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Measuring Change in the Understanding of ECCE Issues

Report on the Advocacy Survey

Produced by IECD, May 2021

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD) initiated the evaluation of its advocacy campaigns in 2015.The use of advocacy evaluation as a strategic tool for promoting policy dialogues as developed by IECD was perhaps novel in the country and the exercise was repeated in 2017 and in 2019, the latter on which this report is based. The primary purpose of the survey in 2015 was to establish a baseline driven by an assessment of what the respondents' knew at that time about a general or a specific ECCE-related issue and to gain further understanding of how this knowledge influenced their actions or behaviour.

In the second round of the survey conducted in 2017, one of the recommendations was for IECD to seek ways to promote its advocacy campaigns to maintain the high standard of knowledge and understanding of ECCE issues achieved that year, especially in the wider community. One of the strategies suggested was to expand the current readership of its newsletter to capture a wider audience, through both on and offline methods and through the use of established media such as the radio and television. This advocacy survey started off by setting the target of at least 70 percent of the respondents demonstrating knowledge of general and specific issues on ECCE. It was shown that the results for 2017 were well above those of the first survey in 2015. It showed that 88 percent of the respondents had reached the highly knowledgeable level in terms of their understanding of ECCE issues, well above the set target.

The main purpose of the survey in 2019 was to determine if the level reached has been maintained or exceeded in participants' knowledge of and understanding of ECCE issues as a result of enhanced Advocacy strategies and campaigns and exposure from big-events. It is envisaged that the same methodological approach was used including the administration of the same instruments and application of the same analytical techniques to ensure a reasonable sense of consistency and comparability. As in 2017, the survey sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. to determine if there has been a positive shift in the respondents' knowledge and which areas of ECCE need more emphasis across Sectors
2. to build partnerships to enhance advocacy campaign
3. to find out what works best for different audiences on ECCE matters

4. to work on new methods and media to use to disseminate advocacy information to the population and monitor the impact

Guided by the notable success of the 2017 survey the IECD set the following expected outcomes for 2019:

- 92% or more of the targeted population showing understanding of ECCE issues
- Increased visibility of ECCE and sensitization among the population, across all Sectors
- an increase in visibility of the advocacy campaigns across the different sectors through constructive dialogues.

This report consists of five sections and in section one a literature review is presented. This will be followed by a description of the methods used in this survey in section two and by the presentation of key findings in section 3. In section four, discussions of main issues will be made and the report concludes in section five.

Section One

1.0 Background

Advocacy is part of a multifaceted strategic process that strives to bring about policy changes for an organisation. From the outset, the evaluation exercise started off by proposing a logical framework to define the overarching evaluation questions and to guide instrument development. The LFA Group (2013), advises that to start off an evaluation one needs to be mindful of these two "foundational" strategies. The LFA Group goes on to cite the advantage of outlining beforehand a "theory of change" through the development of a logical framework as it defines the course of action in terms of strategies to employ and the anticipated outcomes that will indicate the attainment or not of the evaluation goals. Mathies & Aston (n.d) make an important point, however, when they sound a caveat about the fact that it is not clear how the logical framework makes the link between raising awareness and the actual action. In other words, increasing awareness alone is not a sufficient condition to elicit action.

It is all too tempting to try and address all the questions that the evaluation model chosen might suggest. This could result in one taking conflicting trajectories which are difficult to overcome

(ibid, p1). It is well understood that policy change is a complex process and from the beginning, it was conceived as a strategy that is difficult to monitor or evaluate (Hearn, n.d; Lang, 2015; Masters et., al 2016). Hearn adds, this difficulty arises from a multiple of factors that impact on policy intervention and is further compounded by the type of evaluation tools used and strategies deployed in trying to isolate a single explanatory factor – an approach which is arguably booth tempting and risky. Lang (2015) however recognises the role of research and how it can contribute to changes in advocacy and change. The changes could be enhancing awareness on relevant issues, demonstrating and sharing evidence, and proposing alternative methodological approaches.

Aston (2019) of CARE International UK takes a more optimistic approach. While, maintaining that measuring the impact is difficult he is of the view that it is not an impossible task and not necessarily more difficult to accomplish than trying to measure "governance or market systems programming" even if advocacy is different. Aston continues that after the organisation he worked for reviewed an extensive array of "advocacy and influencing efforts" that were successful, a tool was adapted that tested the veracity of outcome realisation; how significant is the success of the advocacy; how influential the advocacy is in the context of policy change; the strength of the evidence; and the intensity of the engagement. As he aptly puts it there is a need for a "moving beyond the anecdote" approach. The IECD so far has relied on an evidence-based approach to its advocacy evaluation but, however, in terms of implementation it is now perhaps opportune to review actual advocacy tactics and determine how to measure these against a set of well-defined criteria of success. This could add another important and interesting layer to its future advocacy campaigns leading up to the end of cycle evaluation exercise.

So far, IECD has conducted what can be described as "stakeholder surveys" in the form of summative evaluation which normally occurs at the end of a cycle, in this case, every two years Coffman & Reed, n.d). However, another approach worth exploring would be the conduct of evaluation as the advocacy campaigns are ongoing, referred to as formative evaluation by the Innovation Network (n.d). This requires the establishment of an advocacy programme plan against which results are assessed with a view of making necessary adjustments as it progresses. Such an approach could iteratively provide timely feedback and eventually raise the evaluation participants' knowledge level and lead to more tangible actions with regards to ECCE issues.

To conclude, it needs to be reiterated that advocacy evaluation is now a well-established field and as Morariu & Brennan (2009) note, there is now a wide variety in evaluation strategies that adds to the fidelity in the data collection process that facilitates faster analysis and insights sharing. IECD will continue to count on the support and inputs from stakeholders. As UNICEF (2011) rightly sums up, continued policy engagements and alliances can not only guarantee and sustain achievements already made but also assure "equitable outcomes for all children" and hence a winning start for all children.

2.0 Section Two

This section describes the methods used in this evaluation. It also describes the themes, the different subgroups targeted and some aspects of the analyses conducted.

2.1 Methods

As indicated earlier, since one of the objectives of the survey was to assess the extent of progress made by the respondents in their knowledge of ECCE issues, the instrument used for data collection was retained, including all the demographical variables. These included, for example, information about gender, age group, frequency of watching television and listening to radio, access to internet, among others. As in the first and second surveys, part two of the questionnaire addressed five themes and these were as follow:

- Health and Safety,
- Education,
- Parental and Community Links,
- Child and Social Protection,
- Policy.

As before, the section on Policy was not administered to all the respondents. To answer these items would require a sound understanding of policy issues which some of the respondents would not be comfortable in responding to and therefore this section was targeted the policy makers subgroup only.

The targeted audience consisted of five subgroups as follows:

- Policy Makers,
- Professionals (Education)

- Mid Level Managers (Education)
- Care Providers (directly involved with children: Parents, Service Providers)
- Wider Community

It needs to be mentioned at this juncture that IECD attempted to target more professionals through the use of a web-based survey method but the response was not as expected. Also, the subgroups "Professional (Education)" and "Mid-Level Management (Education)" were merged and labelled "Other Professionals" for this report.

2.2 Sampling

With regards to the childminders, parents, other professionals, and policy makers, judgemental samples were selected and for the wider community a random sample was selected with the assistance of the National Statistics Bureau. For this round of the survey, the enumeration areas for each district were used with randomly selected household used as the sampling unit as was the case in 2017. Table 1 below presents a summary of the respondents by subgroup.

Table 1: Number and percentage of respondents by subgroup

Subgroup	N	Percent
Policy makers	**21**	**2.6**
Other Professionals	**191**	**23.7**
Care Providers	**59**	**7.3**
Wider Community	**536**	**66.4**
Total	**807**	**100**

Initially, the IECD had targeted 1336 respondents in2019 compared to a target of 1027 in 2017. However, despite numerous call-backs and the use of a web-based survey tool, only 807 respondents returned the completed questionnaire. The summary, presented in Table 1 above, shows that the achieved response rate was about 60 percent with professionals from key sectors noticeably missing. The response rate from policy level respondents was also disappointing compared to 55 who participated in 2017.

2.3 Generating the Indices

Consistent with the method used in 2015, for each of the themes, a recoding was necessary to take into account the instances where "I don't agree" statement indicated a correct

response. The correct response in all cases was assigned a new score of 1 and an incorrect response a 0 and this was particularly useful for generating the performance levels. The Rasch model has been consistently used for determining the different knowledge levels. The indices will be used as a first-level analysis as these will be cross-tabulated or graphed against independent variables such as gender.

2.4 Generating the Knowledge Levels

For this analysis, the Winstep software was used which employs the Rasch model for item and person calibration. It was on this basis that cut-off score criterion was used for establishing the benchmarks. Three performance levels were established and labelled as Highly Knowledgeable, Knowledgeable, and Slightly Knowledgeable, respectively. Respondents classified as "Highly knowledgeable" were very much au fait with the issues being addressed with very little gaps in their knowledge and attitude. Those grouped under "Knowledgeable" had some gaps in their knowledge of and attitude towards issues presented to them but these should not pose a potential risk to children, especially for those who are directly responsible for child care. For those in the last category, there were significant gaps in their knowledge and attitude, potentially risky for those directly involved in child care. As the Rasch model is based on probability, the following cut-offs were retained for comparability purposes:

- for the Highly Knowledgeable category a probability of success was set at 80 percent.
- for the Knowledgeable category a probability of success was set at 75 percent
- for the Slightly Knowledgeable anything below the 75 percent mark

Success in this context meant choosing the option that indicated the correct knowledge of the issue being addressed.

It is also worth pointing out for the level setting exercise that two categories were merged – categories that showed that respondents at least agreed a little with the item and totally agreed against the category that indicated total disagreement. The category "I do not know" was treated as missing in this case.

3.0 Section Three

3.1 Findings

This section starts off with a presentation of summary percentages for some of the demographical characteristics of respondents.

3.2 Coverage

As already indicated, a total of 807 participants responded to the questionnaire of which there were 517 females (65.1%) compared to 277 males (34.9%). The gender of 13 participants was treated as missing values. With regards to the age of the participants, this was categorised into six groups as illustrated in Table 2a.

Table 2a: Distribution of respondents by age group

Age group	Frequency	Valid Percent
15 - 20	11	1.4
21 - 30	134	16.7
31 - 40	181	22.5
41 - 50	173	21.5
51 - 60	177	22.0
Over 61	127	15.8
Total	803	100.0
Missing	4	
Total	**807**	

The question as to whether the participants had a child of their own was posed. This was important as we wanted to gauge if there is a difference in understanding of ECCE issues as expressed in the knowledge levels. 658 or 81.5 percent indicated that they had a child of their own while 149 or 18.5 percent said that they did not.

3.3 Organisation Worked For

With regards to the type of organization the respondents worked for this is presented in Table 2b. it needs to be mentioned that the “Other” category included retirees and pensioners, self-employed, students, carers, and the unemployed. It was unfortunate that respondents such as those who were unemployed were not captured separately as in 2017.

Table 2b: Type of organization respondents work for

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Government/Parastatal	265	35.5
NGO/Not for Profit	30	4.0
Academic Institution (e.g Prof Centres)	139	18.6
Private Business	196	26.2
Other	117	15.7
Total	747	100.0
Missing	60	
Total	**807**	

3.4 Highest Education

Another important demographical variable was that concerned with the education level of the respondents. This is presented in Table 2c below.

Table 2c: Respondents' highest education level

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Primary	85	10.8
Secondary	202	25.8
Post Secondary	364	46.4
Tertiary	133	17.0
Total	784	100.0
Missing	23	
Total	**807**	

It can be observed that about 90 percent of the respondents had completed at least secondary level education. The number who indicated that they had completed only primary level education came as a surprise however.

3.5 Access to Information

Knowledge about how the respondents access the different types of media is important as part of any advocacy strategy. The IECD is cognizant that while radio, television, or print, still

remained important information sources, the internet has fast become the preferred means of accessing information across a range of age groups. Access to these three common types of information sources is presented in Table 2d.

Table 2d: Frequency of watching TV, listening to radio and reading newspaper

	TV		Radio		Newspaper	
Frequency	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
I do not watch/listen to/read	46	5.7	198	24.6	280	34.9
Once a week	77	9.6	75	9.3	195	24.3
2 - 3 days	94	11.7	74	9.2	80	10.0
4 - 5 days	64	8.0	42	5.2	52	6.5
Everyday	522	65.0	415	51.6	195	24.3
Total	**803**	**100**	**804**	**100**	**802**	**100**

The results shown in the table above were quite interesting and showed that reading newspapers was the least popular followed by listening to the radio. On the other hand, about two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they watched the television everyday and taken together, this was important for consideration in the implementation of future advocacy campaigns. It was also possible to further disaggregate the data by age group. In Figure 1, the percentage of respondents by age group who watched TV, listened to the radio or read the newspaper at least once a week is presented.

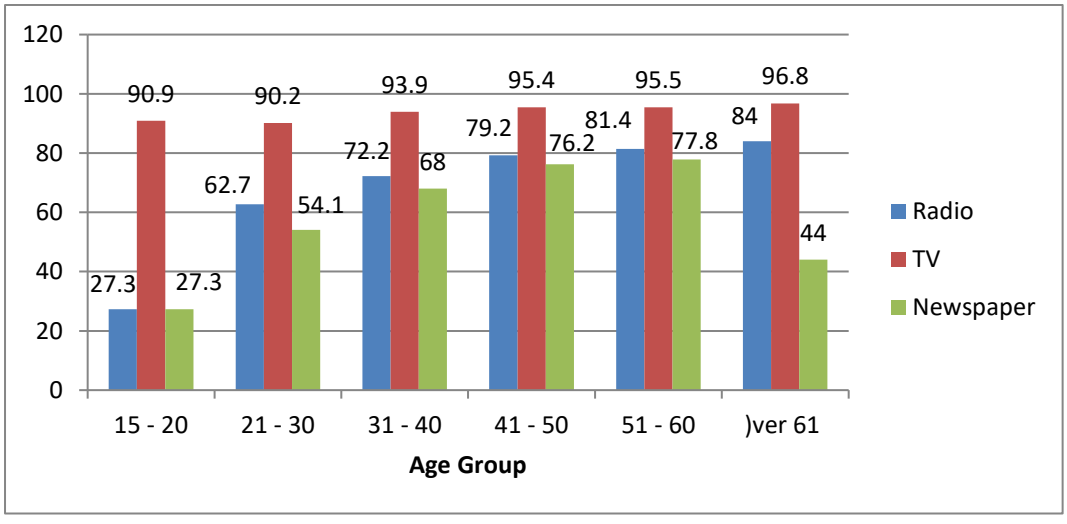

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents indicating frequency of information source by age group

Again, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they watched TV at least once a week was the highest among the three sources and this was consistent across all age groups. As for the younger age group, listening to the radio or reading a newspaper were not popular as close to 73 percent indicated that they neither listened nor read. It was also interesting to know the most likely time of the day the participants were most likely to watch TV or listen to the radio for any targeted campaign. The results are shown in Table 2e.

Table 2e: Time of the day for watching TV or listening to radio

	TV		Radio	
Frequency	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
I do not watch/listen to/read	43	5.4	194	24.4
Night only	347	43.6	78	9.8
Evening only	256	32.2	125	15.7
Afternoon only	27	3.4	53	6.7
Morning only	17	2.1	139	17.4
All day	105	13.2	206	25.9
Total	**795**	**100**	**795**	**100**

As can be seen, the most likely time to watch TV was either during the evening or at night which together accounted for almost 75 percent of the respondents. As for the time of the day that was most likely for one to listen to the radio, apart from the one quarter who indicated all day, for the other times, it was quite evenly spread. In addition, the respondents were also asked about access to the internet and whether they had read ECCE related issues in the past 12 months. In the case of internet access, of the 803 who responded, 588 or 73.2 percent responded in the affirmative. As to if they had read ECCE related issues in the past 12 months, 782 responded of whom 215 or 27.5 percent said that they did. This remained low.

As in the baseline study, for each theme, an index was generated by first recoding the responses as follows:

0 if the respondent indicated they do not know or the response was wrong
1 if the response was correct

This was then summed for each respondent on all the items that constituted that index. For example, for the theme Health and Safety, there were 12 items and when summed this

produced a possible minimum of 0 (0 out of 12) and a maximum of 100 (12 out of 12). The minimum and maximum possible scores were deduced for all the four indices. It was possible to generate a mean percentage score for each index and the results are presented below, starting with Figure 2.

