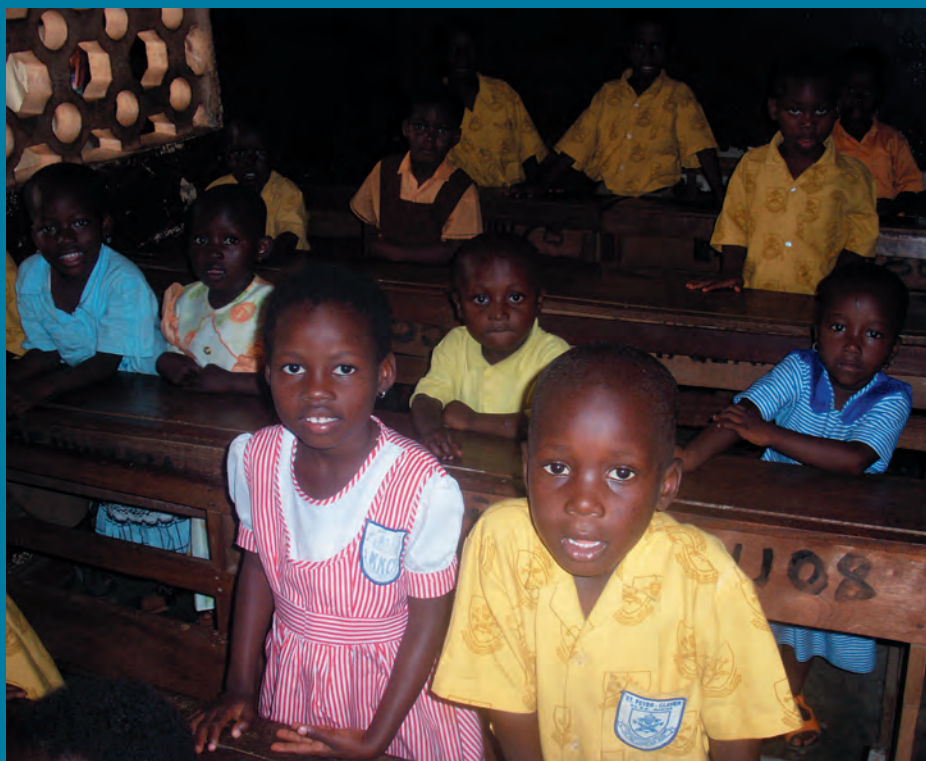




Education International

Pan-African Early Childhood Education seminar

THEME: "Quality Early Childhood
Education: Every Child's Right"



Mensvic Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Report

29th - 30th September 2009

Summarized by Kofi Nyiaye and reviewed by Dennis Sinyolo

Cover: Pre-school children in a public ECE centre in Ghana.
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FOREWORD

Children have a right, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to receive education, and Early Childhood Education (ECE) must be considered part of that right. Education International strongly believes that Early Childhood Education is of great value to all children and should be available to all. It provides a sound basis for learning and helps to develop skills, knowledge, personal competence and confidence and a sense of social responsibility. Therefore, every child, including children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds and other disadvantaged groups, should have access to early education services of good quality. African children cannot be denied the benefits of this fundamental right.

This is a summary report of an ECE Pan African seminar organized by Education International and held in Accra, Ghana, from 29 – 30 September 2009. The seminar was initiated by the ECE Task Force, which was set up by the EI Executive Board, following the decision of the Berlin World Congress in 2007.

EI will vigorously pursue the recommendations of the seminar and continue to support its member organizations in Africa and elsewhere to advocate for quality ECE services for all children. We encourage teacher unions in Africa and beyond, to continue to embrace and support the ECE sector, including ensuring universal access, quality, the training and professional development of staff and the improvement of their conditions of service.

We would like to thank the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) for hosting the seminar and the following EI member organizations for supporting it financially and otherwise: The Danish Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) of Denmark, Lararforbundet of Sweden, Union of Education of Norway (UEN) and the National Education Association of the United States (NEA).



Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary



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1. INTRODUCTION

Education International (EI) organized a Pan - African Seminar on Early Childhood Education in Accra, Ghana, on 29th and 30th September 2009 for member national teacher unions and other organizations for which Early Childhood Education (ECE) was a major concern. The seminar was attended by participants from 14 African countries - representing teacher unions. In addition, the seminar was attended by members of the Education International Task Force on Early Childhood Education, EI staff, representatives of Action Aid International and observers from 8 other countries outside Africa.

The seminar was hosted by the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and supported by the Danish Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) of Denmark, Lararforbundet of Sweden, Union of Education of Norway (UEN) and the National Education Association of the United States (NEA).

The main objectives of the seminar were to facilitate exchange of experiences on policy and practical issues on Early Childhood Education among teacher unions and organizations involved in the promotion of early education and to also lay a foundation for establishing a regular Africa ECE platform.

The proceedings of the seminar included an opening ceremony, which was followed immediately by a presentation of a paper on EI Policy on Early Childhood Education and a keynote, address on the theme, "Quality Early Childhood Education: Every Child's right" .

Other papers presented highlighted the following: "The role of educators and their unions in promoting and delivering quality ECE services"; "Joining forces to promote ECE, "Experiences from the North-South collaborative program"; "The mandate and activities of the EI ECE task force"; Current developments, issues and challenges on Early Childhood Education in The Gambia, Congo, Ivory Coast, Tanzania and Zambia; together with experiences from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Benin (based on an Early Childhood Development Program organized by BUPL and LO/FTF Council, Denmark, in conjunction with GNAT). The program has been running since 2002 and also involves Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), The Federation of Teachers Unions (FESEN) Togo in 2008 and Union of Early Childhood Educators (SYNAEM), Benin in 2009).

There were parallel group discussions dealing with 3 topics. These were: "The role of teacher unions in promoting ECE provision"; "Training teachers to meet the ECE goal"; and "Fostering collaboration to achieve universal and quality ECE provision".

In addition, a panel discussion was held dealing with the sub-theme: "Working together to improve ECE in Africa"; Specific contributions focused on the topics, "The role of civil society in the EFA and ECE movement"; and "Building synergies to achieve EFA: Experiences from Uganda".

1.1 Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Vice President of GNAT, Portia Anafo, with the Minister of Education of Ghana as the Guest of Honour. Present at the opening ceremony were 60 participants comprising representatives of 14 African countries representing teacher unions, and participants,

observers and invited guests from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Mauritius, Benin, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America; members of the Education International Task Force on Early Childhood Education and staff of the Education International Africa Office, Ghana and Brussels; Three Action Aid representatives from Nigeria, United Kingdom and Sierra Leone and invited guests from Ghana, who included representatives from the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry Of Education, Ministry of Women and Children, UNESCO, UNICEF, Teachers and Education Workers Union (TEWU), The Private Proprietors Association and the World Organization for Early Childhood Educators (OMEPE).

In her opening remarks, Portia Anafo was happy that EI had taken up the issue of Early Childhood Education and for initiating the seminar. Since education was the key to Africa's development, she hoped that the seminar would serve as a powerful microscopic lens which would capture all the issues, obvious and hidden, that require national and collective discussions on early childhood.

In the welcome address, the EI Vice President and EI Africa President, Irene Duncan-Adanusa, reminded participants that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was signed exactly 20 years ago but expressed satisfaction about the fact that the seminar was in progress.



Pre-school children entertain seminar participants during the official opening ceremony.

Tracing the history of the interest of EI in early childhood matters, she said it dated back to the 1998 EI Congress Resolution and the and the 2007 Congress decision to establish the Task Force on Early Childhood Education. The European Regional seminar served as an impetus to the African seminar.

The importance she attached to the seminar was the key role Early Childhood Education plays in national development. The seminar would also serve as a launch pad for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the seminar would be useful as a mapping out exercise on Early Childhood Education in Africa.

It was hoped that by the end of the seminar there would have been fruitful exchanges of useful information among the various countries and organizations engaged in early childhood activities.

Perhaps the recommendations put forward by participants would be the basis for developing a policy on Early Childhood Education by EI Africa just like the policy designed by the Europe Region. Duncan-Adanusa briefly touched on the work of the EI task force on ECE, and in addition, she provided a summary of the EI policy on ECE.

While signing off, the EI Vice President assured the participants that their stay in Ghana would be safe and hospitable and that they would get whatever they might be missing away from home.

1.2 Statements

In a follow up to the welcome address, statements and solidarity messages were shared by representatives of some key organizations present.

In her message, the Chairperson of the EI task force on Early Childhood Education, Haldis Holst, restated EI's commitment to early education and emphasized ECE as a key national development agenda. Referring to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Holst brought to light the very crucial need for early childhood services for the benefit of every child, whatever their circumstances. What the seminar was about was to highlight the importance of offering quality services to the youngest citizens, to stress on the importance of early childhood teachers and to ensure that, as teacher unions, were cared about the youngest children of Africa and their teachers and promise ourselves that we would initiate good policies and actions on their behalf.

