

Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Welcome to our first edition of the Institute of Early Childhood Development's Newsletter for this year which is also our fifth edition. Time flies and we are already halfway through 2017. I am pleased to once again share with you our accomplishments of the past six months.

This edition consists of a series of interesting articles, news and picture presentations of our work at the Institute. Highlighted are the Training Programmes for Childminders, the development of the National Action

Plan 2017-2018, Dissemination Workshop on the findings of the Denver Development Screening Test (DDST), Data Management Project and Minister Joel Morgan's visit at the Institute Headquarters.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my staff for their indispensable contributions towards the realisation of the many activities and projects. My gratitude also goes to our faithful partners and stakeholders for their unrelenting support to early childhood development in Seychelles.

Happy Reading!

Mrs. Shirley Choppy
CEO of IECD

Minister's Visit to the IECD

As part of the familiarization visit to the Department and Entities under the Ministry of Education portfolio, Minister Joel Morgan, Minister for Education, visited the premises of the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) on Thursday 4th May 2017.

The visit started off with a warm welcome from the Chairperson of IECD Board, Captain David Savy and Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Shirley Choppy.

The CEO made a brief presentation on the mandate, budget allocation and activities of the Institute. The accomplishments since its inception were also highlighted such as the designation of IECD as a Best Practice Hub for ECCE, the National Childminding Programme and numerous researches that have informed policy actions as well as the current challenges. These include limited staffing capacity and office space, shortage of financial resources to implement additional programmes and related



initiatives. The presentation concluded on a high note with the Minister giving his support to further developments of the Institute.

Following the presentation, the Minister toured the offices of the Institute, viewed the facilities at the disposal of the staff and met with the staff members. The Minister was accompanied by his Advisor, Mr Alex Souffe.

4th ECCE Forum: Dissemination workshop on the DDST research study



In its Fourth ECCE Forum held on Friday 03rd March 2017 at the STC Conference Centre, the IECD brought together child development professionals, nurses, parents, and other stakeholders to share the results of the study, discuss policy-related issues, recommendations of the study for future improvements, and chart the way forward.

The objectives of the study were to

- i. Capture and analyze child Development outcome data from the Denver Development Screening Test (DDST),
- ii. Establish the achievement of Developmental milestone of Seychellois Children,
- iii. Examine the testing conditions in the community health centres
- iv. Seek the views of parents on the development of their children.

During the forum, the two consultants who assisted the IECD on the Project; Mr. Egbert Benstrong and Dr. Andre Leste, presented among other recommendations the following:

- the need for the test to be reviewed to improve the reliability in its administration.
- validity in the interpretation of the results.
- the need to carry out an audit of the DDST facilities to administer the DDST in the Health Centres by the Programme Managers in consultation with the Nurse Mangers.

The IECD Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Shirley Choppy highlighted the importance of measuring and reporting on child development outcomes as an international best practice. She recommended that proposals discussed are translated into action, to build capacity of professionals and improve on data availability on child development to enhance learning outcomes and ultimately raise the quality of service.



Professional development session for Childminders



The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) organized a half day working session on Saturday 17th June 2017 on Employment Contracts for Childminding Services. This is part of the continuous professional development for Childminders to support their transition from an informal into the formal childminding sector and more importantly in view that the Government is assisting the registered Childminders with a financial subsidy on a monthly basis.

The session was facilitated by lawyer Mr. Bernard Adonis, a legal expert on employment issues. The aim of the training session was to sensitize Childminders on the legal requirements of their service and legal framework on employment in force. The presentations focused on three different types of Employment Contracts which Childminders, minding more than five Children, may be likely to use as they are expected to employ staff e.g. an Assistant Childminder. Mr. Adonis explained the legal details of the contracts such as part-time, continuous and the fixed-term. *(continued on next page)*

The Childminders were encouraged to adopt professional practice within their establishments at all times; staff files must detail employee roles and responsibilities, have signed contracts with clear terms and conditions of employment, including hours of work, salary, leave entitlements and current disciplinary policy and procedures. They familiarized themselves with the

contents of the three contracts, discussed instances where they would use each and practiced completing sample contracts. They also got the opportunity to share their current practices and seek guidance and advice from the facilitator.

A similar working session was organized for Childminders based on Praslin and La Digue early July 2017.

Action Research: Early learning activities in Childminding Establishments



The early years are known to be a critical period in human development as it is well established that the brain is more receptive to learning during these formative years. We also acknowledge that children learn best through play; hence Childminders today are being encouraged to conduct early learning play activities as part of their daily routines. Such activities are important for children's cognitive, emotional, social and physical development.

A small scale action research project entitled "Initiation of Early Learning activities in Childminding establishments", is aimed to empower three registered Childminders to implement age-appropriate and stimulating early educational activities. Mrs. Stephanie Payet, a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in the Regulatory Affairs Section, is the coordinating this project.

Through the technical assistance of an external consultant, all Monitoring and Evaluation Officers were sensitized on the fundamentals of Early Learning and Development of young children, to enhance their knowledge and skills so as to provide effective support to Childminders.

The Implementation Plan of the Action Research Project comprises of the following aspects:

1. Facilitate sessions for Childminders to sensitize them on the importance of educational development and early learning activities, and strategies to implement such activities in their establishments.

2. Undertake demonstration of Early Learning activities using appropriate materials and resources by the ME Officer at the designated childminding establishments.
3. Conduct trial implementation and practice of the assigned early learning and educational activities by the childminders.
4. Conduct visits to establishments to observe and support childminders whilst implementing early learning activities with the children.
5. Prepare the project's evaluation report, write individual Childminder case studies and publish articles on the Action Research Project.

The childminders earmarked for this project are:

- Mrs. Josette Hoareau from Bel Ombre. She will be focusing activities involving the development of children's gross motor.
- Ms. Maureen Esther from Les Mamelles, who will be attending to fine motor and accompanying manipulative activities.
- Ms. Christiana Anette from Bel-Air. This Childminder will demonstrate the steps to effectively tell a story to young children. She will be using a classic children's story.

The Childminders guided and supported by the Project Officer will be given ample time to put into practice what they have learnt.





A donation from the heart!

On March 1st 2017, the IECD received a donation for the sum of SCR 100,000 from Gran Kaz situated on Francis Rachel Street. This donation was done through their CSR programme: 'Gran Kaz, Pran Swen'. The donation will go towards the funding of a project in the National Action Plan for ECCE 2017-2018. The IECD staff would like to thank Gran Kaz Management and staff for their kind contribution towards the work of the Institute and ECCE in the Seychelles.



Welcome to
 2017 has proved to be an eventful year for the IECD. Following the 1st International Biennial Conference on ECCE and becoming a member of the IBE-UNESCO, many accomplishments have been achieved. *Clockwise from left:* Ms. Jasmine Talman, Ms. Julina, Mr. Garry Woodcock, and Mrs. Linda William-Melanie. Ms. Julina is in the Regulatory Affairs Section in January as the Communication & Information Officer. Mr. Garry Woodcock joined the team as the Administrative Officer.



Thank you dear Children!

Two weeks after the prestigious First International Biennial Conference on ECCE, the IECD brought together the children who participated in the opening ceremony, accompanied by their teachers. The Institute expressed their heartiest thanks and appreciation for their lively and brilliant performances. After a brief welcome from the CEO, the children and teachers received a Certificate of Participation from a member of the National Conference Committee, Mrs Linda William-Melanie, Principal Secretary from Social Affairs, and a token of appreciation from members of staff. The ceremony ended with a lovely song by the National School's Choir.



Proud of our
 On Thursday 16th February, the Seychelles was recognized as the Best Practice HUB for ECCE by the IBE-UNESCO. This was indeed a significant achievement. What better way to celebrate this achievement than to take a group photo alongside the Best Practice HUB members on this special occasion. We are proud of our staff and the support they have given to the Institute.



to the Team!

for us, with the First International Biennial
a Best Practice HUB. With these new
ome new team members.

na joined the Advocacy & Information
& Information Officer. In May, two new
Francoise as the Director for Advocacy
k as a Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Dina Antoine joined the Institute as an
t the beginning of July.



Visit at the Constance Ephelia Resort

The CEO, Mrs. Shirley Choppy and staff members of the Regulatory Affairs Section attended a meeting with the Staff of the Health and Safety Department at the Constance Ephelia Resort, Port-Launay. It took place on Wednesday 7th June 2017. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and learn more about the national standards for childminding services and also the possibilities of training for the hotel staff working in the Kids Club. The facility is also used as a Day Care for the children of the hotel staff. Following the meeting, the delegation visited the Kids Club facilities and the provision of educational activities and they were impressed with the high level of standard in the facility.



Achievement!

IECD was declared a Best Practice HUB for
a proud and joyous moment for the Institute.
ment than by taking a family and souvenir
commemorative plaque on this auspicious
All done Team!



Presentation of Fire Safety Equipment

On Friday 9th June 2017, Mrs. Lydia Basset, an Anse Royale based Registered Childminder received her Fire and Safety equipment. The presentation was made by Mrs. Audray Sally, the Human Resource and Budget Management Officer, and this included a fire extinguisher, two smoke detectors and a manual gong. The donation of these equipment was provided by the National ECCE Trust Fund. Congratulations to Mrs. Basset on your registration and for taking steps to keep the children in her care safe and secure. IECD Team wishes her all the best in her noble career.

Training of Childminders: Presentation of Certificates



April 2017 was a busy month for the staff of the Regulatory Affairs Section at the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD). Two training programmes were in full implementation stage whereby a new group of thirty-one Home-Based Childminders from Mahé and Praslin were attending a Pre-Registration Sensitization and Training Programme. At the same time, seven registered Childminders from Praslin and La Digue were being trained in Basic Paediatric First Aid.

The new group of Childminders attended sensitization and training sessions based on the IECD (National Standards on Childminding, Regulations 2016). The Childminders have been sensitized on the standards relating to Health, Child Rights and Protection, Staffing, Safety, Early Learning, Interaction, Administration, Nutrition, Family and Community Engagement and Physical Environment. The training programme, organized by IECD, is mandatory for all Childminders before they can proceed to registration. It was jointly facilitated by external facilitators from the Early Childhood Care and Education Sectors; Health, Family & Social Affairs, Department of Youth and Sport and Education as well as the Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency.

The training programme kicked-off on Saturday 1st April with an introductory meeting for the Mahe-based Childminders. The same meeting took place on Saturday 8th April for Childminders based on Praslin and La Digue. The trainees have altogether completed approximately 56 notional hours of training and are now expected to be more familiar with the national standards and have acquired more knowledge and skills. The Childminders have been given a window period of about seven months (up to January 2018) to initiate implementation of four mandatory standards in preparation for registration.



Seven registered Childminders followed two-days of training, in the Red Cross Society office on Praslin, on Basic Paediatric First Aid facilitated by the Red Cross Society of Seychelles. Both groups of Childminders have completed their training and were awarded with their Certificate in a special ceremony on the 30th June on Mahé.



Data Management in ECCE: Validation and Training Workshops



In Seychelles, like in many other small developing states, data may be readily available in various modes and from different sources. However, there is a need to improve data quality, usability, comprehensibility, ease of retrieval and intelligence to make a real difference in the performance of organizations.

In our national context, specifically in the domain of early childhood development, it is recognized that there are currently many gaps in the process of collection, reporting and accessibility of data across different sectors. The World Bank's System Approach for Better Education Results in Early Childhood Development (SABER-ECD) underlined the need to develop sound indicators for a national database and data management system on early childhood development. This need was again identified in the 2nd ECCE Biennial Conference in 2013 as a recommendation for an integrated information system to provide reliable and up to date data on all ECCE indicators.

The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) took up the challenge and partnered with the World Bank for financial and technical assistance to develop and implement this national project. The first phase of the project was conducted in September 2016 and included a situational analysis carried out in the health sector and a sensitization workshop on data management in ECCE for all professionals in health and other sectors in ECCE.

As part of the second phase of the project, IECD in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the World Bank hosted a validation and training workshop on Data Management in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) on 12th and 14th June 2017. The workshop was conducted by Ms. Lindsay Adams, an Early Childhood Consultant from the World Bank. After collegial welcome and introductory remarks from CEO of IECD, Mrs. Shirley Choppy; the CEO of the Health Care Agency, Dr. Danny Louange outlined the importance and benefits of such a project in line with international norms and best practices. He reiterated the importance that the government is placing on ECCE, the need to urgently address the challenges in data management for further improvements in particular on health-related indicators and at national level.

Mrs. Adams presented a list of selected and approved indicators for the project which were primarily based on WHO standards. Furthermore, she provided additional information on the definition, collection and recording of data for analytical purposes. Participants reviewed and validated two main documents based on Child Health and Nutrition - the 'Indicator Dictionary' and the 'Collection Manual'. A range of comments and suggestions were put forth by the participants and these will be further refined by the Consultant in readiness for trial implementation.

The second day of the workshop focused on-actual calculation of diverse data, practical sessions and the procedures for collecting, analyzing, collating and retrieving data for reporting purposes.

Following the trial phase in the Ministry of Health, it is expected that the trial model will be fully implemented and replicated by other ECCE sectors. The ultimate aim of improving data management in ECCE nationally will be achieved by establishing structures and procedures for the systematic collection, management and use of data related to early childhood health, nutrition and development. This will be done through the building of technical and human capacity for improved multi-sectoral data management and use.

Dr. Conrad Shamlaye, Consultant and Advisor to the Ministry of Health, expressed great satisfaction with the outcome of the two-day workshop. He further commended the excellent collaborative work between IECD and the Health sector in the implementation of this project, which will positively impact the holistic development of young children.

The workshop brought together many front-line professionals from various sections and units to reflect on current practices discuss indicators and the way forward. The final phase of the project, which is the pilot implementation of the indicator framework and manual will take place in the second half of 2017.



IECD launches the National Action Plan 2017-2018 ECCE

The third edition of the National Action Plan 2017-2018 for Early Childhood Care and Education was officially launched on Friday 28th July 2017 at the STC Conference Room.

The ceremony was graced by the Designated Minister and Chairperson of the High Level ECCE Policy Mrs. Macsuzy Mondon, Minister for Health Jean Paul Adam, Minister for Family Affairs Jeanne Simeon, Secretary of State Mrs Aude Labaleine, Captain David Savy - Chairperson IECD Board, Principal Secretaries among other professionals in ECCE, partners and sponsors.



In her launching address, Designated Minister Mondon placed emphasis on the resounding success of the First International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education and the elevated status of Seychelles as the Best Practice Hub for ECCE. She described the National Action Plan 2017-2018 as a dynamic venture to advance the frontiers of ECCE, dissolve sectoral barriers and take the ECCE agenda to greater heights.

The National Action Plan is by far the Plan with the highest number of projects. It consists of 20 projects which cut across all ECCE Sectors: 7 from the Health Sector; 5 from the IECD; 3 from the Local Government Sector; 2 from the Social Affairs Sector and 3 from the Education Sector.

A representative from each Sector presented a summary of their projects. Mrs Choppy received a donation from the



Children's Special Fund from the Secretary of State from the President's Office, Mrs. Aude Labaleine. This is in support of the implementation of selected projects in the new Plan and early childhood development.

During the ceremony, high level officials, key partners and stakeholders in ECCE were presented with copies of the National Action Plan 2017-2018.

The ceremony concluded on a high note, whereby the Institute recognized and paid tribute to a few individuals who have and are continuously supporting the cause and further developments in early childhood. These were: Minister Simeon, a former member of the National Coordinating Committee, and former Chairpersons of the Technical Teams Mrs. Anne-Marie Bibi and Mr. Dan Frichot.

Their exemplary contributions and dedication have been greatly appreciated!



Upcoming Activities

Pilot implementation of the National standards for childminding services

Pilot data collection processes in the Health Sector

Assessment of Early Learning in pre-school settings in the Education Sector

Promotion of ECCE through the display of message boards in various public areas

Training of Childminders on National Standards

Implementation of second Advocacy Survey on ECCE Issues