

EDUCATION FOR ALL GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2007 SPECIAL THEME: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

November 25th 2005 – January 15, 2006

Final Report from the Online Consultation

1. Introduction

On November 28, 2005 the Report team of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) launched an online consultation on the special theme, *Early Childhood Care and Education* (ECCE)¹. The online consultation followed on the heel of two other consultations, an in-house consultation with UNESCO Headquarters and an e-mail consultation with UNESCO field offices both in November, 2005. A meeting with the Consultative Group for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) was held in Paris in September, 2005. The consultations were all based on commentaries to the Draft Outline for the special theme on ECCE. The feedback that has come in from all these sources has given the GMR team a stronger and more well- balanced platform for the thematic part of the 2007 Report.

The following is a sum-up of the experiences we have had with the *online* consultation. The team would like to thank all those who took part in the consultation for interesting and relevant contributions in the area of ECCE. We would also like to address our appreciation to the members and affiliates of the Consultative Group on ECCD and the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) for their active participation and their assistance in identifying stakeholders for the consultation. Finally, we would like to thank the “Groupe ONG –EPT” (The Group of Non-Governmental Organizations for Education for All) for disseminating information to their member organizations and for making active contributions.

2. Overall Objectives of the Online Consultation

The goal set for this consultation was to assure that the Report team was fully aware of the range of views, concerns and policy experiences prevailing in the field of ECCE. The objectives were to:

- Further promote dialogue on and input to the special theme for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007, *Early Childhood Care and Education* (ECCE)
- Comment, critique and add to the draft outline for the 2007 Report
- Bring into the arena material that will enlarge our understanding of ECCE

¹ The first online consultation organized by the GMR team was held in March 2005 to discuss the draft outline of the EFA GMR Report 2006, special theme: literacy

- Share knowledge with a range of actors in the development community
- Build further on the collective ownership of the GMR
- Increase the visibility of the GMR by connecting and consulting with others

At the request of a number of participants, the original time frame for the consultation (November 28th – December 16th, 2005) was extended in January from January 2nd – 15th, 2006. Thus the consultation time frame was extended from three to five weeks.

3. Organization and Implementation of the Consultation

During the preparatory stage a number of ECCE stakeholders were identified through various channels such as the Consultative Group on ECCD and the ECCE adviser to the GMR team. Approximately 3000 persons received invitations. A pre-announcement was made ten days in advance on the UNESCO Education Page website. (November 18, 2005). The online consultation was formally launched on November 28th. The draft outline was posted in English, French and Spanish. The consultation was based and moderated in English, but participants posted comments in English, French and Spanish. The consultation was moderated by Dr. Elizabeth Heen, on special secondment from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation, Norad). Summary reports were posted on the consultation for the first two weeks of discussion. They are enclosed in the annexes of this report.

The consultation platform was organized into fora reflecting the sections of the draft outline. Each forum had several main topics formulated by the Moderator. Some new topics were added by the Moderator during the discussion, mostly to expand the comments that were coming in from participants.

3.1. Key statistics on the consultation

From November 2005 until January 2006 approximately 2 800 persons consulted the website. Slightly less than 50% of the 118 registered participants came from civil society, 19% from Intergovernmental Organizations and 17% from Academia. The female-male ratio was 64 / 36. While moderation of the consultation was done in English, there was active participation from French and Spanish-speaking participants.

Key Statistics from the Online Consultation (28 November, 2005 – 15 January, 2006)

Summary statistics

Total number of readers: 2767

Total number of registered participants: 118

Total number of fora: 9

Total number of topics: 41

Total number of posts: 123

When it comes to geographic distribution of the consultation, we can see that there is a potential to raise the participation level from regions such as Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States. The table below and Annex 1 give an overview of the key statistics from the consultation:

3.2 Challenges

The *first* online consultation experienced some technical difficulties for registering participants. With these experiences in mind the team tried to make first time registration more “user friendly” by posting a notice in English, French and Spanish on how to register (“Six Steps for Successful Registration!”). The software instrument contains as well a detailed index over Frequently Asked Questions. A special “help desk” was established to assist participants.

