

Draft Concept Note  
Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) for Africa  
Pilot Workshop on the delivery of Modules

## Background

In March 2013, in view of the overall improbability by the majority of the countries of achieving the EFA goals by 2015, following the recommendation of the Regional EFA and the Global EFA Meetings (in Johannesburg, October and Paris, November 2012 respectively), UNESCO and its partners (ADEA), ANCEFA), FAWE), (CONFEMEN), UNFPA) and UNICEF) launched the Big Push, Initiative for the Acceleration of EFA in Sub-Saharan Africa. 8 countries<sup>1</sup> were engaged in the first phase while 11 more<sup>2</sup> joined since October 2013. The first cohort is moving towards implementation, after their selection of the specific EFA Goal(s) for acceleration. From this group, 3 countries have chosen to accelerate ECCE, namely Angola, Swaziland and Zambia. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> group it is already known that São Tomé & Príncipe will choose this goal as well.

The work of UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) in the area of capacity development of teachers and caregivers for quality early childhood care and education dates back to 2007. It began with the conduct of research in six African countries: The Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa. In a validation workshop that followed in 2008, Mauritius and Senegal were added to the list of countries to share their experiences. The research findings revealed among others, the lack of ECCE policy in some countries, a large gap in the capacity of the countries to provide quality ECCE services, poor investment in the ECCE sub-sector by government leading to high cost of services, the lack of supervision of ECCE facility to ensure compliance with universal best practices, etc. On the basis of these findings, a curriculum framework design workshop was organized by IICBA in collaboration with experts and policy makers in selected African countries<sup>3</sup> in October, 2011 and a validation workshop in April, 2012. This effort resulted in the elaboration of seven modules that were later validated with the support of institutional partners such as the UNESCO BRENDA, the ADEA Working Group on ECD, UNICEF Uganda, International Task Force on Teachers for EFA and CIEFFA<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Angola, Chad, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Niger, Senegal, Swaziland and Zambia

<sup>2</sup> Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, S.Tomé & Príncipe, RDC, Rwanda, The Gambia, Togo and Uganda

<sup>3</sup> Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda

<sup>4</sup> CIEFFA is an organ of the African Union Commission whose overall objective is to "Promote girls' and women's education for their full participation in the eradication of poverty, the advent of a world of peace for a sustainable human development"

The short timeframe for the implementation of the Big Push acceleration, urges for immediate action and the existence of the IECCE modules are an excellent opportunity to assist countries to fast track their acceleration efforts in ECCE, while adopting socio-culturally and economically appropriate models.

### **ECCE Status in Africa**

Progress in ECCE in Africa differs enormously between countries and region. In 2010, SADC's), early childhood enrolment stood at 45% on average, while in EAC), only Kenya and Tanzania achieved above 30% level while the average stood at 27%. A similar picture could be seen ECCAS) region, whereby while pre-primary enrolment has more than doubled, the average has only reached 26%. In ECOWAS) (with the exception of Cape Verde and Ghana) and IGAD), progress has been more timid and rates (19 percent on average) are well below the SSA average (28%).<sup>5</sup>

The above figures are justified by the fact that in many African countries, Government policies and programmes in education often neglect this essential group of children and as such budgetary allocation is still not sufficient to cater for the looming need for quality ECCE programmes. As a consequence, ECCE is still largely left to Faith-Based institutions, the private sector and individual entrepreneurs who are trying to fill the gap. ECCE centres are often concentrated in urban and wealthy areas, where parents can afford the costs and tend to be more aware of its benefits. The rural areas are the most deprived due to poor funding, inequitable access to available services, absence or insufficiency of mechanisms to ensure quality education and training for preschool teachers and caregivers, and the low status of early childhood education personnel. In many cases, caregivers do not have a clear understanding of early childhood development and child protection issues.

IICBA and partners have therefore identified a need to develop training and education programmes that would provide tools, skills and resources to people working with vulnerable children and their families. These are issues well covered in the IECCE curriculum with a strong belief that the people on the ground are best suited to identify and solve problems that face them.

### **Opportunities for ECCE**

The above and the (1) adoption in 2009 of the inclusion of ECCE as a priority for the African Union Plan of Action for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade on Education for Africa (2006-2015) by Ministers of

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<sup>5</sup> Africa EFA 2012 Report, UNESCO BREDA

Education in Africa and (2) the approval by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)<sup>6</sup> working group on Early Childhood Development (ECD) of the IECCE approach to ECCE provision as one of its flag ships during the ADEA Triennale in Bamako in 2012 justifies the promotion of this approach in the entire continent.

### **The Concept of IECCE**

The Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) curriculum framework is designed to address the perceived lack of resources for conventional and elitist models of ECCE by encouraging the creative use of local resources. It is designed to make access to ECCE services easier and systemic through the involvement of the adults within the households, extended families and communities. IECCE seeks to improve the quality of teaching and learning with the availability and use of the training modules developed, produced and adapted to the local cultural context of the indigenous child; and employs the child's mother tongue or local language as a tool for effective teaching and learning.

One of the fundamentals of IECCE model is that local and indigenous children are to be educated within their cultural context. Evidences abound that the type of ECCE programmes currently being operated in many African settings are neglecting the cultural values and practices that are capable of adding values to the lives of the children to make them functional members of their society. The IECCE modules are living documents with a goal to capacitate parents, all older relations in households and extended family members, elders in the neighbourhood, older siblings, including helpers and interested stakeholders who can read and write in their local language. The learning therefore can be home-based, community based or institutional based. The persistence of low importance given in practical term to early childhood care and education personnel will be eliminated through local and community investment in the implementation of the modules. Delivery will include creatively designing culturally acceptable internal and external environment for the children to learn through play.

The target trainees will be those that will implement or oversee the implementation of IECCE curriculum framework among low-income children ages 0-8. It will eventually reach children located in (remote) rural areas where there are great challenges in providing ECCE services for young children.

This IECCE model is one practical way that UNESCO in collaboration with its partners the (International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, OSISA), UNICEF and CIEFFA) hopes to support African Member States to operationalize this provision.

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<sup>6</sup> Read more about ADEA in <http://www.adeanet.org/portalv2/en/content/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do>

The seven modules designed by experts from the participating member states were as follows: Module 1-*The Young Child*: It focuses on the young child whose growth and development is premised on its social-cultural context, the cultural values and beliefs present in the child's environment.

Module 2- *The Child with Additional Needs*: The module highlights the needs of children with disabilities, talents, gifts and other vulnerabilities. It defines concepts and issues for inclusive education, describing the plight of children with additional needs in Africa and outlining procedures to be followed to support these children within their cultural setting.

Module 3- Family and Community: It discusses concepts such as indigenous family, community, values, practices and cultural beliefs for child rearing. It describes how children are raised in an African context depending on different cultural beliefs, values and practices, pointing out to different combination of partnerships for ensuring child development.

Module 4- *Needs and Rights of the Child*: This module is an attempt to expose the teachers and caregivers to the essential needs and rights of the African child. It addresses how to educate children in a manner that will promote their growth, development and better integration into the environment.

Module 5- *Play and Learning*: It exposes the richness of the African environment in terms of resources and materials that children can utilize for play. It is for the teachers and caregivers therefore to adapt them to the social, emotional, intellectual and moral context so that the African child can reap the benefits from play.

Module 6- *The Caregiver*: This module is geared towards producing a caregiver or educator with appropriate qualities needed to take care of the children using locally appreciate techniques.

Module 7- *Assessment and Research*: This concluding module discusses the need for the ECD caregivers/teachers and parents to pay attention to and be familiar with the developmental processes in children. Their observations on the various stages and domains should be documented for the purpose of monitoring and assessing progress made by each child using culturally appropriate measuring tools.

### **The IECCE Pilot**

Taking into account the specific context of ECCE in Africa and the need to assist Member States in their efforts to reinforce of the provision of ECCE services at country level, UNESCO has agreed to support the pilot of the IECCE in the Big Push countries.

Hence, a training workshop will be organized from 9 to 13 December 2013 in Ouagadougou. This training will be a result of combined efforts by IICCBA, UNESCO BRED, UNESCO Windhoek, CIEFFA, OSISA, UNICEF Uganda, and Plan International.

Eight countries<sup>7</sup> are invited to participate, 5 out of the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase Big Push countries and 3 out of the second phase countries. The workshop is aimed at familiarizing the pilot countries with the modules and to develop a roadmap and proposal for the way forward. Grouping the countries and language groups will facilitate support and increase the cost effectiveness of UNESCO and its partners support.

### ***Target Participants***

Ministries of education, teacher educational institutions and interested public and private sector organizations to carry on the implementation of the IECCE programme. Their role will include the development of programmes for local and indigenous leadership and skills, promotion of community collaboration, and creation of model programmes that can be scaled up to other parts of the implementing country and beyond.

### ***Expected outputs from the IECCE pilot***

1. Capacities of key ECCE and relevant Ministry of Education Officials of selected countries in the understanding of IECCE modalities strengthened
2. Joint coordination and implementation framework per language group and country determined
3. Framework for national curriculum update, training and implementation of IECCE modalities, monitoring and evaluation agreed upon including Roadmap in participating countries
4. Inputs collected from participants for further improvement of the Modules
5. Workshop report

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Lusophone countries: Angola and S.Tomé & Príncipe; 3 Anglophone countries: Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia, and 3 francophone countries: Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal