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Institute of Early Childhood
Development (Seychelles)

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Regional Workshop on Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): Progress and Way Forward for Africa

5th to 7th June 2024

Mahé,
Republic of Seychelles



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INTRODUCTION

This Framework for Action derives from the Regional Workshop on Progress and Way Forward for Africa on Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for Countries of the Southern African and Eastern African Community held in the Republic of Seychelles from 5 to 7 June 2024. The event brought together Senior Government Officials, partners from UNESCO and ECCE experts from the 16 participating countries involved in strategic planning and implementation of ECCE provisions, programmes and services.

In recognition of the crucial role of ECCE in shaping the future of the world and the Tashkent Declaration for the transformation of ECCE by ensuring equitable access to quality ECCE; strengthening the training system of ECCE personnel; innovating and transforming policies and practice; adopting a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to policy development, financial provision and data management; and fostering the holistic development of young children in alignment with the targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; this Framework is intended as a point of reference for governments in the development and implementation of their plan of action with the support of the Institute of Early Childhood Development as a UNESCO Category 2 Institute.



PROGRESS & GOOD PRACTICES

This Framework is based on the progress made and good practices adopted in member states to advance the ECCE agenda. These are summarized in the context of the strategic priorities with reference to the core Tashkent commitment for action:

Improvements and implementation of policy and legal frameworks

Reported progress has been made in the development of policies and legislation. Several countries have drafted their ECCE policies. Alongside, national legislation has been enacted for quality assurance to review legal instruments related to ECCE and to regulate child care services.

Critical issues include updating, reviewing, and further work in the development of national policies.

Strengthening of ECCE systems including the recruitment, qualifications and working conditions of all ECCE personnel

Schemes and plans to improve the conditions and qualification of teachers are being pursued. However major concerns were articulated regarding the quality and the capacity of the ECCE workforce. The need for the professionalization of early childhood teachers and child care workers remains a priority.

Quality learning for all children, including foundational literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills

Several milestone projects and curriculum reviews have been reported to indicate progress in the pursuit of quality in early learning. Revision of early learning programmes to focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills and to adopt the play-based pedagogical approach must be accelerated.

The development of skills and values for global citizenship

Community projects are being implemented to promote the development of life skills and living values. The cross-curricular model of teaching and learning has been reported as an effective means of achieving sustainable development goals. However global support is being sought for successful curriculum enrichment and consistent programme delivery.

Harnessing scientific evidence and digital technologies

Use of digital technologies has been initiated and in some instances breakthrough projects have been reported. Nevertheless, the integration of technology in teaching and learning and harnessing technological know-how for the effective management of the ECCE system must be scaled-up.

Increase financing for ECCE

There has been limited progress in the financing of ECCE. Public-Private Partnership arrangements are on actionable agendas. Increase in government subsidies and investment in free compulsory education has been reported. However, intensive efforts are needed to analyze funding arrangements and innovate the financing of ECCE.

Strengthening whole-of-government and multi-sectoral approach

Many countries are planning strategic actions linked to government engagement and multi-sectoral collaboration. High Level commitment is needed to be pursued to promote whole-of-government, multi-sectoral and integrated approaches in the governance of ECCE.

Improve monitoring and reporting capacity

Data systems are being piloted and good practices have been shared. Data management system needs to be progressively developed in ECCE for diagnosis, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting.



THE CHALLENGES

1. In pursuit of the global education agenda 2030 the Tashkent commitment encompasses the holistic nature of child development, the lifelong learning prospects and the social equalizing potential of ECCE. Thus, there is a need to transform ECCE for quality and equity, workforce capacity and quantity, innovation and scientific robustness, multi-sectoral integration, and coordinated governance and financing.
2. The policy environment in many countries is not necessary conducive to deliver ECCE services and programmes. Policy making, legislative structures, and institutional framework need to be established to optimize ECCE provisions.
3. ECCE is still being delivered through different ministries, organisations and agencies within a country. The collaboration of all the sectors to work towards a common vision is necessary to shape a coherent ECCE system, and foster synergy amongst concerned partners.
4. Lack of consistent standards and quality assurance mechanism across geographical regions and between the state and private institutions leads to inequity in service delivery, unaccredited programmes, inadequate supervision, and lack of accountability and regulatory practices. This reduces the effectiveness of ECCE provisions so that many children and parents, and, mothers, in particular, are excluded from the benefits of ECCE programmes or they are deprived of quality access to ECCE services.
5. In order to sustain or improve ECCE provisions constant monitoring and periodic evaluation is necessary. The use of data to set baseline, to assess projects, to communicate important status information, to measure the effectiveness of services and programmes, to expand on quality indicators has been, on the whole, inadequate. A strong statistical system for data management needs to be considered.
6. There is growing evidence and awareness of the importance of children's early learning experiences. Many countries are reviewing early learning programmes with emphasis on play and catering for the needs of disadvantaged groups. There is a need to review or design, comprehensive early learning curriculum with an assessment framework to sustain and guide the development and implementation of programmes for early learning.
7. Limited resources have been a major set-back in ECCE provisions. Lack of infrastructure, lack of human resource capacity, inequitable provisions between state and private facilities and non-engagement of the community have strained the development of proactive, facilitating, empowering ECCE systems. The challenge is to increase investment by linking ECCE with national economic planning and creating strong multi-sectoral financial plans.
8. The quantity and capacity of ECCE teachers and early child care workers is a persistent challenge in the development of ECCE. There have been issues with the recruitment, qualification and working conditions of ECCE personnel. More extensive human resource strategies need to be implemented to train, retain and valorize early childhood workers and teachers.
9. A National Action Plan establishes an ECCE focus in 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; it facilitates sectoral interchange and interaction. National action planning can unify and guide relevant sectors in advancing the ECCE agenda.



AGENDA FOR ACTION

Through this Framework member countries will re-affirm their commitment to the Tashkent Declaration and ECCE initiatives with international support, more specifically, with the assistance of IECD UNESCO Category 2 Institute for ECCE. Based on the progress made and good practices adopted by member states, there is collective agreement that follow-up plans and actions are envisaged:

1. Re-affirm national and international commitment to ECCE

- Develop an enabling policy environment with adequate legal and regulatory framework to support ECCE
- Promote an integrated multi-sectoral approach and design collaborative structures
- Reaffirm the central importance of action planning in the implementation of ECCE

2. Reinforce equitable participation & quality access

- Establish national standards and regulations for ECCE provisions to ensure quality
- Improve and expand programmes and services with special emphasis on disadvantaged groups
- Intensify advocacy campaigns to increase ECCE provision to include universal pre-primary education

3. Increase investment in ECCE

- Link ECCE with national development and economic planning by means of creating a strong multi-sectoral ECCE financial plan
- Mobilise diverse financing assistance by reviewing the role of national funding organisations in funding ECCE related projects, linking with international funding agencies, and targeting priority areas
- Establish links with private sector for funding, expansion and diversification of ECCE provisions

4. Review curriculum framework

- Design comprehensive early learning framework
- Develop early learning programmes with a focus on early stimulation and the need to structure information and provide the conditions which are conducive to achieving learning readiness
- Provide instructive early learning environment paying particular attention to outdoor spaces and varied environments outside the school
- Empower and support parents to participate actively in the process of early learning of their children

5. Establish data management system for ECCE

- Increase national capacity and develop partnerships amongst organizations to develop an ECCE management and information system
- Establish a robust monitoring mechanism at all levels of the system to provide feedback on performance, achievements, and to assess service conditions in ECCE
- Combine programme monitoring with evaluation and reporting
- Use action research methods to diagnose problematic areas and try out remediation strategies

6. Cooperation

- Exchange information, and share experiences and good practices
- Cooperate with international organisation for leadership and support
- Develop links with other partners for technical support, skills transfer, and capacity building

SUPPORT

The **Institute of Early Childhood Development / UNESCO Category 2 Institute** will provide on-going support and technical assistance to partner countries, and monitor the implementation of the plans and ECCE Projects.

- Map country priorities for action with a strong focus on working with governments to ensure local level implementation
- Facilitate networking arrangements to share knowledge and good practices and to link national and international partners
- Make best practice tools and training materials easily available and initiate professional exchanges, study visits, and learning groups
- Convoke specialists and experts, and mobilise technical resources to support national implementation
- Identify technical assistance input in specific areas of ECCE and match to providers or to capacity building initiatives
- Promote the diagnostic research monitoring methodology to identify ECCE issues which need attention to provide effective solutions, evaluate impact, and strengthen local capacity
- Mobilise funding support for technical cooperation, the development of resources, technologies, and programmes
- Provide leadership and facilitate consultative processes to develop technical support plans in alignment with national strategies and plan of action and to monitor achievements and progress
- Maintain a regional platform to stimulate the exchange, compilation, analysis, summary and dissemination of information on ECCE and provide peer review opportunities
- In close collaboration with existing data management systems, support consistent data collection, the maintenance of databases and the development of indicators for evaluation and reporting on ECCE





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORKSHOP



A Publication by the Institute of Early Childhood Development/
Category 2 Institute under the auspices of UNESCO

OCTOBER, 2024

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