Southern Africa Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education

"Ensuring Quality Early Childhood Care and Education"

26-27 April 2016

Ezulwini Town, Swaziland

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa and the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO would like to express their sincere gratitude to all delegates from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, who travelled to Ezulwini Town, Swaziland for the Southern Africa Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, for their active participation in all the discussions, and for sharing their countries' experiences.

The UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa and the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO would also like to thank the Swaziland Ministry of Education and Training for hosting this conference and for their important efforts in making sure that this meeting could take place in a successful manner.

The organizers received positive feedback from the participants and it is trusted that this report captures all reflections, discussions and recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

The Kigali statement on education of Post 2015 recognized the right to access inclusive, equitable and quality education and reaffirmed the commitment to ensure that every child, youth and adult, including minorities and the most disadvantaged groups, complete high-quality education from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education with at least a minimum completion of free and compulsory basic education of 9 -10 years. The Ministers committed to an integrated approach for ECCE, which requires collaboration between all relevant ministries, especially the ministries responsible for planning, education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, social welfare and security to build early foundations for every child.

There is also recognition that the early years are crucial to a child's development and that ECCE has a strong impact on educational achievement in later levels of education. Hence, a strong ECCE sector is important to a quality education system. In the Southern Africa Region, most of the education systems in the region have an ECCE sector, but the scope and quality of the early childhood level varies greatly across countries. Similarly, to underscore the importance of early childhood care and education, global goal 4 target 2 addresses the issue of readiness of children for school through participation in quality early childhood care and education with at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education.

During the Regional Teachers Conference held in Maputo in August 2015, there was a general consensus that ECCE covers children aged 3-6 years old. In some countries (Zimbabwe and Namibia) early childhood education is part of the national curriculum, while in other countries (Zambia and Tanzania) the scaling up and national roll out of quality ECCE with a modern curriculum is being implemented. In countries like Swaziland, there is no ECCE service regulation by the Ministry of Education but steps are being taken to set up a system to regulate and monitor the quality of ECCE.

It is in this context that the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa in collaboration with the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO organized a two-day Regional meeting on ''Ensuring Quality Early Childhood Care and Education'' in Ezulwini Town, Swaziland on 26-27 April 2016.

With the theme ''Ensuring quality Early Childhood Care and Education'', the conference was a platform for governments, private ECCE providers and development partners to share country policies, good practices, experiences and research results on ECCE, and to make recommendations to UNESCO on how to support member states on issues regarding ECCE.

OPENING SESSION

Official Opening

During the official opening session, the participants were welcomed by the organizing partners: UNESCO, the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO and the Swaziland Ministry of Education and Training.

Following the welcoming remarks of Ms Hazel Zungu, the Secretary General of the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO, the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Education and Training indicated his great pleasure with being able to host this regional conference in Swaziland.

The Honourable Minister of Education and Training, Dr Phineas L Magagula, expressed his sincere gratitude to UNESCO for organizing this meeting and for emphasizing the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education. He explained that expanding access to high quality ECCE is one of the smartest investments we can make, because early childhood is the stage where most of the human brain is developed.

The Honourable Minister said that it is unfortunate that in low income countries, where Education for All is still far from being achieved, provision of quality ECCE is only for the wealthiest. "This fragmentation regarding quality is detrimental to those who are disadvantaged. Swaziland is in this regard not different."

Honourable Dr Magagula continued: "We appreciate the able leadership and technical advice provided by UNESCO in the field of Education as we embark on the new agenda 2030. Regional fora like these are particularly welcome; as we face similar challenges, it is an opportunity for us to identify common strategies."

Before declaring the conference officially opened, the Honourable Minister ended his address with a powerful quote: "Quality ECCE is the great engine of personal development. It is through quality ECCE that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor; that the son of a mineworker can become the managing director of that mine; that a son of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation."

Meeting Objectives

Mr Abdoul Wahab Coulibaly (UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa) presented the objectives of the meeting and set out the programme for the three days.

The meeting objectives are the following:

− To share country policies, good practices/experiences and research results on Early Childhood Care and Education;
− To examine key issues and challenges on the issue of Early Childhood Care and Education;
− To identify concrete recommendations on how to foster inter-country cooperation as a means to strengthen Early Childhood Care and Education.

The participants were informed that ROSA's holistic work on teachers includes a focus on Early Childhood Care and Education and its particular workforce. Following the regional conference on teachers in Maputo in 2015, the participants recommended to organize a meeting specifically on the ECCE workforce. Such a focused meeting would allow participants to formulate specific recommendations concerning the foundational years of the education system.