The administrator reported fewer calls for assistance during this second online consultation. However, we have still registered that some people, also this time, had difficulty in registering for the consultation, and some had difficulty posting comments on the site. At the same time we do not know how many potential participants “gave up” after not being able to register correctly. We do not know whether this can be due to an overly complicated software product or web design. Some participants have made it known that their limited ICT skills have been a stumbling block to participate actively in discussions. These challenges will be discussed with the ICT technicians within the weeks to come.

4 Key discussion areas

The following is a succinct overview of some key discussion areas.

4.1 The Holistic Dimension of ECCE/Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPS)

Children have a “*right to develop their full cognitive, emotional and social and physical potential*” through an appropriate program, be it a pre-school or a care-related program. A well-designed intervention that caters to the child’s needs can redress damage suffered at an earlier age. There is a need for more innovative solutions to develop and promote ECCE. From India we have examples of linking pre-school services to primary school. This can be a very effective tool to keep older siblings in school.

ECCE is part of the educational system in many countries over the world, and in some countries education is organized and financed through a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP). Participants felt that the GMR report should take up the question of how ECCE can be integrated into the Sector Wide Plans in countries. ECCE should be included both in education and health sector plans. ECCE programs should be viewed as holistic, providing for health, nutrition and protection of children, in particular those made even more vulnerable through HIV/Aids.

Particularly rich presentations of historical, theoretical and philosophical groundings for ECCE were presented for countries such as Mexico, India, Brazil and Canada. In particular an article from the 1931 publication of “Young India” recapturing the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Mme. Montessori was posted on the consultation website.

4.2 Provision and Governance of ECCE

Decentralization of education has affected ECCE. Experiences from countries like Mexico, Papua New Guinea and India were discussed. In Mexico the decentralization process in education has been in effect since 1988. Central government provides policy, while state and local bodies are implementing authorities. One advantage of decentralization is that municipal government has more contact with local people and their needs. At the same time this creates great expectations among local populations. They are not always in proportion to the budget funds accessible. This in turn creates frustration both amongst clients and service providers.

In India problems arise when ECCE activities are managed by various governmental departments. The largest programs under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in India are supervised by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. What role then does the Ministry of Education play in assuring that children receive minimum standard education – related services?

Mexico has a 2-track system of “Pre-Kinder” and “Kinder” educational programs for 0-6 year olds. Each program type has a distinct variety of provision, supervision, early childhood focus etc. “Kinder” education of 3-6 year olds has now become compulsory. Interesting examples of experiences with the Huichole people of the Sierra Madre and the rural region of Sinaloa were given.

4.3 ECCE: On-the Ground Experience on National Level

A number of participants gave well detailed examples of ECCE policy, programs and challenges in the countries where they live or work. **India**, for example, passed in 2001 an amendment to the constitution, making education a fundamental right for children from 6-14 years. However, children within the age of 0-6 are not included in this legislation. **Mexico** has legislation making compulsory early childhood education from the age of 3-6 years. It is hoped that this objective will be reached by 2008. However, when it comes to the pre-kindergarten age group, only about 20% of these children attend Children Development Centers in Mexico. An example of a decentralized ECCE system is given from **Kenya**, where district early childhood education centers (DICECE) have the possibility to train local pre-school teachers and adapt curricula to local contexts, taking into account traditional childrearing practices. In **Canada** ECCE is formally under the jurisdiction of the Provinces. However, for many years the Federal Government of Canada has been exerting its influence on ECCE initiatives and in certain cases on ECCE *policies* in the provinces. From **Brazil** we learned that legislation from 1996 put both nursery schools and pre-schools under the Ministry of Education. The rationale behind this is to emphasize the interdependence of cognition and social development in the young child. However, cognition is considered the more important of the two. **Eritrea** has an integrated approach to ECCE, with the Ministry of Education as the key line ministry, but in partnership with several other national ministries, each having its area of child-relevant competencies (i.e. health, agriculture, fisheries, labor etc). From **Yemen** we learned that child well-being indicators are amongst the lowest in all of the Middle East and North African countries. Yemeni Education Law from 1992 states the importance of Kindergarten as a link to basic education, but little has been done to provide ECCE for more than 2% of the (urban) young child population.

4.4 ECCE and child well-being

Several participants emphasized the value of putting the needs of the child at the very center of ECCE. These needs include nutrition and health, early stimulation, interaction with the environment amongst other things. Child nutritional and health outcomes are included in the outline, but indicators such as *immunization rates* and *child mortality* data ought to be included in the analysis.

Professionals within the area of family economics stress the need to give *families* the support they need to be able to offer young children optimal conditions for growth and development. These efforts do not have to be tied to an institutional program.

A stronger focus on *expression* of and by the child is stressed. This includes: verbal, vocal, gesture or movement, or graphic, plastic or pictorial expression. Expression is inextricably linked to us as social beings. It is important to facilitate communication of expression by putting the child into a context that will promote creation, interest and emotion, which can result in *expression*.

4.5 ECCE and Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children

Countries with centralized governments are seen by some to have a better capacity to transform policy into national programs. This is dependent upon the availability of human and financial resources. In countries where social service programs depend on local funding, significant variation in access and quality may occur. This will have a bearing on ability to offer ECCE related activities to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable should be seen in light of the country's ability to provide services for all. New Zealand offers an interesting example of this.

Various forms of discrimination of young children can lead to marginalization. One comment from Latin America points to differentiation of the treatment of boys and girls in ECCE institutions and pre-school. Caregivers and teachers should be given training on accepting and integrating young children who do not manifest traditional sex roles in early childhood. ECCE provision for families of migrant workers is an area which is not sufficiently dealt with. Both in India and in large parts of Africa economic conditions are making traditional nomadic and pastoralist communities even more vulnerable. More focused ECCE attention should be given these groups.

In India the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) reach out to 12 million children under the age of 6 and to 3 million pregnant and lactating mothers. ICDS programs target children in vulnerable sections of the population, *and yet* they do not target *children with disabilities*. This is a group that remains excluded from policy plans.

4.6 Financing of ECCE and working conditions for ECCE staff

In Brazil an education resource fund (FUNDEB) financed through state and municipal income tax is now being extended to the early childhood sub-sector. This is important, for one because enrollment in private nursery and pre-schools is on the rise. Private provision is quite expensive

in Brazil, and many women see themselves forced to leave their jobs when they have children, because they cannot afford child care.

In Mexico elementary school teachers get fringe benefits for working in parts of the country where access is difficult. Why don't pre-school teachers or other ECCE staff get the same? In India salaries, benefits and working conditions have been an issue of contention in the ICDS. Most of the underpaid workers are women, and gender bias is believed to be a cause, but poor working conditions are also said to be due to the low political priority given to this sub sector.

4.7 Civil society

The development of ECCE should be founded on local “programs” fully adapted to the needs of local communities. One participant believed that the role of (civil society) communities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) should take precedence over public authorities. The role of national governments is primordial in developing programs in the public sector and in providing effective stimulation and encouragement to the NGO communities.

Generally speaking, civil society in Canada is consulted on matters pertaining to ECCE. NGO's play an important role in provision of ECCE, and NGOs form pressure groups that influence politicians. These groups are, however, quite heterogeneous on both province and national levels. In Mexico the Public Education Board has created consultation fora for teachers. Sometimes they are opened to the public at large. However, there is no strategy for communication or explanation of the documents or proposals being put forth. The media does not participate in these consultations.

5 Implications for Preparation of the EFA 2007 GMR Report

The rich discussions during the online discussion have provided the opportunity for the GMR team to reflect on both the content and organization of the thematic section of the report. Although our ideas are still developing as we gather research and data from various sources, we can share the following implications with you:

Based on feedback during the consultation, we will accord more attention to:

- A rights-based approach, including the importance of birth registration.
- The need for a broad perspective on ECCE provision that includes pre-primary schools, as well as community centers and activities that occur in the home.
- Recognition of the importance of the full range of children's development including the importance of health, nutrition, and social support.
- How to improve access to and quality of services and supports for children from birth to three and their parents/caregivers.
- Issues of ensuring successful policy and programme implementation in both decentralized and centralized systems of governance
- Challenges of training, recruiting, and retaining qualified staff in contexts of strong financial and human resource constraints and the low status of the profession.

- Vulnerable and disadvantaged children with limited access to quality ECCE. We need to focus more include traditional nomadic and pastoralist communities. Children with disabilities are still marginalized in many communities.
- Issues of gender inequality go beyond parity in ECCE enrolment and include bias against girls within the curriculum and often in teacher attitudes and practices.
- Important to identify examples of promising strategies to build partnerships among government, civil society, and private actors and promising strategies.
- Provide case studies from countries in both the North and the South

6. Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Consultations

The second online consultation achieved many of the objectives stated at the outset. Although it is not possible to gauge the impact that the consultation will have on the outcome of the report, the team feels that it has a better foundation upon which to build a robust report. We therefore draw the following conclusions:

- A fruitful dialogue was established with the active participants. Although the volume of activity was at times limited, participants took time to post relevant and substantial comments.
- The team received useful feedback on the draft outline for the 2007 EFA GMR
- A considerable amount of useful material on national and regional level was submitted to the consultation.

If the team should decide to conduct a *third* online consultation for the 2008 Report, the following recommendations might be taken into consideration:

- The present preparation timeline for the consultation should be re-examined in relation to the technical and logistical parameters and realities that exist
- Experiences with the online consultation software used for the first two consultations should be reviewed with respect to user friendliness and efficiency
- The duration of the online consultation should be re-examined, based on experiences from the first two consultations. A period of 3-4 weeks would seem suitable
- The team should give consideration to limiting the number of fora for discussion. This could help to better focus discussion on areas of immediate interest. A new forum could be introduced by the Moderator each week or during the entire length of the consultation. This being said, the Moderator should not “manage” discussions, but rather attempt to “focus” them.

7. Annexes:

1. Online Consultation on 2007 GMR: Statistics on Participants
2. Resume of the first two weeks of the online consultation

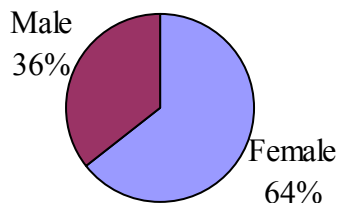
For the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team
Elizabeth Heen
Moderator

Annex 1: Online Consultation on 2007 GMR: Statistics on Participants

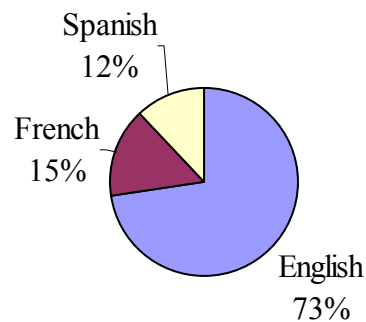
Table 1: Participants by gender, region and professional affiliation