3.6 Health and Safety Index

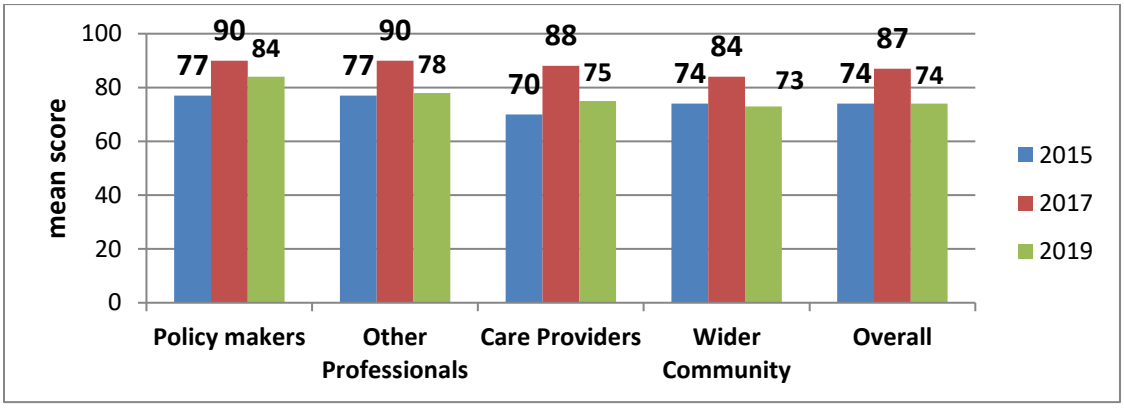

Figure 2: Mean score on Health and Safety Index by main subgroups

There were 12 items for this index. The percentage mean score on this composite index in 2019 was similar to that obtained in 2015 for all the groups. The percentages for 2017 were the highest reached. Examples of items for this index were concerned with breastfeeding, vaccination, nutrition, and care of a child's teeth.

3.7 Education Index

For the education index, the percentages are presented in Figure 3.

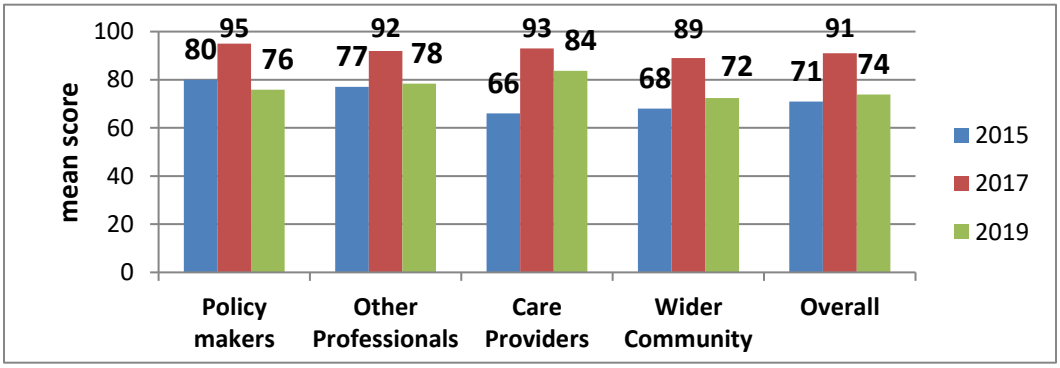

Figure 3: Mean score on Education Index by main subgroups

While the percentages for 2019 were slightly better than in 2015 for most of the subgroups, they were well below those for 2017. They were at a level that could be deemed as

reasonable as overall, it was near the 75 percent mark. Examples of the 11 items that constituted this index on education were associated with perceptions about the future performance of at-risk children, the importance of play in a child's education, and stimulation and brain development.

3.8 Parental and Community Links Index

For this index, there were 7 items that addressed the role of parents and of the wider community. Figure 4 presents the mean score on this index for the four subgroups.

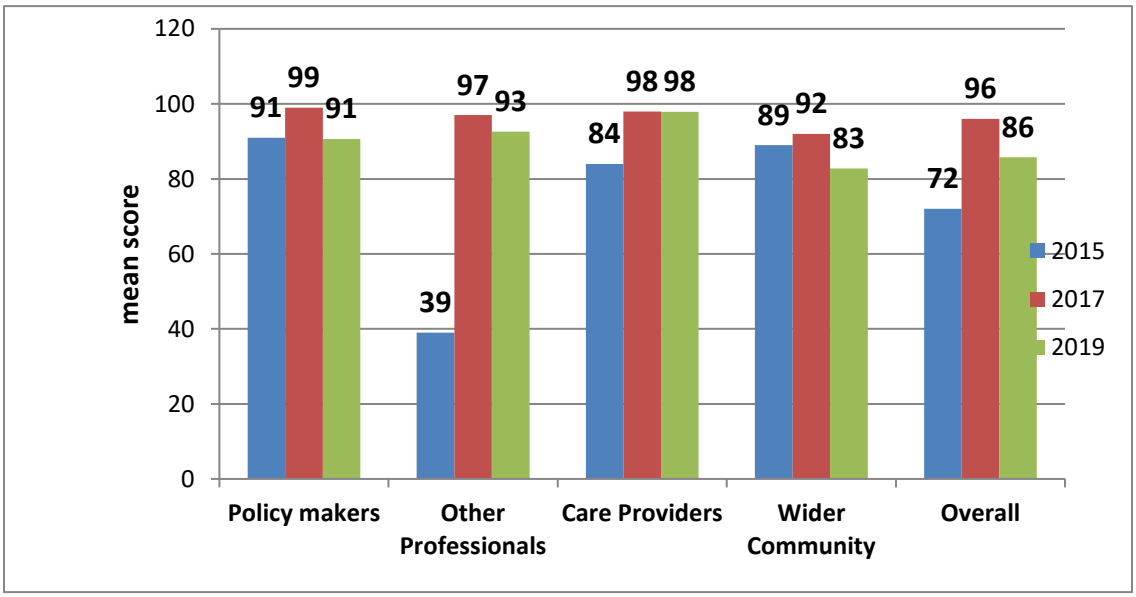

Figure 4: Mean score on Parental and Community Links Index by main subgroups

Overall, the mean score for that index was 86 percent or ten points below 2017 and with the exception of the Wider Community subgroup, the scores were much better than in 2015 and generally showed that the respondents were correct in their interpretation of the items presented to them. Examples of such items were an awareness of the benefits of high quality early learning programmes, service providers and parental engagement, and building strong community links.

3.9 Child and Social Protection Index

The final index consisted of ten items that addressed children and social protection issues. When the survey started in 2015, much concerns were raised in the way the respondents

responded to some of the items but this changed for the better in 2017. The results are presented in Figure 5.

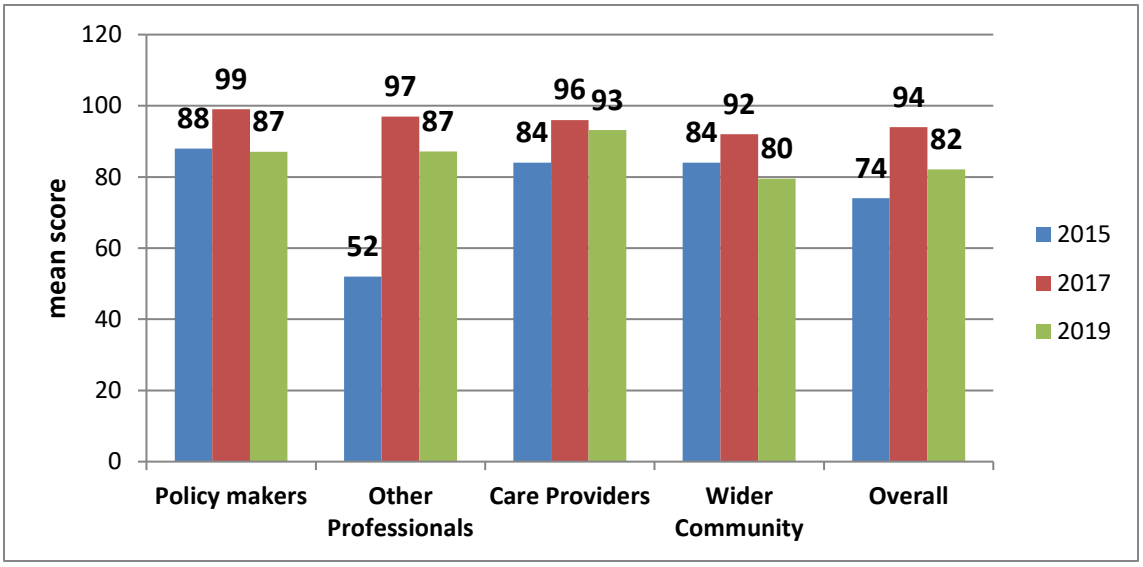

Figure 5: Mean score on Child and Social Protection Index by main subgroups

For 2019, the mean scores were above the 80 percent mark for all subgroups and that showed that the respondents were still very much aware of and understood issues involving children protection even if the overall percentage was 12 points below that of 2017.

3.10 Exploratory Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis as a data reduction technique was conducted to assess whether the underlying structures based on the 40 items of the questionnaire covering sections on Health and Safety, Education, Parental and Community Links, and Child and Social Protection, respectively, were related and how strong these were. The KMO measure for sampling adequacy was 0.78. Four factors were requested, based on the fact that there were four themes as mentioned above.

The four factors accounted for just 28 percent of the total variance. The first factor consisted of 10 items with factor loadings ranging from .415 to .656. This factor accounted for 10.8 percent of the variance. The second factor comprised 6 items and explained 8.7 percent of the variance with factor loadings ranging from .451 to .641. Factor number three consisted of 5 items and accounted for 4.5 percent of the variance with factor loadings ranging from .430 to .592. Finally, the fourth factor had 5 items and explained 3.97 percent of variance with factor loadings ranging from .420 to .533.

Factor 1 – Supporting Structures and Well-being

The first factor extracted seemed to be associated with the type of structures that prevailed and how this supported the child's development and well being. For instance, the respondents recognised that building strong community links amongst parents, caregivers, teachers and children could promote helpfulness, inclusiveness and responsibility. Likewise, they responded positively to the idea that parents and the wider community should be familiarized with the benefits of high-quality early learning programmes. On the well- being aspect, it was recognised that preserving the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all actions and decision concerning the child. The value of play in promoting cognitive development also featured under this factor.

Factor 2 – Child Protection

The second factor seemed to fit well with the Child and Social Protection theme as was expected. For examples, when presented with the statement "Young children should not be encouraged and taught how to listen to the opinions of others because it is too early for them", over 70 percent of the respondents indicated that they did not agree and this was featured in the factor loadings. Likewise, the respondents recognised that the custody order, made by the Court of Tribunal, was legally binding and that an adopted child was a legal member of the adoptive family in the same way as if he or she was born to them.

Factor 3 – Child Care and Upbringing

Admittedly, to find a label for this third factor was not an easy task. The tendency, however, was for the items to reflect child care and general upbringing. It was obvious, for instance, that the respondents disagreed with the view that in order to bring up, raise, or educate a child properly, the child needed to be physically punished. Similarly, they concurred that it was unacceptable for children under care to watch TV so that they stayed quiet and did not disturb. Overwhelmingly, they disagreed with the statements that buying expensive clothing for the child was the most important thing in his or her development and that play was an unnecessary distraction that impacted adversely on children's cognitive development as it took away valuable time that could be better spent on academic tasks.

Factor 4- Education and Development

Items that appeared under this extracted factor were associated with views about child development and education in general. it appeared that the respondents had an idea of how the child's brain development could be stimulated by play and the need to engage with service providers and the wider community to provide a suitable environment for children to develop fully.

3.11 Policy

The survey instrument also included a section which targeted the Policy Makers subgroup as the items were concerned with policy-level issues related to ECCE and also to IECD as the lead institution. The table below presents the results for all three years and gives the percentage of respondents who agreed, from a little to total agreement, with the policy statement presented.

Table 3: Percentage of respondents agreeing to Policy statements

Statement	2015	2017	2019
Universal pre-schooling is a worthwhile goal to pursue in the Seychelles.	97	89	100
It is important for early care providers to be registered so that they benefit from provisions made under the ECCE framework.	98	29	100
Accountability is not an issue for early childhood care workers in Seychelles.	1	30	10
Early childhood care and provision is too expensive which outweigh the benefits.	51	13	42
Recent IECD priorities have nothing to do with ECCE priorities and the wholesome development of the child.	4	15	0
IECD is just another structure created to interfere with the work of early childhood care providers and education.	15	36	0
In my opinion my current level of awareness of Early Childhood related issues compared to one year ago has not changed.	28	75	16
In my opinion IECD should be the regulator body for childminding services, with the required staffing capacity, internal mechanisms and procedures.	85	85	95
So far I am very satisfied with the work being done to raise the level of awareness on ECCE issues	92	74	100
I have much information I need about ECCE issues.	76	76	90
I know or have heard of national standards for childminding services and contacts have been initiated with external partner organisations.	88	95	90

The policy makers responses for the statements presented to them in the three evaluation, especially for the last two showed a positive change in attitude. For statements 1, 2 and 9, all indicated that they at least agree a little and more interestingly none agreed to statements 5 and 6 for 2019

3.12 Performance Levels

As already mentioned, it was possible to recode the respondents' responses on a dichotomous scale so that the Rasch model could be deployed to generate the different knowledge levels. The section start with some descriptive statistics and it will also generate some cross-tabulations in order for further comparisons to be made between subgroups or between years.

3.13 Descriptive Summaries

It needs to be mentioned that the criteria used for level cut scores were maintained for a more meaningful comparison to be made with the previous two surveys. The criteria were as follows:

- 80 percent probability of success to qualify as highly knowledgeable with minor gaps in knowledge and attitude
- 75 percent probability of success established for those who were classified as knowledgeable with few gaps.
- below the 75 percent mark, the respondent would be classified as slightly knowledgeable with significant knowledge gaps.

The table below shows the overall levels reached in the understanding of ECCE issues.

Table 4a: Percentage of respondents at the different knowledge levels

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	**Slightly Knowledgeable**	170	21.1
	Knowledgeable	111	13.8
	Highly Knowledgeable	526	65.2
	Total	807	100.0

The percentage of respondents on target was about 79 percent which is lower than in 2017. On target in this case means those who at least achieved the knowledgeable level.

3.14 Trend

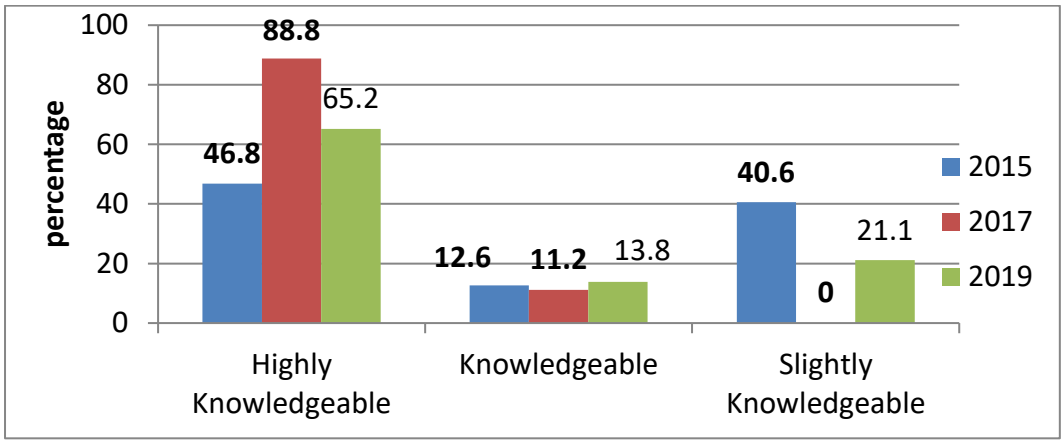

Figure 6a: Percentage of respondents at various knowledge category levels in 2015, 2017, and 2019

While the percentage of respondents who were at the "Knowledgeable" level remained steady for the three surveys, it was clear that there was a shift from the highest level to the lowest and this was rather unfortunate as it was expected that the percentage at the high end could at least be maintained. It was not surprising, therefore, that the percentage on target experienced a dip of about 21 percentage points between the last two surveys as shown in Figure 6b.