The seminar would be most beneficial if the 2 days were spent listening, learning and sharing, developing strategies and ideas and exploring opportunities on how to move the early childhood agenda forward in the interest of the African Child. To a large extent, early childhood services in Africa were inadequate, with an enrollment rate of only 14%. However, it was one sector which was benefiting the rich, the more. In keeping with the Education International Resolution of 1998, she emphasized that Early Childhood Education was a public good and so charged all governments to push resources into the sector. The period of paying lip service to Early Childhood Education was over, she concluded.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Program Officer for Education in Ghana, Madeez Adamu, emphasized that the purpose and very existence of UNICEF was to champion the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Early childhood issues, therefore, form the foundations of UNICEF's Medium Term Strategic Plan. In Ghana, UNICEF has been providing major financial support to government public early childhood activities, including curriculum development, training and policy implementation. The work of UNICEF had, therefore, been geared towards reducing the gap between the rich and the poor by sup-



porting public early childhood services. Madeez was hopeful that the seminar would serve as enough motivation for the teacher unions to invest in early childhood services.

The Vice President of the World Organization of Early Childhood Educators (OMEPE), Ghana Chapter, Grace Amarteifio, in stating the core function of OMEPE, expressed solidarity with EI as champions of the rights of the child as stipulated in the UN convention. OMEPE supports research which may influence and facilitate the conditions in which children live, play and develop. It also promotes for all children, the optimum conditions which will ensure their well being, happiness and development in their families, institutions and communities. She was of the view that the deliberations which would be done during the seminar and sharing of ideas would be more fruitful if they resulted in the development of strategies for future implementation of specific projects in Africa for the good of the young child.

In a statement by the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, read for him by the Director of Teacher Education Division, Victor Mante, restated that education is a fundamental human right and that Early Childhood Education was a public right and so equal opportunity must be granted all children by government despite the circumstances of the children. The seminar could best serve as an opportunity to formulate comprehensive plans and strategies for the implementation of programs in order that Africa would meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The Public Relations Officer of the Association of Private Proprietors of Early Childhood Centres, Mrs Edith Haziell, used the occasion to praise EI for organizing the seminar to create awareness about the importance of Early Childhood Education. She was also thankful to the Government of Ghana for including private early childhood centres in its training programs and also for supplying free of charge, some teaching and learning materials meant to benefit the children in these centres. Even though private early childhood centres do so with a profit motive, it was also because they relied on private capital to run their centres. As the private schools got more support from government, it was likely that the cost of private ECE would come down. Such private centres should be considered as very important partners in the stride to educate the young children of Africa. The government alone could not fulfill the increasing demand for early childhood services, she argued.

In a concluding statement, the representative of the Minister of Women and Children, Ruth Addison, who was the National Coordinator of Early Childhood programs in Ghana, used the occasion to feature major highlights of ECE in Ghana. Public Early Childhood Education had been going on for decades in Ghana, even though it was dominated by the private sector. A policy on ECE was implemented in 2004 by which ECE was officially recognized as part of the formal education system.

Addison further explained that the implementation of the policy had been gradual but systematic, with the creation of a national secretariat for the coordination of all ECE activities in Ghana and the setting up of the very active National Early Childhood Committee. In addition, a curriculum to guide Early Childhood Education had been developed and was in use in all ECE centres, including private centres. A set of early learning standards and indicators had also been developed for 4-5 year olds.

As a tribute to the efforts to improve Early Childhood Education services, birth registration had improved up to 62% and under-5 mortality had been reduced by 30% (2008). Despite some improvement in the ECE sector, Ghana needed to intensify parent education and to introduce other social protection measures which would help to retain the young child in the centre. She concluded that the measures put in place by government were gradually helping to improve the sector which has a gross enrollment rate of 50%.

Ghana's Minister of Education, Hon Alex Tettey-Enyo, was the guest speaker. He reflected on the status of ECE services in Ghana just as the Ghana National Coordinator had done previously. In addition, he explained the key role the training of educators plays in quality education. Two main institutions responsible for the training of educators in Ghana are the universities and The National Nursery Teacher Training Centre (NNTTC), which runs 8-week in-service sessions.

In 2008, there were 11 000 public and 4 000 private ECEs providing organized care for 50% of eligible young children qualified to enter ECEs, with a total of about 37 000 educators most of whom are untrained.

The huge numbers of children who were not benefiting from the services and untrained educators, as well as the inadequate relevant infrastructure and equipment, pose a huge challenge to the government of Ghana. It however remains undaunted and was in the process of introducing additional measures to strengthen education in general in Ghana. This includes expanding the

school feeding program, increasing the level of grants to schools, the provision of free uniform to children in deprived schools and the granting of allowances to teachers working in most deprived communities. With these steps in progress, the Minister was hopeful that if all African governments prioritized Early Childhood Education with support from NGOs, civil society and parents, quality early childhood services would be assured.



Ghana Minister of Education, Honorable Alex Tettey-Enyo, officially opened the seminar.

The Minister expressed appreciation that teacher unions had taken time off to take a critical look at the early childhood sector and hoped that the discussions would end with concrete decisions which would be implemented.

The EI Chief Regional Coordinator, Assibi Napoe, while giving the vote of thanks, expressed the deepest appreciation for the willingness of member unions and organizations to attend the seminar in Ghana and particularly the organizations and unions which sponsored the seminar. After the closing remarks by the chairperson, the opening ceremony was brought to an end.

1.3 The Keynote address: “Quality Early Childhood Education - Every Child’s Right”

By Cyril Dalais, Advisor, Ministry of Education and Former UNICEF Senior Consultant, Mauritius

Cyril Dalais intimated that as the participants reflected on quality Early Childhood Education as Every Child’s Right, and as the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child was being celebrated, there was need to reflect on the provisions of the Convention as a working guide to all child centred-activities. He made special mention of the provisions especially related to protection of the child, Articles 6, 7, 8, 18 and 28, 29 and 31. These articles provide an interesting framework for policy dialogue development and implementation.

The Convention also called for holistic, inter-sectoral and integrated action and demanded that all ministries and agencies come together and coordinate activities for the common good of the child. A child’s development between the ages of zero and eight is very crucial and may prove disastrous and too late if adequate provision was not made for the child. Whatever we planned to do for the children of Africa, the provisions of the convention would serve as a good reference point and an important guide book for child-centred action.

Dalais confirmed that Early Childhood Education in Africa was a necessity and an urgent concern which must be tackled with all the seriousness it deserved. There was the need to highlight the importance of putting the child first. The survival, care, protection, equal opportunities for all children in Africa must be the priority. The policy of inclusion should be the order of the day, and so Africa needed to ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child contributed to integrated programs that would reach out to all those living in abject poverty and who were excluded because of natural calamities, HIV and AIDS, and man-made disasters like war, displacement of population and ethnic cleansing.

Africa would need a lot of financial resources to be able to push the agenda of early childhood forward, but it required countries and their unions to invest their energies, commitment, time and finance in young child-integrated programming for a better return for the future.

However, Dalais was of the view that even though some countries were doing well economically, Early Childhood Education was still not receiving the best atten-



tion. Even some organisations which were supposed to be pro-children could be accused of feet-dragging about early childhood issues. He charged the unions attending the 4th Pan African workshop in Dakar, organised by UNESCO (10-13 November 2009), to do so with a clear resolution to reinforce the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the celebration of the coming of age (21st birthday) of CRC on 20th November 2010.

2. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

2.1 EI Policy on Early Childhood Education

By Dennis Sinyolo, El Senior Coordinator, Education and Employment, Brussels

Education International (EI), as an organization representing the interest of teachers and education worldwide, has been interested in all aspects of education. It was especially concerned about the interest of the youngest persons in society, who must be catered for, but are particularly vulnerable.

The policy of EI on Early Childhood Education was particularly framed to recognize ECE as all the services targeted at very young children. These may include but not be limited to all kinds of education taking place before compulsory schooling and provided in different kinds of settings, including nurseries, childcare centres, crèches, kindergartens, pre-schools and many other institutions similar to these.

EI, in adopting this definition, was aware of varied forms of names and definitions by different organizations, countries and stakeholders. For instance, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) refers to Early Childhood Education as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) calls it Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), while UNICEF calls it Early Childhood Development (ECD). By Early Childhood Education, EI means education from a broader perspective - wholesome education that encompasses children's holistic development and learning, where care forms an integral part of a child's development and education.

Tracing the history of the policy, Sinyolo explained that the EI World Congress in 1998 in Washington D.C. passed a Resolution on Early Childhood Education. In the resolution, it was stated that all children have a right, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to receive education and Early Childhood Education (ECE) must be considered part of this right.

The Key provisions of the Washington Resolution

The main provisions of the Resolution were that quality ECE services should be a public service and that early childhood services should be free of charge and be available to all children, including those with special needs. It also suggested that Early Childhood Education should be an integral part of every country's education system. Teachers working in early childhood institutions should have the same rights, entitlements and status as other teachers. Appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure that both men and women were recruited and trained as early childhood educators. The same status of pedagogical training should be provided for all teachers, including early childhood educators, so as to promote equity in the education system. This resolution was therefore the basis of the EI policy on Early Childhood Education.

EI policy on education and Early Childhood Education

One of the basic tenets of the policy was that education in general was a basic human right and a public good and not a commodity. As a public good education should not be sold, neither should it be traded for profit. Every child has the right to public education of good quality. The right to education has been recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In addition, EI supports the 6 Educations for All (EFA) goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and all other forms of efforts, initiatives and programs aimed at providing universal access to quality education. EI also believes in inclusive education or education for all, including children, boys, girls, the poor, the rich, the rural and urban, migrant, indigenous, the vulnerable and the disabled.

The role of EI and other teacher unions in promoting ECE

The Washington Resolution mandated EI and its member organizations to promote the ideas and recommendations expressed in the resolutions through contacts and discussions with governments, intergovernmental organizations,



UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, OECD and other similar institutions. In addition, they were to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood and support the promotion of programs that made easy the exchange of ideas. Through advocacy activities, they were to promote public funded high quality early childhood programs.

The benefit of ECE Policy for Europe

Sinyolo informed the meeting that the EI Pan-European Structure had a policy on ECE. Drawing from various research findings, the policy states that early childhood is the most critical period for cognitive and social development, the acquisition of languages and early literacy. Children are active learners from birth, and the first years are vital. Early Childhood Education should be recognized as a first step to basic education and as a fully integrated sector within national educational system. High quality Early Childhood Education provides the foundation for lifelong learning and stimulates children's social emotional, physical, cognitive and linguistic development. Sinyolo went on to challenge Africa to come up with its own policy on ECE. This would provide a systematic and coherent union response to the ECE challenge on the continent, he concluded.

2.2. The mandate and activities of the ECE task force

By Haldis Holst, Norway, Chairperson EI Task Force and EI Vice President

Giving some background information about the EI task force on Early Childhood Education, Haldis Holst explained that it was formed as a result of a decision taken at the 5th World Congress of EI held in Berlin in 2007. Prior to, and as a background to this decision, in 1998, at its 2nd World Congress in Washington D.C. EI had passed a resolution on Early Childhood Education, affirming that children have a right to receive education as expressed in the universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Early Childhood Education ought to be considered as part of the right. The resolution also stipulated that early childhood must be recognized by every country as an integral part of education and should be a public service provided free of charge and available to all children despite their circumstances.

of the Working Group resulted in the development of a European policy on Early Childhood Education, which was ratified by the Pan-European Conference in 2006. The policy affirmed the EI 1998 Resolution and also whipped up enthusiasm among unions in the European region and urged EI member organizations to be active participants and initiators of debate and to advocate for high quality ECE as an inherent part of basic education.

Composition

The task force was made up of 14 members, 2 EI Executive Board members, 2 from each of 5 EI regions, and 2 other experts.



ECE Task Force members (from left): Dennis Sinyolo (EI Secretariat), Omar J. Ndure (GTU, The Gambia), Birendra P. Shrestha (NTA, Nepal), Marguerite Gustave (STU, St Lucia), Haldis Holst (Chairperson, UEN, Norway), Allan Baumann (BÜPL, Denmark), Shyrelle Eubanks (NEA, United States), Irene Duncan-Adanusa (GNAT, Ghana), Joao A.C. Monlevade (CNTE, Brazil) and Attu Diaw (SNEEL, Senegal).

Activities

The task force has so far held two meetings, the first one in Malta and the other one in Accra in 2009. It also organized a mapping exercise on Early Childhood Education and the report was in a draft form.



The aim of the task force

The main aim of the task force was to serve as an advisory body to EI on various aspects of Early Childhood Education, including strategies for effective implementation of the Washington Resolution on ECE and ECE policy, practice, programs and activities. The idea was to create a body which would inspire, motivate and remind EI and its members on early childhood issues as a priority area.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the task force were to devise and recommend strategies for implementing the 1998 EI Congress Resolution on ECE. Based on this, EI interacts with governmental agencies, non- governmental organizations, private providers and international agencies on issues related to Early Childhood Education.

Another equally important area was the need to identify and analyze global, regional and country trends and developments in ECE and recommend appropriate policy responses. The purpose of the mapping exercise was borne out of this idea. The hope was that about 19 countries would respond to the mapping exercise. The report so far showed great diversity in terms of the status of Early Childhood Education in Africa and the rest of the world. However, the concerns about Early Childhood Education seem quite similar.

In addition, it was to help identify successful examples of Early Childhood Education systems, programs and activities and devise strategies for sharing them with member organizations. This Pan- African conference was therefore in fulfillment of this objective.

Lastly, the purpose of the task force is to recommend strategies for improving the status of Early Childhood Education and that of ECE staff, including their conditions of service and professional development and to come up with publicity materials highlighting EI and its member organizations' involvement and activities in ECE. EI has a website which features issues on early childhood. Individual members were advised to develop their own website, posters and brochures.

Time frame

The task force was mandated to hold 3 meetings, the last of which would take place in June 2010 and thereafter send a report to the Executive Board. It would submit its report to the EI World Congress in 2011.

2.3 Joining forces to promote ECE: Experiences from the North-South, South-South collaboration program

By Cyril Dalais, Advisor, Ministry of Education and Former UNICEF Senior Consultant, Mauritius

Cyril Dalais gave experiences from the North-South and South-South collaborative program, which promotes collaboration in various aspects of ECE, particularly the training of educators through teacher exchange programs and short courses. In reference to the EFA Global Monitoring Report in 2007, the status of Early Childhood Education provision in Sub-Saharan Africa was identified to be poor and limited. The major issues identified were lack of funding, resources, staff and infrastructure, lack of capacities in policy making, lack of political support at both the national and international levels and lack of a common vision and strategy among development partners.

As a result, a response called the Mauritius-African Initiative, was devised, focusing on capacity building in Early Childhood Education, policy and political dialogue and advocacy, and strengthening of the UN common approach and coordinated strategy towards ECE based on UN reform principles. Mauritius was identified as one of the most advanced countries in ECE in Sub-Saharan Africa, with specific reference to pre-primary education. Access to pre-primary education is very high. ECE provision is based on a multi-sectoral approach and the country has the capacity to become a regional knowledge hub.

Mauritius joined hands with Norway, a country with an equally highly advanced Early Childhood Education system, other agencies like UNDP, UNICEF and universities devised a capacity building program for high cadres who were ECE policy makers.

The idea was to develop an intensive diploma awarded by the university of Oslo, facilitated by ECE authorities in Mauritius. Participants were policy makers, leaders and ECE practitioners from Africa South of the Sahara, starting with participants from Mauritius, Tanzania Madagascar, Comoros, Reunion, Seychelles and Tanzania. The approach of the course was 25% academic and 75% practical, demand driven and assignments based on national priorities. In addition, an academic knowledge hub would be developed, made up of Mauritius and Tanzania, to build and share activities, research and documentation and to promote policy dialogue. The start up phase was 2009-2010.



Another case of North-South cooperation which was an initiative of ADEA, in collaboration with the University of Victoria, Canada, was in the area of the development of ECE capacity. They organized Early Childhood Development Virtual University training programs for ECE trainers and educators in Sub-Saharan Africa. The first batch completed a 3 year Masters program in early childhood in 2006. Since then the program has been going on with participants doing one year professional skills training in Early Childhood Education. Countries in the program include Ghana, Senegal, Malawi, Tanzania etc.

These 2 examples of North-South and South-South cooperation identified the educator as the key agent in Early Childhood Education and assumed that improvement in their skills would help to improve the quality of ECE services in Africa.

3. COUNTRY REPORTS

3.1 Current developments, issues and challenges: Country experiences

■ **THE GAMBIA** - *By Essa Sowe, Deputy General Secretary, Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU)*

The country profile

With a population of 1.667million (2006) and with 6% of the population under 5 years, integrated ECE is part of the expanded basic education system.

Early Childhood Education

In terms of Early Childhood Education, the enrollment rate has been 23% for those aged between 3 and 6 years. There is a marked disparity between rural and urban access rates, ECE services being more available in the urban setting. For children with special needs, only 14% have access to Early Childhood Education. Early Childhood Education has been largely in the hands of the private people at a ratio of 90%: 10%. Access is also based on affordability and is largely more expensive in the private sector.

Other Early childhood services

Baby friendly initiatives have been undertaken, including baby friendly hospitals and community initiatives, as well as nutrition surveillances. There is a

baby friendly hospitals initiative, involving 19 hospitals aimed at promoting breast feeding among mothers with young children. Baby friendly community initiatives promote optional infant and young child feeding practices through advocacy, training on infant and child nutrition and promotion of food security at the community level. This is being promoted in 283 communities and affecting 50 000 children with 40 % coverage. Nutrition surveillance is also undertaken to assess the nutritional status of children and the findings help to guide the provision of specific nutritional interventions.

Some strategies to promote ECE

A national policy framework has been developed to serve as a guide to the implementation of early childhood activities. The annexation of centres to lower basic schools in the rural Gambia is being done by way of provision of facilities and services.

Guidelines have also been developed for the training of polyvalent educators. In addition, a national curriculum has been developed to serve as a guide to the educators who work in the centres.

Other initiatives undertaken include the provision of meals to children in the centres which have been annexed to lower basic schools and the running of in-service training programs for educators on both full- time and part-time bases.

Challenges

The main challenges to Early Childhood Education in the Gambia include inadequate access to health, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, early learning and stimulation, resulting in low enrollment rates, with 76% of children being out of the centres. Repetition rates (6%) and drop-out rates (5%) are high, particularly in the centres annexed to the lower basic schools.

A high under 5 mortality rate of up to 113 per thousand (2006), high infant mortality of 84 per thousand, vulnerability to abuse, harassment and exploitation, disease, social exclusion and poverty were some of the challenges facing Early Childhood Education in The Gambia.

In addition, the educators face the problem of high educator-child ratios, unattractive conditions of service, low level of professionalism, low salaries and inadequate teaching and learning materials.



■ **ZAMBIA** – *By Catherine Chinunda, Zambia National Union of Teachers*

Country Profile

Zambia has a population of 11,696 175 of whom 2,012 000 are below 5 years. It has an under- 5 mortality rate of 182 and infant mortality rate of 108 per thousand. The majority of Zambians subsist on an equivalent of less than a US dollar a day. Poverty is slowly compromising the sustainability of what Zambia has achieved since independence (Fifth National Development Plan, 2005). The severity of poverty is more acute among rural households than urban households.

In the same vein, most Zambian children live under high poverty conditions that are worsening with time. The orphans and disabled children are subjected to extreme conditions of poverty, unable to access basic services and are most vulnerable to child abuse by adults within the family, neighbourhood and the community (CSO, 2000). It is estimated that two thirds of all Zambian children aged 0-6 years live in very difficult conditions and most of these live in rural or unplanned settlements in urban areas. From the face of it, it is also observed that the number of street children is also increasing.

Background

The emphasis on provision of Early Childhood Care, Development and Education in Zambia strengthened after the resolve of the Jomtien Conference on education in 1990 and the Dakar Framework of 2000 in Senegal. The Dakar Framework on Education for All (EFA) reaffirmed the Jomtien recommendations and committed national governments to provide comprehensive ECE policies and to address challenges of child development.

What is ECE?

In the context of Zambia, the term Early Childhood Education (ECE) is used to refer specifically to the education issues of children from birth to six years, as provided in the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2003-2007 and the Education For All (EFA) Framework of Action of 2004. Early Childhood Care, Education and Development (ECCED) is the level of education, formal or informal, which a child between 0-6 years of age undergoes before attaining the compulsory age of 7 years of entry into basic school in Zambia. On the other hand, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a comprehensive term implying all aspects of child development. ECD adopts a holistic approach encompassing health, nutrition, hygiene and children's cognitive development and socio-emotional wellbeing (UNESCO 2007). On the other

hand, Early Childhood Education is a component of ECD that specially refers to the provision of childhood education to children between the age of three and six. The three acronyms (ECCED, ECD and ECE) may be used interchangeably but differently in this paper. The focus of the paper, however, is on the ECE situation in Zambia and the challenges of policy gaps.

Why ECE?

The need for expanding the provision of ECE services cannot be overemphasized. The increasing focus on expanding ECE arises from the growing emphasis by researchers who have established that ECE has long lasting impressions on children when they grow up. It is argued from research that the human brain grows to its full capacity by the age of five. From this background, it is imperative that between the age 0-6 years, as is the case for Zambia, children must be given the necessary stimulation so as to build strong foundations, not only for entry into basic school education, but for preparing them for future life opportunities as well. Realizing that the needs of the child are diverse, the concept of the whole child demands for comprehensive approaches to the provision of ECD services. This is from the understanding that provision ensuring children are provided with good health, nutrition, water, care and environmental sanitation is in place.

Above all, ECE programs are vital to offset social and economic disadvantage and are an instrument to guarantee children's rights that opens the way to all the EFA goals and contributes powerfully to reducing poverty, the main objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. As such, the provision of ECE requires concerted support from the state, NGOs, civil society, communities and families.

Policy Initiatives and Current Status

Historically, the Zambian government's participation in Early Childhood Education has been minimal. The Day Nurseries Act of 1957 was the first innovative step towards recognition of the importance of Early Childhood Care, Development and Education by the government. This Act is still in effect and provides legal backing for anyone capable of offering Early Childhood Education.

In 1972 the Zambia Pre-school Association (ZPA) was created as an umbrella organization to look into issues of Early Childhood Education by taking charge of the nursery and pre-school matters in the country. Since, then the ZPA has broadened its mandate to include training of teachers for Early Childhood



Education. It is worth noting that in the past and for many years, no single organization was mandated with the responsibility of running the activities of Early Childhood Education. The local authorities merely maintained registers of all Childhood Centres within their localities without monitoring their performance. However, this situation has now changed and all the activities of Early Childhood Development have been placed under the authority of the Ministry of Education, as outlined in the National Education Policy “Education Our Future” (1996). The role of the Ministry is to encourage and facilitate the establishment of pre-school programs especially in rural areas, training of teachers, developing curriculum materials and monitoring standards.

Currently, institutions with ECD services and resources include seven social sector Ministries. These are the Ministry of Health that provides children’s health and nutrition services; the Ministry of Education that provides the curriculum, materials and teacher education for pre-school and basic education; the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development that provides the National Child Policy; the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services that looks into child welfare at community level; the Ministry of Gender that contributes to the reduction of maternal mortality; the Ministry of Local Government and Housing that has the Early Childhood Care Development and Education legal framework; the Ministry of Justice that executes laws to protect the rights of children; and the Ministry of Home Affairs that provides birth registration service and ensures child protection from abuse through the victim support unit. There are also some private institutions that provide training for pre-school teachers.

Currently, there are 454 government pre-school qualified teachers. Of these, 148 are males while 306 are females. On the other hand, there are 942 qualified pre-school teachers trained by private / church institutions of which 84 are males while 858 are females (EdAssist, 2008). There is no data on the number of ECE sites and children accessing ECE.

The National Child Policy

The first National Child Policy was formulated and approved in 1994, following Zambia’s adoption and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children in 1991. This was revised in 2006 in order to incorporate the new and emerging issues affecting the welfare of children. The new National Child Policy is expected to provide the required framework for responding to the concerns, rights and needs of children, taking into account the prevailing eco-

conomic conditions in the country, child labour, child trafficking, HIV/AIDS, child abuse and other related concerns. The rights based approach to programming is fundamental to this policy, as it recognizes the child's right to survive, to develop and to be protected, thereby ensuring that the provisions for the UN Convention on the Rights of Children are realized.

The revised National Child Policy incorporates the objectives as set out in the National Program of Action that was devised in 2004. The National Program of Action targeted a number of goals, one of which aimed at expanding Early Childhood Care, Education and Development. It also sets out to improve family welfare, thereby enabling the poorest and most vulnerable families to raise their living conditions, reducing the providing support to orphaned and disabled children, reducing the incidence of child abuse and improving the welfare and status of old women (Kasonde, 2008).

The National Education policy

The National Education policy of 1996 (Educating Our Future) is the guiding policy in the provision of all forms of education in Zambia. The policy recognizes the importance of Early Childhood Education in building early experiences in the child. The policy also recognizes the need for Early Childhood Education in building up "cultural capital" and to compensate for disadvantages that may arise from disadvantaged homes where reading, writing, or other education-related materials are absent (Educating Our Future, 1996).

Notwithstanding this acknowledgement, the policy does not commit government to providing ECE services to children below the age of six. The government is only responsible for providing professional services to pre-school education by training teachers, developing curriculum materials and monitoring standards. This has left a gap in ECE provision where the majority poor children do not have access. Currently, the provision of ECE services is profit driven, where only children of privileged parents access quality ECE services.

The 2004 GRZ Gazette

The efforts to expand provision of ECE services were strengthened with the Jomtien resolutions of 1990 and the Dakar Framework of 2000. Since then, the framework of Zambia has focused on the six Education For All (EFA) goals where expanding provision of ECE is receiving greater focus. To address the existing policy gaps, government shifted the responsibility of childcare and education from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, and Community Development and Social Services to the Ministry of Education.



Through the 2004 GRZ Gazette, the Ministry's concern has been the establishment of ECE programs for children living in rural areas and poor urban councils, local communities, NGOs, religious groups, families and individuals in order to increase access to ECE services (UNESCO, 2006). Currently, the Ministry has drafted a comprehensive ECE policy to address the existing gaps.

The draft ECCED Policy

The government of Zambia is in the process of adopting a policy on ECE. The policy aims to promote the growth and development of all Zambian children to achieve their full potential regardless of their status. The policy is in response to the 2004 directive to transfer the responsibility from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, and Social Services, to the Ministry of Education in 2004, through a GRZ Gazette. The policy further aims to provide ECE services to children between 0-6 years, acknowledging it as the period of most fundamental growth in children.

Challenges

One of the existing challenges is the high poverty levels of about 67% of the total Zambian population. The poverty levels are exacerbated by the rural urban migration that causes shortage of human resources in the rural areas and causing congested unplanned shanty compounds in urban centres where there are no basic amenities and Early Childhood Centres. The other challenge is that institutions that support ECE services are not readily available in rural areas and unplanned settlements where the majority of poor and vulnerable children are located. In addition, the public ECE services in the urban areas are not close to the communities as expected, while the private ECE services are at a fee that cannot be afforded by poor majority households. In addition, children in disadvantaged households are subjected to child labour that reduces their chances of accessing ECE services. The ravages of HIV/AIDS coupled with high levels of divorce have also exposed children to destitution.

As regards the education policy, the current education policy is limited to training of pre-school teachers, provision of the national curriculum and educational materials, and maintaining standards in schools. It does not include parental education. The policy also does not commit the government to provide ECE services, placing the responsibility on private and church providers. This disadvantages the poor children, thereby perpetuation the poverty cycle. Despite having the Curriculum Development Centre, the development of curriculum material has not been effective. Materials for ECE are not available in all the pre-schools (Draft ECCED Policy, 2009).

Lastly, the draft policy places the responsibility of providing ECE services to both the parent and the government. The policy acknowledges that children live within the context of the family. The family would be considered to be the primary support institution for promoting holistic development of children. However, the current situation where the majority of households are vulnerable and live in poverty does not provide a favorable environment for children's education. Thus, government should take full responsibility of providing comprehensive ECE services to be able to expand the provision to poor and vulnerable communities as well.

Conclusion

The provision of ECE in Zambia needs concerted efforts. The initiatives to provide ECE can be traced as far back as 1957 when the Day Nurseries Act was enacted. The 1957 Act is the current existing legal framework that guides the registration of ECE sites. It is also supported by the 2004 GRZ Gazette that shifted the responsibility of providing ECE services to the Ministry of Education. The formulation of the ECE policy is another giant step in strengthening efforts to provide ECE services.

It is important to acknowledge that there is no single sector in Zambia that can effectively provide ECD services to adequately meet the needs. Therefore, it is imperative that a new policy is developed to address the needs for expanding provision of ECE services, especially to rural areas and the vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in urban areas. It is expected that the new policy would provide guidelines for coordination and harmonization of quality services among all stakeholders and ECE service providers.

The provision of comprehensive ECE services is important and need not be overemphasized. ECE provides children with the opportunity to grow and develop into responsible adults. The age between 0-6 years is when the child's brain develops to its full capacity. This is the critical moment when children require appropriate stimulation to prepare them for future life experiences. This is also the appropriate age range where policies targeted at poverty reduction can effectively break the poverty cycle by addressing the root causes of social-economic marginalization in early age by providing ECE services to prepare them for future development.



■ TANZANIA - *By Anthony Mtavangu, Tanzania Teachers Union*

Background

The United Republic of Tanzania comprises Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar, formerly two countries that were united to form one country in April 1964. There are two governments, namely, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. Following the establishment of the union, it was constitutionally agreed that some matters would be under the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT), while leaving some affairs separately under each of the two sides. In this regard, education matters were divided such that Higher Education became a URT matter but not pre-university education matters. Pre-university education has since then remained to be a separate concern, each government handling it its own way although there are issues for which Zanzibar counts on Tanzania mainland.

In light of the above, this report focuses on current developments, issues and challenges pertaining to Early Childhood Education being part of the pre-university matters restricted to Tanzania mainland.

Introduction

Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU), with an active membership of 165,000 of the potential membership of 220,000 is currently the only teacher organization in Tanzania mainland. The union collaborates with government and other education stakeholders, being a key stakeholder to the pre-university education development, representing pre-university teachers, not only on welfare matters, but also on professional and general education development concerns. In this regard, the union is mandatory and has a place in addressing pre-university education development matters and issues. Among other fora, TTU is a member to the Education & Vocational Training Ministerial Advisory Committee; the Basic Education Development Committee as well as in the Basic Education Quality Improvement Task Force. It is in this regard that TTU is in position to speak on and for all pre-university education matters and issues including those of Early Childhood Education, which is part of the education system and structure of education and vocational training.

The education system and structure

Early Childhood Education in Tanzania mainland is part of the formal education and vocational training system. The system is an academic one that ranges from pre-primary through primary, ordinary secondary education level to advanced level secondary education with the structure of 2-7-4 and 2 (years) before the 3+ higher education structure.

About Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Tanzania mainland

With regard to policy issues, according to the current education and training policy, the government of the URT recognizes that Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Tanzania mainland is crucial for the child's physical, intellectual, spiritual/ moral and emotional development. As a matter of policy, ECE refers to the kind of services provided in Day Care Centers (DCC) to children under 4 years, on the one hand, and pre-primary education to children at the age of 5 and 6 years before they are enrolled in Standard One. While the former type of ECE services is meant for providing the general care of children that includes socializing and in a way introducing them to some school related life experiences, the latter is more inclined to exposing children, not only to a socialization process but also to mental, moral spiritual and emotional development with a touch in academic knowledge and skills as preparatory to primary education.

This government recognition is informed by various research findings conducted since the 80s that suggest that children entering standard one after pre-primary education, which is part of Early Childhood Education, become more successful than those who never went through early childhood services. As a result of this fact, government decided to include Early Childhood Education in the form of pre-primary education in the formal education system at the ages of 5 and 6 years prior to enrolment in the first grade of primary education. Currently, pre-primary education, which is supposed to be conducted in primary schools in pre-primary classes by teachers who are trained for that purpose, takes place for two years before entrance to standard one.

In practical terms, with regard to ECE, we see Day Care Centres (DCC), none of which are either owned or controlled by the government, although the relevant line ministries are those of community development, gender, women and children's development & that of health and social welfare. These ministries are expected to at least provide guidelines and monitor what goes on. Owners of these institutions are mainly religious organizations, mainly Christian organizations and a few individuals, for children whose mothers are employed, dead, jailed or for other reasons they are not in a position to take care of their children. DCCs render services to children before the age of 5 year. One major challenge is that DCCs are restricted to urban areas only and the majority are not for free, so children from families that cannot afford fees do not enjoy this crucial service. In this regard, it is not "Every Child's Right". There is yet another challenge which is lack of proper training of the majority of teachers, especially those owned by individuals or groups of owners whose motive is economic. This situation has a negative impact on children's intellectual, moral and emotional development.



With regard to pre-primary education for children at the age of five and six, it was established by government since the 80s that every primary school must have a pre-primary education class with a trained teachers, from among grade "A" teachers, for that purpose. In addition, there would be one person to assist the teachers on non professional teacher affairs. Having at least a pre-primary class in every primary school would eventually lead to enrollment of standard one pupils from preprimary graduates. This would make learning in primary education of a better quality and with greater success. However, there has been a big challenge in an attempt to meet the target for pre-primary education for all children before going to standard one. Up to the year 2008, only 20.6% of the children enrolled in standard one had undergone pre-primary education after over 25 years since the decision was made. So far, most of the pre-primary education pupils are in government schools. For example, in 2009 the enrolment in government pre-primary schools has been 322,103 pupils compared with 19,936 pupils in non-governmental schools. Between 2008 and 2009 the total enrolment in non-governmental pre-primary schools has declined from 68,574 to 45,062 pupils, while in government pre-primary schools there has been an increase from 805,407 to 851,084 (5.7%) between 2008 and 2009.

There is yet a challenge with regard to quality of pre-primary education in relation to duration reduction. The current draft policy comes up with a reduction from two years to one year for pre-primary education, claiming that there is insignificant difference in attainment in primary education on entry into standard one, between those who have been to pre-primary education for two years and those who had it for one year. This change will make pre-primary education to be for the children from the age of 4 to 5 years. The intention is to make them begin and complete primary education at a lower age so that eventually they may complete higher education at a lower age than it is now.

There is another challenge with regard to identification and support to talents. There is lack of identification and support to talents and potentials among pre-primary education children.

Another challenge is lack of suitable infrastructural facilities in Child Care Centers, thus affecting achievements of the aspired building of a strong foundation of education and training.

There is lack of proper facilities of infrastructure, materials and professional capacities to suit the provision of education in child care centres and pre-primary education classes for children with special needs education. There is also lack of coordination and control of environments of non-governmental institutions that run Day Care Centres.

■ CONGO – *By Eupharaisie Ngoudiankento, Fédération des Travailleurs de la Science, des Sports, de l'Enseignement, de l'Information et de la Culture (FETRASSEIC)*

Country profile

Congo has a population of 3,689,000, with 587 000 aged below 5 years. The under -5 mortality rate was 148 per thousand and infant mortality rate of 126 per thousand in 2006.

Introduction

In the republic of Congo Early Childhood Education is placed under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. There are both private and government sectors engaged in Early Childhood Education. Early Childhood Education is by policy not compulsory for children. It also requires the active participation of parents to succeed.

The structure of Early Childhood Education

At the national level, there is the Director General of Basic Education and under that is the Directorate of Early Childhood Education. At the district level there are Directorates of Education for Primary and Secondary Education, and under that we have inspectorates of education who monitor the early childhood centers.

There are three levels of Early Childhood Education. These are level one, for three year olds, level two, for children four years old and level three, for children 5 years old. This refers to the public system. But there also exists a vibrant private sector kindergarten education system.

Data on Early Childhood Education

In all, there are 81 early childhood centers with an early childhood educator population of 241 and a total pupil population of 7797. Out of the total pupil population, 3845 are girls. Most of the educators are women.

Problem

The main problem in relation to early childhood education is the inadequacy of educators.



3.2 Experiences from countries involved in the BUPL and LO/FTF Council supported program

■ GHANA: Lessons from the project GNAT-BUPL-ECD Program

By Kofi Nyiaye, National Project Coordinator, GNAT-BUPL ECD program

The program has been a collaboration between The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and The Danish Early Childhood Teachers and Social Educators Association (BUPL), with financial support from the LO/FTF Council, Denmark.

The program is an example which has developed from 4 districts below to 60 districts in seven regions, giving it a national flavor above. It evolved from the early childhood educator in the centre, through the head teacher, to the private proprietor and the district level personnel of the Ghana Education Service (GES). It has also evolved from a project to a program with international dimensions spreading to Togo and Nigeria.

It has been an important principle in the GNAT-BUPL development program to start at grass-root level and develop from the individual local educator level, to the district, regional and national level – a down-up principle instead of top-down.

