knowledge, experience, and good practices. They could increase their support for national ECD policy-planning activities, policy advocacy, implementation and follow-up. They could assist with the development of national and regional ECD training systems and training workshops. Intersite exchange is one of the best forms of in-service training. This would be valuable not only within countries and regions but could also include South-South exchanges throughout the world.

Given positive research results and the increasingly high priority that international agencies are placing on expanding investments in ECD, these approaches for international cooperation could help to improve the development of vulnerable children throughout the Latin American region.

One thing is certain: Infants and young children living in poverty and difficult circumstances need attention now. They cannot wait. To meet their needs and overcome poverty, scaling up promising ECD programs is essential.

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Appendix A: Acronyms Used in the Report

AIN	Atención Integral a la Niñez
CASH	Conozca a Su Hijo
CBO	Community-based organization
CCC	Chile Crece Contigo
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CDO	Community development organization
CINDE	Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano
CONAFE	Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles
CONEANFO	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Educación Alternativa No Formal
CSO	Civil-society organization
EFA	Education For All
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
ICBF	Colombian Institute for Family Welfare
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
INTEGRA	Fundación Educational para el Desarrollo Integral del Menor
JUNJI	Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOSP	Ministry of Social Protection
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PAIN	Project for Integrated Services to Children Less Than Six Years of the Rural Mountainous Region (Proyecto de Atención Integral a Niños y Niñas Menores de Seis Años de la Sierra Rural)
PRONOEI	Non-Formal Program for Initial Education (Programas No Escolarizadados de Educación Inicial)
SEDESOL	Secretariat of Social Development
SISBEN	System for the Selection of Beneficiaries
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization