

The Official Newsletter of the Institute of Early Childhood Development




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From The Editor



Dear Readers,

As the cheerful melodies of Christmas fill the air and we finalize our gifts for the tree, we take a moment to reflect on the close of another remarkable year. In this December edition of the Children's First newsletter, we celebrate the incredible milestones we have achieved together, showcasing the vibrancy and passion that have defined our activities over the past months.

We invite you to explore an innovative digital initiative to enhance Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Seychelles through technology. This relates to the launch and execution of IECD's first online digital solution for the government's financial assistance programme for child care services - known as Child Care Benefits Information System, Seychelles (CBISS).

In our feature on the Early Childhood Music Education Workshop, you will discover the innovative approaches we have adopted in collaboration with the National Arts and Craft Council and the Conservatoire des Arts, through the Seychelles Institute of Culture, Heritage, and the Arts. Together, we are using music to nurture creativity and promote learning in our young children.

This year, we also celebrated ECCE Theme Days, organizing a range of activities across different sections within the Institute. We commend their efforts in this inaugural year of the initiative and express our gratitude for the caring contributions of our Childcare Services, which helped make it a success.

We emphasize the importance of team-building activities and showcase the diverse initiatives led by our Institute that promote collaboration and camaraderie among staff. Moreover, we highlight our commitment to ongoing high-level training and professional development as well as the vibrant social committee activities.

Our sensitization activities on the draft 'Early Childhood Development (National Standards for Childcare Centres) Regulations, 2024' promises to pave the way for enhanced childcare standards across our nation, ensuring that our children receive the highest quality of care in line with international norms and best practices. This is an initiative that all parents in the country appreciate, and we congratulate the Institute for its commitment to this important endeavor.

Additionally, we are excited to maintain our international connections, with members of our staff participating in conferences and meetings in Kenya, China, and Rwanda. This engagement fosters a global perspective in our efforts.

As the year comes to a close, let us take a moment to appreciate our shared accomplishments despite the challenges we faced, and look forward to what lies ahead in 2025 in the best interest of our youngest citizens and their families, and our country.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Justin Valentin, Minister of Education, Dr. Marope, the Chairperson of the Governing Board of the Category 2 Institute, Captain Savy, the Chairman of the Local Board, and all Board members for their unwavering support and guidance. We also appreciate their active engagement, whose encouragement has been crucial in our quest to meet our strategic priorities, targets and key performance indicators for this year. A special note of thanks also goes to our esteemed partners and stakeholders in the ECCE sectors and partner agencies, in child care services and all benefactors for their generosity and support during this year. This collective endeavor has solidified our position as both a national and global leader, enhancing the visibility of the Institute and Seychelles, and its leadership.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment and support. Together, we can continue to make a profound impact in the field of early childhood care, education, and development, laying a solid foundation for future learning and a brighter future for the next generation.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year ahead!

Mrs. Shirley Choppy

Chief Executive Officer
IECD Category 2 Institute Under the Auspices of UNESCO

Universal Children's Day 2024 Winners of the Children's Photography Competition: Children, Culture & Heritage through Photography



Creche Year 1 and 2 - Au Cap Primary School



Primary 1 - Anse Aux Pins Primary School



Primary 2 - Anse Aux Pins Primary School

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY 2024



Tree Planting Activity

A tree planting event was organized by the IECD's Social Committee at the Anse Etoile Crèche and Small Step Day Care, both located in the Anse Etoile district, and it coincided with Universal Children's Day celebrated on 20th November every year. The activity brought immense joy to the children as they engaged in planting trees that will positively contribute to their environment.

Anse Etoile Crèche received three medicinal plants, while Small Step Day Care was gifted two fruit plants. This thoughtful selection aims to educate the children about the importance of plants and their benefits to both health and the ecosystem.

The day began with a fun walk by the staff of the Institute, meandering through the scenic routes of La Gogue and Maldives. This lively stroll not only added excitement to the day, but also allowed staff to connect with nature and promote a healthy lifestyle, even before the planting commenced.

Overall, the tree planting activity was a resounding success, fostering a sense of community and environmental responsibility among the young participants in conserving the environment and mitigating climate change. The smiles on the children's faces reflected their enjoyment and engagement in this meaningful initiative.





Universal Children's Day is celebrated annually on November 20th, as established by the United Nations to promote children's rights and welfare around the globe. This year, the Institute of Early Childhood Development, a UNESCO Category 2 Institute, commemorated the occasion with two main events.

Prize-Giving Ceremony Celebrates Young Talent in Photography

Anse Aux Pins Primary, Au Cap Primary, and La Retraite Primary schools emerged as the winners of the IECD Children Photography Competition, receiving their prizes at a ceremony to coincide with Universal Children's Day, in November at the National Library. The event was graced by the presence of Mr. David Andre, Secretary General of the Seychelles National Institute of Culture, Heritage, and the Arts, and Mrs. Shirley Choppy, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Early Childhood Development / UNESCO Category 2 Institute.

The children were awarded various prizes, including gift vouchers sponsored by the Seychelles Island Foundation, the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority, and the IECD. Additionally, they received books, a camera, and other learning resources provided by SNICHA, the Seychelles Heritage Foundation, the National Arts and Crafts Council, the Office of the Education Minister, and the IECD.

In his address to the attendees—comprising participants, teachers, parents and staff of IECD—Mr. Andre encouraged the children to embrace their roles as guardians of the nation's culture and heritage. "What better way to honor children than by celebrating their talents and the rich tapestry of our culture and heritage?" he remarked.

CEO Mrs. Choppy emphasized the significance of the competition, themed "Children, Culture, and Heritage Through Photography." She highlighted that the initiative was not solely a contest but a valuable learning opportunity. "Learning occurs outside the confines of a classroom, and we hope that this experience will foster lasting memories and develop valuable photography skills," she stated.

Other participating schools included Bel Ombre Primary, Bair Lazare Primary, Anse Etoile Primary, and the School of Exceptional Child. The initiative was met with enthusiasm and appreciation, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this event a success.



IECD COMMEMORATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY AS A UNESCO CATEGORY 2 INSTITUTE

This year, the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) proudly commemorates its first anniversary as a UNESCO Category 2 Institute. To mark this significant milestone, the Institute launched a nationwide media campaign aimed at raising public awareness and informing the community about its critical role and contributions in the field of early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Seychelles and beyond. This initiative was coordinated by the International Cooperation and Exchange section, led by Director Mrs. Beryl Nagapin.

The celebration campaign features two main components. First, a series of 13 short videos aired on national television from October to December. These videos showcase prominent figures from society and esteemed partners who have played a vital role in advancing ECCE in Seychelles, expressing their appreciation for the Institute's leadership, the hard work and commitment of its staff, and its milestone accomplishments. In addition, these videos honour 4 long-serving staff members of the IECD/UNESCO Category 2 Institute, highlighting their dedication and contributions to the institute's mission.

In addition to the video broadcasts, key messages from these influential individuals will be published in the Government's Newspaper and disseminated across various social media platforms, further amplifying the campaign's reach and ensuring that the message resonates with a wide audience.

Through this campaign, the IECD aims to celebrate its first anniversary while fostering greater understanding and support for early childhood education initiatives in Seychelles.



Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope
Chairperson of Governing Board
IECD / UNESCO Category 2 Institute



FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

“ IECD has given Seychelles an immense recognition, the recognition is quite global. Seychelles is on par with countries that are called the best practice countries that takes care of their children. Seychelles is an exemplar! IECD should be the ‘go-to’ place for when you want to know - what’s new, what works, what are the trends and future trends in Early Childhood Care and Development? We would like to see the Institute being a laboratory of ideas. Therefore, the Category 2 Institute should be operationalized very quickly to become a global centre of excellence ”

2ND GENERAL MEETING OF REGISTERED CHILDMINDERS: POSITIVE GROWTH IN THE CHILD CARE SECTOR

The child care sector is experiencing notable growth, with 2024 statistics highlighting a significant increase in registered childminders. This year, eighteen new childminders have registered with the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), bringing the total number of childminding services to 122. The distribution includes three providers on La Digue, eleven on Praslin, and the remainder primarily based on Mahé. These developments were announced at the Second Annual Meeting of Registered Childminders, held on November 23rd at the Seychelles Trading Company, Conference Room.

Mrs. Nathalie Moustache, Director of the Home-Based Childcare Section, led the presentation and reported that the general level of compliance with the National Standards for Childminding Services has reached an impressive 90%. However, she noted some areas still requiring attention. As of June, another group of eleven facilities have achieved 100% full compliance on the National Standards established by the 2016 Regulation.

During the meeting, childminders received updates regarding the ongoing review of the National Standards for Childminding Regulation. This review incorporates recommendations from childminders, including the proposal to allow private medical testing instead of requiring it through the Ministry of Health. Additionally, updates to the safety requirements have been made to align with recent changes in legislation from the Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency (SFRSA), concerning evacuation plans and safety training.

A key highlight of the meeting was the official launch of a new evacuation plan and fire drill video. Childminders had the opportunity to view this high-quality video, which outlines essential safety measures. The video is the brainchild of Ms. Maria Emmanuel, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, and is part of her initiatives under the Performance Management System

Contract for 2024. Ms. Emmanuel received valuable support from Childminder Mrs. Veronique Thomas and Mr. Paul Faure from the Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency (SFRSA), whose contributions were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition.

Furthermore, Mrs. Renelle Anacoura, Principal Officer of the Centre-Based Childcare Section and head of the Early Learning Programme Committee, provided information about the upcoming comprehensive Early Learning Programme (ELP), which is set to be institutionalized within home-based childcare services next year, along with its associated resources.

Mrs. Anacoura presented a detailed report on the implementation of the ELP and outlined plans for 2024. She congratulated those who are successfully implementing the programme and offered advice and guidance for those who may need to put in additional effort. This initiative aims to ensure that all children benefit from educational activities, preparing them for formal early childhood education.

The CEO, Mrs. Shirley Choppy, also attended the meeting and shared valuable information about the grants provided by the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Trust Fund, established by the Government to support childminders. She encouraged them to apply for assistance from the Trust Fund to aid in implementing the National Standards regulation and the Early Learning Programme.

It is noteworthy that the majority of childminders have successfully renewed their registration certificates, a key achievement that the Institute is proud of. Additionally, they were encouraged to ensure that their assistants complete the Pre-Sensitization Training in the near future. This training is vital for professionalizing the childcare sub-sector and will contribute significantly to providing a winning start for all children, in line with the Institute's strategic framework.



Evaluation Workshop: National Action Plan for Early Childhood Care and Education 2023-2024



The National Coordinating Committee (NCCOM) has reported an 85% project completion rate, up from 81% in the previous National Action Plan (NAP) 2021-2022. On November 22, 2024, the final evaluation workshop for the 16 projects within the sixth edition of the NAP for Early Childhood Care and Education took place, showcasing impressive participation from six key sectors/ministries: Health, Family, Social Affairs, Education, Local Government & Community Affairs and IECD.

High-level officials were present at the workshop, including Mr. Kevin Perine, Principal Secretary for Local Government and Community Affairs; Mrs. Linda William, Principal Secretary for Social Affairs; Mrs. Shirley Choppy, CEO of the IECD, a UNESCO Category 2 Institute; and Mrs. Yasmin Umarji, CEO of the National Council for Children. The objective of the workshop was to collectively present and assess progress across various sectors and gather insights for future enhancements.

The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) has demonstrated significant progress across several projects, including data collection for Early Childhood Development (ECD) indicators, the expansion of childcare services, sensitization of parents regarding early stimulation and

learning programmes, and the implementation of an online benefits system. The CBISS project, in particular, received positive feedback, with overall system completion rates rising from 28.5% in 2023 to 100% by mid-2024. By November 2024, the online platform recorded an impressive usage success rate of 96% among targeted users.

Mrs. Choppy, the Chairperson of the NCCOM, made several key recommendations, including extending the National Action Plan period to three years to provide sectors with adequate time for planning and executing projects in relation to the UNESCO/Tashkent Declaration commitments by 2030, ultimately aiming for the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the same year. She also proposed an increase in the allowance of the Technical Teams for ECCE across five ministries, which was introduced in 2011, and emphasized the need for ongoing monitoring and analyses of the Plan's progress to facilitate future improvements.

This national collaborative effort signifies a strong commitment to advancing Early Childhood Care and Education initiatives for continued success and improvement.



Embracing Digital Transformation

IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION



TEAM MEMBERS OF CBISS AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE DIGITAL PLATFORM ON 5TH JUNE 2024 AT THE SAVOY RESORT AND SPA

In an era marked by rapid digitalization, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector faces both challenges and opportunities in adapting to emerging technologies. While adopting technology can sometimes be optional, it is often essential for progress. Over the years, many services within this sector have been innovated to enhance communication with parents, create engaging learning materials, and optimize resources in this evolving digital landscape.

The primary objective of the Institute is to improve operational efficiency and enrich customer experiences. As a UNESCO Category 2 Institute, the IECD understands that transforming its business model necessitates a cultural and mindset shift. This transition is grounded in a strategic approach to technology that emphasizes data-driven decision-making and aims to strengthen relationships with our key stakeholders: parents, child care providers, and government entities.

One of the key initiatives introduced by the IECD this year is the 'Childcare Benefit Information System Seychelles (CBISS)', a digital platform designed to streamline the registration process for financial assistance for children enrolled in registered childcare services. Since its launch in June 2024, CBISS has simplified access to financial support while enhancing the Institute's operational efficiency by significantly reducing paperwork and administrative burdens, allowing childcare providers to focus more on the quality of care.

Additionally, the IECD has launched its first e-newsletter to embrace digital communication, keeping stakeholders informed about the latest developments and best practices in early childhood care, education and development. This digital tool helps foster a sense of community and strengthens relationships among sectors, families, and communities, both locally and globally, by sharing valuable insights and resources.

To further these efforts, the IECD has established a digital directory of registered home-based childcare services, making it easier for parents to find suitable options. This initiative enhances the customer experience by providing a centralized hub for information while encouraging providers to gain visibility in an increasingly competitive market.

Recognizing the importance of continuous growth, the IECD has developed a comprehensive digitalisation plan that aligns with its long-term strategic direction and the vision of the Government. This plan outlines how technology can be leveraged to improve internal processes and interactions across the childcare ecosystem, thus ensuring that the Institute remains responsive to the needs of its organization, partners, and stakeholders.

Continuous professional development remains a priority, with several staff members currently pursuing degrees in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) through online platforms. This commitment to ongoing learning and education empowers staff and fosters a culture of innovation and excellence, equipping the next generation of leaders to navigate the complexities of the digital age and ensuring the Institute remains relevant with new developments in ECCE.

Finally, the IECD has conducted an online Advocacy Survey with the participation of its partners and stakeholders in ECCE. The aim was to gather data on the current communications strategy and activities of the Institute, informing future strategic actions and improving communications efforts. By embracing data-driven decision-making using technology, the Institute can ensure that its initiatives align with local and community needs as well with international trends in the promotion, marketing and communications activities.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, the IECD recognizes the transformative power of technology to enhance internal processes and operational efficiency within its programs and related initiatives, improve customer experience, and set a benchmark for childcare providers across the country.



IECD STAFF (Starting from second from left; Maria Emmanuel, Alix Joubert & Prisca Leon) pursuing University Degrees in ECCE online



CBiSS

CHILD CARE BENEFIT INFORMATION SYSTEM SEYCHELLES

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) going digital :
Supporting the Digital Economy Agenda of the Government



POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND VALUABLE INSIGHTS FROM RECENT CHILDCARE BENEFIT SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Institute of Early Childhood Development is pleased to announce the results of a recent satisfaction survey conducted among parents/guardians and childcare providers registered in the Childcare Benefit Information System Seychelles (CBiSS). The survey was led by project officers Ms. Laurette Lebon and Ms. Amina Sarah, with the support from Space 95 and the Department of Information, Communication and Technology (DICT). The results revealed encouraging levels of satisfaction with the system designed to facilitate government financial assistance to parents whose children are enrolled in registered childcare services.

Key findings from the survey indicate that 83% of respondents reported being very satisfied with the CBiSS online system. Additionally, 90% found the system easy to navigate. When asked about the time spent navigating the platform, 54% indicated that it took them approximately up to 3 minutes to complete registration process, whilst 46% took between 4 to 5 minutes.