The main objective has been to help improve the working and living conditions of the educators, especially those in the non-formal /private sector. GNAT is the leading teachers union in Ghana and is made up of teachers from all levels of pre-university education, from the early childhood levels to teacher education colleges. The program therefore aimed at creating a sector within GNAT which would cater for the interests of educators from the private sector and attract them to join the union. Increasingly, the most important benefactor of the program activities have been the early childhood educators trying to build on their interest and motivating them to understand their own low level conditions and be prepared to take decisions to help improve those conditions. The program involved running lots of trade union education, professional training skills, and education on children and their needs.

Results

All these have broadened their horizon and helped to improve the status-qualifications, experiences, incomes, outlook- of at least 3000 educators from the private sector who have joined GNAT. Some have had university education and have experienced tremendous changes in their personal circumstances, begin-

ning from very low unimaginable levels. A lot of educators, especially those the project trained to serve as representatives supporting the program coordinators in the mobilization exercise, have become a motivation force to other educators in their own personal lives.

It is an example of close collaboration between the program and the authorities. Beginning from the planning stages of the program, the GES staff at the national, regional and district levels, collaborated effectively with the program coordinators which enabled the program to run smoothly. It is the GES which helps to release the educators in the public sector for the program activities. At all levels the GES early childhood organizers participate in and benefit from the training courses.

The program coordinators also collaborated with the GES to develop national early childhood standards and the curriculum used by educators in the ECE centres and was a major source of support for the development of Ghana's early childhood policy, as well as its policy. The National Nursery Training Centre (NNTTC) is a public institution, but it supplies resource persons for the skills training activities of the program.

The program has also placed at the disposal of both GNAT and Ghana, experienced and qualified early childhood staff. The program coordinators and sixty others received training in project management with an early childhood slant. Tutors at the NNTTC have benefited from graduate level training in ECE. The collaboration between BUPL staff, the program staff and some GNAT staff as the hand outs on various concepts in ECD were developed, has been a very useful cross- cultural experience.

Some BUPL senior educators who supported the program to develop the ECE model centre, left behind very useful lessons like the use of out-door, play, small class size, group work, which have become the basis for working by educators in most of the centres. As the program funding by LO/FTF comes to an end in June 2010, GNAT staff are gradually taking up responsibilities for the program at the district, regional and national levels.

In terms of finances, there are over 20.000 educators working in the public education sector who are already members of GNAT. But in addition, the recruitment of over 3000 educators from the private sector who pay dues to GNAT though at almost half rate, is a constant source of income to fund the program. The GNAT has already put up a budget line for early childhood programs which it hopes to increase with time and the organization has employed 4 permanent staff to help run the program.



The program has equipped BUPL to be able to work in an environment where there is little or no resource from the beginning. They are well equipped to serve as advisers in any economy which is breaking new ground. As the program enters the West Africa sub region, GNAT believes that the experiences they have gathered in Ghana would serve as a good guide.

■ NIGERIA: The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) Program

by Ango Adamu, State Program Coordinator, NUT State Secretary-Kaduna

The Nigeria part of the program took off in 2008 and is situated in Kaduna state. It is actually a 2? year pilot project aimed at giving capacity to and a sense of professional belonging to early childhood educators in the state. The project has a lot of support from Ghana, where the program initially started. The National Project Coordinator of the program in Ghana serves as adviser to the coordinator in Nigeria. Also Ghana has been sharing its experiences in the program with Nigeria so that Nigeria would reduce some of the problems and challenges Ghana had when implementing the program. This project is, to a large extent, an example of North-South–South cooperation.

Status of ECE

In Kaduna state, there are 641 public early childhood centres and 700 private early childhood centres. In 1997, there were 3475 educators working in public early childhood centres and 1400 in private early childhood centres, with more than 90% of them being women.

The federal government has adopted Early Childhood Education as part of the public education system as a policy and developed a national curriculum for use by all early childhood centres. There is therefore a phenomenal rise in the number of early childhood centres in the public sector and the number of educators regularly recruited to cope with the rising number of centres. The Integrated Early Childhood Development Committee coordinates and monitors early childhood programs in the respective states.

Most of the educators in both the private and the public sector are not trained. Also, the educators who work in the public sector belong to the union but had not been given any special recognition by the NUT in the past. Conversely, the educators in the private sector had not ever been unionized; neither do they belong to any professional body.

The GNAT-BUPL-NUT ECE program runs a series of professional skills training in Early Childhood Education. GNAT also organized periodic skills and trade union education in Ghana for the project coordinators and educators in both Ghana and Nigeria. By the nature of the project, the skills training of the educators was meant to serve as an inducement to endear the educators to the union and use that as an avenue to unionize the educators in the private sector. It was also meant to help them improve their teaching skills so that they could work better with the children.

Challenges

As a result of the sensitization on the project, there has been a high level of awareness and demand by the educators and some heads and proprietors for the training of their personnel who yearn to benefit from the program. Unfortunately, the large numbers and the inadequate resources would not allow everyone to be trained. The reality is that most of the educators are not professionals and would need the training. This calls for a quick fix process of ensuring efficiency and productivity through specialized training programs. The educators in the private sector, neither have a voice, nor a sense of identity. This is why their working and living conditions are so poor. There is therefore a need for NUT to reach out to them and bring them into the fold.

A third problem has to do with the high rate of transfer of educators who have benefited from the training under the program. The training makes them very sharp and emboldens them to do their work well. But instead of maintaining them in the same centres, they are normally transferred to primary schools. This constitutes a drain on the program. Most centres in the public sector are under resourced, and under staffed. The union would need to take up these issues as the program continues.

The way forward

The program winds down in June 2010. With the experiences gained so far, NUT looks forward to a longer period of collaboration with all the partners.

■ TOGO – The Federation of Unions of Teachers (FESEN) Program – *By Tinka Samah, Program Coordinator, General Secretary (SYNEPET)*

Togo was happy to be associated with the GNAT-BUPL-NUT program. The program was an education oriented one but it was particularly concerned with



Early Childhood Education. In most of Africa early childhood issues are the concern of parents and not so much that of the government.

Program activities

Since 2008, the FESEN, working through the Early Childhood Educators Union (SYNEPET) has been signed on to the GNAT-BUPL-NUT-ECD program. The main activities undertaken since then have been skills training workshops and the decision to trial-test an existing early childhood curriculum which was lying fallow.

GNAT has been serving as the focal point and an adviser bureau for the Togo program. Some educators have been invited to Ghana to participate in training programs in materials development for teaching in early childhood centres. In addition, there have been skills training in how to handle young children.

Togo used the experiences gained in Ghana to run skills training workshops for the country's educators. In addition, the union has developed a guide for producing teaching materials for young children.

With inspiration from the program, the union picked up a curriculum which had been developed by government with NGO assistance and which had been laying waste for a very long time. So far the union has revived interest in the document and trial-tested it. The union has used the document to train some educators and inspectors of early childhood centres. The program also has helped SYNEPET to hold a consultative forum with key persons in government, discussing issues of importance with them.

IMPACT

As a result of the program early childhood educators have become more familiar with SYNEPET, which is better recognized now. More and more educators are enrolling in the union. The membership has increased from 68 to 135. A lot of the educators, not only know how to produce the didactic materials, but also how to use them when working with children.

Challenges

Togo still has some challenges in the early childhood sector. The general poverty of most of the people in the rural areas makes it difficult for mothers to patronize the centres. But this is buttressed by the fact that there is a persistence of ignorance about the importance of Early Childhood Education. The number of early childhood centres remains inadequate. Also the staff is inadequate; these include educators, inspectors and administrative personnel. The

continued closure of the Teacher Training College for Early Childhood Educators is a contributory factor affecting the total quality of Early Childhood Education.

Suggestions for improvement

There should be more investment in the early childhood sector to help improve quality and accessibility. In addition, there should be more emphasis on the education of parents on care for the very young children.

■ BENIN: The Early Childhood Educators Union (SYNAEM) Program – by Charles Dossa

Country profile

Benin has a population of 8.760 million; about 6% of the population is below 5 years. It has an under 5 mortality rate of 148 per thousand and infant mortality of 88 per thousand (2006).

The story of Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education sector is well organized under the control of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. It has a national character with a Director who is a professional but with Ministerial status and a national bureau. There are also professional inspectors from the public sector who go round to monitor both the public and private sectors. The country has a policy on Early Childhood Education which guides all activities on early education.

The government also has a plan of action which it is executing systematically. The action includes the construction of early childhood centres, the drawing of a curriculum, recruitment and training and retraining of educators. Even though the enrollment ratio was only 9% in 2008, a systematic expansion in the public sector was taking place. The history of Early Childhood Educators Association (SYNAEM) dates back to the revolutionary times when all educators belonged to the association called the Federation of Teachers of Basic Schools (SYNEMB). But after the return to democratic governance by Benin, the atmosphere for the formation of unions was made democratic. It therefore became possible to form a union solely for early childhood educators. That gave birth to the Union of Early Childhood Educators (SYNAEM) in 1990. SYNAEM has an executive committee of 17 persons, with district level representation and is affiliated to a major trade union centre (UNSTB), which has a lot of dealings with EI.

There are 1871 early childhood educators in Benin, out of whom only 446 are male. In addition, there are 68 026 children enrolled in the centres.

4. THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS AND THEIR UNIONS IN PROMOTING AND DELIVERING QUALITY ECE SERVICES

- By Assibi Napoe, EI Chief Regional Coordinator

The major objective of Early Childhood Education is to improve quality and extend it to all children, especially to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. This major objective is confirmed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the 1998 Resolution passed at the EI World Congress in Washington.



Assibi Napoe, EI Chief Regional Coordinator for Africa, spoke passionately about the need for unions to promote ECE.

Early Childhood Education is a trade or an art with specific objectives. It is also a profession or a vocation. As an art, it demands love, passion, talent and skill. At the centre of Early Childhood Education activities is the young child, the immature being, fragile and without resources. Such children would need sustained attention and permanent care. In the case of the early childhood sector, educators form the core and the driving force behind the activities, even though parents are the first level educators. The educator must be a professional, well trained, motivated, and a parent substitute. To be able to function effectively the educator requires self sacrifice, self denial, creativity and a lot of initiatives.

As a professional, the educator must constantly keep abreast with developments in the field of the profession and have a strong professional conscience, contributing effectively to all actions which aim at promotion of the good of the

child. She must be conscious that the child with whom she works is immature and any error committed on her may not be easy to correct afterwards. Above all, the educator's responsibility was to deliver quality service.

Trade unions are strong forces, serving as pressure groups with the responsibility to seek improvements in both working and living conditions of their members. They do this through negotiations, quality services to members, legal instruments, and investment of resources. Unions also should function to popularize instruments and resolutions and conventions passed by UNESCO, EI and other recognized institutions.

In addition, the unions need to advocate in order to influence policies and the adoption of appropriate laws and edicts, and by so doing, serve as agents of change in their communities. The unions need to be proactive and present to decision-makers reform projects and initiatives aiming at the improvement of ECE services. Before unions can perform these responsibilities well, they have to be strong, well organized and have a unity of purpose among the members. The union must also have a strategic plan with a mission and a vision. Unions therefore would need to build their own capacities to mobilize. Every union must set up an ECE department to deal with issues related to early childhood. They must also forge alliances with other stakeholders, especially, parents and civil society organizations, the media, as well as international funding agencies and local government.

In conclusion, as professionals, educators must be at the centre of the promotion of early childhood concerns and activities, creating awareness and understanding among policy makers and communities and initiating innovative projects and programs. Above all, they must live above board and work assiduously so that they would win the support and sympathy of the public.

5. PARALLEL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Topic 1 – The role of teachers unions in promoting ECE provision

The purpose of the topic was to discuss and suggest concrete measures that can be adopted by EI and its member organizations to promote universal and quality ECE provision in Africa. After deliberations, some recommendations and suggestions were made for adoption.

One major recommendation was that EI and its affiliates should, as much as possible, share all important information and experiences about ECE. In addi-



tion, EI was to lobby the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and other international development agencies to respect their engagements and commitments to Early Childhood Education as a basic human right for every child.

Teacher unions were urged to use varied means to influence direction of policies in their various countries. These may include the use of international, national and local stakeholder forums, networking and partnering with development agencies and organizations, civil society organizations and parents associations, lobbying of parliament and negotiations with governments.

There was a recommendation that teacher unions should play advocacy roles using different strategies and means. They could make use of the media and video documentary on successful stories to do the advocacy. Specifically, they were to go further by influencing the training of early childhood educators, as well as negotiating for the same conditions of service and conditions of work for teachers in the early childhood sector as other teachers in their respective countries.

In addition, teacher unions were encouraged to take advantage of the internet to learn more about early childhood issues and share such information with its members. The unions would become better informed to adopt forward looking policies on early childhood and influence national policies.

Translating the ECE policies and recommendations of their countries, as well as the recommendations which would come out of this seminar, into concrete programs and activities, would take the idea of quality Early Childhood Education a step closer to reality.

Topic 2 – Training teachers to meet ECE goals

The purpose of this topic was to discuss good practices that might be adopted by African countries to increase the number of professionally trained and qualified early childhood educators. Some recommendations were made as a result of the discussions.

By policy, both public and private early childhood educators should be encouraged to join existing teacher unions or form associations in order to have a common voice to fight their cause.

There is need to upgrade the skills and knowledge of educators whilst on the job. Universities and others training institutions should be encouraged to run sandwich and distance programs for educators.

Providers of ECE services should be encouraged to sponsor educators to further their education and bond them reasonably to ensure their continuous stay on the job.

Unions should advocate for funding the training of more early childhood professionals by government and other stakeholders.

There should be continuous in-service training for early childhood educators.

Certificates should be awarded to participants after completing ECE training programs or attending workshops to give a sense of worth to their program. There should be Government approved salary structures, established in consultation with private practitioners so that qualifications match salary levels across the ECE sector.

Stakeholders (parents, communities) should be sensitized to show respect and collaborate with educators in the Early Childhood Education sector.

Unions should lobby for educators to be motivated to stay on the job after training; through the payment of social security, assistance in payment of medical bills, vacation leave for those who do not enjoy any etc.

Policy makers must be oriented on early childhood issues and stakeholders should be sensitized about the importance of Early Childhood Education and the work of the educator.

Countries should develop Early Childhood Education policies that are government driven and structures put in place for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Teacher Unions must do a lot of advocacy and lobbying to ensure effective the implementation of Early Childhood Education policies.

Topic 3 – Fostering collaboration to achieve universal and quality ECE provision

The discussions centered on how teacher unions can foster collaboration with UN agencies and other development agencies and stakeholders to promote Early Childhood Education.

To facilitate collaboration between teacher unions and development agencies for the good of the early childhood sector, unions must position themselves as strategic partners with the requisite knowledge and data about Early Childhood issues and be willing to invest resources.

It is very essential that teacher unions have a clear understanding of the early childhood sector by building up a data and knowledge base around existing facts and using these to develop strategic plans and positions. This would help the unions understand and identify the purpose of networking. The unions should build on their capacities themselves by providing professional development for their members on knowledge based advocacy, negotiations and collective bargaining. Teacher unions could strengthen their organizations by belonging to trade union centres in their countries. This will help to provide them with the tripartite function in making their demands known to the providers and users of education.

Again they should seek to enhance the professionalism of their members through commitments and enforcement of the code of ethics. This would help to build trust among stakeholders, donor agencies and government and lift the image of the teaching profession in the eyes of the public and put the unions in good stead for negotiations and collaboration.



Seminar participants attentively following the proceedings.

Also the unions must lobby for strategic space in the highest policy decision making body in education.

In their collaboration, teacher unions must seek to relate with NGO's and development agencies, whose objective is to achieve quality education, at both the national and local levels.

The unions could also support the early childhood educator by emphasizing the development and enforcement of a regulatory framework for effective monitoring and evaluation of Early Childhood Education.

6. REPORT ON FIELD VISITS

The participants broke into 3 groups and visited 3 separate early childhood centres. One group visited the National Nursery Teacher Training Centre (NNTTC), which has a model Early Childhood Centre for practice; the second group visited MAJOMA Montessori Early Childhood Centre, while the third one visited the St. Patrice Kinder Garden.

The NNTTC is a public in-service training centre where early childhood educators are trained. There is an early childhood centre attached where the teachers undergoing training go for practice. The centre runs 2 programs, one for an 8 week semester and two for 4 week semesters. The participants were happy about the training institute as a good concept other countries could emulate. It had a small library and trained cooperative staff. The model centre had urinals, a kitchen, library, and a large number of children who were using learning materials during a lesson on exploring. The model centre had no man working as an educator. The administration of the centre showed a well organized public centre with a dynamic parents association offering useful services to the centre.

The MAJOMA Montessori centre is a privately owned early childhood centre, very well organized, with large numbers of children per room space and two well trained educators and an attendant in each classroom. The centre has a well drilled scout group catering for children from 1-8 years with a very inspiring Head teacher and Proprietor. Much of the work taking place was academic.

The St. Patrice Kindergarten is run collaboratively by the Catholic Church and the Government. The centre uses the national curriculum and has 175 children with 5 teachers and 2 assistants. The children come from different backgrounds. All teachers were women and the head teacher was reluctant to accept male teachers. Children were doing rhymes, songs and categorizing objects. Much of the work was however academic. The kindergarten has a school feeding program.

The three centres and training institute were typical of Early Childhood Education in Ghana; The large numbers per classroom, the enthusiasm of the head teachers, the academic nature of most of the work, the largely trained teachers in the public centres paid the same as any teacher according to qualification and total support the training centre has been offering to the teachers in general, the food component and the key role of the church in edu-

cation in general, the role played by parents associations, not only in terms of financing but also the academic nature of such centres as the model centre.



Participants visited a standard pre-school at the National Nursery Training Centre in Accra.

7. PANEL DISCUSSIONS - WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ECE IN AFRICA

There was a panel discussion on working together to improve ECE in Africa. David Archer, from Action Aid International (AAI), talked about the role of civil society in the EFA and ECE movement. He explained initiatives to promote ECE, including calling for additional financing and resisting those policies of International Financial Institutions (IFI) that undermine EFA, including ECE. He informed the meeting about the existing collaboration between EI and AAI, including activities associated with the Parktonian Agreement/Recommendations. Teopista Birungi-Mayanja, EI Executive Board member and UNATU General Secretary, shared Ugandan experiences with the participants, where the teachers union is working with government, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to address educational and professional issues.

8. SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public Authorities should provide integrated and holistic services for young children, services that meet their health, nutritional, developmental and educational needs.
2. Governments should prioritize ECE in their policy-making, planning and budgeting, with a view to increasing access and improving the quality of ECE services for the young children.
3. Public authorities should regulate and coordinate ECE services in order to ensure that services provided by various stakeholders, including private providers, meet national standards.
4. EI and teacher unions should engage in further research and come up with documented evidence and reports they can use for advocacy purposes and to share information and experiences with others.
5. Education International should provide information on Early Childhood Education to its member organizations and continue to facilitate information sharing and exchange between its affiliates.
6. EI and its member organizations should engage in advocacy activities with governments, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, the African Union, Sub-Regional institutions and other stakeholders, using various strategies and media, including workshops, publications and the print and electronic media.
7. Teacher Unions should collaborate with government, UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank) civil society organizations, parents and other stakeholders to promote ECE.
8. Teacher unions should consider unionizing staff in the ECE sector.
9. Teacher unions should use relevant existing structures and opportunities, in particular international days, such as the World Teachers Day, Global Action Week, and World AIDS Day, to address ECE issues.
10. Teacher unions and their members should be conversant with the provisions of international instruments governing child rights, education and Early Childhood Education, for example, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
11. There is an urgent need to professionalize the ECE sector and the teaching force, by ensuring that all teachers receive pre-service and in-service training, as well as continuous professional development.
12. More men should be recruited into the ECE sector in order to provide both male and female role models to young children.



Appendix 1: Workshop Program

DAY 1: TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

08.00 – 08.50	Registration
08.50 – 10.45	Opening ceremony (See separate program for details)
10.45 – 11.15	Tea/Coffee
11.15 – 11.45	EI Policy on Early Childhood Education – Dennis Sinyolo, Senior EI Coordinator, Education and Employment
11.45 – 12.00	Questions, comments and discussion
12.00 – 12.45	Keynote address – Quality Early Childhood Education: Every Child's Right - Cyril Dalais, Advisor, Ministry of Education and former UNICEF Senior Consultant, ECD, Mauritius
12.45 – 13.00	Questions, comments and discussion
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.45	Current developments, issues and challenges – Brief country reports (5 minutes each) from The Gambia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania and Zambia
14.45 – 15.20	Experiences from Ghana and other countries involved in the BUPL and LO/FTF supported programme – Kofi Nyiaye, GNAT
15.20 – 15.30	Questions, comments and discussion
15.30 – 16.00	Tea/Coffee
16.00 – 17.30	Parallel group discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Topic 1: The role of teacher unions in promoting ECE provision. Discuss and suggest concrete measures that can be adopted by EI and its member organizations to promote universal and quality ECE provision in Africa.- Topic 2: Training teachers to meet the ECE goal. Discuss examples of good practice that may be adopted by African countries to increase the number of professionally trained and qualified ECE teachers.- Topic 3: Fostering collaboration to achieve universal and quality ECE provision. How can teacher unions partner with governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote early childhood education?
19.00 – 21.00	Reception

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

08.30 – 09.00	Feedback from working groups
09.00 – 09.30	The role of educators and their unions in promoting and delivering quality ECE services – Assibi Napoe, Chief EI Coordinator, Africa
09.30 – 09.40	Questions, comments and discussion
09.40 – 11.40	Field trip to local ECE centres and projects
12.00 – 12.15	Brief feedback from field trip
12.15 – 13.00	Joining forces to promote ECE: experiences from the North-South collaborative Program - Cyril Dalais, Advisor, Ministry of Education and former UNICEF Senior Consultant, ECD, Mauritius
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.30	The mandate and activities of the ECE Task Force - Haldis Holst, Task Force Chairperson and EI Vice President
14.30 – 14.40	Questions, comments and discussion
14.40 – 15.20	Working together to improve ECE in Africa (Panel discussion) <i>Meeting the challenge of financing ECE</i> – World Bank/ADEA <i>The role of civil society in the EFA and ECE movement</i> – David Archer, Head, International Education Team, Action Aid International <i>Building synergies to achieve EFA: experiences from Uganda</i> – Teopista Brungi-Mayanja, UNATU General Secretary and EI Executive Board Member
15.20 – 15.30	Questions, comments and discussion
15.30 – 16.00	Tea/Coffee
16.00 – 16.45	Summary, conclusions and recommendations – Dennis Sinyolo, EI Senior Coordinator, Education and Employment
16.45 – 17.00	Closing remarks – Irene Duncan Adanusa – EIRAF President and EI Vice President

Appendix 2: List of Participants

N°	Country	Last Name	First Name	Organization	Position
1	Cote d'Ivoire	GNELOU	Paul	SNEPPCI	General Secretary
2	Congo	NGOUDIANKENTO	Euphrasie	FETRASSEIC	
3	Gambia	SOWE	Essa	GTU	Deputy Gen Sec.
4	Ghana	NYIAYE	Kofi	GNAT	National Coordinator, BUPL/ECD Project
5	Ghana	ANDERSON	Jacob	GNAT	Head, Membership Education
6	Ghana	FORSON	Charles	GNAT	Regional Coordinator, BUPL Project
7	Ghana	ANAFO	Portia	GNAT	National Vice President
8	Ghana	AMPONSAH	Diana	GNAT	District Coordinator
9	Kenya	KIPTIS	Stanley	KNUT	Executive Secretary
10	Nigeria	UCHUNO	Victor A.	NUT	Deputy Gen Sec.
11	South Africa	SOMNATH	Renny	SADTU	Education Officer
12	Sierra Leone	PARIS	Juliana A.	SLTU	Teacher Supervisor, ECD
13	Tanzania	MTAVANGU	Anthony	TTU	Head of Education and Training
14	Togo	BOYODE	Essotina	FESEN	Federal Gen. Secretary
15	Uganda	BAGUMA	Filbert Bates	UNATU	NEC Member
16	Uganda	BIRUNGI-MAYANJA	Teopista	UNATU/EI	General Secretary/ EI Exbo Member
17	Zambia	CHINUNDA	Catherine Nampasa	ZNUT	Deputy Gen Sec.
18	Zimbabwe	MULILO	John	ZIMTA	Lecturer, ECD
19	Benin	KINKINGINHOUN	Henriette	SYNEMP	Director, Early Childhood School
TASK FORCE MEMBERS					
20	Brazil	MONLEVADE	Joao Antonio Cabral	CNTE	ECE/EI Task Force member
21	Denmark	BAUMANN	Allan	BUPL	ECE/EI Task Force Member
22	Gambia	NDURE	Omar J.	GTU	ECE/EI Task Force Member
23	Ghana	ADANUSA	Irene	GNAT	ECE/EI Task Force Member
24	Nepal	SHRESTHA	Birendra Prakesh	NTA	ECE/EI Task Force Member
25	Norway	HOLST	Haldis	UEN	Chair of EI/ECE Task Force
26	Saint Lucia	GUSTAVE	Marguerite	St. Lucia Trs	ECE/EI Task Force Member
27	Senegal	DIAW	Attu	SNEEL	ECE/EI Task Force Member
28	USA	EUBANKS	Shyrelle	NEA	ECE/EI Task Force Member
ACTION AID					
29	Sierra Leone	SAMBA	Madiana	Action Aid	Education Coordinator
30	Nigeria	MENKITI	Azuka	Action Aid	Education Coordinator
31	UK	ARCHER	David	Action Aid	Head International Education team
INVITED GUESTS /OBSERVERS					
32	Benin	DOSSA	Charles	SYNEAM	General Secretary
33	Denmark	BRYNSKOV	Morten	BUPL	Deputy General Secretary
34	Denmark	LAURSEN	Svend	BUPL	Senior Adviser
35	Denmark	ASSENS	Jorgen	LOFTF Council	Consultant
36	Denmark	JORGENSEN	Poul	Bornefondon	National Director
37	Ghana	QUARTEY-PAPAFIO	Evelyn	GNAT	Head of Institution; Nursery Training Centre
38	Ghana	AMARTEFIO	Grace	GNAT	Vice President, OMEP
39	Ghana	LARTEY	Mercy	GNAT	ECD National Rep./GNAT Executive member
40	Ghana	TETTEY-ENYO	Alex	Ministry of Ed.	Honourable Minster of Education
41	Nigeria	ONEM	Nelson Onem	NUT	Acting National President
42	Nigeria	OBONG	Ikpe J	NUT	General Secretary
43	Nigeria	ADAMU	Ango	NUT	Senior Secretary, Kaduna
44	Nigeria	AJIBOLA	Sunday A.	NUT	National Treasurer
45	Norway	AAMODT	Gun	UEN	Senior Consultant, ECE
46	Norway	BJERKESTRAND	Mimi	UEN	Executive Board Member, Rep. ECE
47	Sweden	TORNBERG	Anna	Lararforbundet	Senior Officer
48	Togo	TINKA	Samah	FESEN	Deputy General Secretary
49	Mauritius	DALAIS	Cyril	Min. of Educ	Adviser
EI SECRETARIAT					
50	Brussels	SINYOLO	Dennis	EI Headquarters	Senior Coordinator
51	Ghana	NAPOE	Assibi	EI Africa	Chief Regional Coordinator
52	Ghana	NGOUA NGOU	Samuel	EI Africa	Coordinator
53	Ghana	QUAYNOR	Rita	EI Africa	Administrative Officer



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