



IECD
 Institute of Early Childhood Development
 SEYCHELLES
A winning start for all

Children 1st

First Edition / Institute of Early Childhood Development Special Magazine / JULY 2019

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★★★
IECD
Special
Magazine
 ★★★

- Highlights of the Second International Biennial Conference on ECCE
- International Initiatives in ECCE
- IECD News



Note from the Editorial Team



February, 2019 has left special memories of the Second International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education. This year's theme *'Big Data for Small Children: Monitoring Holistic Early childhood Development'*, brought together over sixty international delegates and global experts, and around two hundred local delegates from various disciplines in ECCE and partner organisations.

This conference was jointly underwritten by the High Level ECCE Policy Committee, the National Conference Organising Committee and the Institute of Early Childhood Development, in collaboration with the International Bureau of Education UNESCO.

The first part of this Special IECD Magazine on Early Childhood Care and Education is dedicated to this very important and auspicious event. It highlights the main conference events as well as workshops preceding the conference. The second part features news excerpts from the IECD which also includes the participation of staff in international initiatives.

The success of this conference would not have been possible without the support of our local and international partners and stakeholders. We wish to commend all those who have contributed towards its success and reiterate our call for continued collaboration and support for our children's strong and winning start in life.

Upcoming Activities

- National ECCE Forum-Dissemination of results of the monitoring and implementation of the National Standards.
- Launching of publication - Parent's Information Guide on Home-Based Childminding Services
- Implementation of Advocacy Survey 2019
- Assessment of children's readiness in childminding settings
- Airing of Talk Show on ECCE
- Airing of National Theme 2019 Media Spots
- Certificate presentation ceremony for Childminders and Assistant Childminders

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2nd International Biennial Conference on ECCE

The Opening Ceremony



President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. Danny Faure, Vice President, Mr Vincent Meriton, dignitaries and delegates

The Republic of Seychelles and UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE) organized and hosted the Second International Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the 21st to 23rd February 2019. Under the theme 'Big Data for Small Children-Monitoring Holistic Early Childhood Development, the conference provided practical guidance and information on how to build reliable data collection and reporting systems as a critical pillar for effective ECCE policy and programmes.

The Opening Ceremony was held on Thursday 21st February 2019, at International Conference Centre, Seychelles (ICCS). The Ceremony received the attendance of over three hundred local and international delegates, including experts from various ECCE disciplines from all UN regions, including from the General Education and Quality Analysis Framework (GEQAF) IBE-UNESCO partner countries.

The Designated Minister & Chairperson of the High Level Early Childhood Care & Education Policy Committee, Mrs.

Macszy Mondon, extended cordial invitations for the opening ceremony to the President of Seychelles, the Vice-President, Ministers, Members of the National Assembly, Ambassador for Women & Children among other high officials. It was a privilege to welcome Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, the Director of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education as the guest of honour. To warm up the hearts of the crowd, the Ceremony commenced with a performance by the children from Baie Lazare Primary School (winners of the National Theme 2018 Song Competition). The Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. Vincent Meriton officially opened the Second International Biennial Conference on ECCE. In his address, he mentioned that we are living in a digital age and in all spheres of human activity it has become imperative to collect and analyse data from various sources. He further noted that diverse sources of data are important to ECCE and that there is a need to eliminate existing gaps so that national policies and informed decisions can be taken.



Vice President
Republic of Seychelles



Minister for Education and
Human Resource Development



Director
IBE - UNESCO

Following the Vice President's address, Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, delivered a keynote address in which she commended Seychelles and the Government for their efforts within the ECCE sector and outlined the role of big data to policy-making and holistic early childhood development.

Another interesting feature in the ceremony was the Presidential Highlighted Panel and Moderated Dialogue on Big Data for Human Development Outcomes. The Panel was introduced by the Designated Minister, Mrs. Macszy Mondon and moderated by the Head of Learning, Quality

Control and Archiving at the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), Mr. Pat Matyot. The two plenary speakers, Mr. Neo Xiong, founder of the Neo Bear, a creative technology brand for children, and Dr. Ina Linden, Director of Gothenburg Preschools in Sweden outlined their own experiences with collecting big data for ECCE in their respective professional capacities.

The ceremony was beautifully animated by exceptional performances of children from Beau Vallon Primary School and International School and two veterans in music, Mr. Joe Samy and Mr. David Andre.



Presidential Highlighted Panel

2nd International Biennial Conference on ECCE

Day Two: Main Conference



Minister for Health



CEO, IECD



Q&A Session chaired by Dr. Susan Fock-Tave

The Second International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education focused on the increasingly prominent and critical area of data management in ECCE. Its main aim was to emphasize the importance of collection, retrieval, and management of data to strengthen policy environment and program development to monitor and improve data management and use for early childhood development.

The day began with the welcoming remarks of the Minister for Health, Mr. Jean-Paul Adam. He emphasised on generating early childhood data and recognised the need to build human capacity to establish an integrated database on early childhood for improved multi-sectoral data management and use. The main highlight of the

morning session was showcasing best practice pillars of resilient ECCE systems.

Mrs. Shirley Choppy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Early Childhood Development centered her presentation on the Institutional framework. She talked about the Seychelles Framework for ECCE, which sets the vision and articulates the strategy. It also forms the basis for the creation and development of institutions such as the High Level ECCE Policy Committee, Sectoral Technical Teams, National ECCE Trust Fund, Institute of Early Childhood Development and the National Coordinating Committee. Mrs. Choppy further noted that the IECD, as the Institutional anchor, is one of the innovative features of the ECCE system which propels the rapid transformation

of ECCE in the country.

Resilient ECCE systems require a robust, legal framework to regulate and secure them. Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, the Director of IBE-UNESCO presented key instruments that should constitute the legal framework that underpin resilient national ECCE systems. These include global, national, sectoral, and ECCE-specific instruments, and how they must cohere into a framework. Professor Guo Liang-Jing from East China University of Shanghai followed suit with her presentation on policy framework. After her introduction on the history of preschool education in China, she focused on the current development and usage of big data to improve preschool education policies.

Two further presentations concentrated on the programmatic framework, by Dr. Ina Furtenbach Linden, the Director Preschools Department, City of Gothenburg, Sweden and the financing framework by Professor Katsuki Sakaue, University of Osaka, Japan. Dr. Furtenbach Linden introduced the audience to the Swedish early education system showing the process of decision making regarding policies and programmatic framework whilst Professor Sakaue outlined the trends and common challenges in financing ECCE. He also shared the key principles in establishing a well-functioning financial framework for ECCE with a strong data collection and monitoring mechanism.

The afternoon session focused on promising practices in data management for resilient ECCE systems. It started with a virtual tour of the Data Management Project in the Health Sector, in collaboration with the IECD and the World Bank. This was followed by two other presentations of good practices, one conducted by Ms. Sherilyn Sia, an Early Childhood Educator from Singapore, who stressed on the need to make everyone aware of the big amount of data that are available and how to make use of them, because according to her data will remain data until it is being processed and translated into actions. The other example of promising practice was presented by Mr. Aniruddh Gupta, the CEO of Quantum Education (Q-Ed) India. Mr. Gupta commented that outcomes in early childhood depend on a variety of factors such as quality and training of teachers, learning environment, resources etc..., and that over the years they have experimented with a variety of technological tools to try and gather data. Over time they hope to accurately identify and isolate variables, and focus on improving delivery along those variables in order to create a sustainable, high quality early childhood education.

The last presenter for the day, Prof. Sally Brinkman from the University of Adelaide, Australia focused on ongoing monitoring which is essential to weigh the returns on investments in policy and funding. She discussed the benefits of a census approach to monitoring using two main tools: the Early Human Capability Index (EHCI) and the Early Development Index (EDI). The day ended with a question and answer session which was followed by the wrapping up of key messages by Dr. Andre Leste, an Independent Local Consultant.



Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope



Dr. Andre Leste



Prof. Katsuki Sakaue

2nd International Biennial Conference on ECCE

Day Three: Main Conference



Q&A Session



Minister for Family Affairs



High Level Ministerial Round table

The third and last day of the conference was coordinated by the Social Affairs Department. The day began with the welcoming remarks of Mrs. Mitcy Larue, the Minister for Family Affairs. The first presentation was about promising practices in data management for resilient ECCE systems and was conducted by Dr. Staffan Lekenstam from the Department of Data Management in Gothenburg, Sweden. He focused on the Swedish data systems in the health sector. He introduced the audience to the structure of the data system, the challenges in collecting data from different sources, the researches and the possible analysis supported by the data.

Another example of promising practice was given by Dr. Elma Tershana from Albania. She elaborated on data

collection and monitoring and using it to observe children's situation. Reports and facts are used to inform decision making and promote the use of data to advocate for child human development. This was followed by a question and answer session which was moderated by Dr. Cristian Fabbi, from IBE-UNESCO after which Dr. Anne-Lise Ducanda, from France made her comprehensive and interesting presentation on the impact of overexposure of digital screens on children. She noted that a lot of children with learning and behavioural problems are overexposed to screens.

Mr. Egbert Benstrong, an Independent Consultant from Seychelles discussed about big data for better early childhood development outcomes. He stressed that

decision making needs to be data driven and that there should be a multi-sectoral approach in data collection.

The High Level Ministerial Roundtable that followed saw the participation of Mrs. Macsuzy Mondon who is the Designated Minister and also the Minister for Local Government, Mrs. Jeanne Simeon, the Minister for Education and Human Resource Development, and Mrs. Mitcy Larue, the Minister for Family Affairs. Their deliberations centered on collaboration and partnerships in financing ECCE projects, parenting issues, all sectors to take up data management and the creation of a centralized data management system by the Institute of Early Childhood Development to inform policy decisions.

Before the closing ceremony, the Director of the IBE-UNESCO, made a thorough reflection which highlighted the strong political commitment of Seychelles. She also emphasized on the importance of big data to predict and pre-empt risks and noted that different countries are at different stages in this endeavour. She stated that there is a need to address the issue of fragmentation in Data Management and that Seychelles will lead the Joint Framework for Action.

This led to the presentation of certificates and gifts to conference delegates and resource persons. Ariella Marie, from Primary Two at Mont Fleuri School presented her artwork which was painted during the Conference Opening Ceremony to the Designated Minister who proudly accepted on behalf of the President. This followed by Mr. Colbert Nourrice, a well-known artist, to the Director of IBE-UNESCO.

The Conference ended with the closing address of Mrs. Macsuzy Mondon who thanked all conference delegates for their presence and contributions in the discussions which were remarkable and thought-provoking. She further noted that the two main conference days have marked another milestone in moving the ECCE agenda further by exploring the major contribution of scientific research and the importance of data to improve ECCE services across various spectrums. She also acknowledged that reliable data holds the potential to shape the life and living conditions of all children. Lastly, she thanked everyone who had come together and worked diligently for the successful culmination of activities.