SITUATING AND UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIC

Trends and Challenges in ECCE

Ms Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, Senior Education Programme Specialist at the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, presented the trends and challenges in Early Childhood Care and Education.
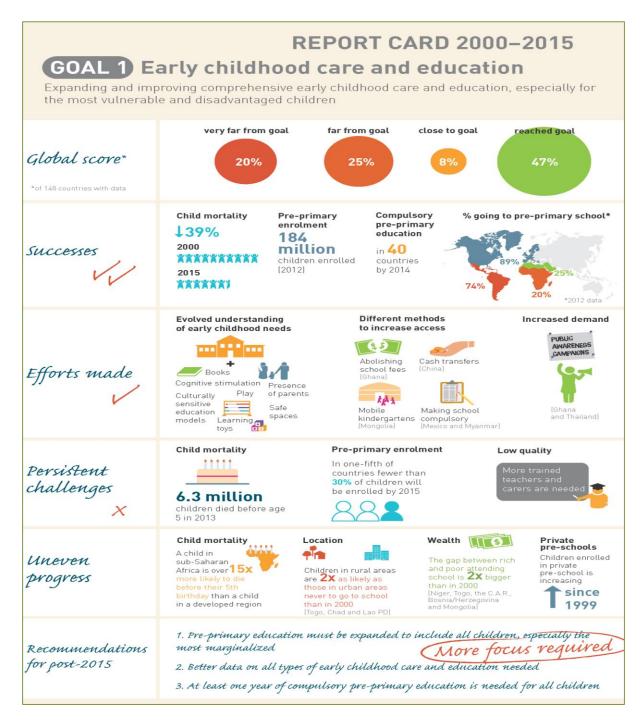
She started by reminding the participants of the importance of the early years as the human brain develops most rapidly in early childhood and later health and attainments build on these foundations. Investing in the early years creates the highest return to human capital investment.

Ms Medel-Anonuevo referred to the Global Monitoring Report which assessed 15 years of progress towards attaining the Education for All (EFA) goals. Goal 1 on Early Childhood Care and Education was one of the least attended to since the drive of EFA was primarily geared towards Universal Primary Education (UPE). Less than half of countries worldwide reached the goal, and 20 percent is very far from the target.

She presented the below report card which clearly highlights that successes have indeed been achieved and efforts have been made towards the goal but that progress has been unequal and challenges remain. The main global conclusion that was made by the GMR is that at least one-year of compulsory pre-primary education is required to improve ECCE provision.

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 1 Early childhood care and education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

Global score*

*of 148 countries with data.

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
20%	25%	8%	47%

Successes ✓✓

Child mortality ↓39%
2000
2015

Pre-primary enrolment
184 million children enrolled (2012)

Compulsory pre-primary education in **40** countries by 2014

% going to pre-primary school*
89%
74%
20%
25%
*2012 data

Efforts made ✓

Evolved understanding of early childhood needs
+ Books
Cognitive stimulation
Culturally sensitive education models
Play
Learning toys
Presence of parents
Safe spaces

Different methods to increase access
Abolishing school fees [Ghana]
Cash transfers [China]
Mobile kindergartens [Mongolia]
Making school compulsory [Mexico and Myanmar]

Increased demand
PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS
[Ghana and Thailand]

Persistent challenges ✗

Child mortality
6.3 million children died before age 5 in 2013

Pre-primary enrolment
In one-fifth of countries fewer than **30%** of children will be enrolled by 2015

Low quality
More trained teachers and carers are needed

Uneven progress

Child mortality
A child in sub-Saharan Africa is over **15x** more likely to die before their 5th birthday than a child in a developed region

Location
Children in rural areas are **2x** as likely as those in urban areas never to go to school than in 2000 [Togo, Chad and Lao PD]

Wealth
The gap between rich and poor attending school is **2x** bigger than in 2000 [Niger, Togo, the C.A.R., Bosnia/Herzegovina and Mongolia]

Private pre-schools
Children enrolled in private pre-school is increasing ↑ since 1999

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Pre-primary education must be expanded to include all children, especially the most marginalized
More focus required
2. Better data on all types of early childhood care and education needed
3. At least one year of compulsory pre-primary education is needed for all children

When pursuing the new education agenda, the following general lessons should be taken into account:

▪ Find new ways to sustain political commitment;

- Further diversify knowledge, evidence and expertise (cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approaches);
- Further strengthen national policy and practice (improving existing policies and plans, focus on equity and quality);
- Effectively mobilize far more financial resources (annual total expenditures to education should at least double from current);
- Bring the monitoring and reporting of progress to a new level (future data collection will be challenging; linking reporting with accountability).

Within the new Sustainable Development agenda, target 2 of Goal 4 focuses on ECD (By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education). Many of the other goals (e.g. 2 and 3) however also include elements related to Early Childhood Care and Education; quality ECCE is in that regard explicitly and implicitly interwoven in the different goals.

On the topic of ECCE policies, Ms Medel-Anonuevo informed the participants that the following elements can be identified as key aspects of comprehensive and integrated ECCE policies (Vargas-Baron):

- Equity and child and parental rights;
- Multisectoral coordination and local service integration;
- A governance system that includes structures for policy development and implementation, such as a national ECCE council, an ECCE policy implementation institute or unit, and regional and municipal committees;
- Standards and regulations for services, personnel and personnel performance;
- Quality improvement and resource development, including improved curricula and methods, pre-and in-service training, certification systems;
- Monitoring, evaluation systems and reporting linked to annual planning systems;
- Adequate investment that will take key programmes to scale on a phased basis; and
- Policy advocacy and social communications to promote policy implementation.

When looking specifically at ECCE in the Southern Africa region, the following features can be highlighted:

- 7 of 9 countries have ECCE policy documents;
- Different articulation with development plans, sector plans;
- Responsible ministries vary from country to country;
- Fragmented ECCE systems;
- Wide range of provision and funding;
- Overall challenge of low status of ECCE profession;
- Sub-sector that is poorly regulated.

With this information, Ms Medel-Anonuevo situated the ECCE discussion and created a common understanding for further reflections.

EXPERIENCES IN ENSURING QUALITY ECCE

Integrated Framework of countries' experiences

In group work, the participants were requested to complete the following questions per country:

- What term is used for Early Childhood Care and Education?
- Is there a policy in place? From which year? What are the policy features?
- What is the age coverage?
- Which Ministry is in charge?
- What comprises ECCE?
- Who funds ECCE; what kind of provision?
- What are the qualifications/educational background of the ECCE teacher?
- Is there any in-service training offered?
- What is the regulatory mechanism that is in place?

Consolidation of the country's inputs to these questions resulted in the following table.

COUNTRY	Term used?	Existing Policy?	Age coverage?	Ministry in charge?	What comprises ECCE?	Who funds?	Kind of provision?	Qualifications	In-service training?	Regulatory Mechanism
Botswana	ECCE	1.ECCE (2001) revised (2015) 1. Curriculum 2. Teacher training 3. Standards 4. Safety 5. Nutrition 6. Health and Sanitation 7. Registration 2. Revised National Policy on Education(1994) 3. Children's Act(2009) 4. Inclusive Education Act (2011) 5. Education Act (1969)	0-6	Min of Education and Skills Development	1.Baby care (0-2.5 years) 2. Day Care (2.5-4 years) 3. Pre-primary (4-6 years)	-Government -Private Sector -Development partners (EU, UNICEF) -NGOs, Churches	15, 000,000 P(Education) 110.000, 000 p (Local Government)	1. 3 Years teachers Diploma in ECCE BGCSE(O level equivalent) 2. 1 years Certificate in Early childhood Care and Education(ECCD) for teacher Aides	1 week workshops for serving teachers 2 year degree programme for serving diploma teacher	1)Private institutions are accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Accreditation(BQA) 2)Government institutions are accredited by the University of Botswana 3)ECCE teachers are licensed by the Ministry of Local Government 4)Ministry of Education issues teaching permits 5)Registration of Preschools done by the Ministry of Local Government.
Lesotho	ECCD	1) IECCD(2013) 2) Draft Early Learning Standards and Age Validation Standards (2012)	0- 6	Ministry of Education and Training	1. Home based (3-5 years) 2. Centre based (3-5) 3. Reception (5 years) Note: day care Centres in industrial areas	UNICEF Government Development partners WFP	-0.03% of min of Education Budget -Donor funds	2 years Certificate in Early childhood Care and Education (Junior Certificate and fluency in English)	2 year part time Certificate Training by Lesotho College of Education for serving teachers	1. Not yet. Challenges in registering private owned centers 2. Only government owned centers are registered by the Ministry of Education and Training.

Malawi	ECD	1. ECD (2006 revised 2015) focusing on Integrated service delivery which include: Nutrition, Health, Education, Early stimulation, Child Protection, Water and Environment sanitation), care for special needs children. 2. OVC Policy(2003) Nation Plan of Action for Vulnerable children (2015-2019) 3.OVC Standards (2014) 4. Early Learning and Development Standards ELDS (2015) 5. National Education Sector Plan NESP(2008-2017) 6. National ECD Syllabus 7. MGDS II(2011-2016)	0-8	Min of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare	Parenting Education(0-2) Centre Based (3-5 years) Transition (6-8 years)	Government INGOS Local NGOs Development Partners Communities Private Sector	MK 6billion (10 Million USD)	1. 1 year Basic Certificate in ECD (Primary education certificate or Junior Certificate targeting caregivers(volunteers) 2. 1 year Basic Certificate in Social Welfare (MSCE, O level equivalent) 3. Diplomas and degrees offered by private institutions suc Indira Ghandi and University of Victoria in Canada	1. 2 weeks Basic ECD trainings 2. 6 months Comprehensive Training for Caregivers 3. 3 weeks trainings for serving ECD personnel	The Ministry of Gender Children and Social Welfare 1)Monitoring and supervision of ECD Training offered both Private and Public institutions 2)Development of ELDS to ensure adherence to standards by both Private and public players 3)The Council of higher Learning offers accreditation of colleges offering diplomas and degrees in ECD
Mozambique	DICIPE: Integral Development of Children in Pre-School age	Strategic plan of DICIPE (pilot)	DICIPE 0-5 (0-2 Parental Education, 3-5 Pre-school)	0-5 Ministry of education	Care and education	Government	Infrastructure, subsidy for facilitators and service providers	Pre-school teachers: no specific training. Choose facilitator in community with Grade 7, pre-training for 2 weeks and 6months-follow-up by Save The Children and Providers	Additional 6 months in-service	None (Piloting stage) Accreditation is only for Primary and Secondary teachers.

Namibia	IECD	IECD Policy, Standards,	0-6	0-4 Ministry of MGECW 5-6 Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture	Integrated programs: care, support, stimulate, education	Pre-Primary funded by Ministry of Education and Ministry of GECW 0-4yrs	Pre-primary funded and 0-4 yrs Subsidy to Educarers, building and renovations of centres	Academic road: Diploma, degrees NGO and MGECW, train certificate some courses 7weeks and some 1 year.	MGECW certificate allow them to do Certificate with Namcol College or diploma. Unam is doing training for Unqualified teachers to upgrade.	NQA accredits courses of UNAM and NAMCOL.
South Africa	ECD	ECD Policy approved 9/12/15, White Paper 5, Standards, Childrens Act of 2005	Policy 0-7, White Paper 0-9	0-4 Ministry Social Development 5-6 Ministry of Basic Education	Care and Education	Grade R funded: Education, Social Development	Subsidy : 40% for food, 20% Administration and Gr. R funded	Academic road: Degrees Level 4 /matric	Level 4 (140 credits) certificate: equal grade 12 Upgrade trainings	Accreditation system to be a teacher and further with Universities Every NGOs who provide training must accredited by Education Department
Swaziland	ECCDE	Draft policy (since 2009) Children policy 2009 Children welfare and protection act 2005 Education sector policy 2014 National plan of action 2011 National education, training and implementation plan	0 - 8	MoET DPMO MTAD MOH	Health, education, nutrition, child protection, holistic child development	Government (0.05%) FBO, NGO, CBO, CP, private	Home-based N/hood care points, Preschools, day care centres, residential child care facilities	3 credits and 2 passes to enter college 3 – year diploma (since 2013) 1 – year certificate	Workshops (NGOs and government) CPD through NGO's Mentorship of caregivers and teachers by NGOs Training of trainers on ECE Parenting manual (home-based centres)	University of Swaziland Queen Maud University of Norway (Quality regulation of colleges) Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) Town Councils Ministry of Health

Country	Type	Policy/Legislation	Age	Ministry	Approach	Providers	Settings	Training	CPD/In-service	Oversight bodies
Zambia	ECE	Draft policy (since 2013) Implementation plan 2016 Background, situation analysis, policy objectives and measures, implementation framework	3 - 6	MoGE	Holistic child development	Government (0.5%) FBO, NGO, CBO, CP, private	Public and private (including FBO, community) preschools	5 O – levels to enter college 2 – year certificate (final graduates 2015, repeaters 2016) 3 – year diploma (since 2015) (Degree programmes exist after diploma, no salary scale yet at ECE)	ECE for special educational needs (post-diploma) CPD activities through district resource centre coordinators and zonal inset coordinators Mentorship programmes through colleges of education In-service training of ECE lecturers Training of trainers by ministry on ECE implementation Institutional leadership management course	Ministry of General Education (MoGE) Directorates of ECE and Teacher Education and Specialized Services Teaching Council (accreditation) Examination Council of Zambia Infrastructure directorate
Zimbabwe	ECD	Revised education act 1996 SI72 of 1999 SC no14 of 2004 DC N0 12 of 2005 SI106 of 2005 SC no2 of 2014 Implementation guidelines and recommendations, minimum standards, strategies	3 – 6 (in schools and communities) 0 – 8 (in college)	MoPSE MoHTESTD MOH	Holistic child development	Government FBO, NGO, CBO, CP, private	Public and private (including FBO, community) preschools	5 O – levels to enter college 3 – year diploma (since 2004) Degree programmes for those already in field	Available at universities Mentorship programmes through colleges Special needs training (post-diploma) Specific training on syllabus interpretation ECE management for school leaders	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) University of Zimbabwe (colleges) Ministry of Health (Health Standards) Rural District and Town Councils (local government)

Based on the sharing of practices, it became evident that all countries have either policies in place, in draft form or are working towards it.

The terminology referring to Early Childhood Care and Education that is used in the countries varies, and so does the specific age coverage. The specific Ministry that is in charge of ECCE also differs; in some of the countries, the mandate for ECCE provision is shared among different ministries, resulting in overall fragmentation of responsibilities and funding. Following a lack of government funding, ECCE is in some of the countries largely in private hands (e.g. Swaziland and Botswana) or largely funded by development partners and community contributions (e.g. Malawi). This significantly hampers unified regulatory mechanisms, standardization and monitoring and evaluation.

The required education and training background for teachers at ECCE level varies from no specific training requirements (e.g. Mozambique) over certificates and diplomas, to university degrees. These qualifications are offered by a range of service providers, both private and public. In-service CPD training courses are offered in all countries.

ECCE WORKFORCE

Competences and Standards for ECCE Teachers

The quality of the ECCE workforce is a strong determinant for quality ECCE programmes. Quality and relevant teacher training programmes, as well as in-service professional development opportunities should therefore be in place. The identification of required competences and standards facilitates monitoring and evaluation.

In group work, the participants deliberated on key issues pertaining competences and standards.

All countries reported to have some sort of monitoring and supervision challenges, which is primarily linked to the mushrooming of centres in the country and the concern of how to supervise these centers. The other main challenge reported is the lack of qualified teachers. ECCE stakeholders have been responding by multiple registration efforts and/or developing standards for ECD centres. It is reported however that additional efforts to expand training and increase resources are needed; advocacy efforts towards enhanced recognition of the importance of ECCE are also needed.

Consolidation of responses to the following questions resulted in the below matrix.

> 1. **What are the key issues/challenges on ECCE competences and standards in your country?**
> 2. **How is government and its partners responding to these challenges?**
> 3. **What could still be done by government and its partners to address these challenges?**

	Key Challenge	Response	What can still be done?
Botswana	Teacher competencies are available from the Botswana Quality Assurance (BQA) for certificate and diploma BUT 1. Monitoring of private ECD providers is a challenge 2. Some teachers have no permits or are unqualified 3. Few ECCE teachers 4. Lack of Compliance 5. Low capacity 6. Lack of inspectors to supervise ECD teachers	1. Upgrading of ECCE teachers from certificate to diploma 2. Government recruiting ECD teachers	1. Increase resources for ECCE classes 2. Expand ECCE training at masters level 3. Create posts for ECCE teachers
Lesotho	− Registration of ECCD Centres (Centre Based) − Introduction of Diploma at Lesotho College of education − Establishment of IECCD Centres in Industrial areas	− Creation of Registration Guidelines − Diploma has been written − Sensitised investors and political leaders for future implementation	− Finalise online registration of centres − Promulgate Diploma for implementation − Industrial Centres need to be implemented and political commitment towards implementation.

Malawi	3-5 year olds ECD syllabus, parenting Education for 0-2 year age group, the ELDS and monitoring tools are available. However there is 1. Monitoring and supervision challenges 2. Lack of harmonisation for education and ECD standards 3. Lack of awareness of standards 4. Harmonisation of ECD Teachers Curriculum 5. Few qualified ECCE teachers with Diploma and Degrees 6. Out of 34,000 caregivers(para-professionals/volunteers) about 17,000 caregivers are not trained 7. Poor infrastructure 8. High caregiver turnover rate due to lack of incentives	1. National ECD Conferences to share experiences and improve on standards 2. Infrastructure development by Action Aid, World Vision, Government 3. Training of Caregivers and conducting in service trainings 4. Training of key Education personnel	1. Finalise Curriculum development for Diplomas and degrees 2. Train ECD staff at post graduate levels to strengthen ECD delivery system 3. Harmonisation of the standards at a national level 4. Inclusion of ECD in teacher Education curriculum 5. Creation of established positions for ECD workers on Government payroll 6. Increase funding 7. Linkages with other countries in the region 8. Expand Training for ECCE workforce
Mozambique	− Evaluate Pilot Project	− 2017 evaluation of Pilot – data collection by National Institute of Statistics and Education Ministry interpretation and compilation of report	− Strategic way forward for expansion − Develop own curriculum − Develop Policy − Train Teachers
Namibia	− Control over centres that mushroom − Quality of ECD practice in centres − Supervision over training institutions (private, no regulation) − Monitoring and evaluation of ECD programmes at ECD centres − Lack of well-qualified staff members at Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) − Lack of training for ECD at training institutions (focus 5 – 8 and not on 0 – 4)	− MGECW is registering all centres for 0 – 4 year old while 5 – 6 are registering with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture − Toolkits for un(der)qualified teachers − Government partnering with NGOs to upgrade ECD educarers competencies − Scholarships for ECD / junior primary students at university	1. Advocacy of the importance of ECD 2. Exchange with neighbouring countries to train ECD educarers 3. Orientation of higher level ministry staff on ECD programmes

South Africa	– Lack of standards for training of teachers ECD standards – Register ECD centres – Qualified teachers	– Comprehensive ECD Policy - NCF Policy – Norms and Standards for ECD Centres – Developed basic Qualification standards – upgrading of qualifications	– Increased Training and mediation of NCF policy – Upgrading of teacher qualifications
Swaziland	– No national syllabus – Use ELDS (have been developed) – Lecturers have no ECE background (ECE new in the country) – Control over centres that mushroom – Quality of ECE practice in centres is compromised – Control over training centres (private, no regulation) – Registration of ECE centres – Lack of funds / transport to monitor ECE centres – Neighbourhood care points are not monitored	– Curriculum under development – Registration of private colleges – Standards monitoring council in place – Government partnering with NGOs to upgrade ECE teacher competencies – Continuous updating of database pertaining to learners, centres, location, etc…	– Registration of Neighbourhood Care Centres – Revamp coordination between responsible ministries – Capacity building (in-service) of lecturers – Upgrading of ECE teachers through government colleges
Zambia	– Lecturers' lack of background knowledge on ECE (ECE new in the country) – Poor quality of ECE practice in centres (diluted grade 1) – Intensify supervision over centres that arise – Supervision of private ECE colleges) – Lack of appreciation of ECE significance at higher levels in the Ministry of General Education – Monitoring ECE centres, especially private and community centres	1. Capacity building of lecturers 2. Government partnering with NGOs to upgrade ECE teacher competencies 3. Standards officers at district level record new centres	– Target specialised ECE lecturers with ECE background in recruitment – Increase cross-cutting linkages with organisations active in ECE – Orientation of higher level ministry officials on the value of ECE – Capacity build school management teams for improved internal supervision

Zimbabwe	− Has very high standards − Every primary school has an ECD class attached to it. − Classes manned by qualified ECD Diploma holders BUT 1. High teacher pupil ratio 2. Poor infrastructure 3. Dropout rate increased due to drought 4. Brain drain due to poor working conditions	UNICEF, Plan International supporting infrastructural development, ECD kit National wide training for teacher professional standards Use of paraprofessional to reduce teacher pupil ratio Feeding programme introduced by government	1. Improving working conditions to retain staff 2. Increase funding for ECD education

STRATEGIZING FOR PROGRESS

The National Level

In the framework of strategizing for progress, the participants identified the following action points at national level:

Botswana	1. Creation of ECCE posts for teachers and teacher aids 2. Adopt the PPPs as an alternative source of sustainable funding 3. Conduct impact assessment of ECCE
Lesotho	1. Registration of ECCD Centres 2. Teacher Training - full time Diploma 3. Establishment of ECCD Centres in Industrial Areas
Malawi	1. Harmonisation of ECCE standards and training competencies 2. Finalise and validate ECD Diploma and Degree Curricular 3. Support and expand capacity development for ECD workforce at all levels especially graduate and postgraduate tertiary levels
Mozambique	1. Education Ministry invite other Ministries to discuss taking pilot forward - partnerships 2. Define Policies for ECCE 3. Teacher Training
Namibia	1. (Supervisor) Develop Diploma in ECD at University (confirm mandate) 2. (Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and NGO) More in-service training e.g. 2 weeks per year in vacation 3. (Colleagues) Importance of ECD and 1000 days with ECD colleagues in the regions
South Africa	1. Increased Training and mediation of NCF policy 2. Upgrading of teacher qualifications 3. Conditions of Service for ECD Teachers

Swaziland	1. Capacity Building
	2. Coordination
	− Standardize curriculum
	− Regulate (Supervise)ECCE centres
	− Registration of ECCE centres
	− Identify ministries responsible for coordination
	3. Monitoring and evaluation
Zambia	1. Access – Mobilising influential community members, MPs, Organisations through sensitisation to increase access through ECE centres
	2. Quality – Strengthen ECE structures and training in colleges of education
	3. Orientation – Targeting provincial and district administrators and school management teams on the value and importance of ECE
Zimbabwe	1. Government should increase funding for ECCE to improve infrastructure and teaching and learning resources
	2. Improving working conditions for teachers
	3. Employ more ECD teachers to address high teacher pupil ratio

From the consolidated table, it can be extracted that key actions required refer to (1) funding, (2) capacity development of ECCE workforce at all levels, (3) advocacy for increased importance, (4) coordination and partnerships.

The Regional Level

The participants also identified actions points at regional level. The identified action points are grouped below.

Promotion of regional networking and collaboration

1. Establish Inter-country learning programmes, study tours and networks;
2. Networking on ECCE within the region;
3. Twinning between ECCE training institutions;
4. Establishment of a UNESCO portal where curriculum, training programmes and news from different countries can be shared;

Promotion of Regional Fora

5. Organization of an Annual Regional Conference on ECCE;

Regional Council and Protocols

6. ECCE Standardization at the regional level under the leadership of a regional council;
7. Establishment of a regional council;
8. Regional ECCE protocol to address disparities;
9. Develop regional policy for implementing ECCE/ECD in disaster and conflict zones;

Promotion of Training courses

10. Establish a Southern Africa Regional ECCE Training, Research and publication Centre;
11. Train ECD workforce in inclusive ECCE/ECD;
12. Provide training in Indigenous ECCE (IECCE) course development (The UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) has developed an indigenous ECCE Framework for Africa. The term indigenous ECCE means native, original, aboriginal, home-grown and local approaches for child care and education which infuses modern practices of hygiene and knowledge to train the African child in ways that assures their unique identities.)

SUMMARY AND WAY FORWARD

Throughout all presentations and discussions of the two-day meeting some key issues emerged:

Funding – Throughout the two day meeting, it became evident that funding constraints for quality ECCE are significant. Although important progress has been made in all countries, government ECCE spending is not substantial. This is intertwined with the perceived lack of importance that is granted to the foundational years of education. Countries' experiences show however that this is changing. In an effort to address these funding constraints, the private sector, community and development partners step in. Their contributions address infrastructure, coordination and training.

However, the lack of recognition and the accompanying funding gap seem to be the mother of ECCE challenges, as they enhance or even generate all other reported constraints.

Fragmentation – In the majority of the countries, the mandate for ECCE provision is shared among different ministries, resulting in overall fragmentation of responsibilities. Following the above mentioned lack of government funding, ECCE is in some of the countries largely in private hands or largely funded by development partners and community contributions. This coordination challenge significantly hampers unified regulatory mechanisms, standardization and monitoring and evaluation.

Access – ECCE services are not for everybody; we learned for example that in Mozambique, only about 5% of children have access to ECCE services. This is again mainly connected to the funding gap and the substantial cost of accessing such services. The countries reported that children from marginalized groups and disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from the lowest quality ECCE or from none at all. Inclusive ECCE provision presents in that regard as a significant challenge. Food insecurity at centres or pre-schools is an important factor leading to non-attendance and drop-out.

Quality – When children do get access to ECCE, the quality of those services is not always guaranteed. In a time when ECCE services are expanding and even mushrooming, it is important to ensure that expansion is accompanied by quality.

In order to ensure quality, fostering linkages between ECCE centres and primary schools at all levels is important; following fragmentation of mandates and coordination challenges, this is not always the case. Another aspect eating on quality services is the matter of mother tongue education and materials. In the majority of countries, the language of learning at the early years of education is dictated to be the mother language; following multiple challenges, this is not always the case, causing learning confusion at the early stages of education.

Countries also reported that standardized curricula are not always in place or implemented, neither are fixed competences and standards, which hampers monitoring and evaluation of the quality of ECCE practices.

Teachers – One of the key determinants of quality ECCE provision is teacher quality; an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. Countries reported a significant lack of qualified

teachers at the foundational levels. This happens for multiple reasons, including a lack of offered training, the high cost of training, and qualified ECCE teachers migrating to higher levels of education. The question of teacher motivation and teacher incentives arises, in which low teacher status and insufficient professionalization of ECCE play a significant role.

It becomes evident that a significant investment in ECCE coordination, access, quality and the ECCE teacher is urgently required. In order to address this, the issue of recognition of the importance of the foundational levels of education and the accompanying funding gap need to be targeted. Countries have already initiated this process.

It also became clear throughout the meeting that collaboration at the regional level can facilitate addressing all of the abovementioned challenges. Against the different national ECCE contexts, challenges demonstrate a common nature, which holds great opportunity for common solutions.

ANNEX I: PROGRAMME

Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education

Conference objectives:

- To share country policies, good practices/experiences and research results on Early Childhood Care and Education;
- To examine key issues and challenges on the issue of Early Childhood Care and Education;
- To identify concrete recommendations on how to foster inter-country cooperation as a means to strengthen Early Childhood Care and Education.

Tuesday 26 April, 2016

Time	Activity	Presenter/Responsible
08:00 – 08:30	Registration for all participants	NATCOM/ROSA
08:30 – 08:45	Welcoming Remarks	Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO
08:45 – 09:00	Cultural Performance	
09:00 – 09:15	Official Opening Remarks	Swaziland Minister of Education and Training
09:15 – 09:30	Group Photo	
09:30 – 10:00	Tea/Coffee	
Session I: Background and creating a common understanding		
10:00 – 10:10	Objectives, participants and programme	UNESCO ROSA
10:10 – 10:40	UNESCO and ECCE / ECCE in the SDGs	UNESCO ROSA
10:40 – 11:00	Policies and Practices in Swaziland (TBC)	Swaziland
Session II: Countries experiences in Ensuring Quality ECCE		
11:00 – 12:35	Experiences from Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia (government perspectives)	Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia
12:35 – 13:00	Discussion	Plenary
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:30	Zimbabwe's experience in ECCE / Challenges of Inclusive Early Education in Zimbabwe	Ms Clara Kanoerera, Zimbabwe Mr Alvord Sithole, VVOB Zimbabwe
14:30 – 14:50	The introduction of Pre-School Education in Mozambique	Ms Gina Guibunda, National Director, Mozambique
14:50 – 15:10	Practices, prospects and challenges for ECCE in Malawi	Mr Thoko Mtapaonga, Lecturer and Course Coordinator, Malawi
15:10 – 15:40	Discussion	Plenary
15:40 – 16:00	Tea/Coffee	
Session III: Improving Policies and Practices		
16:00 – 17:00	Group Work: ECCE Policy framework	Group Work
17:00 – 17:30	Group Work reporting back	Report back to Plenary
17:30 – 18:30	RECEPTION	

Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education

Wednesday 27 April, 2016

08:00 – 08:15	Day 1 Synthesis	
Session IV: ECCE Workforce: Teacher Training, Professional Development and Teacher Status		
08:15 – 08:45	Using Toolkits for Capacity Building	Ms Juanita Moller, University of Namibia
08:45 – 09:15	"Where Children are, we go"	Raviro Chipato, Morganster Teachers College, Zimbabwe
09:15 – 09:45	"Quality ECE teaching? Look at the children!"	VVOB Zambia
09:45 – 10:15	Discussion	Plenary
10:15 – 10:45	Tea/Coffee	
Session V: ECCE Workforce: Competences and Standards for ECCE Teachers		
10:45 – 11:45	Group work: ECCE competences and standards	Group Work
11:45 – 12:15	Group Work reporting back	Report back to Plenary
Session VI: Strategizing for progress		
12:15 – 13:00	Group work: Identifying Action Points	Group Work
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	Group Work reporting back Discussion	Report back to Plenary
15:00 – 15:15	Way forward	UNESCO ROSA
15:15 – 15:30	Closing	Swaziland
15:30 – 16:00	Tea/Coffee – Leave for field excursion	
FIELD EXCURSION		

ANNEX II: ATTENDANCES

	Country	Name	Position	Institution	E-mail
1	Botswana	Rapelang Bogatsu	CEO	Ministry of Education and Skills Development	rbogatsu@gov.bw
2		Mosimanelape Kgasa	Principal Education Officer	Ministry of Education and Skills Development	msbkgasa@gov.bw
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18		Elizabeth Mkhabela	ECD Programme Manager		

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