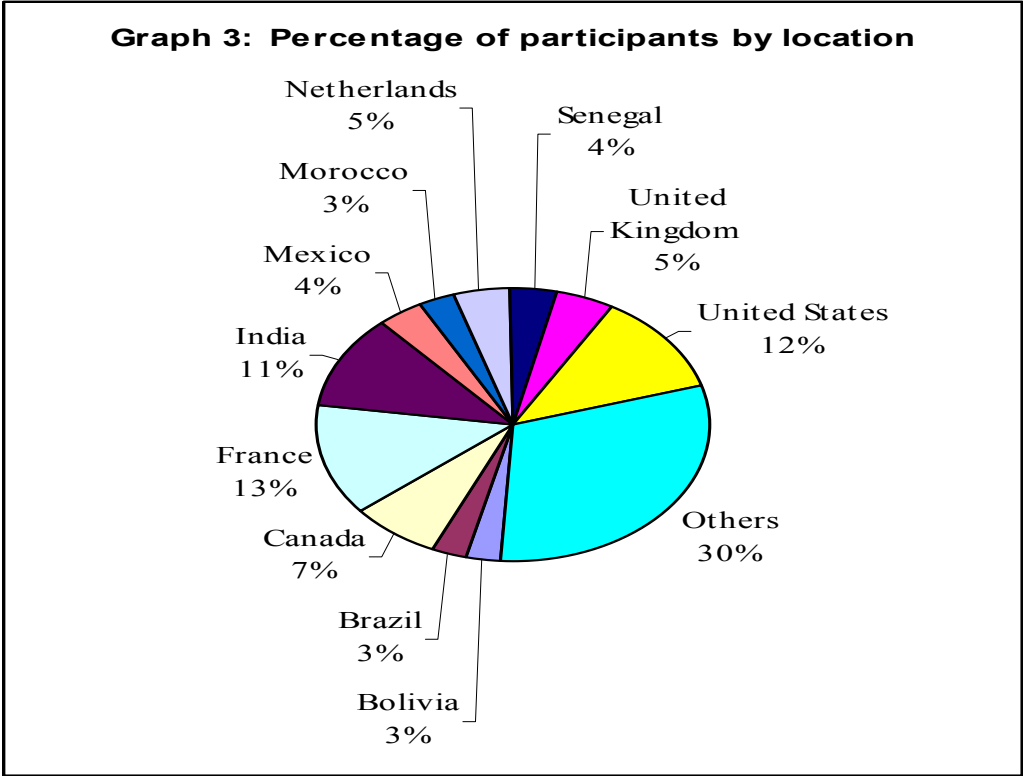
Regions	Gender	Professional affiliation							Total	%
		Academia	Bilateral agencies	Civil Society Organizations	Independent experts	Ministries	Intergovernmental Organizations	Other		
Arab States	Female			2				2	4	67%
	Male	1		1					2	33%
	Total	1		3				2	6	5%
Central and Eastern Europe	Female	1							1	100%
	Total	1							1	1%
East Asia and the Pacific	Female	1		3	1		2		7	100%
	Total	1		3	1		2		7	6%
Latin America and the	Female	3		4	2		2		11	73%
	Male	1		2		1			4	27%
	Total	4		6	2	1	2		15	13%
North America and Western Europe	Female	5	2	18	6		11	1	43	72%
	Male	4	1	10	1		1		17	28%
	Total	9	3	28	7		12	1	60	51%
South and West Asia	Female	2		1					3	20%
	Male	1		7	1	2	1		12	80%
	Total	3		8	1	2	1		15	13%
Sub-Saharan Africa	Female	1		4		1	1		7	50%
	Male			4			3		7	50%
	Total	1		8		1	4		14	12%
Grand Total		20	3	56	11	4	23	1	118	
%		17%	3%	47%	9%	3%	19%	1%		

Graph 1: Participants by gender



Graph 2: Participants by language





Note: « Others » include Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Honduras, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Madagascar, Malta, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Philippines, Australia, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia.

Annex 2: Resume of week 1 and 2 of the Consultation

2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) - Online Consultation

Resume from Week 1 (28 Nov.- 5 Dec.)

Dear Participants,

It comes as no surprise to the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) team that there is keen interest in early childhood care and education (ECCE). The draft outline on the thematic section of the 2007 GMR – this year devoted to ECCE- was issued for comment on the internet one week ago (November 28th). Now, one week after, people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe have registered to participate in the consultation. This gives us a solid base upon which to make comparisons and share experiences.

As many of you have seen, the outline is divided into 7 sections related to ECCE. The 8th section is reserved for other comments which are not related to the thematic part of the report. Each of the sections can be a forum for discussion. To start off discussions we have left it up to you to comment a specific question we pose from the outline, or to bring up your own themes, questions and comments.

My impression after this first week is that this arrangement seems suitable. However, some of you may be interested in flagging a particular question or theme which we can turn into a separate forum. Please let me know if you wish me to establish a new forum, for it is the moderator alone who can do this technically.