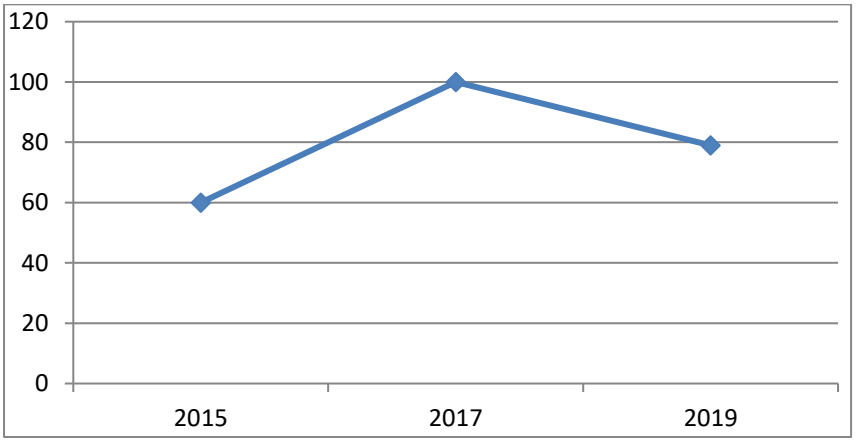

Figure 6b: Percentage of respondents on target 2015, 2017, and 2019

3.15 Levels by Gender

The results were also disaggregated by gender and this is presented in Table 4b.

Table 4b: Percentage of respondents at the different knowledge levels

			Level			
			Slightly Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Highly Knowledgeable	Total
Gender	Female	N	95	61	361	517
		Percentage	18.4	11.8	69.8	100.0%
	Male	N	74	50	153	277
		Percentage	26.7	18.1	55.2	100.0%

The results showed that the female participants were more knowledgeable than their male counterparts. Almost 82 percent of the female participants were on target compared to about 73 percent for males – a gap of almost 10 points. Moreover, further test of association showed that the this was not statistically significant in 2015 ($\chi^2(2) = 4.448$, $p = 0.108$,) but this was the case in 2017 (χ^2 (2) = 18.716, $p < 0.001$) and remained so in 2019 ((χ^2 (2) = 16.868, $p <$ 0.000).

3.16 Performance by Respondents With Own Child

For the 2017 survey, respondents were asked if they had their own child for the first time. This item was introduced to assess whether there was an association between the knowledge level of parents who had their own children or not. The results are presented in Table 4c.

Table 4c: Percentage of respondent having or not having own child reaching different knowledge level in 2017 and 2019

Status	**Slightly Knowledgeable**		**Knowledgeable**		**Highly knowledgeable**	
	2017	**2019**	**2017**	**2019**	**2017**	**2019**
Have my own child	0	19.9	12.4	12.5	87.6	67.6
Do not have my own child	0	26.2	10.9	19.5	81.1	54.4

The results in the above table showed that there were only minor differences between the respondents that said they had their own child and those that said otherwise in 2017 but in 2019, the pattern changed. While the association was not significant in 2017, it was the case in 2019 ($\chi^2(2) = 9.874$, $p = 0.007$) and this cannot easily be explained but perhaps it might be due to expecting mothers received additional information in pre and postnatal clinics.

3.17 By Age Groups

Table 4d: Percentage of respondent by age group reaching different knowledge level in 2019

			Level			
			Slightly Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Highly Knowledgeable	**Total**
Age Group	**15 - 20**	**N**	3	2	6	**11**
		Percentage	27.3	18.2	54.5	**100.0**
	21 - 30	**N**	42	24	68	**134**
		Percentage	31.3	17.9	50.7	**100.0**
	31 - 40	**N**	41	17	123	**181**
		Percentage	22.7	9.4	68.0	**100.0**
	41 - 50	**N**	30	17	126	**173**
		Percntage	17.3	9.8	72.8	**100.0**
	51 - 60	**N**	23	29	125	**177**
		Percentange	13.0	16.4	70.6	**100.0**
	Over 61	**N**	28	22	77	**127**
		Percentage	22.0	17.3	60.6	**100.0**

It was clear that in 2019, the younger respondents were less au fait with ECCE issues and the 41 – 50 age group posted the highest percentage at the highest knowledge level. Interestingly, a statistical test for association produced a significant result ($\chi^2(10) = 29.685$, $p = 0.001$) and this can perhaps be explained by the difference in education and maturity levels of the two groups.

3.18 By Highest Education Level

Finally, a cross-tabulation between highest education and knowledge level was produced and this is presented in Table 4e.

Table 4e: Percentage of respondent by age group reaching different knowledge level in 2019

ghest Education		Level		
		Slightly Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Highly Knowledgeable
Primary	N	16	14	55
	Percentage	18.8	16.5	64.7
Secondary	N	53	37	112
	Percentage	26.2	18.3	55.4
Post Secondary	N	83	47	234
	Percentage	22.8	12.9	64.3
Tertiary	N	11	10	112
	Percentage	8.3	7.5	84.2

It was not surprising to observe that the group with the highest percentage was the respondents who had completed tertiary level education. What was surprising though was that a higher percentage of respondents who claimed that they had completed only primary level education was on target compared to those that completed secondary or even post-secondary education. Further test of association revealed a highly significant result ($\chi^2(6) = 31.582$, $p < 0.000$).

4.0 Section Four

This section discusses the main findings of the advocacy evaluation. The discussion will be done according to the themes outlined in the questionnaire design.

4.1 Discussion

In terms of coverage, the survey achieved a response rate of 60 percent and this was somewhat disappointing compared to 2017. For instance professionals from key sectors and policy makers were notably missing and as mentioned, even if an attempt was made by IECD to provide access to a web-based survey tool, bearing in mind of the ubiquity of smartphones and

other web-enabled devices. Responses from the wider community were very satisfactory bearing in mind that the field workers had to conduct door-to-door interviews to capture this important group. This was well reflected in the age range of the participants.

For any advocacy event, it is important to have an idea of the various information sources available to the targeted audience and it was possible to capture the frequency and best times the participants accessed these. The television and to a lesser extent the radio, were most popular and the number of participants who read newspapers was comparably low, probably due to the cost involved. A majority of participants indicated that their access to the internet and reading of the ECCE newsletter remained a concern. While the cost of producing print materials remains relatively high, IECD should explore alternative ways to distribute its newsletter. For example, could there be an ECCE related blog that can be easily and frequently updated, bearing in mind the high percentage of participants who had access to the internet? Another potential avenue that can be explored is to adopt "gamification" strategies done digitally.

4.2 Health and Safety

It came as a surprise that the respondents' knowledge of health and safety issues in the context of child care dropped to the 2015 level. This was despite the exposure and rich exchanges that were a direct result of the well – attended conferences, presentations, newscasts, and forums organised by the IECD and partners. One can only hope that 2017 was not an exceptional year. But as far as the child was concerned, paying attention to health and safety issues was important and one would expect that all concerned with child care should possess the necessary attitude and knowledge. It was evident in their choice of responses to statements presented on this domain in the questionnaire that this was not the case. The factor loadings were small in these cases.

4.3 Education

Respondents' knowledge of and attitude towards early childhood educational issues were also generally satisfactory but again failed to reach the level of 2017. Nonetheless, the respondents were keen to the idea that children from vulnerable families stood to benefit in their life long education by participating in pre-school programmes. Also, they were attuned to the notion that a child's brain development occurred very early and children did not reach developmental milestones at roughly the same time. They understood that the process was not

smooth and continuous. The respondents also agreed to the view that it was in the child's best interest to breastfeed into the second year of his or her life, probably in acknowledgement of the positive effect this had on development and education. Similarly, it appeared that long gone are the days when the perception was that a child needed to stay quiet or watch TV all day in order to be considered as well-behaved for learning to take place in care settings.

4.4 Parental and Community links

The level of knowledge and understanding of issues concerning this theme were very satisfactory and comparable to that achieved in 2017. The respondents were cognisant of the benefits of providing opportunities for children to develop positive life values at a very early age, for example, by listening and respecting the views of others. Likewise, the respondents seemed to understand the advantages of building constructive coalitions among the key stakeholders in providing for a stimulating environment for each child to grow, learn, and develop.

4.5 Child and Social Protection

Issues presented under this theme were also well understood by the respondents. This was in evidence in the factor analysis. This was one area of concern in 2015 when it was found that quite a significant number of respondents then had gaps in their knowledge about child protection especially when it came to beliefs about child punishment and the legal rights of an adopted child, to cite two examples. It appeared that these beliefs have been dispelled with even if they continue to be manifested in small segments of the wider community.

4.6 Policy

As observed, the reactions by policy makers to the statements presented to them were very encouraging. IECD needs allies and what could be geaned from the patterns in the way the policy makers agreed or disagreed to the statements presented was that IECD could rely on policy influencers who understood its role as an ECCE leader and regulatory body, who understood issues of accountability that revolved around child care even if it was recognised that the cost of service provision was expensive.

5.0 Section Five

Conclusion

This report was based on the third round of the evaluation of IECD's advocacy strategy. The coverage was satisfactory as it managed to capture the responses from over 800 participants, even if it was below the response rate achieved in 2017. Advocacy, as a strategic tool, has been used by IECD not only to influence policy decisions on ECCE issues but also to create greater awareness among service providers, educators, parents, and the wider community. Evaluating an advocacy strategy is by no means straightforward but the practice is now well established and provides much-needed insights into the effectiveness of its advocacy strategy.

The results obtained showed that one of the most important sources of information which IECD could use for future advocacy campaigns was the internet and therefore it should explore the best way to go digital especially with the ECCE newsletter to improve readership and penetrate the younger age groups. The percentage of respondents who were on target in terms of their knowledge level experienced a drop compared to 2017, but reached close to 80 percent. This was relatively high and compared favourably with the results obtained in 2015, the baseline year.

However, there is strong evidence to support the view that there were significant differences across the different subgroups with regards to their knowledge levels. There was reason to believe from the results obtained from the last two evaluations that there were noticeable changes in the participants' beliefs on and attitudes towards many issues such as child protection, the value of play in stimulating brain development, nutrition, and the benefits that can be reaped from having strong links among stakeholders.

As to the achievement of the target set, it was clear that this was not attained. A possible explanation could be the low responses received from policy makers and the unexplained non-participation by important groups of professionals from key sectors. It has been suggested that this could have been due to "evaluation fatigue" as the surveys were conducted on a two-year cycle. Perhaps this needs to be reviewed to ensure maximum participation and effect. Regardless, though, IECD has managed to demonstrate a tangible degree of success in its sensitization efforts on ECCE issues and has helped changed mindsets and beliefs for the benefit of the child.

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