Presentation of artwork to Dr. Marope



Presentation of artwork to Designated Minister

Presentation by the Local Expert

Developing and Sustaining a Resilient Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) System in Seychelles



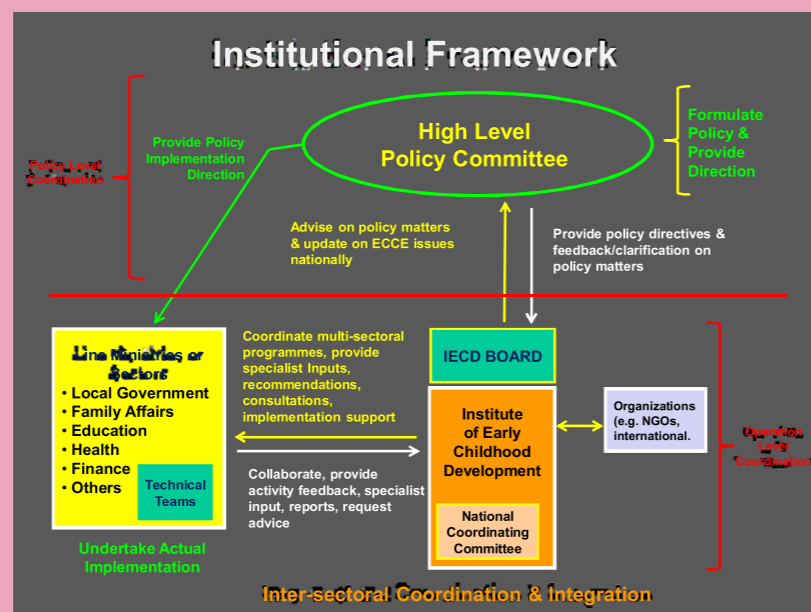
CEO-IECD, Mrs Shirley Choppy

Although ECCE Programmes were being delivered as part of the functions of selected ministerial sectors, it was the adoption of the Moscow Framework for Action in 2010, which initiated and precipitated the development of a coherent ECCE System in Seychelles. Mrs. Shirley Choppy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Early Childhood Development presented the Seychelles Institutional Framework at the Second International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, as part of the Best Practice pillars of a resilient ECCE system. The Institutional Framework comprises of the High Level ECCE Policy Committee, the Institute of Early Childhood Development (described as the institutional anchor for ECCE) and the ECCE Technical Teams in key Ministries.

Mrs. Choppy outlined several benefits of a coordinated, integrated and inter-

sectoral system. These include: political will and support, technical leadership & commitment, increased coordination and synergy in the implementation of projects, strengthening collaboration within and between sectors, better monitoring of the implementation of ECCE related projects, better service for young children, increased understanding of ECCE related concepts and issues, and the facilitation of sectoral interchange and interaction.

Mrs. Choppy also provided details of two relevant legal institutions in the Financial Framework which have been set up by the Government of Seychelles, which includes the National ECCE Trust Fund and Children Special Fund. It also consists of other programmes such as subsidies for registered childminding services and parents whose children are enrolled in registered zero to four childcare services, and the introduction of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Scheme, to further strengthen and support the development of ECCE in the country. All these great initiatives have been applauded by international organisations such as UNESCO and the World Bank, and have led towards the designation of Seychelles IECD as a Best Practice Hub for ECCE by the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO in February 2017.



Presentation by the Local Expert

Big Data for better Early Childhood Development outcomes: What will it take?



Mr. Egbert Benstrong - Local Consultant

the Ministry of Health to some extent. The pilot covered a total of close to 7000 children in the zero to six year age group and therefore has tremendous potential for big data analyses, connections, and conversations.

The Assessment of the Early Learning Environment in Pre-School (Crèche) Setting, again initiated by IECD in collaboration with the Department of Education in 2018 could serve as another good example of the use of data to drive policy direction. One of the conclusions of the report, for instance, was that resource provisions were below the expected standard which could have an impact on early learning experience of the child. As a final example, the department of education has been assessing the level of Readiness for Crèche or Pre-School for children with varying experiences in early care provisions as some are cared for at home, some in child minding facilities and others in day care centres. All three have different care environments. The assessment therefore has tremendous predictability analytic potential if linked to later national key stage testing

What will it take to improve outcomes using big data?

The multi-sectoral nature of the early childhood care and education will potentially generate a huge volume of data. To improve developmental outcomes therefore will require a number of considerations. The first perhaps has to do with the human condition in that there needs to be a radical change in mind set. There needs to be acceptance that decision making should be data driven and that procrastinating or resistance to change is a non-starter. Data collection should be timely.

Secondly, there should an emphasis on cross-sectoral sharing of information guided by strong ethical principles. Thirdly, there is a much needed urgency for capacity building through training and professional development in big data analytics. In parallel, there should be a well conceived investment plan for the acquisition of the necessary technologies including information management systems and storage, bearing in mind that many software are currently open source. Finally, there should be further expansion into the other sectors, namely, family and social, community development and of course more involvement of the finance department.

To conclude, big data analytics in early childhood care and education will be an influencing factor not only in policy articulation but in improving outcomes for young children when all sectors collaborate with IECD playing a pivotal role in data management, storage and access.

From its inception the IECD has been a proactive and a firm believer in action – oriented decision making processes. For instance, in its first National Action Plan in 2013, a set of nine core principles was articulated and Principle 8 in particular focused on evaluation and data collection. It recognised then that data and evidence were critically important to monitor outcomes, advance understanding of local situations and guide effective policy response. It was clear that data on early childhood were gathered at different sources using diverse indicators and that many gaps and inconsistencies in data gathering across the different services were evident and consequently this impacted on research to drive further actions and interventions.

What has been happening since?

IECD has initiated a number of audits and one in particular, targeted the childminding service providers (usually caring for children aged from three months to four years of age) in 2013. The results from this survey assisted in the development and implementation of a Standards Framework for childminders which arguably has had positive effects on the level of services of childminders. More recently, IECD and the Ministry of Health partnered in a pilot on data management in Early Childhood Care and Education late in 2017 and this was conducted with the technical assistance from the World Bank Group. This exercise resulted in the production of a set of nine indicators using WHO (2006) references as benchmarks. This pilot was seminal and became part of the nutrition dialogue in

Conference Side Events

The journey towards quality Birth-To-Three Curriculum: Narratives from Singapore



Dr. Geraldine Teo-Zuzarte

As part of the Conference Side Events organised by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Dr. Geraldine Teo-Zuzarte gave an insightful presentation entitled: "The journey towards quality Birth-To-Three Curriculum: Narratives from Singapore". Dr. Teo-Zuzarte is a Group Professional Practices Officer, NTUC First Campus and Centre Director of The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre in Singapore. She conducted her presentation at the STC Conference Centre on Monday 18th February, three days prior to the opening

ceremony of the Second International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education. The participants, which included high level officials, were stakeholders, partners, education representatives, school leaders, teachers, Day Care Operators and assistants, and IECD Staff members.

Dr. Teo-Zuzarte's presentation focused on Singapore, which like many countries around the world, has in recent years began to give attention to and invest in the area of early childhood care and education. There is an increase in awareness of the need to examine the curriculum for children aged zero to three years in Singapore due to the increasing demand for infant care. The concept of Early Years Centres catering for children aged zero to four years has also emerged in the last couple of years as a bridge to kindergartens for children aged five and six.

First and foremost, she reported that The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) serves as the regulatory and developmental authority for the early childhood sector in Singapore, overseeing key aspects of children's development below the age of seven, across both kindergartens and child care centres. ECDA is an autonomous agency jointly overseen by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSFD).

She also gave an insight on the curriculum for zero to six years which provides progressive development across the



the implementation of the RBC, it was reported that the children were observed to be very unhappy, the educators were stressed and there was minimal learning as a result of poor teaching. Therefore, as Dr. Teo-Zuzarte highlighted, there was a great need to introduce a different curriculum. They were guided by neuroscience as it recognises the zero to three age group as a critical window of development and that brain development increases through positive experiences. Moreover, the Relationships-Based Curriculum emphasizes the development of secure attachment, i.e. bonding between infant and educator, and the family.

To end her presentation, Dr. Teo-Zuzarte noted that observation is fundamental to the curriculum and stressed on the need to regularly observe children and plan activities based on observation, whilst using a variety of resources to optimize learning experiences.

age groups. The curriculum is premised on a 'Plan, Do and Review Model' in keeping with current views that all curriculum decisions have to be based on children's development. Educators observe and plan relevant activities/experiences which are not only interesting but also age-appropriately challenging for children. A full day programme provides seamless and immersive bilingual learning experiences. It is a well-paced programme which also caters for children with specific learning abilities.

It was also shared that NTUC First Campus, one of the largest providers of child care for some 20,000 children in 156 centres, has implemented a Relationships-Based Curriculum (RBC) for Birth-to-Three aged children. Before





Conference Highlights

Conference Highlights



Team of Ushers from the Ministry of Health



Baie Lazare School performing their winning song



Multicultural performance by the International School Seychelles



Partial View of guests attending the Opening Ceremony



Mr Neo Xiong making his presentation



Dr Ina Linden Furstenberg presenting the Swedish example on Big Data



Mr Joe Samy on stage performing



Mr Colbert Nourrice and Ariella Marie painting the Second International Biennial Conference on ECCE



Mr David Andre on stage performing



Traditional Dance performance by Beau Vallon Primary School



The team of experts and International Resource persons



Minister Adam opening the second day of the conference.



Dr. Louange intervening during the plenary session



Partial view of delegates attending the conference



Dr. Marope sharing her final thoughts



The IECD Team



Professor Brinkman making her presentation



Q&A Session - Showcasing Best Practice Pillars of Resilient Systems

Conference Side Events

The impact of screens on young children



Dr. Anne-Lise Ducanda



Screens. We look at them every day: at the office, at home, whilst on the move. As harmless as they might seem, they do pose a threat to the development of our little ones.

Dr. Anne-Lise Ducanda, a French expert on the overexposure of young children to screens gave a presentation on the dangers of giving children too much screen time.

'Digital tools were created to capture our attention and for us to spend most if not all of our time on them'

Dr. Ducanda gave a few striking numbers during her presentation, one of which was that nowadays each household with kids has an average of 8.5 screens: more screens than children.

"Screens are perturbing parenting: it's the first time that parents cannot lean on their own experience to manage what their children are doing because smartphones and tablets did not exist in their time. They are discovering screens at the same time as their children who often know how to use these gadgets better than their parents. Parents are even proud that their children know how to use these gadgets better than they do and that the roles are now reversed," she remarked.

Presenting results collected during her visits and consultations, Dr. Ducanda noted that the issues seen in children who were overexposed to screens were of

psychological, intellectual, cognitive, linguistic, auditory, visual and physical nature. Out of 981 students, 154 were severely impacted - boys accounted for 74%.

She continued by explaining that the signs of overexposure were: attention deficit, aggression and violence, lack of eye contact, serious affective and communication disorders. To illustrate the signs, she showed the participants the story of a parent who was dealing with their young son being non-responsive to his name, avoiding eye contact with people who would interact with him, having a short attention span and not uttering a word. The parent tried the no screen method usually prescribed by Dr. Ducanda and the young child was back to his happy, normal, talkative self in five months. According to an American study on 370 parents done in 2015, parents gave their children screens in order for them to get the housework done (73%), to keep them calm (65%), to get them to sleep (29%) or to make them eat (33%). They also claimed that they were effective as screens required no preparation or storage.

The risks of providing children with screens for long stretches of time are: co-dependency and addiction to the gadgets, lack of exercise as screen usage encourages children to be seated for extended periods which affects muscle tone and does not promote the usage of their senses and fine/gross motor skills such as pinching, jumping, lifting, etc.

'A child needs to disorganize the world in order to understand it through: lifting, sorting, putting together, and taking things apart. They need to learn frustration, effort and patience.'

These sensorial experiences allow children to create neural connections which build their abilities that will be used to communicate and engage in activities as they grow.

Dr. Ducanda also advised parents to reduce the incidence of background TV and to switch off the television and any other handheld screens when not in use as children have been found to lose focus on the activity they are engaged in (playing with cubes, going through a book, etc) in order to periodically glance at the television when familiar sounds or images pop up. This disturbs the child's train of

thought and it is seen that the child does not pick up where he or she left off.

When asked about how much screen time is appropriate for a young child, Dr. Ducanda advised that no screen time is best for very young children (one or younger) and 10 to 15 minutes a day of controlled screen time was acceptable for older children above one year.

She ended her presentation by stating that nowadays our children go outside less than the previous generations and that with the increase of apartment living and stressful everyday life, parents were finding it difficult to go out to spend quality time with their children and to keep them entertained which explained the rise in usage of handheld and portable screens with young children.



Seychelles Biennium:

Evaluation of the National Action Plan 2017-2018 for Early Childhood Care and Education



Dr. André Leste - Independent Consultant

Collaboration and coordination across Sectors is paramount for Early Childhood Development. In Seychelles, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is coordinated through a joint National Action Plan which spans over two years. To date, three National Action Plans (NAP) for ECCE have been executed and they consisted of projects which are implemented by each Sector. The NAP forms part of the national drive to place early childhood development at the forefront of the country's priorities. Similar to the previous NAPs, an evaluation is conducted at the end of each cycle to provide information on the level of implementation of the projects, the strategic influence of the plan and its general impact. The NAP 2017-2018 consisted of 19 projects from the five ECCE Sectors: Health, Social, Education, Local Government as well as the Institute of Early Childhood Development.

The presentation of the Evaluation Report of the National Action Plan 2017-2018 Early Childhood Care and Education was a seminal session held on the 18th of February 2019, as part of the Side Events of the Second

International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Seychelles. The aim of the Seychelles Biennium was to share the progress of ECCE in the context of the NAP and also highlight the achievements and challenges in ECCE in Seychelles and provide a platform to discuss on areas requiring improvement. Organised by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, the event was programmed at the Seychelles Trading Company (STC) Conference Room where an impressive gathering of professionals and service providers, and those concerned with the development of Seychellois children in their early years were expectantly assembled. The event was attended by international guests, namely, Dr. Mmansetsa Marope Director of IBE-UNESCO and Dr. Teo-Zuzarte from the NTUC First Campus and Director of Caterpillar Cove Child Development and Study Centre in Singapore. The Chairperson of the High Level ECCE Policy Committee, Ministers, Chairman of IECD Board, Chief Executive Officers and Chairpersons of the ECCE Technical Teams were also in attendance. This was an occasion to celebrate the implementation of the two-year plan and appraise resultant achievements.

Dr. André Leste, an Independent Consultant presented the evaluation report of the NAP. He explained that the evaluation framework has been based on a generic United Nations Development Programme Model which considers the resource input in terms of material and human resources, achievements measured as outcomes, and overall impact. He described the main research methods employed; these were questionnaires for the technical team members, reports of sector projects, output documents, and self appraisal of sector performance. The five priority areas addressed in the plan, that is, Policy Research, Parental and Community Involvement, Professional Training, Early Detection and Child Protection, and Quality Access were outlined to show their contribution and relevance to the national early childhood care and education system.

Dr. Leste offered a brief review of achievements of associated projects in the five ECCE Sectors:

- Education with three projects on children's profile and



early learning programme in day care centres, and training facilities for early childhood personnel.

- Health with six projects relating to day lounge facilities in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, oral health and the introduction of a tooth brushing programme, improving the administration of the Denver Development Screening Test, the special aids programme, pulse oximetry screening for newborns, assessing nutritional intake of children and measuring growth using World Health Organization standards.

- Local Government with two projects concerning the provision of day care facilities and upscaling the community-based kids gathering programme.

- Social Affairs with two projects on suitability check for assistant childminders, and implementation of the risk indicator assessment framework.

- Institute of Early Childhood Development with five projects on data management in collaboration with the health sector, ECCE advocacy survey, training of childminders, implementation of childminding standards, and assessment of the early learning environment in crèche.

One of the most important measures of achievement was the extent to which the outcomes that were expected at the beginning of the project had been met. Performance indicators were used to assess the level of achievement of the expected outcome. In summarising

achievements for each project, Dr. Leste revealed that, overall, 24 out of the 39 outcomes expected of those projects had been met, moderate progress had been made towards the achievement of ten outcomes, and he commented on the limitations in the achievement of the other five outcomes.

Dr. Leste claimed that the implementation of the overall plan had been successful although budget limitation had been the major cause of implementation problems. Also more targeted recognition of the ECCE Technical Team may need further attention to enhance motivation. However, the National Action Plan has had considerable impact on the knowledge and understanding of ECCE within sectors, it has had positive learning responses from ECCE Technical Team members. Through the collaborative working style, sectors have shared experiences, exchanged knowledge, and consolidated their relationship with IECD.

Following Dr. Leste's presentation, the Principal Secretary for Local Government, Mrs Marie-Celine Vidot, Principal Secretary for Education, Dr. Odile Decomarmond, Principal Secretary for Social Affairs, Mrs. Linda William-Melanie, Chief Executive Officer of IECD, Mrs. Shirley Choppy and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Health Care Agency, Mrs. Kathleen Cecile convened in a panel discussion alongside Dr. Leste. The queries raised by the audience related mostly to the challenges in the implementation of the projects. Budgetary constraints to implement the projects came out strongly in the plenary.



The respondents shared the different ways by which funding are secured for the projects and also advised the audience on good planning when conceptualizing the different projects.

The Seychelles Biennium also presented the Sectors with the opportunity to showcase general progress and challenges in implementing ECCE services and programmes in their respective Sector. On the programme was a series of presentations by the Technical Team Chairpersons. The presentations took the form of videos as well as PowerPoint presentations. Ms. Beryl Laboudallon, the Technical Team Chairperson of the Social Affairs Sector, kick-started the presentations with a video presentation on reliable data collection which is suitable to monitor the prevalence and incidence of child protection issues. Next on the programme was a presentation by Mrs. Stephanie Desnousse the Technical Team Chairperson for the Health Sector. The focus of Mrs. Desnousse's presentation was on services offered by the Health Care Agency to children aged zero to seven years. She also outlined the successes and challenges faced by the Health Care Agency in the delivery of these services and programmes. The Local Government Sector lead by the Technical Team Chairperson, Mrs. Betty-Mai Sofa followed with a video presentation on its services, programmes and projects which target children and their families in the wider communities. It showcased the multidisciplinary nature of local governance and community development and it also highlighted some of the challenges being faced by the Ministry. Mrs. Vereine Louis-Marie a Technical Team member of IECD outlined the successes, challenges and aspirations of the IECD since its establishment in 2013 with emphasis on its coordinating, advocacy and regulatory roles. She also

illustrated the links of the Institute with its international partners and what IECD aspires to accomplish in the short term. The last presentation was by the Education Sector and this was in the form of a video presentation led by Mr. Cyril Pillay, the Technical Team Chairperson. The video highlighted efforts by the Education Sector to improve the quality of human and physical resources for ECCE as well as the strengthening of the pedagogy and the overall tracking and monitoring of children.

To conclude the programme, Dr. Mmansetsa Marope, shared her reflections after sitting through the presentations. Dr. Marope's thought-provoking reflections and take away messages concentrated on how Seychelles can improve the processes of the Biennium to make it more productive. She stressed on the need to dedicate time for reflective discussions, particularly on addressing the challenges. She emphasized that this was the most important part of this Biennium and that following this exercise, the Sectors should leave with a common agenda to address their shortcomings. However, she also cautioned that the focus should not be too much on the narratives of what the challenges are but rather on how to address the challenges. She reiterated that the countries which are attending the Conference are interested in learning how Seychelles achieved its best practices. Dr. Marope also advised the Sectors to consider the aspect of prevention rather than focusing on early interventions which may sometimes be more costly to implement. She also commented on the evaluation of the NAP where she stressed that more emphasis should be placed on why the outcomes have not been met. To conclude her remarks, she encouraged the Sectors to reflect on what they anticipate for early childhood children in Seychelles.

Thank You Ceremony



On Monday 18th March, staff of the IECD headed out to three schools to present pupils who participated in the Opening Ceremony of the Second International Biennial Conference on ECCE with their certificates of participation. This initiative by the National Conference Organizing Committee aimed at thanking the children and their teachers for their colorful performances during the opening ceremony. Four schools were represented during the ceremony: International School Seychelles, Mont Fleuri Primary School, Baie Lazare School and Beau Vallon Primary School. Certificates were presented to each pupil, the accompanying teachers and to the school as a whole.

Baie Lazare School performed their song 'Benediksyon en Paradi Inik', which won them the Audience Choice and First Place prizes in the 'Sesel, Mon Pei Beni' song competition organized by the IECD in November 2018. International School Seychelles performed twice: a colorful Seychello-Botswana dance and a mesmerizing djembe piece.

Beau Vallon Primary School gave veteran traditional dancers a run for their money with their traditional dance medley keeping everyone on the edge of their seat.

Mont Fleuri Primary School was represented by six year old Ariella Marie. Ariella took center-stage with well-known local artist, Colbert Nourrice. Ariella and Colbert each painted their understanding of the conference theme.

Later that day, the National Conference Organizing Committee hosted a ceremony at the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education Auditorium whereby members of the ECCE Sectors as well as other external partners were presented with certificates and tokens of appreciation.

'As small as we are, we have delivered big. Those of you who have supported us, it's only fitting to reward you for the effort you have put into organizing the pre-conference events, the main conference and the official opening ceremony. We had helping hands from all sectors who gave a lot of their time. We had a successful event, we thank the National Conference Organizing Committee for planning the event. Thank you to you all and we give you rendez-vous in 2021 where will be looking up to you for your support and assistance for the third edition of the conference', said Minister Simeon, who is also the Chairperson of the National Conference Organizing Committee.

The short ceremony ended with a cocktail.

Participation in International ECCE Initiatives

Early Childhood Education and Development Cluster Technical Meeting



The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA16-25) clearly states that Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is the pillar for future learning and identifies it as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. CESA 16-25 identifies pre-primary education as a neglected sub-sector which deserves special attention. The CESA-ECED cluster was therefore established to strengthen this critical sub-sector.

In this light, the first Technical meeting of the CESA-ECED Cluster was held from 21st – 22nd March, 2019 in Bagatelle, Mauritius. This important meeting was attended by Mrs. Shirley Choppy - Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Early Childhood Development and Mrs. Julina Madeleine, the Principal Officer for Centre-Based Childminding Services. It was hosted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research of Mauritius in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfeCN).



The meeting was attended by eleven Member States, Regional Economic Communities, Civil Society Organisations and International Development partners. At the outset, Mrs. Mayadevi Soonrane from Mauritius, presented the progress report for the ECED Cluster. This was followed by Member States and partners who shared experiences and updates on ECED implementation in their respective countries as well as their plans for 2019. The audience were very impressed by the update from Seychelles presented by Mrs. Shirley Choppy. They were particularly interested in the Institutional Framework.

Members also had the opportunity to join various working groups, identify priorities for 2019/2020 and select key indicators to track success. Four Working Groups (WGs) were operationalised, namely: Policy, Advocacy and Communication; Access to quality ECED Programmes and Services; Governance and Accountability; Knowledge generation, documentation and dissemination. The Chair and Convener of each working group will be part of the ECED Cluster Technical Committee whose terms of reference were also agreed upon at the meeting. In this regard, Mrs. Shirley Choppy from Seychelles was elected as the Chairperson of the Governance and Accountability Group.

It was agreed that partnerships cut across all working groups and shall be coordinated by AfeCN. All members of the ECED Cluster renewed their commitment to CESA 16-25 and the AU Agenda 2063 which are in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals. The team will meet through follow-up meetings/workshops which will be organised to implement this initiative and sustain progress.

Participation in International ECCE Initiatives

Seychelles' ECCE system gains much visibility at San Fransisco Conference



The CEO of the IECD, Mrs Shirley Choppy attended the 63rd Annual Conference of the Comparative Education International Society (CIES) under the theme: Education for Sustainability. The invitation was extended by the IBE-UNESCO. The conference was held in San Francisco, California, USA from the 14th to the 18th April 2019 and was attended by more than 3500 participants from 125 countries.

Mrs. Choppy made a presentation on the Seychelles Early Childhood Care and Education System known as a best practice in the region and globally, on Wednesday 17th April. Her presentation focused on: Developing and sustaining a resilient early childhood care and education system in Seychelles. The CEO's participation in this conference is aimed at increasing the visibility of and promoting Seychelles' ECCE system, and the important work that IECD is doing to become a Category II Centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

Mrs. Choppy also participated in a follow up formal panel

session on ECCE where she provided more insights into our system and support other countries aspiring to further develop and improve their ECCE systems. The session was chaired by Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, the Director of the IBE-UNESCO.

Background information on CIES:

CIES, the Comparative and International Education Society, is an academic association dedicated to increasing understanding of educational issues, trends, and policies through comparative, intercultural, and international perspectives.

CIES is the largest and oldest of 47 comparative and international education societies around the world. Its more than 3,000 individual members — researchers, analysts, practitioners, and students — represent over 1,000 universities, research institutes, government departments, non-governmental organizations, and multilateral agencies across the globe.

Our Promising Young Artist: Ariella Marie



During the Opening Ceremony of the Second International Biennial Conference on ECCE, a talented six year old Ariella Marie, guided by a well-known artist Mr. Colbert Nourrice, sat confidently in front of her easel to paint her understanding of the conference theme: Big Data for Small Children: Monitoring Holistic Early Childhood Development. This was the first-ever innovative feature of the conference.

Ariella lives with her mum Lyn and her dad Jude. She has been attending Mont Fleuri Primary School since Crèche. Ariella's passion is drawing and making patterns during her free time. She is still deciding what she wants to do when she grows up!

Training of Childminders



Eight participants took part in a Pre-Registration and Sensitisation Training session on the National Standards for Childminding on Praslin. The training was organized by the IECD in partnership with other ECCE sectors. The trainees received their Certificate of Attendance during a ceremony held at Raffles Seychelles, Baie Ste Anne Praslin, on Saturday 15th December 2018.

Children's Work Exhibition



A total of 26 registered Childminders from both Mahe and Praslin participated in a Children's work exhibition on Saturday 1st December, 2018 at the IECD Headquarters. The artworks were selected, mounted and beautifully displayed to showcase young children's creativity and artistic talents. Childminders and children alike were rewarded for their efforts and received educational materials and toys. This project was part of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Mrs Patsy Francourt's Annual Operating Plan (AOP).

Children's Day Message from the Institute of Early Childhood Development Saturday, June 1st 2019

On Children's day we celebrate the lives of our children who are gifts for our future generation. Children thrive in an environment of unconditional love, where their laughter and contagious joy is our reward. Let us also spare a thought on this day for children who are struggling to survive in the face of malnutrition, abuse, or are victims of child trafficking. Our every endeavor to alleviate these present-day global struggles, is invaluable no matter how small.

This year's national theme 'Valoriz kiltir travay dir' fits in perfectly with IECD's ongoing work to enhance the quality of services offered to infants. As the body providing leadership in Early Childhood Care and Education nationally, we strive to fulfill our mission of improving the quality and accessibility of care and education to all children in Seychelles. Moreover, UNICEF's theme for this advocates the rights of all children. It reveals that all children have their rights denied every single day and that we need to build a world where every child is in school and learning, safe from harm and able to fulfill their potential.

Our message to care givers, parents and guardians: Make the most of the work which continues in order to heighten the quality of early childhood care, education and

services. These are tools which will help you craft a path along which children may grow into healthy and balanced human beings. It is your duty as parents, guardians, care givers and professionals to ensure that children are kept safe and that decisions are taken for them in their best interest.



The wish for our children:

Play to your heart's content as this is how you will learn to grow and adapt to this ever changing world. Through our impassioned effort, we pray that one day you will realize the importance of good values, honesty and hard work.

On this very special occasion, the CEO- Mrs. Shirley Choppy and staff of the IECD wishes all infants and young children of the Seychelles a very Happy Children's Day. Children, may your

curiosity take you to beautiful places and your happiness shine a guiding light onto your path.

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. – James A. Baldwin.

So let us all give children great things to imitate.

National Early Childhood Care and Education Forum on the Learning Environment in Pre-School (Crèche) Settings



The IECD hosted the National ECCE Forum on the Learning Environment Project in Pre-School Settings on Friday 16th November 2018. The results of the study were disseminated to Headteachers, Coordinators and Ministry Officials. The research work was carried out by IECD in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and led by the External Consultant, Dr. Andre Leste.

IECD News

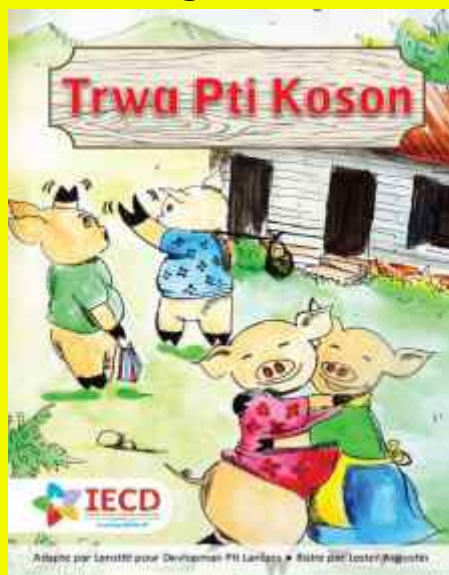


Day Care Assessment

The IECD is mandated by law to regulate both home-based and centre-based services. Prior to the migration of Day Care Services from the MEHRD to IECD. The IECD, in collaboration with SEED Institute in Singapore carried out a Baseline Assessment on the provision of services in all Day Care Centres. The results were presented to individual Day Care Operators and to all partners and stakeholders in ECCE. Work is underway to implement the recommendations in partnership with key stakeholders.



Big Books



On the occasion of Universal Children's Day which is celebrated every November 20th, the Institute launched two big story books. This project, which is a first for the Seychelles, was undertaken by the Communication and Information Officer, Miss Jasmine Talma, as part of her Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The Three Little Pigs and The Shoemaker and the Elves were published in our national languages: English and Creole. The aim of the project is to provide Childminders, Parents with resources to encourage early literacy and instil a love of reading in children from a very young age.

NAP 2017 -2018 Evaluation Workshop



An evaluation workshop was held on 2nd November 2018 at the ICCS to assess the extent to which the National Action Plan ECCE 2017-2018 projects had been implemented in relevant sectors. The workshop consisted of presentations from Sectors followed by Q&A sessions. The workshop ended with a plenary session where recommendations were brought forward for the formulation of the next plan.

Be Smart, Eat Smart

IECD has recently introduced **The Mid-morning Snacks Booklet** to showcase a variety of healthy and easy mid-morning snacks options that parents and Childminders can choose from. It provides 20



examples to guide them and to improve the nutritional quality of snacks provided. This AOP project was spearheaded by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Ms Marvel Simeon.



The Chairperson of the High Level Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Committee, Mrs Macsuzy Mondon, the National Conference Organizing Committee headed by Minister Jeanne Simeon and the Institute of Early Childhood Development would like to thank all individuals and organizations who have contributed towards the success of the Second International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education which took place from 21st to 23rd February 2019. They are grateful to the Government of Seychelles and the IBE-UNESCO, particularly, Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope for their unwavering support and guidance.

Special thanks go to all local and international resource persons for sharing their knowledge, experiences and best practices in Big Data management through the various presentations. The Biennial would not have been a success without the hard work and engagement of the Institute of Early Childhood Development, its Board, ECCE Sectors: the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family Affairs, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Sports.

Big Data for Small Children: Monitoring Holistic Early Childhood Development is somehow engraved in the minds of many people, thanks to the partnership and unflinching support from the local media, particularly the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation and the Seychelles Nation. The conference would not have been possible without the financial support of the Children Special Fund, sponsors and ECCE Sectors. The Committee avails of this opportunity to renew its call for all parties, sectors and institutions to work together for a strong and winning start for all children in Seychelles.

The Chairperson of the IECD Board and the CEO take this opportunity to extend their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the staff of the Institute for their hard work and dedication towards the success of the Conference and for their indispensable contribution in the realization of this Special Magazine.

**IECD Seychelles:
A Best Practice Hub for ECCE**

Seychelles has been recognized by UNESCO for the leading role it is playing among the 'General Education Quality Assessment Framework' (GEQAF) countries developing relevant programmes and institutionalizing the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards its goals of achieving quality Early Childhood Care and Education for all. The country's drive towards excellence in ECCE has been acknowledged and commended by UNESCO's International Bureau of Education.