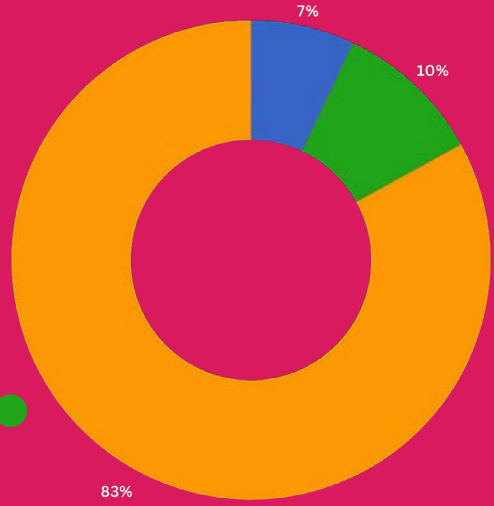
Respondents commended IECD for this bold initiative and the system for streamlining the process of accessing financial assistance. Benefits highlighted included improved efficiency, enhanced information storage, reduced paperwork, overall time savings and timely receipt of information such as responses and monthly payroll. Many users found the initiative to be user-friendly and accessible. Whilst the survey provided a valuable opportunity for the Institute to gather information for enhancement, it also identified a few areas for improvement. A notable concern was the inability of some individuals to access the service due to a lack of internet connectivity. One prominent suggestion was to allow both parents or guardians to input their information into the system rather than restricting this capability to one individual.

CBiSS is a digital platform launched in June of this year that helps with the management of the financial assistance process, track benefit distribution, and ensure the system operates efficiently. This includes maintaining records and ensuring timely payments and exchange of information, facilitated through the Treasury Department of the Ministry of Finance to eligible parents and childcare service providers in the home and centre.

Personal data collected through the system is managed with strict confidentiality and in compliance with relevant data protection regulations, safeguarding the privacy of parents and registered childcare providers.

The Institute is committed to continually enhancing the Childcare Benefit Information System based on user's valuable feedback. It appreciates the inputs and comments from survey participants and will work diligently to address the challenges raised while further improving the services we provide to the parents, our partners in child care services and the community as a whole.

How satisfied are you with the CBiSS online system?



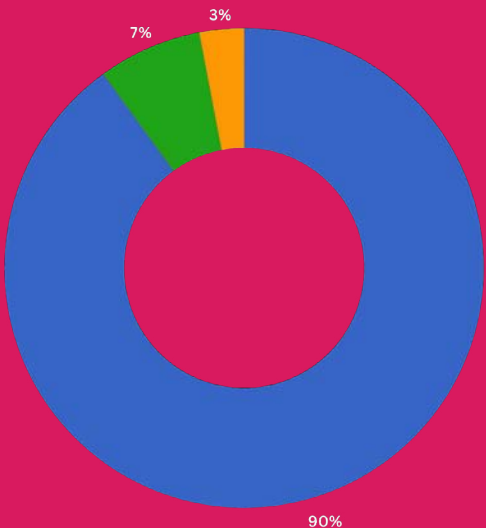
- Satisfied ●
- Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied ●
- Dissatisfied ●

How long did it takes to register on CBiSS?



- 0 - 3 Minutes ●
- 4- 5 Minutes ●

How easily where you able to navigate the system?



- Easy ●
- Difficult ●
- Very Difficult ●





CONCLUSION OF THE SENSITIZING PARENTS PROJECT: A SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE IN EARLY LEARNING

With the completion of the National Action Plan for 2023-2024, we are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the project “Sensitizing Parents: Creating a Stimulating Learning Environment”, spearheaded by the Section for Child Care Centre in collaboration with the ELP Team. This year, the outreach efforts has been expanded by actively engaging parents in large workplaces and targeting districts in the community that were not covered in the previous initiatives. The goal was to strengthen connections and ensure that IECD’s message to sensitise parents and build their capacity reaches a broader audience.

Although this two-year plan has concluded, the Section, with the support of the Early Learning Committee is committed to institutionalizing the programme. As they continue their outreach efforts, they remain dedicated to supporting parents in fostering stimulating early learning experiences at home.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who participated and contributed to the success of our sessions in 2024 and look forward to the continued involvement of parents in the coming year!

From September to November, the Section organized a series of Sensitization Sessions aimed at empowering parents of children aged 2 to 4 years—a crucial developmental stage. These sessions took place in three key districts: Anse Boileau, English River, and Plaisance, as well as at three major workplaces, including Airtel Seychelles, Seychelles Public Service Transport Corporation (SPTC), and the Health Care Agency.

Districts	Total Participants
1. Anse Boileau	25
2. English River	16
3. Plaisance	31
Large Workplaces	
1. Airtel	6
2. SPTC	18
3. Ministry of Health	5
Total	101

During the sessions, parents were provided with practical activities and strategies for interacting with their children and creating an enriching early learning environment at home. The feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive, with many parents expressing gratitude for the valuable insights shared. They emphasized the essential role of parental involvement in nurturing a lifelong love for learning and promoting growth in their children.

ENSURING QUALITY STANDARDS IN CHILD CARE

The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) has a legal obligation to uphold quality standards within all registered child care facilities. According to the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Act 2022, specifically under Section 13 (1) and (3), the Institute is mandated to conduct formal inspections to all registered child care services to assess their compliance with the National Standards. These inspections occur biannually or as needed based on complaints.

and skills in monitoring compliance. Based on my observations during formal visits, several training sessions were organized aimed at raising the level of quality to national standards in service delivery. Topics covered include ‘Fire Drill and Evacuation Procedures’, ‘Basic First Aid’, and ‘Child Development,” he noted.

Mr. Alix Joubert, Senior Compliance Officer in the Home-Based Section, shares insights from his inspection experiences this year. “In the first quarter of 2024, I noticed significant improvements among childminders regarding ‘Staffing’ and ‘Child Rights and Protection’ Standards. However, in the second quarter, it became clear that further efforts were needed in the area of ‘Early Learning and Interaction’ Standards. By the third quarter, I was pleased to observe substantial progress, with childminders effectively implementing all National Standards within their facilities,” Mr. Joubert explained.

The primary purpose of these visits is to ensure compliance with the IECD’s National Standards on Childminding Regulation, 2016. Following each inspection, a comprehensive report is compiled and shared with the childminders. These reports summarize findings related to mandatory standards such as ‘Health’, ‘Safety’, ‘Physical Environment’, ‘Staffing’, and ‘Child Rights and Protection’, and also include recommendations for further improvements and enhancing the quality of care provided.



As Mr. Joubert emphasized, “Our children are our greatest treasure, and it is vital that they are cared for in a safe and secure environment that fosters their holistic development through play-based activities. We strive for all child care services to operate at the highest possible standards, as required by the Institute of Early Childhood Development.”

The IECD remains committed to continuous improvement in child care services, ensuring that every child receives the quality care they deserve.

Through these inspections, Mr. Joubert has experienced personal and professional growth. “My extensive fieldwork with the IECD has greatly enhanced my knowledge

INTERNATIONAL

The collaboration between the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) and our external partners has intensified across various fronts. We proudly hosted our inaugural international event in June: the Regional Workshop on the Tashkent Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for Southern and Eastern African countries. As we moved into the final quarter of the year, our international collaborations expanded significantly, marked by participation in three notable international events.



Seychelles Delegation

IECD Delegation Attends Regional Conference on Women's Empowerment in Nairobi

The collaboration between the Category 2 Institute and our external partners has intensified across various fronts. We proudly hosted our inaugural international event in June: the Regional Workshop under the banner 'Tashkent Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)' for Southern and Eastern African countries. As we entered the final quarter of the year, our international collaborations have expanded, marking by the attendance and participation in notable international events. From September 17 to 21, the Collaborative Action for Childcare Conference (CAC) took place at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya. A two-member delegation from the UNESCO Category 2 Institute participated in this significant gathering. The conference aimed to reshape the support systems provided by African governments for early childhood care, advocating for greater access to high-quality and affordable childcare.

Experts in ECCE from Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, and Seychelles convened to exchange insights and explore innovative solutions for enhancing the childcare sector across these nations. Complementing the CAC, a Regional Learning and Exchange Workshop focused on Women's Empowerment in East and West Africa was also organized.

During the conference, Mrs. Shirley Choppy, our Chief Executive Officer, delivered a keynote address outlining Seychelles' journey in developing its care economy and child care sector. She highlighted the landmark achievements, valuable lessons learned throughout this process, discussing the organization of the childcare sector in Seychelles, the roles of various stakeholders, and the impact on childcare service outcomes while spotlighting best practices.



DESK UPDATE

Participation in the 8th Annual Meeting of UNESCO Category 2 Centres/Institutes in Education

Representatives from IECD/Category 2 Institute attended the 8th Annual Meeting of UNESCO Category 2 Centres and Institutes in Education. Organized by the Teacher Education Centre (TEC) under UNESCO's auspices, the event took place at Shanghai Normal University, in the Xuhui District in November. The delegation included the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of International Cooperation and Exchange.

The meeting aimed to share updates on ongoing activities and programmes, present future action plans, and explore potential avenues for collaboration among the Category 2 Centres and Institutes in education. Each Centre presented updates on key achievements and future plans, building on discussions from the 7th Annual Meeting held in Paris in 2023. Notably, Mrs. Choppy shared the Seychelles' Institute's strategic priorities, key achievements and future actions, which include programmes for 0-3 age groups and quality assurance, knowledge production, capacity building, advocacy, and monitoring and impact evaluation.

IECD was congratulated for the national and regional milestone achievements recorded for 2023 and 2024 in ECCE, especially as the newest UNESCO's Category 2 Institute. During a follow-up session, Mrs. Choppy, together with her counterparts, discussed joint initiatives and potential cooperation related to teacher development and education. Proposals included establishing a framework for future collaboration and developing a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize cooperation among all Category 2 Centres in Education. This initiative aims to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 4 by 2030, transforming teacher education and improving learning outcomes for all children globally.

The IECD delegation also attended the 4th Global Forum on Teacher Professional Development and the launch event for the Chinese version of the Global Report on Teachers on November 11, 2024.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Mrs. Choppy discussed future collaboration with the Directors of Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU, South Korea) and Regional Centre for Quality Education (RCQE, Saudi Arabia). To note, IECD already has an active MoU with APCEIU and intends to explore similar collaboration with RCQE for quality education in ECCE. Both Centres expressed their readiness to support IECD's activities and initiatives in 2025.

This important gathering presented a significant opportunity for IECD-Category 2 Institute to engage with other education-focused institutes within UNESCO's network, fostering collaboration and partnership toward shared objectives.

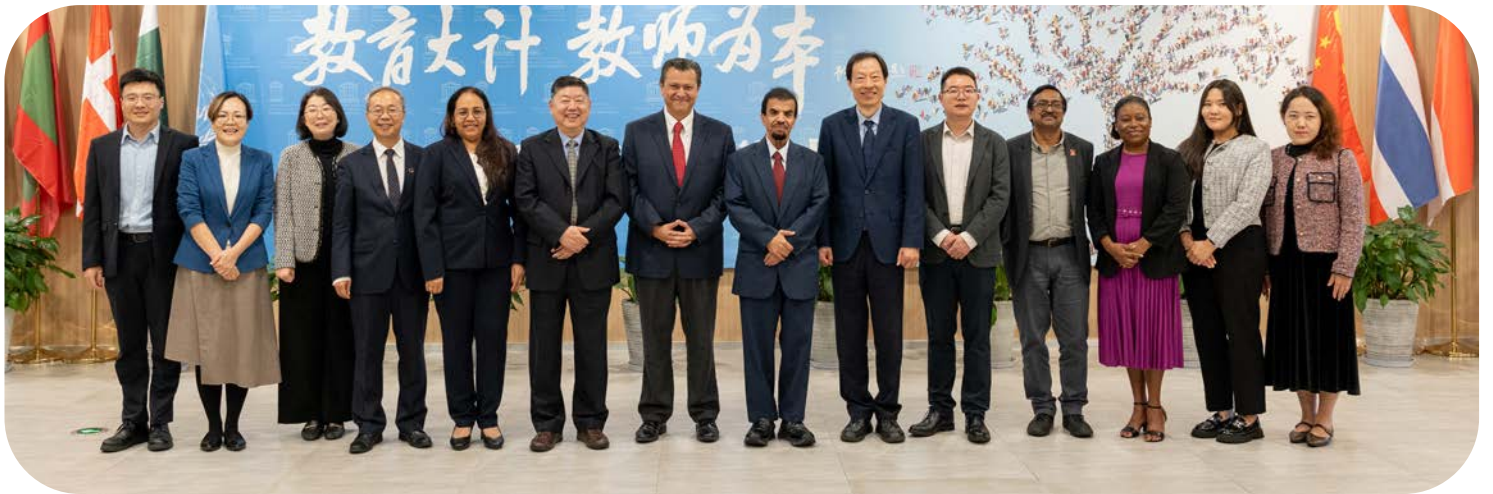
Africa Foundational Learning Exchange 2024: A Transformative Experience in Rwanda

A delegation from Seychelles, led by the Education Minister Dr. Justin Valentin, representatives from IECD, Mrs. Renelle Anacoura and Ms. Maria Emmanuel, and senior officials from the Ministry of Education, gathered with international education leaders at the Africa Foundational Learning Exchange (FLEX) 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The conference commenced on November 11th, with parallel sessions that set the stage for the grand opening ceremony held the following day. This prestigious event brought together ministers from 26 countries and leaders from 30 nations, highlighting the urgent need for policymakers to prioritize foundational learning, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed, irrespective of their background.

FLEX 2024 offered a rich cultural experience, featuring traditional Rwandan dance performances among others during the gala dinner. Delegates benefited from valuable networking opportunities, connecting with peers from across the continent. The conference included plenary sessions and a variety of parallel discussions addressing critical topics such as early childhood education, literacy, numeracy, financing, research, and resources. Participants also had the unique opportunity to visit local schools and the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

This transformative experience underscored the importance of collaboration in tackling the challenges of foundational learning, inspiring delegates to implement innovative solutions within their respective countries.



CHILD CARE MANAGERS AND STAFF SENSITISED ON THE DRAFT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Childcare managers and their staff from 33 centres are now more familiar with the draft 'Early Childhood Development (National Standards for Childcare Centres) Regulations, 2024', following a series of sensitization sessions hosted by the Institute. This initiative aimed to familiarize child care personnel with the upcoming standards, which are essential for ensuring high-quality care for children throughout the nation. The proposed standards are not new to the child care providers as they have also provided their valuable inputs through several consultation and validation workshops organized by the Institute and relevant partners in ECCE.

The enthusiastic participation and positive feedback from these sessions underscore the critical importance of continuous training and adherence to regulatory standards. As the draft regulations are still under review and have yet to be legislated, these sessions have provided childcare centres with a crucial overview of the anticipated ten quality standards and their significance.

The sessions were conducted on the main islands of Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue from May 11 to June 22, 2024, and both programme and non-programme staff participated. Facilitators included IECD personnel and representatives from various agencies to ensure comprehensive coverage of each standard.

The sensitization sessions achieved a commendable participation rate of 84%, with 212 out of 252 childcare staff in attendance.

Participants provided valuable feedback through an evaluation form. Many managers expressed that the informative nature of the sessions were instrumental in helping staff understand and implement the new standards, emphasizing the need for adequate preparation time prior to regulation and formal inspection in 2025. Childcare personnel also found the sessions productive and expressed a strong desire for more in-depth training opportunities. They noted the importance of follow-up and effective sensitisation with parents, transitioning to digital record-keeping for increased efficiency, and requested support visits to their centres with the promulgation of the regulations.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

Maria Emmanuel's Remarkable Journey

We are thrilled to highlight the inspiring journey of Maria Emmanuel, one of our youngest employee at the Institute. A qualified and licensed Social Worker, Maria currently serves as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in the Home-Based Child Care Services Section, which operates under the Regulatory Affairs, Quality Assurance, and Standard Setting Division. In addition to her full-time responsibilities, she is pursuing a Bachelor of Education with Honours in Early Childhood Education and Care at the Open University of Mauritius, where she is currently in her second semester of the four-year online programme.

Beyond her professional duties, Maria actively contributes as a member of the Suitability Check Panel at the Social Services Department. In this role, she assists with the conduct of comprehensive interviews and assessments to determine the suitability of childminders for supervising young children in registered child care services.

An adventurous and ambitious individual, Maria has recently undertaken two significant projects this year that showcase her dedication and versatility.

Directory for Home-Based Child Care Services

The first is her debut publication, where she served as the project officer for “Reviewing the Directory for Registered Home-Based Child Care Services in Seychelles.” To ensure the successful completion of this project, Maria wore many hats—conducting interviews with Childminders, taking photographs, and editing content. Her passion for photography fueled her eagerness to capture the essence of young Seychellois children. The Directory was officially launched on August 2, 2023, and was published on August 5, 2024.

Fire Drills and Evacuation Plan Training Video

Maria's second project, “Fire Drills and Evacuation Plan” for childminding services, culminated in the creation of a training video, which was unveiled at the second Annual General Meeting for Home-Based Child Care Services in November. This video will serve as an invaluable training tool for prospective childminders enhancing safety and preparedness in childcare settings, and for sensitising the population on the importance of national standards, particularly ‘safety’ and ‘staffing’.



United Nation's 54 Faces of Africa Campaign

We are also proud to announce that Maria has been selected to represent Seychelles and the IECD/Category 2 Institute in the “54 Faces of Africa” campaign. As part of this initiative, she submitted her personal story, reflecting on what it means to be African and highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by African youth. Her contributions also included compelling photographs that complement her narrative.

Selected photos and stories from across the continent will be published in print and digital formats and promoted to governments, United Nations (UN) entities, regional bodies, and other stakeholders. Additionally, featured works will be showcased at UN offices in the region and shared on other UN organizations' digital platforms, along with external partner organizations and campaign collaborators.

We are incredibly proud of Maria's achievements and look forward to witnessing her continued success. On behalf of the IECD Team, we wish her all the best as she embarks on this exciting journey ahead!

2024 ASSESSMENT OF EARLY LEARNING READINESS OF CHILDREN IN REGISTERED AND UNREGISTERED CHILD CARE FACILITIES



In 2024, the IECD conducted the Early Learning Readiness 2024 Assessment among 1,196 children aged 3 and 4 years old from both registered and unregistered childcare facilities. The assessment, which took place from August to October, aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of early learning readiness among children who will be attending crèche or preschool in 2025. This marks the sixth assessment, following the inaugural one conducted in 2019 among registered home-based services.

The primary objectives of this informal assessment are to share data on early learning outcomes nationally and internationally, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2, and to help the Institute review the assessment tool used to establish early learning readiness. Additionally, the assessment seeks to identify socio-educational factors that may be associated with children's level of early learning readiness.

The final results of the assessment will be published in 2025, providing valuable insights into early learning readiness among young children in Seychelles.

FIRST REGIONAL WORKSHOP: FOLLOW UP ACTIONS



In November 2024, the Institute has released two significant publications: The Final Report and Framework for Action, both derived from the recent Regional Workshop on the 'Tashkent Declaration and Commitment to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education' (ECCE). This workshop marked the IECD/UNESCO Category 2 Institute's first international gathering since the Seychelles/UNESCO Agreement came into force in June 2023.

Held with the support of the UNESCO Regional Office in Kenya, the workshop took place from June 5 to 7, 2024, in Seychelles. It brought together 33 participants from 16 countries across southern and eastern Africa, including Seychelles, for some serious reflections

and intensive discussions about ECCE. The outcomes from these discussions culminated in the Framework for Action, which aims to serve as a roadmap for ECCE initiatives throughout the African continent.

The document emphasizes critical areas identified by participating countries and highlights the essential role of the IECD and the UNESCO Category 2 Institute in providing ongoing support and technical assistance to Member States in Africa.

Both documents are available in three languages: English, French, and Portuguese, and can be accessed on the Institute's official website at www.iecd.gov.sc. The documents have been shared to all the 16 countries through diplomatic

channels with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and to the Cabinet of Ministers through an Information Note.

Several countries have already expressed strong interest in further support and collaboration with IECD Seychelles, including Djibouti, the Comoros Islands, and Madagascar. These member states have formally requested technical assistance, through the UNESCO's Secretariat. This illustrates a growing commitment to advancing early childhood education in the region.

IECD STAFF COMMENDS EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC EDUCATION WORKSHOP

The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), a UNESCO Category 2 Institute, had the privilege of partnering with the Seychelles National Institute of Culture, Heritage and the Arts (SNICHA), the National Arts and Crafts Council (NAAC), and the Conservatoire des Arts (CPA) for an important initiative focused on early childhood music education.

In September, we hosted the Early Childhood Music Education Workshop, facilitated by an expert from the United Kingdom, Dr. Susan Young. This engaging event included specialized sessions tailored for registered childcare providers, including childminders and childcare managers.

The workshop provided hands-on training in musical techniques, effective song delivery, and innovative uses of various instruments, all designed for children aged 0 to 3 years. At the IECD, we are deeply committed to promoting music education for young children, recognizing its vital role and lasting benefits on their holistic development. This commitment extends far beyond the workshop; we eagerly anticipate continuing our partnership with SNICHA's entities such as NAAC and the Conservatoire des Arts to enhance music education initiatives in early childhood across the nation.

The workshop also served as an invaluable professional development opportunity for our staff in both home-based and centre-based child care sections. The knowledge and skills acquired during this event have already been integrated into our sensitization sessions for parents, childminders demonstrating the immediate impact of this initiative.

Our staff members praised the workshop for its engaging and interactive format, highlighting not only the joy of music but also its significant benefits for child development. They found the sessions invaluable for incorporating music into various childcare practices and appreciated the practical strategies shared, such as crafting musical instruments from natural materials and creating rhymes to make learning more interactive, fun and enjoyable.

Each staff member who attended the workshop received a certificate of participation from the Conservatoire des Art, and they are pleased to share the enriching experiences gained with colleagues, child care service providers and parents alike. IECD takes the opportunity to thank the Secretary General, Mr. David Andre, CEO Jimmy Savy, Director Pierre Joseph and Instructor Antoine Souris for their steadfast support in this milestone project. We look forward to furthering this special collaboration and promoting music education for young learners in Seychelles.



Mrs. Renelle Anacoura
Principal Officer
Centre-Based Section

"This workshop has equipped me with the skills to deliver music techniques and songs effectively. Unlike prior workshops, this one stood out for its focus on diverse instruments and practical applications for young children."



Ms. Vanessa Philoe
Senior Compliance Officer
Centre-Based Section

"The workshop underlined how crucial it is for educators to actively engage with music, not merely as passive listeners, but as participants who model movements and sounds."



Ms. Maria Emmanuel
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Home-Based Section

“Understanding the importance of music allows us to encourage childminders to include musical instruments in their programs, enriching the children’s learning experiences.”

Mr. Alix Joubert
Senior Compliance Officer
Home-Based Section

“This knowledge will be instrumental in monitoring childminders and ensuring they incorporate musical play into their daily activities.”



Les Seychelles ma petite île que j'aime

Où nous vivons tous en paix et en harmonie.

Où tous les petits enfants, quelle que soit la couleur de leur peau, sont aimés et protégés.

Oh Seychelles que j'aime.

J'ai tellement d'amis avec qui jouer. J'ai la chance d'aller à l'école et d'apprendre tellement de choses.

Alors, aux enfants du monde, venez visiter mon beau pays et nous pourrons tous être amis.

Maia Sarah - École Française



In Memory of Mr. Selby Dora



The morning of Monday, September 23, 2024, will forever be etched in the hearts of the staff at IECD. As we arrived at the office, the devastating news of our dear colleague, Mr. Selby Dora's passing broke upon us like a storm. It was hard to grasp the reality of such a loss, and even harder to accept that our beloved "Mr. Dora," as we affectionately referred to him, was no longer with us.

A distinguished professional in the field of education, Mr. Dora was a wellspring of knowledge and experience, upon which our institute relied for professional advice and support. His insightful guidance and mentorship, especially for the staff of Centre-based Child Care Section, shaped our understanding on educational frameworks, assisting us in the development and review of policies and national standards, that have contributed to the effective establishment of the Centre-based Section. This has helped to propel the regulatory and quality assurance outfit to new heights.

Besides, he never missed to convey his words of gratitude for the Institute's Board, the CEO and staff who have worked diligently to transform a largely unregulated home-based childminding sector into a well-structured and organized sector – one of the landmark achievements and best practices in ECCE recognized by the UNESCO, World Bank, ADEA among other international organizations.

Throughout his tenure at the Institute, Mr. Dora worked closely with both management and technical staff, and he is always willing to share his skills and expertise. He had a remarkable talent for analyzing complex matters and distilling them into simple, understandable elements. His patient and clear explanations fostered an environment of learning and growth for all of us.

Even after his formal retirement, Mr. Dora continued to be a guiding force at the Institute, nurturing friendships that had developed over many years. He cultivated strong, collaborative relationships not only with colleagues but also with clients in the Child Care Services sector. His passion for education and his unwavering belief in the potential of every child inspired many, solidifying his status as a cherished figure in our community.

Mr. Selby Dora was not just our colleague; he was a friend, a source of wisdom, and a proud Digois who embodied the values we hold dear. We are honored to carry forward the inspiring legacy he has left behind—the profound difference he made in our lives and the lives of countless others will not be forgotten.

The IECD Category 2 Institute will undeniably feel his absence, his thoughtful support, and his genuine essence. One of the many phrases he would often say after a long day of work was, "Colleagues, we will touch base." This phrase will forever resonate in our minds as we reflect on our memories of him.

Season's Greetings



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année

Zwaye Noel e Bonn Ane

Warmest Wishes,

Board, Management & Staff
Institute of Early Childhood Development/
UNESCO Category 2 Institute

NEW REGISTERED CHILDMINDERS IN 2024



Judane Payet
"Future Kids Rainbow Childminding"
Ile Perseverance 2



Jordana Joubert
"Learn and Play ChildCare"
Plaisance



Bernadette Bastienne
"Titi's Childminding"
Pointe Larve



Stanne Samson
"Flourish Childminding"
Ile Perseverance 2



Mathilda Joseph
"Crib to Creche Care"
Grand Anse Mahe



Annabelle Radeponde
"ALM-Smile Childminding"
Ile Perseverance 1



Jeanne-D'arc Ernest
"JD's Childminding"
Bel Ombre



Nicole Marcel
"Little Mind Child Care"
Anse Aux Pins



Stephanie Evenor
"Tiny Blossoms"
Au Cap



Farida Serret
"Blue Bells"
Glacis



Jeline Savy
"Unique Kid's Care"
La Digue



Juta Camille
"Mumi Juta EL Child-Minding"
Baie Lazare



Sharifa Eugenie
"Little Learner's Childminding"
Plaisance



Jerina Cherry
"Mummy-Mon Childminding Service"
Plaisance



Veronique Hollanda
"Excel Childminding"
Ile Perseverance 1



Vanessa Antat
"Sunlove Care"
Anse Royale



Louisonne Rapide
"Badou Child's Night Care Services"
Anse Royale



Charlotte Madeleine
"Little Star light Childminding"
Anse Royale

