

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION



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Foreword

With the launching of the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2023, national action planning retains its prominence as a dynamic process for improving and sustaining Early Childhood Care and Education in Seychelles. The National Action Plan 2023-2024 ECCE (NAP) is the first plan to address and support the priority areas of the Framework. The NAP has been conceptualised as an on-going venture to advance the frontiers of ECCE with high quality expectations of significant impact on the lives of children and their families, and the ECCE system in Seychelles.

The two-year rolling plan has three dominant strands. First, the need to attend to service delivery conditions through the improvement of the policy environment and the reinforcement of quality standards is addressed. This involves child protection policy formulation for safeguarding children, using ECD indicators for decision-making and reporting, enhancing interview conditions in the provisions of social services, and strengthening early development screening in the child health programme. Second, promoting equity through the Early Childhood Development (ECD) of an online platform to facilitate parental access to and use of early childcare services, upgrading and increasing childcare facilities, and attending to language impairment needs are prioritised. Third, the emphasis on early learning for children is placed not only in structured institutions but also through the engagement of parents at home. Thus, improving and monitoring children's learning is undertaken through action learning, enhancing the learning conditions in Children's Home and raising parental awareness of the need to create a nurturing early learning environment at home.

The National Action Plan 2023-2024 for Early Childhood Care and Education sets the ECCE agenda in Seychelles for the next two years. It upholds the holistic principles; it is a catalyst for the collaborative structures that have been judiciously constructed; it is pivotal in guiding sectoral projects towards the ECCE winning vision. It anticipates high-level commitment for its implementation and strong sectoral willingness for its execution. With high expectations and much enthusiasm, I would like to present the Plan to all our stakeholders, in particular, and the public in general. I look forward to its successful implementation and positive outcome.

Dr. Justin Valentin
Minister for Education
Ministry of Education



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASP	Agency for Social Protection	NCC	National Council for Children
APHI	Association of People with Hearing Impairment	NCCOM	National Coordinating Committee Meeting
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention	NECCETF	National Early Childhood Care and Education Trust Fund
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	NGO	Non-Government Organisation
DICT	Department of Information Communication Technology	NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
DDST	Denver Development Screening Test	OAE	Otoacoustic Emissions Testing
EBF	Exclusive Breastfeeding	PPP	Public Private Partnerships
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
ECD	Early Childhood Development	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ECBS	Early Childhood Benefit System	SEC	Social and Emotional Competencies
EPI	Expanded Programme for Immunisation	SEL	Social Emotional Learning
EU	European Union	SELF	Seychelles Early Childhood Learning Framework
ECIC	Early Childhood Intervention Centre	SF-ECCE	Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education
IECD	Institute of Early Childhood Development	SIAH	Seychelles Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture
ISEEA	International Science and Evidence Based Education Assessment	SIT	Seychelles Institute of Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider	SITE	Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education
MGIEP	Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development	UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
MCH	Maternal Child Health	UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	WCECCE	World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education
NAP	National Action Plan	WHO	World Health Organization





SECTION I INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Care and Education in the Seychelles has undergone massive and rapid changes in the last ten years. This transformation has been influenced by political commitment, high-level strategic directives, progressive institutional leadership, multi-sectoral collaboration, heightened policy dialogue, and a burgeoning monitoring and evaluation structure. The last decade has witnessed key achievements in legislative and policy actions with the consolidation and expansion of early childhood provisions. These changes have been prompted and accelerated through national action planning.

As a means of pursuing the holistic goal of ECCE and promoting a collaborative and complementary working approach for the provision of ECCE services and programmes, the National Action Plan for ECCE has become a binding policy document for the main ECCE sectors. It has become a transforming force in ECCE. It establishes an ECCE focus in the key sectors; it motivates the sectors to initiate actions and strategies that would lead to improved provision and services for ECCE children and their parents; and it facilitates sectoral interchange and interaction. One of the major impacts of the National Action Plan is the collaborative impetus for widening stakeholders' perspectives and extending partnerships.

The accomplishments of the five, two-year rolling plan derived from The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2011) which was a direct response to the Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation(2010), have been documented. There have been policy realignment and programme review, renewed governance structure, community involvement and expanded access, improved training and professional development, quality assurance and standards formulation, parental engagement and participation, and research execution and application. Special attention has been given to the expansion of the provision for children in the 0-3 age group for early learning and school transition. Particular emphasis has been placed on monitoring and data management as necessary processes for successful implementation and effective reporting.

The National Action Plan 2023-2024 ECCE has been influenced by two main events the development of the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2022 - 2027 (SF_ECCE 2023) and the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education 2023.

The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2023 was informed by a consultative methodology. A multi-strategic approach was adopted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the ECCE system in Seychelles and to gain wider stakeholders' perspectives with regard to the implementation of the SF_ECCE (2011) and specific situations of ECCE in ECCE Ministries, and other organisations interested in ECCE. A documentary review was carried out, which was used to guide working meetings, consultative sessions, and stakeholder workshops.

Based on ten principles, which place the child at the centre of programme and service delivery, uphold the child's rights, and emphasise the importance of play in learning, the Framework encapsulates the concept of ECCE. In promoting parental involvement, community participation, and an inclusive environment, the Framework reaches out to meet diverse social needs. In its quest for a high-quality outcome and its appeal for sustainability, accountability, and data availability, the Framework adopts result-based methodologies to assess successful implementation. It sets a "winning" vision with the mission of working "together for the holistic development and wellbeing of children". It refocuses on thematic priorities, namely, governance and funding, quality access, early learning and development, families and communities, research and data management, and workforce development. Moreover, detailed strategic actions are proposed to achieve the goals within those priority areas. It represents the multi-sectoral and inter-agency efforts to sustain and improve the ECCE system in Seychelles. It is intended to generate a whole Government response, attain a unifying policy focus in ECCE Ministries, and trace the progress needed for quality achievements.

Conveniently, as the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2023 was being finalised, the World Conference on ECCE 2022 was convened. This provided an opportunity for an international validation of the Framework. The Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education 2022 reaffirmed the right to quality ECCE, and reinforced the need for accountability, multi-stakeholder partnership, and investment to adjust to the worldwide movement to increase the resilience and sustainability of ECCE systems and advance lifelong learning.

ECCE Sectors

The National Action Plan 2023-2024 ECCE seeks to reinforce the intention of The Tashkent Declaration and accelerate the implementation of the new national Framework to pursue the holistic goal of ECCE and promote collaborative partnerships. With its potential for nation-building, ECCE concerns all sectors. However, the national action planning process seeks to establish an ECCE focus in key sectors to initiate actions and strategies that would promote and develop the ECCE system in Seychelles. An examination of the role of the five sectors directly involved with ECCE would point towards the policy orientation and on-going or intended strategies that activated the development process of the National Action Plan 2023-2024.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the principal advisor to the Government on education matters at the level of early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education and training. The Ministry is also the main steward of the education system in that it:

- maintains a clear focus on the long-term health and performance of the system, ensuring that all leaders strive to make achievement possible and worthwhile
- creates contexts for all parties in the system to deliver and fulfil the major intents of the government in relation to education and
- creates links and platforms for other sectors of the community, including the private and public, to network meaningfully towards facilitating the achievements of all learners in Seychelles

The system is designed to enable all learners to perform and succeed with minimum disruption. The design also permits the building of networks among all sectors and potential agents of the society. This Ministry works across boundaries both locally and internationally.

As such, the Ministry's on-going engagement to modernize the education system and provide a platform for newer conversations in and about education in the context of a

changing society is reflected in the Strategic Plan 2021-2024. The plan is based on the premise that a new approach to organising the business of education is required in order to instigate new drive and synergy across the system. The focus is on developing a cost-effective and long-term educational system that pushes learners to excel through a course of study that allows for their full development as future citizens of the country. Technology-enabled learning will be a critical component of this endeavor and one of the tools that will move the educational modernisation process forward.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health, with its vision for 'all people in Seychelles to attain the highest possible level of physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being, free from disease or infirmity', plays a significant role in the life and development of children in Seychelles. The Maternal and Child Health Care Services are part of a well-established and functional National Health Care System that works towards this vision.

The Maternal Health Care Programme aims at providing an effective continuum of accessible quality care before (Pre-conception care) and during Pregnancy (Antenatal Care), Childbirth (Intrapartum Care), and the Postnatal Period. Women and their families are provided with preventive screening tests and appropriate information and advice for a healthy pregnancy, safe childbirth and postnatal recovery, in order to improve pregnancy outcomes, thus reducing the risk of infant and child death.

The Child Health Programme focuses on the importance of the fundamentals of children aged 0-4 years and the right of each child to receive the services on offer at the health care center. The services offered are growth monitoring, developmental screening tests, hearing tests, administration of childhood preventable vaccinations, and post-natal home visits upon discharge from the hospital. The programme priority is to deliver a holistic care approach towards children and their families, thus promoting early identification and interventions of children who are at high risk, including child abuse prevention, and preventing complications that may be fatal to the health and well-being of the child.

Upon enrollment in preschool, children are registered for the School Health Programme, which provides a continuation of preventive care services, which includes health screenings, immunization, referral to appropriate agencies, and health promotion activities such as talks and sessions with children, teachers, and parents. The programme

aims at allowing all school-aged children in Seychelles to attain the highest level of education by being physically, socially, and mentally healthy, consequently in safe, secure, hygienic, and health-promoting school environments. Integrated within the school health programme are school dental services, which provide oral health care services to school-going children.

The Expanded Programme for Immunisation (EPI) coordinates the administration of childhood vaccinations in collaboration with the child and school health programmes. Upgrades of current vaccines and the introduction of new childhood vaccines are planned for the coming years.

To complement the preventive and curative aspects of child health services, the Ministry of Health engages in a variety of child health services to deliver specialized care. The Early Childhood Intervention Centre (ECIC) is mandated to serve children with developmental delays aged 0-5 years. Other early childhood intervention services include Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Audiology Services, Nutrition Services and Dental Services.

There are universally accessible medical care services available across all government health centres, free at the point-of-use. Specialised (Paediatric) services are available in outpatient and in-patient basis, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs

The Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs is mandated to oversee the affairs of the district, empower local communities and ensure good governance with transparency and accountability, through citizen engagement, inclusiveness and empowerment towards development.

One of the underlying roles of this Ministry is to contribute to early childhood care and education provisions. It facilitates the construction and maintenance of child-friendly infrastructures such as Early Child Care Centres, Community Centres, and play and outdoor spaces; it designs out-of-school programmes and educational activities to engage parents, early child care workers and the community. The Ministry is instrumental in maintaining the linkages between central and local government, building an effective local government system, and promoting a progressive environment for community

participation, community ownership, and sustainable development.

Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs

The Social Affairs Department of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs has statutory responsibility under the Children Act (1982) to assume a coordinating function in the protection of children. This requires close collaboration with all partners. The Social Affairs Department offers child protection services to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and their families. These services, mostly preventative and educational, are usually decentralized (operating from local centres) and they are undertaken by Social Workers through case management and court investigation. One of the responsibilities of the Department is to seek alternative care, organise aftercare services, and operate the Children's Helpline. The Department is mandated to set standards in children's homes and screen professionals working with children. The Department also runs parenting and life skills programmes.

Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family's Strategic Plan is focused on the principles that education, empowerment and embracing diversity is of necessity to improve quality of life. The Ministry's vision is 'Empowering families to improve quality of life' and its mission statements are to 'Enrich the lives of Families; Empower youths to maximize their full potential and Promote and embed sports in the Seychelles culture'.

The Ministry's goal and strategic principle that embrace the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) framework are the provision of diverse and quality services for families and the strengthening of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to support and promote projects in developing the capacity of children and their families to lead a good quality of life.

The Family Department's mandate is to empower and strengthen families through the provision of preventive, developmental, and remedial programs and services. Working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, individual, group, and family counseling and psychological interventions and support are provided for children and families.

The National Council for Children (NCC) works in partnership with the Family

Department and the Sports Sector. A range of educational programs and training, including sensitisation campaigns and workshops on matters that impact family functioning, have been implemented. On the other hand, the Sports Sector has developed a specialized physical education programme for early childhood. The Baby Gym program is well established and will be promoted and decentralized in community-based facilities and the inner islands with the support of The National Sports Council.

The Family Department of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family seeks to “empower families to improve quality of life” and intends to develop interactive programmes with families in the community. The Family Department’s Research and Policy Planning Division conducts research and analysis of matters pertaining to the family, gender and population. The National Family Policy of 2016 is being reviewed and a National Parenting Education Framework needs to be developed.

Institute of Early Childhood Development

The Institute of Early Childhood Development is the anchor for ECCE and the guardian of the Framework. One of its predominant roles is to coordinate the implementation of the Framework.

In implementing the Framework, IECD will mobilise resources to focus on improving the quality of child care services, reinforcing collaboration, and supporting the expansion of child care facilities, including the establishment of a regional and global hub for ECCE. A legislative and regulatory framework will be established, which will lead to policy action for quality assurance of child care services. Sector collaboration and multi-stakeholder cooperation will be strengthened to facilitate effective implementation through action planning, coordination, and monitoring. Advocacy and supportive initiatives to increase child care facilities will be pursued. Moreover, within its recent mandate as a Category 2 Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education under the auspices of UNESCO, the Institute will create professional, technical international linkages and the implementation of the national action plan will provide a platform for networking and sharing good practice.

Main Features of the National Action Plan

The purpose of the Action Plan is to make a significant contribution to the holistic development of children in the early years through the improvement of programmes and services, and through policy research, and standard setting. This will create an enabling

environment for quality ECCE. The NAP 2023–2024 is characterised by salient features in its design, intention, and realisation.

Project-based

The NAP is project-based. A descriptive style is adopted to contextualise the project or programme, link the outcomes to objectives, and outline broad strategies that would result in specific outputs that will, in the long term, lead to the expected outcome. This narrative approach provides flexibility and rationalisation for the project.

Result-oriented

The result-based planning model promoted by UNDP has been adapted for this plan. This shifted focus from activities to results, and particular attention had to be given to the phrasing of the outcome statement so that the criteria of specificity, measurability, and achievability are adhered to. Moreover, performance indicators, which are the means of assessing progress against specific outcomes and the achievement of results, have been very carefully inserted, and, where possible, baselines have been established or made available to capture change data.

Time-bound

The trajectory of the project or programme is contained within a two-year cycle. Strategic activities are planned to fit into that timeframe. Thus, the plan is economical in terms of time, although a range of projects can be accommodated within the different ECCE Sectors. However, there is a level of flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances, but the defined timeframe facilitates the monitoring of progress through the outputs in anticipation of the expected outcome.

Research-driven

Research is a key activity in the implementation of the plan. As much as possible, a research component has been included in most of the projects. The aim is to authenticate data collection procedures, measure change, or develop indicators for reporting. The research aspect promotes a better understanding of ECCE, encourages analytical reflection, and collects data to provide evidence of the outcome, achievement, and effectiveness of programme. Research activities provide concrete measures of effect, and the research process guides the monitoring of projects and the evaluation of the plan.

Specifically, four key research actions are inserted in the plan: monitoring the effects

of programmes on the holistic development of children; carrying out surveys to judge the perceptions and views of targeted ECCE professionals and parents on the appropriateness of programmes and structures to raise awareness and for education and training; establishing indicators to assess ECCE provisions at the organizational and national level; and measuring the level of achievement of outcomes for policy response and information.

Accountability-focused

The NAP is devised in a way that fosters the principle of accountability. Having developed the projects, the sectors assume a high level of commitment to its implementation. The timing for delivering outputs is carefully calculated so that all the outputs, documentation or actual deliverables are recorded. Moreover, the responsibility of the participating agency is also very clear. Thus throughout the different stages of implementation, accountability measures have been taken to ensure adequate reporting of information and progress, and the ultimate success of the project.

National priorities

The NAP 2023-2024 focuses on the National priorities derived from the SF_ECCE 2022. The implementation framework within which the Action Plan has been conceptualized is illustrated in Figure 1. The outcomes are interrelated, and they aim either directly or indirectly towards the holistic development of the child and the provision of high quality ECCE.

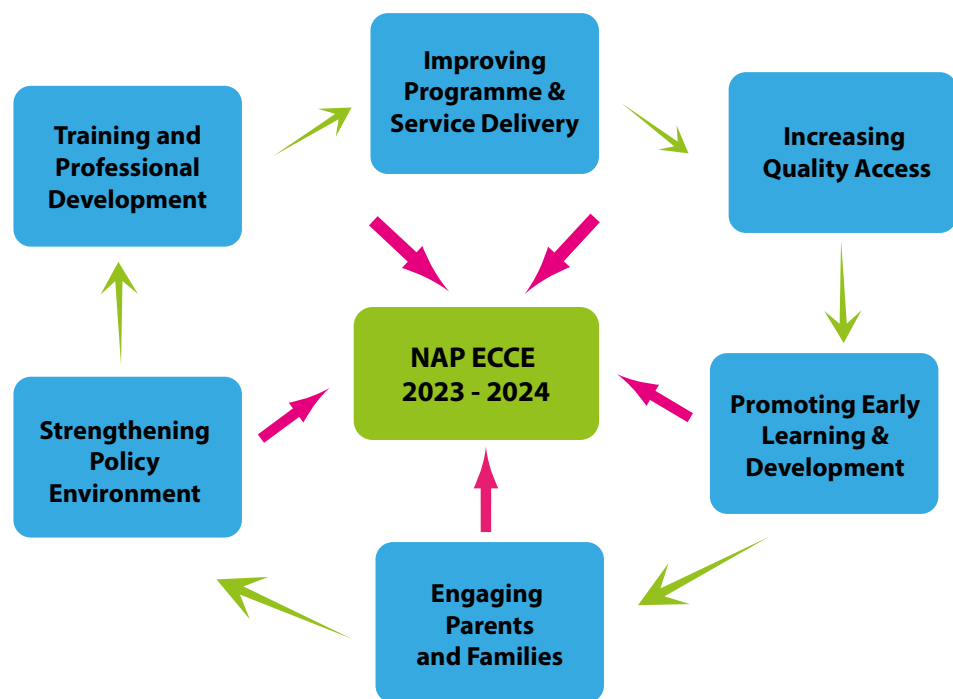
Six thematic areas derived from the SF_ECCE 2022 have been addressed through 17 sectoral projects:

- **Improving programme and service delivery** - The quest for quality in early childhood care and education forms part of the strategic priorities of the SF_ECCE 2022. Reinforcing standards in programme delivery and improving service conditions are given due attention. Three projects, strengthening the *Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST) for early detection and timely referral and intervention, making child-friendly provisions to improve the environment of the interview room, and creating an online Early Childhood Benefit System to ensure efficient and effective management and implementation of the financial assistance scheme*, are directly linked to standard-

setting and improved service delivery.

- **Increasing quality access** – In the SF_ECCE 2022, the need for equitable access to early child care services so that all children have equal opportunities for quality ECCE ‘regardless of residential location, family income, parental employment status or special educational needs’ is well articulated. Extending and updating institutional facilities and increasing access to specialised groups are strategic actions included in the plan. Three projects *to increase child care centre provision, upgrade child care facilities, and support the development of speech, language and communication skills in early childhood* have been programmed.
- **Promoting early learning and development** - The SF_ECCE 2022 supports the review, development, improvement, and monitoring of child development and early learning programme. Projects relating to *social emotional learning (SEL), educational and development programme, action learning in Children Home, and monitoring learning achievement in the first and second year of crèche education* have been planned.
- **Engaging parents and families** - Due emphasis is placed on the role of parents, family, and the community. Specific family engagement programmes or interventions for active facilitation of nurturing, responsive, and stimulating interactions and early experiences are promoted through the SF_ECCE 2022. Supporting *breastfeeding practice in postnatal mothers, empowering teenage mothers through a stay-and-play project, sensitising parents on early stimulation and learning* are three related projects.
- **Strengthening the policy environment** - is an important part of the strategic priority to improve the governance of ECCE. This involves three projects: developing a policy on *Safeguarding in the Early Years*, pursuing the data management processes, and *promoting child care centre provision in organisational settings*. The intention is to make information available for decision-making and policy action.
- **Training and professional development** - The SF_ECCE 2022 recognises that the professional competence of staff is a significant indicator of ECCE quality. The focus

Figure 1: Framework of the NAP 2023-2024



in the plan is on upscaling *action research* initiatives for early childhood teachers to improve instructional practice and teacher capacity.

Budget Implication

The estimated cost of implementing the National Action Plan 2023-2024 to achieve the expected outcomes has been calculated for each project and is estimated at about SCR 9 million. Table 1 contains a summary of the total cost for each ECCE Sector.

Table 1: Budget

Sector	Number of Projects	Cost (SCR)
Education	2	210,000
Health	3	262,540
Local Government & Community Affairs	2	7,450,000
Social Affairs	4	700,000
Youth, Sports and Family	2	70,000
IECD	4	240,000
Total	17	8,932,540

In developing the Plan, sectors have to align the projects with the strategic plan of the concerned Ministries or Agencies. Therefore, some of the funds will be derived from the recurrent budget of the organisation. However, the Action Plan has many innovative features which would make procurement demands. Also, it has a strong research base with major data collection requirements and the need for technical support. Additional funding may be necessary. Moreover, it can be seen that the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs has the largest cost for major construction and renovation of childcare facilities with funding from central Government.

Accessing adequate finance is one of the fundamental challenges in the implementation of the plan. In the evaluation of previous plans the unavailability of funds was mentioned as limiting project implementation. The 'Budget Narrative' from the sectors proposes possible sources of funding and this would need to be followed-up.



SECTION II

SECTORAL ACTION PLANS

Having agreed on the effectiveness of the project-based framework and with the experience of project development in previous plans, the six ECCE Sectors generated project areas in line with the strategic plan of their Ministries and in consultation with senior officials from their organisations. Draft Project Profiles were developed within the sectors.

The Draft Project Profiles went through a review process facilitated by IECD. The profiles were scrutinized, critical comments were recorded, and suggested inputs were provided. This was followed by a working meeting with each sector team for clarification

and general agreement. The Project Profiles were reformulated and redrafted. Intensive editing was carried out by IECD to refine, reshape, and finalize the projects for inclusion in the National Action Plan.

In this section, the Project Profiles for all the sectors have been outlined. The ECCE Sectors have been presented in alphabetical order except for IECD as the overarching organization





EDUCATION



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Mrs. Merna Eulentin
Principal Secretary
Education Services
Ministry of Education

**“Un enfant
est un âme qui vous cherche”**

”

Project Title

Promoting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at early childhood level in schools

Goal

- To foster SEL at early childhood level through an evidence-based framework
- To nurture healthy teacher-pupil relationships within a supportive learning environment
- To build social emotional competencies and positive character in pupils at early childhood level

Objective

- To pilot the implementation of an evidence-based framework to support SEL at early childhood level
- To build teachers' and teacher assistants' capacity in supporting children's SEL
- To support teachers and teacher assistants in creating an enabling learning environment that favours the development of SEL
- To engage parents in the development of their children's SEL

Background and Rationale

The mission of the Ministry of Education is to build a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education and training reflecting universal and national values that will promote the integrated development of the person and empower him/her to participate fully in social and economic development.

To deliver on this mission, schools should not only be concerned with the development of academic and technical skills, but also with the development of the whole child, including social-emotional aspects. The first International Science and Evidence Based Education Assessment (ISEEA) (ISEEA, 2022)¹, which reviewed evidence from brain maturation, cognitive psychology and the science of learning, showed that equitable and inclusive quality education requires a whole-brain (holistic) approach and needs to integrate Social and Emotional Competencies (SEC) along with knowledge and cognitive development (Bierman and Motamedi, 2015)². Teaching and learning in schools have strong social, emotional, and academic components (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004)³ and

pupils need to learn social emotional skills as much as they need to learn literacy and numeracy. Relationships and emotional processes affect how and what we learn. Schools and families must effectively address these aspects of the educational process for the benefit of all students (Elias et al., 1997)⁴.

Research from developmental sciences shows that social and emotional competencies predict positive life outcomes in late adolescence and adulthood, including physical health, positive relationships, reduced aggression and conflict, well-being and successful labour market outcomes, besides fostering academic growth (Singh and Duraiappah, Rethinking Learning Report, 2020)⁵. Social and emotional competencies are malleable; however, the earlier the intervention and education the more robust the brain connections and behavioural outcomes. Driven by high levels of brain plasticity, that is the brain's ability to structurally and functionally change itself in response to training and learning (among other conditions), early childhood programs oriented at SEL can build lifelong social and emotional competencies and practices. Thus, providing an early childhood learning environment, which promotes all aspects of development, is a necessity if all children are to be supported to reach their full potential.

While holistic development is a key principle of the Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF, 2015), SEL is not typically taught or promoted in a comprehensive or systematic way in Seychelles state schools. It is therefore imperative that there is a paradigm shift in the way young children are educated, which takes into account the scientific research to date and the Seychelles context. This project seeks to bring about meaningful change in the early learning environment within schools with teachers having the knowledge, skills, and motivation to build healthy and supportive relationships with their pupils and contribute to the holistic development and advancement of pupils' learning. Furthermore, the project will engage parents by sharing information and practical strategies for supporting children's development, particularly SEL.

Description

The Education Sector ECCE Technical Team will lead this project to develop a framework for promoting SEL at early childhood level and pilot its implementation in selected schools, namely Au Cap Primary, Bel Eau Primary and Plaisance Primary. Based on recent research on cognitive development, neuroscience and trainability in the classroom, the SEL Framework will encompass four core dimensions. They are empathy, mindfulness,

compassion and critical inquiry. Technical assistance relating to neuroscience and the development of SEL will be provided by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP), based in New Delhi, India.

The management and early childhood personnel of schools selected for the pilot project will be responsible for implementation of the project at school level. Key local stakeholders, including professionals in schools, Ministry of Education Headquarters, Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education (SITE), the Ministry of Health, the Department of Social Affairs, the National Council for Children, and the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), will also be consulted regarding the SEL framework.

Some of the major stages of the project will be to:

- Develop SEL framework based on evidence from the international research literature and knowledge of the Seychelles' context
- Provide capacity-building for school management, teachers, and teacher assistants on the implementation of the SEL framework
- Sensitise parents on SEL and how they can support their children's development
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SEL framework in pilot schools

Budget Narrative

The project will require the expertise of specialists in SEL for the development and implementation of the framework. The overall cost of the project is estimated at SCR150,000. Funding will be made available from the recurrent budget.

Expected Outcome

Pupils demonstrate increased social emotional competency level at the end of the pilot

Performance Indicators

- Overall proportion of teachers and teacher assistants implementing the SEL Framework to improve pupils' social emotional learning competency level
- Overall proportion of early childhood pupils showing age appropriate social emotional learning competencies
- Overall proportion of parents who are engaged in supporting the SEL of their children

Baseline

Current practices relating to the support of SEL at early childhood level in schools
Current level of social emotional competencies of pupils at early childhood level

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Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Conduct sensitisation sessions on SEL with Early Childhood Teachers	Report of Sensitisation	July 2023
2. Develop SEL framework based on evidence from the international research literature and knowledge of the Seychelles' context	SEL Framework	August 2023
3. Provide capacity-building for school management, teachers, and teacher assistants on the implementation of the SEL framework	Report of Training	September 2023 (initial training) April 2024 (Ongoing capacity - building)
4. Monitor the implementation of the SEL framework in pilot schools as per the guidelines	Implementation Report	September 2023 - Ongoing
5. Evaluate the implementation of the SEL Framework in pilot schools	Evaluation Report	December 2023 (First Year) November 2024 (Second Year)



Project Title

Empowering and enabling teachers to improve instructional practices

Goal

To improve the competencies and confidence of teachers at Primary One and Primary Two levels to teach literacy and numeracy through action research

Objective

- To promote a culture of reflective practice and continuous professional development amongst P1 and P2 teachers
- To facilitate capacity building opportunities for P1 and P2 teachers with regard to the action research process and the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- To provide targeted support relating to the needs of learners

Background and Rationale

The vision and mission of the Ministry of Education emphasize the provision of quality education. Early childhood is the foundation of the learning process and practitioners in that field need to be well equipped to meet the diverse needs of all learners. The action research project (2021-2022) has contributed significantly in fostering the reflective practice of crèche teachers, particularly relating to the teaching of early numeracy skills. The results of the project also indicate that there is a need to further engage teachers to reflect deeply about their practice with a view of raising attainment of all learners.

Whilst much has been done to train Primary 1 and 2 teachers, it is evident that, in certain cases, the learners' needs are not being fully met due to a number of factors. This includes the quality of teaching, the diverse needs of learners, parental engagement, amongst others. This project has therefore been maintained to ensure continuity and sustainability. It aims to empower and enable Primary One and Primary Two teachers to improve instructional practice through action research. As was the case with Crèche Teachers, Primary One and Primary Two teachers will be encouraged to reflect on and analyze data on a consistent and collaborative basis to ensure success for the cohort of pupils who are now in Primary One. In order to meet the challenges being faced, schools will be encouraged to restructure their professional development system providing Primary One teachers with opportunities for collaborative enquiry, reflection and dialogue to improve their instructional practices.

Primary One Teachers are seen as agents of change in that they support learners as they take their first steps into formal education. It is paramount that they take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning with a view to improve learners' performance and well-being. This is in line with several of the Priority Areas derived from The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2011), including improving accountability and service delivery, early stimulation, and training and professional development. This project is also well aligned with the Education Sector's new strategic direction and priorities which puts emphasis on improving the quality of lesson delivery and attainment, facilitating training through the use of state of the art and appropriate resources for early childhood teachers and teacher assistants.

Description

In view of the devolution of responsibilities to schools, the project will be led by the school management and will receive the support and assistance of the ECCE Technical Team and the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education (SITE).

Some of the major stages of the project will be to:

- Support teachers in implementing the action research model
- Coordinate professional development opportunities focusing on the teaching of literacy and numeracy in line with the action research model
- Build Communities of Practice for networking and professional support
- Evaluate the outcome of the project. (collect data based on the implementation and pupils' progress)

Budget Narrative

The overall cost of the project is estimated at SCR 60, 000. Funds will be required to cover the facilitation and logistics of professional development, and expenditure relating to monitoring and evaluation. The project will also incur travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses particularly for participants from Praslin and La Digue. Funding will be made available from the recurrent budget.

Expected Outcome

Improved practice in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy through a specific action research intervention and increased attention to pupil learning needs

Performance Indicators

- Proportion of Primary One and Primary Two Teachers making use of targeted action research model to improve instructional practices and pupils' learning abilities
- Areas of intervention addressed - pupils are actually encountering difficulties in both numeracy and literacy, therefore the teachers will identify the areas in which the pupils are encountering the specific difficulty and try to remedy them through the action research model
- Results of the interventions will take into account the teachers' reflective practices and the pupils' reaction to the intervention

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Teachers trained on the use of the action research model	Training Report	June 2023
2. Supporting teachers in the implementation of action research	Implementation Report	July 2023 - ongoing
3. Coordination of professional development opportunities focusing on the teaching of literacy and numeracy in line with the action research model	Professional Development Report	July 2023 February 2024 June 2024
4. Monitoring the implementation of action research (making use of a monitoring checklist and supporting writing-up)	Monitoring Report Individual action research reports	September 2023 - Ongoing
5. Evaluation of the implementation of action research in schools	Evaluation Report	November 2024



ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mrs. Catriona Monthy, Ms. Lymiah Bibi, Mr. Cyril Pillay (Chairperson), Mrs. Germaine Gill, Mrs Rosemai Jolicoeur, Mrs. Helen Basset



HEALTH

“



Dr. Bernard Valentin
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Health

“For several decades, scaling down neonatal, infant and early childhood mortality has been the mantra of the health sector. New societal challenges such as substance abuse, dysfunctional families and, generally, less child-friendly socio-economic environments, require that we redouble our efforts to work better upstream to ensure the birth of healthy babies and to preserve their health and wellbeing throughout the early years. The Ministry of Health is relentlessly strengthening all its structures and processes to better protect, promote and restore the health of mothers and their babies and we do this, with pride and gusto.”

”

Project Title

Strengthening Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST) for early detection and timely referral and intervention

Goal

To promote the standard practice of utilizing Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST) as a screening tool for early detection and intervention in children 0-4 years of age

Objective

- To promote DDST as an important developmental screening tool
- To train a pool of Community Child Nurses as trainers
- To build the capacity of other Community Child Health Nurses facilitated by the trainers
- To promote capacity building of all the Community Child Health Nurses in administering the DDST
- To raise awareness of parents and guardians on the importance of the DDST screening

Background and Rationale

Child health programme plays a critical role in promoting the healthy growth and development of all children in the first decade of their lives. The Child Health Programme contributes to the achievement of the country's vision of Health for All and ultimately all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Child Health is a specific health programme, which takes over from the Maternal Health Programme.

There are presently at least 15 full time child health nurses positioned in all district health care centres taking a leading role in the programme. The programme's target population is approximately 15,000 children aged 0-5 years of age. Excluding the families, this constitute a wide client base for health services and interventions.

A number of health interventions are carried out during the early childhood years to detect any development or health issues. Post-natal visit is done soon after delivery that is usually the first two weeks after both mother and baby has been discharged from hospital. Consequently, there is the six weeks' assessment (postnatal assessment done

at the health centre level). If potential problems are detected, the children then have the opportunity to receive specialized help.

The children who attend the Child Health Services at health care level are from birth to 4 years of age. They receive their childhood preventable vaccinations from 3 months to 18 months. DDST is carried out from the ages of six weeks to four years.

Since the pandemic Covid-19 in 2019, there has been disruptions in the health care services and child health services has not been excluded. Nurses from different working areas had been deployed to work with Covid-19 patients in the specialized hospital. The health care services had to scale down in terms of selecting services that are essential with the limited staff available. The DDST was scaled down whereby only tests on babies between 6 weeks to 2 years were undertaken. Consequently, the percentage of 3 and 4 year-old children who had undergone the screening has decreased significantly. In addition, the target coverage of DDST for the age group of 3 and 4 years of age has always remained low over the years. not only during the pandemic. The statistics collected for total DDST screening for year 2019 were 8,017. In the year 2021, the total DDST was 4,356 that is only 54.3% coverage when compared to year 2019. It is noticeably evident that the total coverage has extremely dropped.

Properly diagnosing a child's disorder is crucial so that each child can get the right kind of help. DDST is an assessment tool used to identify development delays or impairments a child may have that can affect the child's development and ability to function and perform daily tasks. Efficient implementation of DDST is essential to provide accurate findings and early detection for prompt referral to appropriate and specialized services.

Description

Screening will be carried out by child health nurses in the health centres under the leadership of the project officer (Child Health Programme Manager). Timely referral for children requiring intervention will be done with other professionals such as rehabilitation staff. All Child Health Nurses working in all the Community Health Centre of Seychelles will attend the training which will be conducted by an external facilitator.

The following activities and strategies are anticipated:

- Equipment needed to conduct DDST which is DDST kits will need to be purchased

to serve as a contingency plan.

- Routine collection and data reporting will be carried out on the use of the DDST screening tool, the number of children screened and referred.
- The Programme Manager for Child Health will be responsible for the monitoring process. Periodic analysis will be carried out and gaps will be addressed accordingly.
- Referrals will be made to appropriate /identified health professionals from the Community Child Health Services.
- Colourful tickers as token of appreciation will be given to children after performing their DDST. This will serve as recognition for passing their test or giving their best efforts.
- There will be a series of educational materials that will be developed to help raise awareness of parents on speech, hearing and language in the early years. This will include posters, leaflets and videos.
- Video slots will be developed and broadcasted on SBC and on social media, for example, Facebook and Instagram.

Budget Narrative

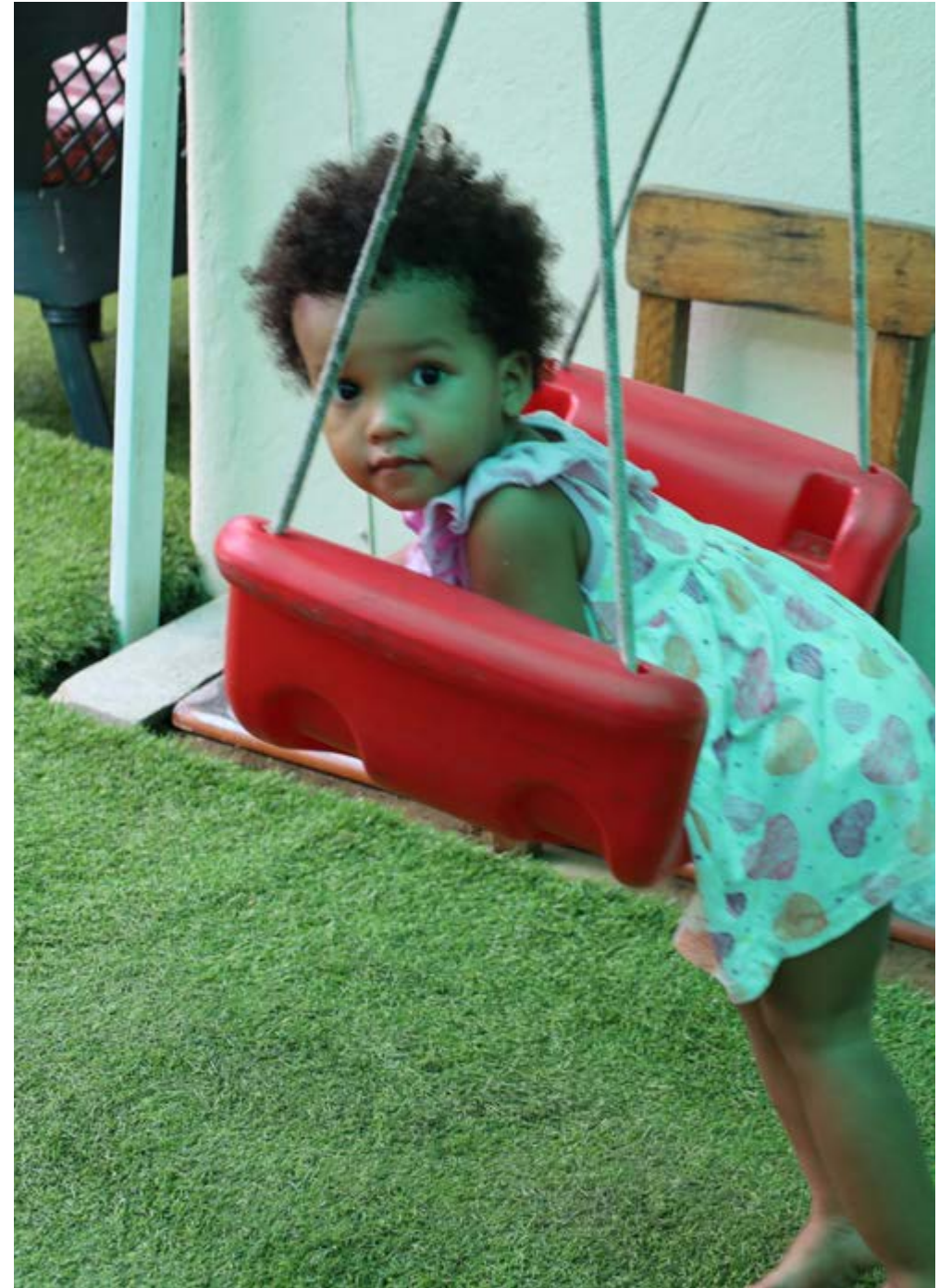
The budget is estimated to be SCR 89,000. This will cover procurement of DDST Kits, costs for other resources and services including remuneration for an external facilitator. Funds will be sourced from the National ECCE Trust Fund, mostly, with additional contribution from the Health Care Agency.

Expected Outcome

Increased attention is given to DDST for effective service delivery

Performance Indicators

- Implementing training programme for trainers – characteristics of trainers, process, effectiveness
- Implementing training programme for nurses or other health professionals – characteristics of professionals, process, effectiveness
- Quarterly and Semi-annual monitoring report
- Level of parental awareness
- Screening results at the end of the project period – number of children in age categories, number of referrals, and types



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Preparation of programme	Programme developed	July 2023
2. Conduct training	Training Report	August 2023
3. Procurement of Kits and Materials	Kits and materials available	August 2023
4. Promoting DDST	Promotional resources Video production	September 2023
5. Gauging parent awareness	Parent Questionnaire	October 2023
6. Administration of DDST and on-going monitoring	Semi-annual reports which include data collection and reporting DDST results , and on-going data collection and data capture of parent questionnaire responses	November 2023 - August 2024
7. Analysis of DDST data	Preliminary Report	September 2024
8. Evaluation	Final Report	October 2024

Project Title

Sensitization on communication skills, notably speech and hearing in early childhood

Goal

To support the development of speech, language and communication skills in early childhood

Objective

- To build capacity of Community Child School Health Nurses in the implementation of Otoacoustic Emissions Testing (OAE)
- To raise awareness of parents and guardians on speech and language development in early childhood children
- To promote support services for parents who have children with hearing impairment
- To improve collaboration with external partners in the promotion of hearing, speech and language development of children as well as supporting partners in the promotion of sign language

Background and Rationale

Investing in early childhood development is an emerging area of concern in global public health. Evidence has shown that the early years of life determine and influence health, well-being, behavior and cognitive functions of people. Early detection and intervention for children with developmental delay or disabilities significantly improves their chances for lifelong inclusion, well-being and productivity, and early childhood years provide an important window of opportunity to build a strong foundation.

Two of the most common developmental delays or impairment identified in children age 0-4 years is speech and language delay, and hearing.

Speech/language delay and impairment

Speech impairment amongst children age between 0- 4 years of age exists across the world.in many countries. According to a research in 2018 involving preschool bilingual children in Cape Town, South Africa, 9% of children had speech difficulties, with 75% of that group having a speech delay. A study carried out in Australia in 2019 showed that 20% of 4-year-old children have difficulty understanding or using language. According to Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in United States about 5-8% of children

under the age of 5 years have developmental impairments of speech and language. This proportion is higher than that for any other neurodevelopmental condition occurring at that age. Parents are concerned about these impairments, and the number of children being referred to speech and language therapy services is increasing.

In Seychelles, according to Primary Health Care Services Annual Statistical Report 2021, in regards to the allied health services, the Speech Pathology Unit received the majority of referrals. The speech pathology unit attended to 636 cases (29% new cases and 71% repeated cases) in 2021. Most referrals received by the Speech Pathology Unit for children aged 0-4 years are from the Community Child Health Services.

Hearing impairment

Without extra help, children with hearing loss have problems learning language. These children can then be at risk of other delays. Families who have children with hearing loss often need to find different ways to communicate with their child such as learning sign language to help their child achieve the developmental milestones. These skills together with hearing aids and other means can be used to assist children with hearing impairment.

In Seychelles, a number of health interventions are carried out during the early childhood years to detect development or health issues. Hearing test is one of the screening tests administered after the baby is born usually within the first week of life. The baby has two chances to repeat the test if he or she has failed at the first attempt.

The baby is referred to the audiologist to rule out the possibilities of hearing impairment after the second attempt. Initial diagnosis is made with follow up appointments to identify the correct and early intervention for the child such as hearing aid, medicine or surgery. Unfortunately, a referral mechanism for both babies and parents to enlist the assistance of the Association of People with Hearing Impairment (APHI) has not been established. The Association through the newly opened Centre can provide support and learning of sign language to promote effective communication between the baby or child born with hearing impairment and the parents.

This project focuses on two of the most common developmental delays or impairments identified in children aged 0-4 years of age in Seychelles. These are speech and language delays and impairments and hearing impairment. The project aims to promote healthier

child development and foster better quality of life for children by empowering parents to better support healthy speech and language development of their child and also to provide support to parents with hearing impaired children. It also intends to link with other agencies and engage NGOs to help deliver support services.

The project subscribes to global and national plans. It resonates with the Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.2 which states that by 2030, all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they would be ready for primary education. Also, the project contributes towards the attainment of the Strategic Direction 2 of the National Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026 that is to improve health services across the life-course and address priority health conditions and to improve collaboration with private health sector and health-related NGOs. Moreover, it is in line with the Seychelles Framework Early Childhood Care and Education to meet the needs of children at risk of educational disadvantaged.

Description

In order to guarantee that the project is successful several key partners will be engaged throughout. This includes but is not limited to the speech pathologist, audiology staff, Paediatrician and Community Child Health Nurses. Other external organizations such as the Association for Persons with Hearing Impairment (APHI) will also be co-opted when needed.

The implementation of the project will be in four parts:

- Developing a series of educational materials including posters, leaflets and videos and conducting the awareness programme
- Training of Maternity, Child and School Health nurses on Otoacoustic Emissions Testing (OAE) techniques and conducting the tests
- Sensitising targeted groups of parents of children with speech and hearing impairment and assessing level of awareness
- Carrying out a survey on level of awareness in the community and evaluate effect of awareness campaign

Budget Narrative

The budget is estimated to be SCR113, 540. This will include the cost of video production and broadcasting, as well as design and printing of posters and leaflets. Funds will be

sourced from the National ECCE Trust Fund, mostly, with additional contribution from the Health Care Agency.

Expected Outcome

- Skillful and knowledgeable Community Child Health Nurses in OAE
- Increased awareness of parents on hearing impairment and speech development
- Raised awareness of the community on hearing impairment and speech development

Performance Indicators

- Descriptive account of the training of MCH Nurses in performing OAE
- Results of OAE on children aged 0-4 years including those referred for speech and hearing interventions
- Level of awareness of parents with children (0-4 years) with speech and hearing impairment
- Level of awareness of other stakeholders on speech and hearing issues

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Preparation of awareness raising campaign	Posters, leaflets, video production	July 2023-September 2023
2. Set up the campaign	Report on activities undertaken, such as broadcasting, talks, setting-up posters, leaflet distribution and others	October 2023 - September 2024
3. Training on OAE	Training Programme Training Report	September 2023
4. Implementation and monitoring of OAE tests and identification of impairments	Semi-annual Monitoring Report	October 2023 - September 2024
5. Preparation for sensitization of parents	Specific Programme for parents List of parents with children with speech and hearing impairment	October 2023 - December 2023
6. Delivering the sensitization programme	Semi-annual monitoring report	January 2024 - July 2024
7. Assessing the level of awareness of parents	Assessment tools developed Assessment Report	August 2024 - September 2024
8. Measuring level of awareness of parents	Questionnaire developed Survey Report	August 2024 - September 2024
9. Project Evaluation	Final Report	October 2024

Project Title

Maternal perception and practice on aspects of breastfeeding in postnatal mothers at Seychelles hospital

Goal

To assess the knowledge, perception and practices of breastfeeding in postnatal mothers

Objective

- To determine correlation between breastfeeding knowledge, attitude and practice in postnatal mothers
- To identify the source of information for the mothers on breast feeding
- To identify barriers to the practice of breast feeding

Background and Rationale

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It is the process of feeding the baby with the mother's milk. This can be either by the traditional direct nipple feeding where there is nipple-baby-mouth contact or by expressed breast milk that is fed through the bottle¹. Breastfeeding provides ideal food that leads to ideal growth and development of an infant, with additional advantages on the maternal health. The global public health and World health Organization(WHO) recommends that an infant should be breastfed exclusively for the first six months, starting immediately after birth (preferably during the first 30 minutes of life). The infant should thereafter be exclusively breastfed for up to six months of life, day and night on child's demand. During this period, no fluids including water should be given to the baby. Oral medication can be given in the event that the infant is sick. Until the child is two years of age breastfeeding should be continued. It is discouraged to use bottle feeding, teats or pacifiers since these are associated with poor hygiene and the risk of the infant getting gastroenteritis.

If done properly breast feeding allows normal growth and development of the baby. Breast milk is of two types: Colostrum which is the initial yellowish and sticky milk produced from mother's breasts from 37 weeks of gestation to about seven days after delivery; and Mature Milk which is whitish in color and is effectively produced from about 10th day following delivery.

The decision to breastfeed is largely a matter of individual choice and rational decision making. However, the decisions and experiences are constructed and practiced within the social milieu in which the mother lives². Breastfeeding knowledge and attitudes are socially learned within the family since family members often have frequent and on-going interaction with the mother, providing her with practical information about breastfeeding and complementary feeding. There are various factors that influences the decisions regarding breast feeding initiation and duration; these include socio-demographic factors (education level, monthly household income, and parity), residence and cultural beliefs, employment policies, health-related factors, and biosocial factors (breastfeeding support).

There has been a reduction in Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) rate and it remains low in both low-income and high-income countries. Previous studies have shown that many females do not meet the WHO recommendation of 6 months' exclusive breast feeding³. Data from the 2006–2007 Canadian Maternity Experience Survey⁴ indicated that only 14.4% of females exclusively breastfed for at least six months; and that 25% of women who initiated breastfeeding added liquids other than breast milk to their child's diet within two weeks of delivery. By 2011–2012, six-month exclusive breastfeeding rates had increased, but remained low at 26%. Data in Seychelles show that the breastfeeding rate drops drastically from 66.7% to 42.3 % from birth to 6 completed weeks; and at 6 months it drops even further to 32.2%. As for partial breast feeding the rate is already 33.3% at birth and it increases to 62.4% at 6 months of age. Looking at the distribution of the percentages of feeding mode by sex for the age groups one and five months, partial breastfeeding is more prevalent at both ages for boys, while for girls at one month exclusive and partial breastfeeding modes have similar rates. Exclusive breastfeeding rates decrease relatively by 75% from one to five months for both sexes⁵.

There is a continuous decline in exclusive breastfeeding occurring from birth to 6 month of age, and in view of the fact that numerous societal and maternal characteristics are associated with breastfeeding duration, there is a need for reinforcing and introducing early and multipronged interventions to support females to exclusively breastfeed longer. The largest declines in exclusive breastfeeding occurred in the first month and after four months, and the common reason for this in most studies is insufficient milk supply and difficulty with breastfeeding. Some studies have also shown correlation in children between an early introduction of complimentary feeding and a significantly higher mean BMI in children - thus resulting in obesity.

All recommendations on reduced breastfeeding rates emphasize the need for early and continued postpartum breastfeeding support. Although many females in numerous studies perceive insufficiency in their milk supply, biologically less than five percent of females are unable to produce adequate milk to meet the nutritional needs of their infant. It is vital to determine the level of maternal knowledge about breastfeeding to correlate their knowledge with breastfeeding practices. We need first to identify the source of information for mothers on breastfeeding, the gaps that exist, and develop tools to provide effective support to encourage breastfeeding education, practice and extension of breastfeeding period.

Breastfeeding has benefits for both mother and the baby. It is the best source of nutrition for most babies, it has protective benefits against some illnesses and diseases, it shares antibodies between mother and her baby, and it is cheap. Breastfeeding also creates a bonding experience between mother and her baby because it promotes skin to skin contact, more holding and stroking; this in turn has benefits in reducing social and behavioral problems in both children and adults.

This project is in line with the Sustainable Developmental Goal 3 relating to good health and wellbeing where it covers both child and maternal health. It also forms part of the Strategic Direction 4 of the National Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026 which is to promote a healthy population with emphasis on creating a supportive environment for breastfeeding in workplaces, and fully implementing code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes to protect and promote breastfeeding. It also contributes to the enhancement of the maternal health programme with special reference to breastfeeding as prioritised in the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2022.

This project aims to identify gaps and areas of deficiency that need to be addressed in an attempt to increase the rate and duration of breastfeeding in neonates and hopefully meet the WHO goal set for breastfeeding in many postnatal mothers.

Description

The project will involve all postnatal mothers delivering a live viable baby on maternity ward and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Mothers eligible will include primiparous and multigravida mothers who delivered by either means, that is, normal vaginal, assisted,

or caesarean sections, and who are admitted to the Seychelles Hospital. A questionnaire would be administered on the first 3 days of admission.

The questionnaire aims to determine firstly the knowledge about breastfeeding and its nutritional, immunological, and psychological benefits. The second aspect to be evaluated will be the attitude which will influence the initiation, type and duration of breastfeeding. Lastly, the practice which no doubted depends on the knowledge and attitude will be assessed. This should initiate an explanation of the reduction of the breastfeeding rate over time.

Budget Narrative

The cost for the project is estimated at SCR 60,000 to cover research administration and logistics. It is anticipated that funds will be made available from the recurrent budget of the Health Care Agency.

Expected Outcome

Identified information gaps in sensitizing postnatal mothers on breastfeeding

Performance Indicators

- Level of knowledge on breastfeeding
- Attitudes to breastfeeding
- Relationship between knowledge, attitudes and current practices

References

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- ⁴ Rates of and factors associated with exclusive and any breastfeeding at six months in Canada: an analysis of population-based cross-sectional data. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth volume 23, Article number: 56 (2023)
- ⁵ Technical report on the analysis of the 2017 routine nutrition information data: results, challenges and opportunities. WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. ISBN 978-92-4-155011-6

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Instrumentation	Questionnaire produced Database developed	July-August 2023
2. Training data collectors	Training Report	September-October 2023
3. Implementation	On-going data collection Semi-Annual Progress Report	November 2023 - July 2024
4. Data Capture	Completed database entry	August 2024
5. Analysis and writing-up	Final Report	September 2024 - October 2024



ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms. Stephanie Charlette, Dr. Juliette Rioux, Mrs. Michelle Fred, Mrs. Veronique Bresson, Mrs. Fiona Paulin, Ms. Jeanne Leggaie, Mrs Stephanie Desnousse (Chairperson)
Missing: Ms. Jane Henriette, Ms Nathalie Brutus and Ms Agnes Boniface



**LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
& COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS**

“



Kevin Perine
Principal Secretary
Local Government and Community Affairs

“Children are an integral part of our country's future and sustainable development. The Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs serves as a catalyst towards this goal, providing a safe environment whereby the children of Seychelles can grow through the various Programmes implemented at Community Level, as well as the Day Care Centre facilities in place. Nurturing the upcoming generation, holds the promise of a beaming future full of endless possibilities.”

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Project Title

Child care centre provision

Goal

To increase community access to quality early learning and care facilities for the District of Mont Fleuri

Objective

To undertake the construction of a standardized Child Care Centre
To meet the development needs of children (0-4 years) and the needs of working parents

Background and Rationale

Child Care Centres are intended to provide a stimulating and safe environment for the child to develop. At the same time, Child Care Centre provision responds to community needs in contributing to family life by supporting working parents in the care and education of their children. Moreover, it has social cohesive function in that it provides a focus for parental meetings and family exchanges and has the potential to create employment opportunities in the district. The Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs is mandated to build, maintain and ensure equitable access to community infrastructural facilities including Child Care Centres.

Presently, there are fifteen Government-owned Child Care Centres which are being managed by the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs in 15 Districts. Those Child Care Centre facilities are leased to Seychellois entrepreneurs. It is Government's plan to have at least a child care centre facility in all the Districts on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue depending on available resources. Day Care Centres are constructed catering to the demand which continues to grow. They should not only provide early learning opportunities for children and support for parents, they should also provide an enabling environment for community participation and parental engagement. At the same time, these services need to be affordable, appropriate, and conveniently situated within district areas to serve the community.

Description

The role of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs will be to oversee the implementation of the project in collaboration with the Planning Authority, Ministry of Education, IECD, Ministry of Health, and the Fire and Rescue Services Agency.

Construction of the Child Care Centre will entail:

- Securing of funds
- Undertaking the tendering process and contract awards
- Carrying out the construction work
- Procuring equipment and furniture
- Undertaking the landscaping and installation of outdoor area

Budget Narrative

The total cost for the construction of the Child Care Centre has been estimated at SCR 4 million. Funding is expected through a budget line under the Public Investment Sector Program (PSIP) for 2023-2024.

Expected Outcome

Community access to innovative early childhood facilities is established

Performance Indicators

- Project's delivery within the established timeframe
- Contractor's delivery as per agreement
- Project management
- Child Care Centre built in compliance with standards for physical infrastructural design, external design and outdoor elements, child and family friendly facilities
- Stakeholders' collaboration and satisfaction (Participating Agencies, Community Personnel, Parents)

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Secured Fund	Funds available	February 2023
2. Tender Process undertaken	Selected contractor - signed contract	October 2023
3. Construction Work	Quarterly Progress Report	November 2023-July 2024
4. Completion	Signed Completion/Occupancy Certificate	August 2024
5. Evaluation	Satisfaction survey report Stakeholder interview report	September 2024 - October 2024
6. Write-up	Final report	November 2024



Project Title

Upgrading childcare centre facilities for improved service delivery

Goal

To facilitate the provision of childcare services in an environment that fosters the holistic development of the child

Background and Rationale

With the evolution of Early Childhood Care and Education in Seychelles the traditional model where children were being cared for in the home by family members is being replaced by the current practice where provision can be made in childminding establishments or child care centres. From a community perspective, childcare facilities have become an essential service that aims to provide a hygienic, safe and stimulating environment for early learning and development.

Most child care centres (known as day care centers) were built during the 1990's and early 2000's. Unfortunately, no clear maintenance plan was drawn up. As a consequence, many of those centers fell into a bad state, structurally, aesthetically, and with poor safety standards. In addition other buildings were converted into child care centres without meeting the set requirements.

With the adoption of the new prototype for building day care centers and the revised quality assurance system in place, there is a need to upgrade those existing facilities. The intention is to bring them up to standard. This will help to provide a more conducive early learning and caring environment for the children, meet the needs of parents, and facilitate service delivery. Over the next two years, the renovation of ten child care facilities has been planned. Three of those centres have been included as part of the National Action Plan 2023-2024 ECCE to provide further impetus to quality improvement in child care provisions.

Description

The Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs Department will oversee the implementation of the project in collaboration with the ECCE Technical Committee, Planning Authority, Ministry of Education, Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), Ministry of Health, Procurement Oversight Unit and Contractors. The project

entails the upgrade, renovation and restoration of three childcare centres, namely, Anse Royale Day Care Centre, La Digue Day Care Centre and Baie Ste Anne Day Care Centre.

All three centres will undergo major works as follows (as per scope of works):

- Replace roofing sheets, including timber structures where necessary
- Completely replace ceilings including battens
- New wiring works
- Change electrical fittings and appliances such as fans, tube lights, switches and sockets
- Redo tiling works and erect tiles in rooms as required by relevant authorities, such as on part of the walls in the kitchen and bathroom
- New plumbing works in the kitchen, toilets and bathrooms, including new waste water facilities
- New partitions to separate specific required rooms
- External works

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost takes into account the size, renovation plan, and location. The project will be entirely funded by the Government of Seychelles through yearly budget allocation:

- Anse Royale Day Care - SCR 400,000
- Baie Ste Anne Praslin Day Care - SCR 900,000
- La Digue Day Care - SCR 950,000

Expected Outcome

The completely revamped child care facilities will provide significantly improved infrastructural and environmental conditions for the development needs of children (0-3 years)

Performance Indicators

The new maintenance plan has as much as possible catered for new facilities and areas within the existing building as per requirements set by relevant authorities and stakeholders. For the interior, new descriptions include: new partitions to separate open spaces to new classrooms and quiet rooms; new designated milk preparation area completely separated from the main kitchen; separate bathrooms for baby and toddlers. Completely erect wall tiles in the bathroom and part of the kitchen. Most doors on the interior will be half see-through (glass panelled), for supervisory purposes.

As for the exterior, waste water facilities are to be rebuilt. The discharge points of roof water runoff have been catered for taking into account the original inadequate discharge point around the play areas.

The collaboration and participation of other stakeholders are of paramount importance. Most renovation plans have been drawn up in view of requirements set forth by these key partners, such as Public Health Authority (PHA), including food control unit, the Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency (SFRSA), IECD, and parents. Also, the views of parents on the upgraded facilities will be sought.

Implementation Plan

Upgrading of Child Care Centre 1- Anse Royale

Activities	Output	Timeframe
1. Secured funding	Funds available	February 2023
2. Tender process undertaken	Award contractor-sign contract	May 2023
3. Renovation Work	Weekly monitoring reports	August 2023-October 2023
4. Completion	Signed completion/taking over certificate	November 2023
5. Evaluation	Satisfaction survey report Stakeholder interview report	December 2023
6. Write-up	Final report	January 2024- February 2024

Implementation Plan

Upgrading of Child Care Centre 2 - La Digue

Activities	Output	Timeframe
1. Secured funding	Funds available	February 2023
2. Tender process undertaken	Award contractor-sign contract	August 2023
3. Renovation Work	Weekly monitoring reports	September 2023-January 2024
4. Completion	Signed completion/taking over certificate	February 2024
5. Evaluation	Satisfaction survey report Stakeholder interview report	March 2024
6. Write-up	Final report	April 2024

Implementation Plan

Upgrading of Child Care Centre 3- Baie Ste Anne Praslin

Activities	Output	Timeframe
1. Secured funding	Funds available	February 2023
2. Tender process undertaken	Open tender/award contract/sign contract	July 2023-August 2023
3. Renovation Work	Weekly monitoring reports	September 2023
4. Completion	Signed completion/taking over certificate	March 2024
5. Evaluation	Satisfaction survey report Stakeholder interview report	April 2024
6. Write-up	Final report	May 2024



ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

**FIRST ROW FROM LEFT : Mr. Nigel Payet, Ms. Begita Melanie (Chairperson), Mrs. Nicole Gabriel, Mr. Steve Noel
FROM LEFT : Mr. Christophe Madeleine, Mr. Dan Frichot, Mr. Darren Omath**



**SOCIAL
AFFAIRS**

“



Mrs Linda William Melanie
Principal Secretary
Social Affairs Department

“As a society we need to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to protect our children who have alienable rights and should be loved and nurtured to grow up in a safe environment.”

”

Project Title

A recreational garden for productive leisure

Goal

To promote learning by engaging children in home gardening

Background and Rationale

Foyer de Nazareth is a Children Home for boys. Beautifully located, perched on a hill at Anse Etoile, the grounds of the Home are well kept and the soil looks fertile. The Home has a garden, but it is not being properly kept through a specific programme for children to attend to it. Moreover, adult intervention, guidance and supervision is not necessarily adequate and most of the time inconsistent especially from the Homecare Manager.

It has been reported that gardening has a multitude of benefits. It has physical benefits as one is out in nature. It is good for mental health as spending time outdoor can improve one's mood, release stress and boost creativity. In fact, research suggests that gardening can help people recover from depression, anxiety, and stress. Studies have shown that kids who spend time outside playing sports, riding bikes, and taking part in organized activities tend to develop better social skills and become less aggressive. Gardening provides an opportunity not only to develop gardening skills, a love of plants and nature, and an interest in food production but can also become a motivator for learning and a vehicle to increase basic general knowledge. A garden provides an environment for social interactions and to meet with other people who shares similar interest or expertise, and make friends.

The mission statement for the Social Affairs Department places much emphasis on social development and supporting learning in congruence with standards from the Children's Act promoting "health and wellbeing", "learning achievement", and "independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care". There are 11 children in the home aged 4 to 8 years. They will be the main target group for this project through which gardening programmes and schedules will be developed, and individualised intervention planned and monitored to engage children of early childhood age in the Home.

Description

The Social Services Department will oversee the implementation of this project by providing support, building professional connections, and partnering with other able parties and stakeholders. Some of the main stages of the project can be identified as follows:

- Purchasing of garden equipment
- Organising work groups
- Setting-up of the garden (weeding/ cutting/ plant bed/ water tank installation
- Planting of seeds or seedlings
- Harvesting
- Learning how to use the produce

Partnership arrangement is well advanced. Consultation has already begun with SIT, SIAH and the Agricultural Extension Officer of the West Region: two of them have provided their action plans. SIAH has also donated two hutches for the pet corner. The Officer is also organising visits to other successful farms and recruiting farm hands to assist with the maintenance of the garden and some of the technicalities of gardening.

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost for the project is SCR 150,000 and it will include:

- Procurement of tools, equipment and resources
- Clearing and preparing garden area
- Transportation and labour cost for the installation of water tank
- Transportation and purchasing cost for seedlings, seeds
- Training
- Monitoring and up keeping of garden
- Developing and construction of pet corner
- Visits to other farms
- Certificates of achievement and/or appreciation
- Administration and reporting

Expected Outcome

- A recreational garden and pet corner matching the original design to the satisfaction of all stakeholders
- Children participated in the development of the garden, engaged in gardening activities, have basic knowledge of the gardening process, demonstrated basic knowledge of the gardening process, and have acquired a productive attitude to gardening

Performance Indicators

- Work progression through a series of photographs and description explaining the process
- Individual children profile featuring:
 - Tasks details and level of participation
 - Level of basic knowledge
 - Level of skills acquired
 - Attitude to gardening and the project
 - Level of social interaction
 - Change in behaviour



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Procurement and storage of resources	Inventory of equipment and tools in storage facility	July 2023 -September 2023
2. Clearing of gardening area/ learning about gardening tools and their uses	Checklist identifying tools and their usage	October 2023 - November 2023
3. Learning sessions on soil profiler	Feedback records	December 2023
4. Preparing soil, on-going gardening activities, up keeping of garden	Report of progress in terms of children achievement, staff satisfaction and functioning of the garden	January 2024 - July 2024
5. Visits to other farms and gardens	Reports including children's reaction and experience	August 2024
6. Harvesting – Visit by nutritionist	Reports including childrens' reaction, experience, and knowledge	September 2024
7. Evaluation	Final Report	October 2024 - December 2024

Project Title

Engaging Children in After-School Learning Activities

Goal

The aim of this project is to introduce an after-school programme to support children's learning

Objective

- To support school programme
- To identify learning difficulties
- To take remedial actions
- To provide learning resources
- To improve learning conditions

The St Elisabeth's Convent is one of three missionary children's care homes in Seychelles that functions within the Roman Catholic Diocese. The Convent provides care for children from the ages of 0-8 years. Consultation visit conducted disclosed that most of the children at the convent have academic challenges. This is a startling concern to the Social Affairs Sector whose aim is to ensure that these children thrive holistically through the provision of quality care. This led to an audit in Children's Care Homes to assess the level of care provided to children.

In 2022, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs set 22 minimum Standards of Care that would guarantee quality care for children in Care Homes. Among those, one particular Standard emphasized "Promoting Education Achievement and Leisure Activities". This is further elaborated thus:

Educational achievement is promoted by encouraging all children to attend school and to excel in their academic careers by doing homework and organized study groups to help them when they are encountering problems.

Therefore, there is a need develop support learning programmes. While the children live in a spacious Home, it is of the general view that an improved quality of the learning conditions would be beneficial to the proposed programmes.

Description

Through this project an inventory of already existing activities will be conducted to assess their effectiveness and efficiency in early childhood care and education for the children at the St Elisabeth's Convent. Individual Programmes will be developed through identifying innovative and necessary activities to meet the objectives of the project.

The project will necessitate recruitment and building of a technical team consisting of volunteers, home manager, teachers, social workers. In addition, it will entail the professional development of care providers through training in early childhood care and education to ensure the project's success. The selection of volunteers to assist with the activities and training of child care workers already working at the St Elisabeth's Convent will undergo suitability check screening. The team will help assess each child's individual needs and the development of an individual learning programme for each child for pedagogical support.

The learning environment will be re-organized to provide learning spaces that would promote exploration, interaction and collaboration and spatial flexibility that would allow use of space in different ways for diverse and stimulating activities. Also, newly redecorated existing areas will be transformed into learning corners.

Budget Narrative

The project will cost SCR 200,000 for the 2-year period. The budget is anticipated to be obtained through the Children's Fund and the Social Affairs Department. The budget will cover the following cost:

Human Resources - This will comprise of training for staff and staff remuneration

Raw Materials - This will comprise educational toys e.g. building toys (blocks), puzzles, balls, books, interactive white boards, foam puzzle mats etc...as well as building tools and materials. The use of recycled materials and everyday items e.g. bottle tops, used water bottles can also be cost effective and guarantee a good learning experience

Physical Environment - This will comprise of suitable and conducive materials to create the appropriate learning condition

Educational activities - This will include administrative activities and project logistics

Expected Outcome

- Improved children's learning and development
- Performance indicators
- Personal profile for each child that would include:
 - Level of progress in numeracy
 - Level of progress in literacy
 - Achievement of development milestone
 - Changes in social interaction and level of engagement



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Inventory of existing activities and assessment of learning environment	Report on learning conditions	April 2023 - May 2023
2. Recruitment and training	Training Report	August 2023
3. Assessment of each child's needs	Children Profiles	August 2023
4. Programme development with associated resources	Children's individualized programme	September 2023
5. Monitoring implementation	Monitoring instruments Quarterly updated profiles to trace learning outcome, behaviour modification, and attitude change	September 2023 - September 2024
6. Evaluation	Final report	October 2024

Project Title

Parental Awareness on various technological controls for children safer browsing

Goal

To raise awareness on existing controls to keep children safe while online

Objective

To educate parents on online dangers and how to keep their children safe

To gain an insight on existing parental controls for mobile phones and other electronic devices

To promote safe use of the internet through knowledge on how to make use of free useful control features available online

To allow parents to effectively monitor the usage and screen time on the electronic devices

Background and Rationale

In today's era, parents are raising a new generation of techie kids. At a tender age, children are using tablets, mobile phones as part of their daily lives. The mobile phones, electronic devices and internet have increasingly become indispensable tools for children. Children are using internet for recreational purposes, such as social activities, playing games, talking to friends. The internet is also used to assist them in their learning process but the risks of inappropriate contents such as pornographic materials, violence, gambling, and hate speech contents are real and detrimental.

Research has shown that extreme use of computer and electronic devices can cause physical, social and psychological problems on children. Prolonged exposure and use of online contents especially at such a young age can develop into another level of addiction, unawareness of time, lack of interest in other things, feeling restless and feeling angry.

Parents may be unaware of the growing concerns of exposing their children to the different types of contents, which are more directed towards the negative, especially from the freely available and yet harmful unfiltered contents.

There exist various useful device applications that have been developed, offering parents the possibility to exercise certain levels of controls on what their children may or may not access. It is often the case whereby parents themselves are not aware on how to make

use of such control mechanisms. Without adequate awareness and successful use of a comprehensive control solution children are at great risk.

The increasing pace and the dependency on the use of technological gadgets by children in Seychelles are real concerns. Questions arising are whether parents are knowledgeable enough on the potential risks of the massive amounts of unfiltered contents available on the internet, and its effects on the children's wellbeing if there is no access control. This project will help to educate parents on the possible risks, the various control measures that are freely available and to empower them on how to make use of the appropriate control measures.

The Social Services is the department mandated by law to safeguard the interest of children by protecting them from any form of potential risks of harm. Therefore, Social workers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills on the different control mechanisms to allow them to sensitize parents on how to protect children from any form of risks while online.

Description

The Social Affairs Department in collaboration with Department of Information Communication Technology (DICT) and the local internet service providers (ISPs) will spearhead the project, which will target parents with children age ranging from 3-8 years. The Social Affairs Department will also be collaborating with the Ministry of Education for instance, and other related ministries as necessary for the implementation of the project.

Personnel of DICT and the ISPs will facilitate the training of Social Workers to empower them with the required knowledge and skills.

The project will be focusing on transferring the knowledge and skills to parents on the various available and appropriate controls. This will also include the monitoring parameters such as setting time limits, internet contents filtering, locking of devices remotely, approval of downloads, track locations and logging of visited sites history.

The project will be carried out in two regions only. The parents will be grouped per the respective schools of their child. They shall be encouraged to familiarize themselves to a point that they feel comfortable and confident enough with the aim to out-smart any tech-

savvy kids. Prior to meeting, parents shall be identified and informed on the project, thus to have maximum participation through advertising.

The advertising of the project will be done through a shared collaboration between the Department of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, which will be involved with the dissemination of notices to parents.

Budget Narrative

The budget for this project is estimated at SCR150, 000. This shall include costing for stationaries, printing, training, consultant fee, report writing, transportation, proof reading of documents, and other logistical materials. The project is expected to be funded by the National ECCE Trust Fund.

Expected Outcome

Increased parental awareness of online control of technological devices for their children

Performance Indicators

- Satisfaction of parents with the sessions, what is learnt, how useful
- Increased knowledge of the dangers online for young children
- Level of parental awareness of online control



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Development of programme	Programmes developed in consultation with DICT and ISP with content, method, and evaluation components	July 2023
2. Instrumentation for evaluation of sessions	Questionnaire developed Interview protocol for some parents	August 2023
3. Training of Social Workers as facilitators	Training Report	September 2023
4. Recruitment of parents	Advert- delivery plan	October 2023
5. Facilitation of sessions	Report per region - description, delivery, evaluation of sessions	November 2023 - July 2024
6. Data capture	Completed database entry of questionnaire responses	August 2024
7. Analysis and write-up	Final Report	September 2024 - October 2024

Project Title

Enhancing the environmental conditions in the waiting and interview room for improved service delivery

Goal

To create a comfortable and child friendly environment for children accessing social services

Objective

- To equip the waiting and interview rooms with child friendly, comfortable furniture and stimulating materials
- To assess the use and evaluate effectiveness of the rooms

Background and Rationale

This project is an extension and the realisation of a previous project in the National Action Plan 2019-2020. A waiting room and an interview room were made available for children and parents accessing social services.

Research has shown that the physical environment can have an effect on the stress level of individuals. Visiting the social services office is usually quite stressful for both children and parents. It is expected that a comfortable, well-decorated environment allowing for privacy but equipped with toys and child-friendly accessories has the potential to reduce stress and facilitate participation and interaction.

Play and drawing activities can help break the ice with children and can be used as standalone assessment tools, especially with preschool children who may not have the verbal repertoire to narrate distressing experiences.¹

Through this project, it is anticipated that the environment of the interview room and the designated waiting room will be enhanced to make them more relaxing and to have a positive effect on children and their parents while waiting for or accessing the service.

Description

The Social Services Division will oversee the implementation of the project. The main processes of the project will include:

- Consultation with experts in interior design to gain ideas and design concept
- Development of the design concept with consultant
- Purchasing the necessary resources and equipping the rooms
- Developing guidelines for the interview and waiting room
- Evaluating the outcome and effectiveness of the rooms

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost of the project is SCR 200, 000. This includes consultation fees, procurement of resources and equipment, and administration and logistics. Funding will be sourced from National ECCE Trust Fund.

Expected Outcome

Improved service delivery in waiting and interview room

Performance Indicators

- Descriptive account of the development of the waiting and interview rooms and how they match the original concept and design
- Level of satisfaction on use of facilities by service users (parents, children and social workers)

References

¹Srinath S.,Jacob P.,Sharma E., and Gautum A. (2019). *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Assessment of Children and Adolescents*. Indian J. Psychiatry. 2019 Jan; 61(Suppl 2): 158-175.

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Situational audit	Audit Report	July 2023 - August 2023
2.Planning concept	Interior design plan developed	September 2023
3. Procurement of resources and equipment	Invoices and list of equipment and resources acquired	October 2023
4. Setting up of rooms	Descriptive report on the setting-up process of the two rooms	November 2023
5. Instrumentation	Guidelines and questionnaire developed for usage of rooms	December 2023
6. Implement usage and monitoring	Quarterly report on usage and on-going data collection for monitoring	January 2024 - July 2024
7. Data capture	Database developed and data entered	August 2024
8. Analysis and writing-up	Final report	September 2024 - October 2024



ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms. Sabrina Confiance, Ms. Angel Jeannevol, Mrs. Beryl Laboudallon (Chairperson), Ms. Gina Adelaide, Ms. Debra Lesperance, Ms. Tessy Allisop



**YOUTH, SPORTS
AND FAMILY**

“



Mrs Yasmin Urmarji
Chief Executive Officer
National Council for Children

Stay-and-Play, Baby Gym and other related activities provide the opportunity for parents and their child to meet new people and make new friends in a friendly, safe and relaxed atmosphere. It gives the young children an opportunity to play and engage in activities that meet their needs and development. In addition, it promotes confidence in parents, which in turn promotes a stronger parent-child relationship.

”



Project Title

Safeguarding in the Early Years

Goal

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children learning and developing in early years settings

Background and Rationale

Children have the right to be protected from harm as defined in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Seychelles has been doing its utmost best to ensure that children aged 18 and below are protected from harm.

Safeguarding is defined as the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children. It focuses on protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, and ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care settings.

Although much has been done to safeguard and protect our children in early years settings, a National Safeguarding Policy has never been produced. Stakeholder discussion revealed major gaps in the training of Early Years practitioners – limited or no training – and lack of clear guidelines. This is a strong indication that a National Safeguarding Policy for the Early Years settings is necessary. Such a policy will clarify what is expected, ensure that common procedures are being followed and that proper training is being delivered to all those who are directly involved with taking care of children in any early years setting, in state crèches, child care, or pre-school settings.

Description

The National Council for Children (NCC), an entity under the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Family, will collaborate and work in partnership with IECD, Childminders, Child Care Centres, and other relevant stakeholders to draft the policy. Its successful implementation will depend on the collaboration between key partners such as Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Attorney General's Office, and the Police Child Protection Unit.

The main activities to be implemented are as follows:

- Drafting of policy based on research
- Presentation of the draft policy to key stakeholders
- Revision and amendments of the policy after a consultation period
- Validation of policy by stakeholders and consultant
- Publication and awareness raising of the Safeguarding in Early Years Policy

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost for the project is SCR 50,000.00, which includes consultancy fees for assisting with the drafting and validating of the policy. Funds are also needed for the consultative workshops with stakeholders and the publication of the policy. Funds will be made available from the recurrent budget of the departments under the Ministry.

Expected Outcome

Safeguarding in Early Years: Policy produced, disseminated and approved by key stakeholders

Performance Indicators

- An account of consultation sessions undertaken
- An account of sensitization sessions undertaken
- A descriptive account of stakeholder contribution to the shaping of the draft policy

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Inception	Brief on Working Method	May 2023
2. Document research	Research Paper	June 2023-July 2023
3. Stakeholder Working Meetings	Minutes of meetings	August 2023 - September 2023
4. Production of the First Draft	Draft Policy	November 2023 on-going
5. Consultation	Report of consultative sessions	January 2024 - March 2024
6. Revision and finalisation of policy using consultation feedback	Final Draft approved	April 2024 - May 2024
7. Policy Forum	Report	June 2024
8. Evaluate the project	Final Report	July 2024 -September 2024

Project Title

Stay-and-Play

Goal

To empower teenage parents to develop into responsible parents

Objective

- To promote with teenage parents the importance of play in child development
- To strengthen the attachment and relationship between teenage parents and their child
- To use play to improve young children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.

Background and Rationale

The annual summary from the National Bureau of Statistics data 2021 (most recent data) show that teenage pregnancy rose more than 8% in 2021, to 63 per 1000 females aged 15 to 19 years, not counting those ending in abortions or miscarriages. There were 5 pregnancies in children below 15 years of age.

Teenage pregnancy increases the vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women who need assistance to help break the cycle of poverty or abuse. Research has shown that early childbearing increases health risks for both mothers and their new born. Adolescent pregnancy can also have negative social and economic effects on the girls, their families and communities. Teenage mothers often face a lot of anxiety and stress caused by limited financial support and dependency on their families and other aids. Most of the teenage mothers are unemployed and yet they have the responsibility to care for themselves and their child. They often face stigmatization by society that can lead to depression and a diminished sense of self-worth. Other challenges facing teenage parents include the changing landscape of the family structure in Seychelles, the slow recovery from global disasters such as the pandemic and poor reproductive health care.

It has been reported that most teenagers, once the baby is delivered, face accommodation problems which present a challenge in providing a favourable environment for the development of child. Moreover, it has been found that they know very little about caring for the child and may not receive the necessary support to raise the child. Many of the

young parents do not know how to interact with their baby. This prompted the National Council for Children and Elles Foundation, a newly established NGO, to pilot a weekly 'Stay and Play' project for teenage mothers, using NCC's playroom.

Description

Stay-and-Play is a great way for young parents and their child to meet new people and make new friends in a friendly, safe and relaxed atmosphere. It consists of drop-in sessions, delivered once a fortnight, from a room within a school, a child friendly venue or community centre. It provides a welcoming and safe environment where children can play. It gives the young children an opportunity to play and engage in activities that meet their needs and development. In addition, it promotes confidence in parents, which in turn promotes a stronger parent-child relationship.

The main activities will include:

- Identification of suitable venue/s for the Stay-and-Play sessions
- Preparation of stimulating activities
- Identification of suitable facilitators and volunteers
- Identification of participants
- Conduct of the initial meeting and registration
- Delivery of the Stay-and-Play sessions
- Evaluation of the impact of the project

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost of this project is SCR 20,000, which will be used to mostly cover expenses such as light refreshments and special trips. This will be catered for from NCC's current budget under Programme 2 (Child and Family Services).

Funds will also be sought from sponsors for the purchase of educational resources such as toys, books, crayons, coloured pencils, paint, glitter and other art and craft materials. The project will also accept donations such as food items, diapers, baby clothing, baby items, and other related products. These will be collected and distributed to the teenage parents enrolled in the project as a form of additional support.

Expected Outcome

- Improved parenting skills of the teenage mothers
- Increased understanding by teenage mother of the use of play

Performance Indicators

- Percentage of teenage parents with improved parenting skills
- Number of teenage parents demonstrating improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- Number of teenage parents who have developed a better awareness of child development and the effective use of play in the early years
- Percentage of teenage parents who have secured a Certificate of Attendance/ Achievement or Participation



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Programme Development	Detailed programme	June 2023 - July 2023
2. Establish physical resources	Agreement on use of community-based facilities Documentation on acquirement of resources	August 2023
3. Training of facilitators	List of facilitators Training - briefing report	September 2023
4. Delivery of the sessions	Quarterly Progress Report	October 2023 - June 2024
5. Monitoring achievement	Monitoring tools Achievement results	July 2024
6. Evaluation	Satisfaction Survey Report Report of interview results Podcast	August 2024 - September 2024
7. Writing-up	Final Report	October 2024





ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms. Nelta Serret, Mrs. Lorea Rassol (Elles Foundation), Mrs. Fatma Bibi (Chairperson),
Ms. Nathalie Didon, Mrs. Raisa Saley (Elles Foundation), Mr. Francis Remie, Ms. Nelda Freminot
Missing: Mrs. Venessa Ikarakwu



**INSTITUTE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT**

“



Mrs Shirley Choppy
Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Early Childhood Development

"Our strength has been and shall continue to be our ability to integrate policies and strategies in our inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral approaches to ECCE. This will be the cornerstone to fulfilling our commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals 4.2 and follow through on the Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for the transformation of ECCE. The new ECCE Framework highlights the successes of the previous decade's multi-sectoral strategy and traces future direction for ECCE in the next stages of our national plan. Our intentions and goals are clear and as a Category 2 Centre for ECCE under the auspices of UNESCO, we have redoubled our efforts to guarantee that this goal is also met. Our regional and worldwide mandate allows us not only to share our best practices and successes, but also to rally and explore partnerships that will support new finance structures and mobilize larger, more equitable, and efficient financial resources for ECCE."

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Project Title

Main Study to Establish Structures and Procedures for Data Collection Based on Early Childhood Development (ECD) Indicators for the Social Affairs Sector

Goal

To strengthen the policy environment of ECCE for decision-making and reporting through readily available information

Background and Rationale

As previously stated, the data management project in ECCE has been carried out in support of World Bank recommendations made in the Systems Approach for Better Education Results-Early Childhood Development (SABER-ECD) Report 2013 for Seychelles, emphasizing the need to strengthen access to readily available ECD information. This requirement was also been expressed during the Third National Biennial Conference on ECCE in 2015.

The data management project builds on previous studies in the Health Sector (2017) and the Education Sector (2021). In 2022, the project was launched in the Social Affairs Sector, with a situational analysis providing the necessary information for the development of ECD indicators. A pre-pilot based on 35 agreed-upon ECD indicators was carried out in 2022 to test the model. This study will be carried out to make the necessary adjustments in preparation for the full institutionalization of the data management process in the Social Affairs Sector.

The establishment of ECD data collection structures and processes in the Social Affairs Sector will ensure that information is accessible for new policies, actions, and international reporting. It will benefit early childhood professionals working in these sectors as well as other stakeholders through training and possibilities for continued professional development. The project will assist in building on previous accomplishments, developing ECD policies, programs, and services, and expanding the types of data and information acquired and evaluated in accordance with worldwide best practices. Its primary purpose is to increase the Seychelles status in terms of policy goals, particularly monitoring and ensuring quality, in collaboration with other nations regionally and globally.

Description

The Institute of Early Childhood Development has formed a core technical team to give assistance and manage the project's execution in close collaboration and partnership with the Social Affairs Sector. Technical support from a local professional will also be sought. The project's execution will be driven by four important phases: training and sensitization of social workers; executing the data collection for the study; revising the indicator framework and procedural manual; and publishing the final documents.

Budget Narrative

The project's anticipated budget is SCR 87, 356. This comprises the cost for an external service contract to oversee and manage the implementation, and for travel, training workshops, and the printing of related documents. Some expenditures are expected to be incurred from the recurring budget, while extra funding will be sought through external grants.

Expected Outcome

Standardized data collection procedures for ECCE in the Social Affairs Sector to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Performance Indicators

- Professional trained and sensitised (Sensitisation on indicators and training on the data collection report)
- Developed Indicator Framework and Procedural Manual with adjustments made from the main study results, and the Institutionalization Plan

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Review the Indicator Framework and Procedural Manual (using information gathered from the pilot)	Production of Indicator Framework and Procedural Manual Training Report	April 2023
2. Consultation and undertaking sensitisation and training workshops with social workers and other professionals from the Social Affairs Sector	Training Report	May 2023
3. Undertaking main pilot data collection processes using selected indicators and procedural manual	Monitoring Report	June 2023 - August 2023
4. Carry out feedback sessions with social workers (as data collectors) on the progress of data collection phase	Feedback reports	July 2023
5. Review and finalise Indicator Framework and Procedural Manual with inputs from selected Social Workers	Final Indicator Framework and Procedural Manual	October 2023
6. Analysis of collected data and report writing	Preliminary report of the findings	September 2023 - October 2023
7. Disseminate main study results in a National ECCE Forum	Final Report	November 2023
8. Develop an institutionalization plan in collaboration with the Social Affairs Sector for Implementation in 2024	Institutionalization Plan	December 2023

Project Title

Expanding child care provision

Goal

To create the conditions to increase and diversify child care provision

Objective

- To determine the need for childcare services in large public and private organisations, institutions, and establishments
- To identify childcare facilities that best fit the organisation, institution, establishment or other stakeholders and to establish supporting conditions
- To identify the conditions necessary to facilitate the development of childcare facilities for potential providers and investors
- To identify financial systems that would support the expansion of child care provision
- To provide policy direction in the diversification and expansion of child care provision

Background and Rationale

Achieving comprehensive and equitable access in the provision of quality ECCE remains a concern around the world. As far back as 2014, research carried out in EU Member States highlighted three “main obstacles” for participation in ECCE¹: the cost of provision, the distribution of ECCE centres, and the inflexibility of ECCE facilities mostly in term of service delivery. These notions were reiterated in a UNESCO Brief on Inclusion² in 2021 with recommendations to expand the provision of ECCE programmes both private, public and in the community for availability, affordability and comprehensiveness. The need for “equitable and inclusive quality ECCE services for all children” was recognised by Member States in the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) and reinforced in the Tashkent Declaration (2022). Achieving equitable access in the provision of quality ECCE has been relentlessly pursued by the Government of Seychelles. However, increasing the quantity, distribution, and quality of early child care infrastructural facilities still remains a challenge.

Since the promulgation of the IECD ACT 2014 and now complemented by the ECD Act 2022, the Institute of Early Childhood Care and Education through its programmes has been promoting access to registered childcare services to provide an environment

conducive to safety, wellbeing, and the holistic development of the child. Currently, 58% of children aged 4 months to 4 years attend registered childcare services. The others are being cared for at home or in other unregistered establishments. Diversification of provision is necessary to increase participation in structured settings and incentive conditions are needed to encourage potential investors.

In keeping with the funding strategies in the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education 2022, to “incentivise investors... with the aim of increasing the provision of ECCE services”, this project seeks to generate interest and information, and enlist organisational, government, and public support in expanding early child care services.

Description

The project will be coordinated by the Regulatory Affairs Division of the Institute of Early Childhood Development in collaboration with other stakeholders. It will consist of five main events:

- Seeking technical assistance
- Developing the information gathering tools
- Consultation with selected organisations, businesses, and tourism establishments
- Convening consultative meetings for interested parties
- Setting the agenda for policy formulation

Follow-up actions will include dissemination of findings and consultation with stakeholders.

Budget Narrative

The estimated cost of the project is SCR 75,000, 000. This includes consultancy fees, travel and subsistence, consultation, working meetings, stationery and printing of related documents, among other administrative and logistical costs. It is anticipated that expenses will be incurred from the recurrent budget.

Expected Outcome

The requirements as a result of multi-stakeholder consultation for the development of policy guidelines for diversification and expansion of child care services are established

Performance Indicators

- A description of the consultative process
- Analysis of the consultation process results
 - selected businesses and organisation
 - selected tourism establishments
- Result of interested investor consultation
- Results of consultation with financial sector

References

¹ European Commission (2014) Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care

Available at: https://www.value-ecec.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf

² UNESCO (2021) Inclusion in Education

Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/inclusion-education>



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Formulate a consultation framework identifying target organisations and groups	Framework for consultation	August 2023
2. Prepare interview guide for each category of organisation or groups	Interview guide for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• businesses• organisations• tourism establishments• interested groups of stakeholders• finance	August 2023
3. Field visits	Transcription of consultative sessions	September - October 2023
4. Analysis and writing-up	Draft Report	November 2023



Project Title

Sensitizing Parents: Creating a Stimulating Early Learning Environment

Goal

To motivate parents to engage in early stimulation and learning activities with their children (ages 2 to 3 years old)

Background

School readiness is well emphasized in the UNESCO Sustainable Goal 4.2 for children aged 36-59 months. Children attending registered childcare services are benefitting from a well-established early learning programme. However, there are over 1000 of them still being cared for at home. These children are not benefitting from structured programmes.

In line with the Strategic Framework 2022-2026 to optimize multi-sectoral partnership and coordination for effective programme implementation and service delivery, the Institute has embarked on this project to sensitise parents on the need to foster an early learning environment at home.

A significant recommendation, of the study on Parental Involvement in children's early learning needs conducted in 2021, was that more support should be provided to parents to enable them to better prepare their children for crèche and pre-school education.

Description

This project is led by the Centre-based Childcare Services Section and implemented in collaboration with the Advocacy & Information Section, the Programme Coordination & Research Section and the Local Government and Community Affairs Sector.

This initiative will be implemented in 3 phases.

Phase 1

- Set up a working committee or working group
- Produce a sensitization and training kit in line with the Early Learning Programme for registered home-based childcare service
- Promote the sensitization session on different media channels to encourage parents to register
- Undertake the registration of parents for the sessions

Phase 2

- Compile information to draw up a logistical and implementation plan
- Conduct facilitators' training on the sensitization and training kit
- Conduct sensitization sessions on a regional basis

Phase 3

- Carry out evaluation of the sessions
- Capture, enter and analyse data
- Produce Final Report

Budget Narrative

The total cost of the Project amounts to SCR 59,350. This includes consultative meetings with Local Government and Community Affairs, training workshops/sensitisation sessions and facilitator's fees, designing and printing, transportation and procurement of resources. Fund will be sourced from the IECD recurrent budget and externally.

Expected Outcome

Increased parental knowledge and understanding to engage in early learning activities

Performance Indicators

Report on sensitisation session for Parents or guardians, including participation rate per sensitisation session per region, percentage level of satisfaction of parents with the session and level of awareness

Increase in the number of children from unregistered settings who attained level 3 and level 4 of the readiness assessment in 2023

Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Development of the sensitization and training kit for parents	Sensitization and Training Kit	April -May 2023
2. Promotion of sensitization sessions and registration of parents for the sessions	Regional lists of parents registered for the sessions	June - September 2023
3. Training the selected group of facilitators	Training Report	June 2023
4. Delivery of sensitization sessions	Implementation Plan and Preliminary Report	July - November 2023
5. Write sensitization sessions report	Project preliminary report	December 2023
6. Data capture from questionnaire	Database template with raw data	October - December 2023
7. Undertaking data analysis and report writing	Final Report	January - March 2024

Project Title

To create an online Early Childhood Benefit System (ECBS) to ensure efficient and effective management and implementation of the financial assistance scheme and its associated processes

Goal

To create an online Early Childhood Benefit System to ensure an efficient and effective management and implementation of the financial assistance scheme and its associated processes

Objective

- To establish an online system for the administration and implementation of the scheme
- To help parents, guardians and service providers with registration of their child/children
- To obtain timely information/confirmation of registration and payments, generate reports

Background and Rationale

In 2020, IECD was given the mandate to oversee and manage the newly revised financial assistance scheme for registered childcare services, in collaboration with the relevant partners and stakeholders. The initiative provides financial support for parents to meet the costs of childcare for children aged 4 months to 3 years: The Government provides a sum of 750 Seychelles Rupees per child per month payable directly to the childcare service providers. This includes both childminders (in the homes) and child care managers (in a child care centre).

The other component of the benefit system consists of a financial contribution to registered childminders for staff salaries.

Although the transition of the financial assistance scheme from ASP to IECD has been quite smooth, IECD had encountered some challenges especially with the shortage of qualified staff, increase workload and the administrative activities associated with the flow of the existing inefficient manual system. The process involves substantial paper

work, especially during the last and first two months of the year, when children are transiting from child care services to crèche education.

With the national drive for technological innovation in service delivery and in line with the Tashkent Declaration for the advancement of technology in ECCE, it was felt that there is a great need for further improvement and to introduce a paperless system to effectively and efficiently manage the scheme.

Description

The responsible parties for the implementation of the project are IECD, the Childcare Service Providers and Parents, with DICT as the main partners. A supervisory committee will be set up to review the progress and provide necessary advice where necessary to the successful vendor who is awarded the contract to undertake the Project. The committee will comprise of representatives of the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), the Department of ICT (DICT) and the vendor.

The ECBS will provide an online platform to connect, interact and engage with childcare providers, and parents and/or guardians.

The ECBS solution is to be centrally based, served from the main Government Datacentre, and administered by IECD. Registered childminders and child care centre managers should be allowed to access the module specific to them in the ECBS online system. In addition, the system will be easily accessible on laptops, desktops, and mobile devices at any location.

Documents and information which will be accessible on the system are Parental Confirmation Form (for new children entering a registered childcare service), Transfer Form (if a child is to transfer from one registered childcare establishment to another), Registered Childcare Providers Confirmation Form (for newly registered Childcare Provider), payroll, monthly statistical report and digital signature.

The phases of the project, following the approval by the Procurement Oversight Unit (POU) are as follows:

- The preliminary evaluation of the submitted documentation from the bidders, to establish whether or not the Preliminary Evaluation criteria have been satisfied by each bidder. All of the Preliminary Evaluation criteria will need to be satisfied by the bidder in order to proceed to Stage 2, which is the Technical Evaluation Score, of which the evaluation committee will compute the score.
- An exercise of verification of information provided by the Bidder will be conducted and this will be by a presentation or demonstration of the system. Based on information obtained in this stage, these can be used to update the scorings.
- The evaluation of the total price of the proposals from the bidders will be compared to see whether they are within or outside the maximum funding for the project.
- The bidder with the final highest technical score and the cost of its proposal is also within the maximum funding for the project, will be awarded the tender. In the event that two or more bidders have the same technical score and their prices are also within the maximum funding for the project, the bidder with the lowest cost will be awarded the tender.
- It is estimated that it will take 5 months to develop the system and 6 months for the trial implementation. A Supervisory Committee comprising of DICT and IECD representatives and the vendor will be set up to review the progress and provide necessary advice.
- During the trial implementation, the system will be launched and this will coincide with the Universal Children's Day on 21st November 2023. The full implementation of the system will be in April 2024.

Budget Narrative

The project will be funded by the Government, through the Department of Information, Communication & Technology (DICT). The overall cost is estimated between SCR 300, 000 to SCR400, 000. The cost includes procurement of software developer and training of personnel.

Expected Outcome

An operational online system which has been tested and found to be effective and satisfactory for service users

Performance Indicators

- An account of staff training for the new system
- Revised parent guide/manual
- Satisfaction of users with the use of the technological innovation and initiative include level of complaints



Implementation Plan

Key milestone	Output	Timeframe
1. Recruitment of external Software Developer	Tender Document	March 2023
2. Design and development of the system	System developed	July 2023 - November 2023
3. Staff training on the new system	Training Report	November 2023
4. Sensitization campaign	Sensitization Plan Production of materials Revised parent manual System launched	December 2023
5. Testing and trialing of online system	Progress Report	December 2023 - March 2024
6. Implementation and monitoring	Monitoring tools Progress report	April 2024 - October 2024
7. Evaluation	Final Report	November 2024



ECCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms. Amina Sarah, Mrs. Nathalie Moustache, Mrs. Renelle Anacoura, Dr. Andre Leste, Mrs. Shirley Choppy (Chairperson), Mrs. Hannah Pool, Ms. Marie-France Barra, Ms. Laurette Lebon





SECTION III IMPLEMENTATION

The National Action Plan 2023 -2024 is intended to translate current imminent ECCE priorities into realistic and realisable actions. The implementation of the NAP and the management of the projects within the plan is the operational responsibility of the ECCE Technical Teams in each sector. However the coordination of the plan falls within the role of IECD.

The Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD) has been described as the anchor for ECCE. It provides leadership and strategic direction for developments in ECCE. Apart from its promotional and regulatory role, it has a coordinating function. IECD coordinates the development and implementation of the NAP. It supervises the implementation of the Plan, harmonises all the actions in the Plan, helps in strengthening collaboration amongst ECCE Sectors, liaises with other partners, and supports the sectors in the realisation of their plans.

In partnership with IECD five ECCE Technical Teams set up within the Ministries of Education, Health, Local Government and Community Affairs, and the Departments of Social Affairs and Family Department. The Technical Team headed by a Chair has a major role to play in the execution of the action plan. The Technical Team has the challenging task of leading the implementation of strategies within the Plan, making appropriate representations, building capacity, reporting on progress and promoting the Plan within their sectors and with other partners.

Collaboration

The collaborative approach which has been promoted in the previous framework is given added prominence in the SF_ECCE 2022. In effect, one of the goals of the Framework is to “renew collaboration at all levels of the ECCE System” so as “to reduce traditional barriers in the provision of ECCE and maintain a child and family perspective”. Collaboration is the guiding principle in the implementation of the NAP. It promotes three levels of relationship.

Intra-sectoral - This involves ECCE Technical Team Members working through committees and sub-committees within their sectors where there is facilitative interchange between participants in other departments.

Inter-sectoral – This refers to the linkages that are formed between sectors. Although a sector may lead a particular project, other sectors interact either as partners or through substantive participation or by making substantial input.

Multi-sectoral–This involves a multi-level and cross-sectional process which is the ultimate implementation strategy, when communication pathways have been established, relationships networks have been strengthened and sectors are linking with other sectors and with other agencies, and mutual support are solicited and provided with a concerted effort towards effective implementation.

Positive inter-sectoral relationships, collaborative working practices and partnerships have been one of the major although complex forces which have produced some the dramatic changes in the implementation of ECCE in Seychelles that led to its designation as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre. With the pivotal role of IECD, this needs continuous strengthening through the National Action Plan to promote multi-level collaborative actions and a culture of collaborative professionalism and support.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment, analysis and evaluation are essential processes to monitor progress, record achievement and measure impact. The multi-sectoral nature of the National Action Plan implies that monitoring and evaluation has to take place at different levels and across a wide range of groups and institutions. However, IECD is the central body responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Action Plan and this forms part of the role of the Coordinating Committee comprising the Chairpersons of the Technical Teams headed by the CEO of IECD.

Monitoring components

Inherent in the Project Profiles are the main components for monitoring and evaluation. For all the strategic activities *output indicators* have been designed. This together with the *timeframe* information will facilitate the tracking of progress and will mark the designated interval when specific data will be collected. Secondly, these outputs are directed towards achieving the *expected outcome*, and *performance indicators* have been inserted as a means of verifying to what extent the outcome has been achieved and the kind of data needed for monitoring. Thirdly, where appropriate, *baseline* information has been provided: A baseline is an important monitoring element to measure change.

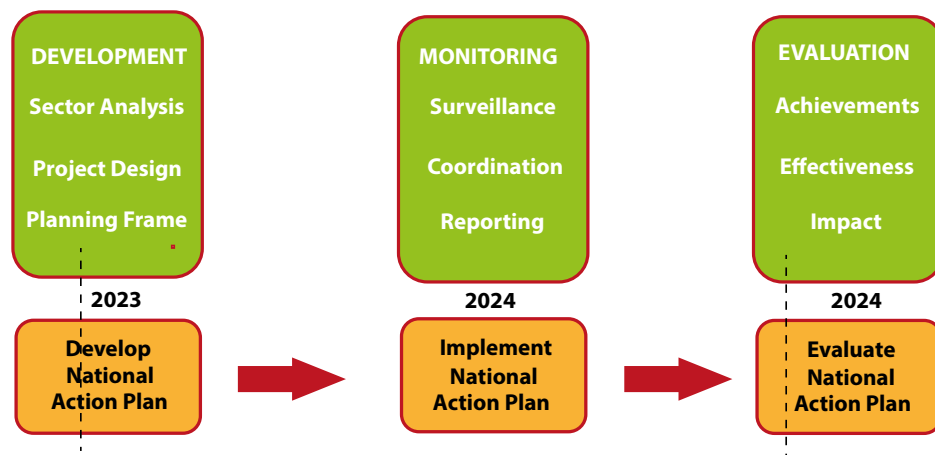


Figure 3: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring strategies

There are three structural processes for monitoring: a) monitoring through surveillance visits, b) monitoring through the National Coordinating Committee (NCCOM), c) monitoring through an Annual Progress Report.

a) Monitoring through surveillance visits

- IECD Officers carry out monthly surveillance visits to track activities
- Sector Operational Plan are examined and implementation strategies confirmed, updated or reviewed
- Progress towards the achievement of related outputs are assessed
- A Sectoral Visit Report which assesses progress towards the achievement of related outputs is produced

b) Monitoring through the monthly NCCOM

- The ECCE Technical Chairpersons will provide feedback on the implementation of the projects
- Sectoral Visit Report will be presented and discussed
- Recommendations are adopted to maintain progress or address shortcomings

c) Reporting

Progress Report - An analytical National Progress Report (from the monthly report) is produced highlighting performance on the projects and implementation of the plan. This is presented at High Level for approval, to be forwarded to the Cabinet of Ministers as Information Note.

Evaluation Report - An independent review process of evaluating the National Action Plan is undertaken. A result-based framework is utilised. Inputs to the plan are factored in and accumulated evidence from the compiled reports are analysed. The achievement of the expected outcome in relation to the strategies for each project and across projects are assessed using project documentation and additional data collected from specifically designed research instruments. Also the level of impact of the whole plan is assessed and an Evaluation Report is produced as the final documentation of performance and results. This report is presented at High Level for endorsement and then submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for information.

Conclusion

This National Action Plan (2023-2024) aspires to make considerable contribution to strengthening the ECCE system in Seychelles. It is the first plan to kick start implementation of the SF_ECCE 2022, it continues the ECCE journey, it stays in tune with global trends, resonates with notions of the World Conference of Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) 2022 for quality, partnership and investment. The project-based approach which was effectively adopted is further acknowledged with specific emphasis on building data systems, increasing provisions for the 0-3, reinforcing standards and augmenting staff capacity.

The National Action Plan responds to the complex challenges of integrating ECCE across organizational divides. It provides strategic directions to address key priorities in ECCE. It has become a reference point for sectoral interchange and interaction. With the collaboration of all ECCE Sectors and Partners, the prestigious IECD international status, and the strong high level national commitment, this National Action Plan is predicted to have significant impact on ECCE in Seychelles.

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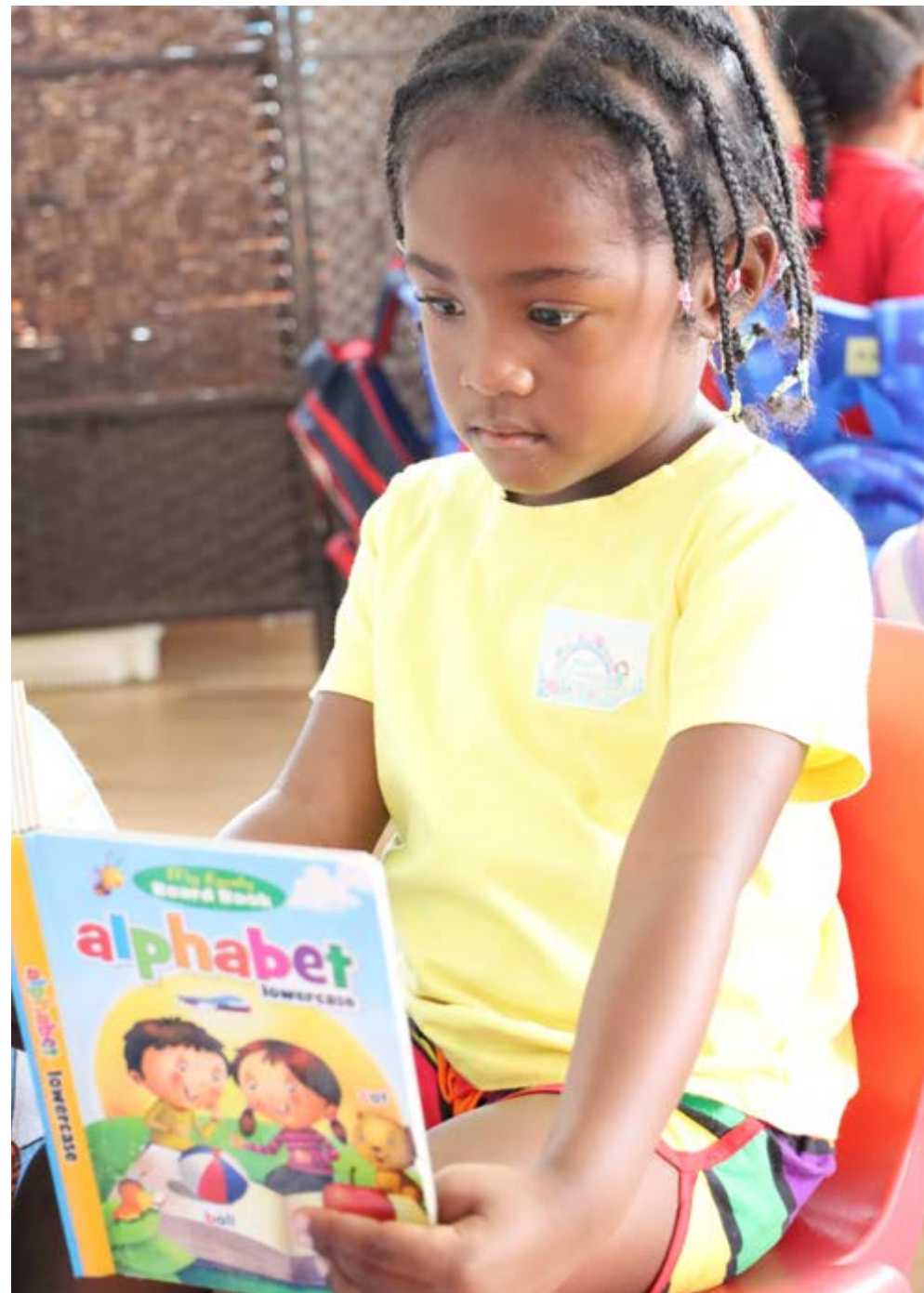
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Afterword

The National Action Plan 2023-2024 for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) represents the collaborative endeavours of key ECCE Sectors, mainly, Education, Health, Local Government and Community Affairs, Social Affairs, and Youth Sports and Family. The development of the Plan has been coordinated and facilitated by the Institute of Early Childhood Development (also an implementing sector) to promote the holistic development of children and strengthen the ECCE system in Seychelles.

Six main thematic areas address issues relating to programme and service delivery, quality access, early learning, parents and families, the policy environment, and professional development. These have been derived from the new Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2023) whilst taking into consideration emerging international trends, and subsequent recommendations from the UNESCO World Conference on ECCE in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2022. Through result-oriented, research-driven methodology, the Plan increases focus on ECCE priorities with anticipated implementable strategic actions.

A collection of 17 projects has been included with contribution from each ECCE Sector. A monitoring and evaluation structure forms an integral part of the Plan. It is being supervised by IECD and implemented by Sectoral Technical Committees. Its implementation is a fitting reminder of the Seychelles ECCE agenda.

I wish you all the best.

Capt David Savy
Chairman IECD Board of Directors



Co-ordinated and Produced By Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD)
3rd Floor, Espace Building, Chemin de la Fraternite, Ile du Port, Mahé, Seychelles
Tel: 4286565 | E-mail: ceooffice@iecd.gov.sc | www.iecd.gov.sc





Anse Lazio beach at Praslin island, Seychelles