Summary of Discussions, Week 1:

Most of the discussions we registered during this first week were centered on 4 themes:

- The holistic dimension of ECCE
- The challenges of financing ECCE
- The challenges of serving vulnerable and disadvantaged children and
- The importance of caregiver training and education

Colleagues from India, Ethiopia and Brazil were the most active participants in this week's discussions. When it comes to **the holistic dimension of ECCE**, we can note that international agencies do not always understand ECCE in its fullest dimension. In fact, Rajeev from India asks: "What is the role of education in early childhood, and how can we eliminate the negative factors in that ?" Tanja from Ethiopia speaks of children's "*right to develop their full cognitive, emotional and social and physical potential*" through an appropriate program, be it a pre-school or a care-related program. A well-designed

intervention that caters to the child's needs can redress damage suffered at an earlier age. Tanja speaks of research findings from Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. They document benefits to the individual, the family and the community. **Let us know more about this research, Tanja!** Upendranadh from India sees the need for more innovative solutions to develop and promote ECCE. He refers to practice from India, where there are examples of linking pre-school services to primary school. This can be a very effective tool to keep older siblings in school.

What is the impact of macro economic policies and globalization on service delivery, in particular on ECCE? This is a question which has come up. I encourage you to give it some thought. Again from India we have an example of integrated child development services (ICDS). These programs are being implemented in India by state governments, with support from national government and international donors. This brings us to the issue of **financing** ECCE. India has not been able to achieve full access to ICDS programs, and quality of provision is not evenly distributed, says Upendranadh. India would need to do a projection of the funds needed to achieve full access to ECCE services from birth to age 6 to 8. Financing questions are also related to sustainability, and Upendranadh prefers a *governmental* commitment to an international *donor* commitment to ECCE. He believes that services are better institutionalized through budgetary provision. **What do the rest of you think of this?**

Fernanda from Brazil writes about a new fund (FUNDEB) that is composed of resources taken from state and municipal income tax. An initiative has now been taken to extend this fund to the early childhood sub-sector. This is important, for one because enrollment in private nursery and pre-schools is on the rise. Private provision is quite expensive in Brazil, and many women see themselves forced to leave their jobs when they have children, because they cannot afford child care.

Who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in your country? The list here is long. Some of these groups are indicated in the draft outline. You have added some other groups to the list: children who live in low density areas, inaccessible terrains, children who live in inhospitable conditions. Sunil from India points to the special ECCE needs of children whose mother tongue is different from the State language. **Several participants are looking for examples of experiences that are adoptable for large scale replication; up to you to follow up!**

Finally, Upendranadh is setting the stage for a discussion which I think is quite important: **Caregiver Education** for children under pre-school age. We learn from him that caregiver education in India is targeting not only the mother, but also the extended family. He speaks as well of traditional caregiving practices, and he argues in favor of upscaling caregiver education. He argues as well for developing caregiver training to household members who can offer child-centered care as a vocation. This is something that exists in my own country, Norway, where family-operated day care is institutionalized.

I can imagine that some of you who are participating in the online consultation have some experience with caregiver education. It would be helpful to share your experience

with us. Are these programs run by INGOs or NGOs? **Does the State participate in these programs? Have they been evaluated or assessed, and can we access these assessments?**

Some Areas for Further Discussion during Week 2

POLICY

- Tell us about your country's national policy for ECCE. What does it address? To what extent is it implemented in the field? What are the main implementation challenges?
- Are ECCE-related policies in your country decentralized to sub-national levels of government? What are the challenges and advantages of decentralization?

PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

- Should there be a national curriculum for pre-primary education or other forms of ECCE? If so, what domains would it cover?
- Can you help us understand what is going on within ECCE programs? What is the balance between teacher-directed and child-centered approaches? Which is better for preparing children for school in your country?
- What are the most influential pedagogical approaches found in ECCE in your country? To what extent are these imported from other countries?

This is the update for the first week of discussions: a good start. We look forward to wide participation and exciting discussions during the second week!

Betsy Heen
Moderator
06/12/05

2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) - Online Consultation

Resume from Week 2 (December 5-13, 2005)

Last week I concluded the resume of the first week of the online consultation by saying that we were looking forward to wide participation and exciting discussions on the draft outline for the 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report on ECCE. Indeed our expectations were met this week, the second week of consultation! We now have registered participants from most regions of the world, and the GMR team has been closely following the consultation. Discussions this week have developed in complexity and in the sharing of experiences, a very good combination. The team is also very happy to see that participants are now sending contributions both in French and in Spanish. This opens up for *linguistic* as well as cultural diversity.

Because discussions this past week reflect the diversity of ECCE, it has not been easy to categorize and summarize the many valid points made. The following is an attempt to draw discussions into a coherent framework:

On the whole comments centered around the following themes:

- The Context of ECCE and child well-being
- Patterns of organization of ECCE
- Universalization of ECCE
- Conditions of service and pay for ECCE workers

When synthesizing the discussions I hope I will not be offending anyone when I use your first names!

The Context of ECCE and child well-being

Several participants have emphasized the value of putting the needs of the child at the very center of ECCE. These needs include nutrition and health, early stimulation, interaction with the environment amongst other things. Patrice from UNICEF is glad to see that child nutritional and health outcomes are included in the outline, but she suggests that indicators such as *immunization rates* and *child mortality* data be included in the analysis.

Collette (OMEP², France) would like to see a stronger focus on *expression* of and by the child. She notes the various registers of *expression*: verbal, vocal, through gesture or

² Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire
World Organization for Early Childhood Education
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar

movement, or graphic, plastic or pictorial expression. Expression is inextricably linked to us as social beings. It is important to facilitate communication of expression by putting the child into a context that will promote creation, interest and emotion, which can result in *expression*. Collette speaks as well of the importance of graphic expression through drawing. She believes (pre-school) teachers should be better trained in didactics of graphic expression. In Norway one of our most well known educationalists, *Helga Eng*, was a pioneer in educational research. Her book *Margarethe's Drawings from the 9th to the 24th Year*, came out in 1926. It is known internationally and is still in use!

Fernanda (University of Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil) notes that her country is in a transition period from teacher directed to child-centered approaches. The role of the teacher is more to discuss, share ideas and allow children to come to a consensus agreement which allows for learning at the child's own pace.

Patterns of organization of ECCE

Quite a few of the participants discussed various elements of the organization of ECCE such as:

- challenges related to decentralization of administration
- challenges of fragmentation of responsibility for ECCE
- organization of ECCE programs in various countries
- language of communication and instruction.

From Brazil Fernanda tells us that the decentralization process in education has been in effect since 1988. Central government provides policy, while state and local bodies are implementing authorities. One advantage of decentralization is that municipal government has more contact with local people and their needs. At the same time this creates great expectations among local populations. They are not always in proportion to the budget funds accessible. This in turn creates frustration both amongst clients and service providers.

Diane (SIL International, Papua New Guinea, PNG) describes a similar situation. PNG has over 800 languages, and 85% of the people live in rural areas. One of the main challenges of the decentralized system is that budgetary resources on the district and local levels are not at all in proportion to the country's national strategy for early childhood policy in PNG.

Does this sound familiar to more of you?

The GMR team is interested in hearing more about the language issues initiated by Diane.

Upendranadh (Aide et Action, India) highlights the problems that may arise when ECCE activities are managed by various governmental departments. The largest programs under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in India are supervised by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. What role then does the Ministry of Education play in assuring that children receive minimum standard education –related services? He raises an important question: Is there a way of addressing mechanisms for

coordination amongst ministries and departments? **Who can give him some feedback on this?**

Renu (University of New Delhi, India) points to the fact that ICDS reach out to 12 million children under the age of 6 and to 3 million pregnant and lactating mothers. ICDS programs target children in vulnerable sections of the population, *and yet* they do not target *children with disabilities*. “This is a group that remains excluded from policy plans...” she comments.

Ashok (Mahavir Yubak Sandh, India) works in poor districts in Orissa State. He writes that after 20 years of community service and with more than 120 welfare programs for the poor, the number of persons living under the poverty line has not decreased significantly. Providing infrastructure and teachers is not enough. “We must ensure to involve the Parent-Teacher/Mother –Teacher Associations more to give the movement success”, he says.

Guadalupe (Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico) has given us a very concise picture of the 2-track system of “Pre-Kinder” and “Kinder” educational programs for 0-6 year olds. Each program type has a distinct variety of provision, supervision, early childhood focus etc. It is interesting to note from Guadalupe that in Mexico pre-school (“Kinder education of 3-6 year olds) has now become compulsory. She has also given a useful presentation of how pre-school educators are trained in Mexico. