

## **A mega evidence and gap map of evidence synthesis for child welfare in low- and middle-income countries: preliminary findings**

### **What is an evidence and gap map?**

An evidence and gap map (EGM) is a graphical representation of the available evidence for a particular issue. An EGM shows where there is plenty of evidence and where there are evidence gaps. The main uses for an evidence and gap map are to guide policy makers and practitioners to evidence to support decision-making, and to inform research priorities in order to fill evidence gaps.

An evidence and gap map is shown as a matrix in which the rows are intervention categories and sub-categories and the column outcome domains and sub-domains. Each cell lists the studies for that intervention for those outcomes, with links to the available studies.

An evidence and gap map informs us what evidence is available. It does not summarize what the evidence says.

### **What is the child welfare mega-map?**

This mega-map is a very broadly defined evidence and gap map covering child welfare and low- and middle-income countries. The mega-map includes systematic reviews and evidence and gap maps. It does not include primary studies. Gaps show gaps in evidence synthesis. There may be primary studies in a cell for which there are no primary studies. Conversely, the presence of evidence synthesis does not mean there are necessarily primary studies in that area.

The primary purpose of the mega-map is to determine priority areas for new EGMs and systematic reviews.

### **Why are we producing this mega-map of child welfare in low and middle-income countries?**

Women and children's health are concern in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including targets to end preventable newborn, child and maternal deaths by 2030, to ensure universal access to reproductive health-care services, education, and to protect, promote and support early child development and adolescents' health.

SDG Goal 17, focused on implementing the SDGs, includes an explicit target on supporting an increase the availability of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data. Evidence and gap maps (EGMs) can contribute to achieving SDG 17 by supporting the prioritization of global evidence synthesis needs and primary data collection.

### **Main Findings**

We found 99 systematic reviews from 3ie database and 16 evidence maps which present evidence on child welfare in low- and middle-income countries. Stage 2 of the project will have a more comprehensive search.

The largest concentration of evidence for health and ECD interventions and for health-related outcomes. Intervention categories for which there is little evidence are synthesis social welfare and social work (including child protection), governance and environment and WASH. The most common outcomes measured are those related to health, healthy development and learning and development. Few studies measured effects on risk factor reduction. There were very few studies on measuring safety and few studies include economic analysis.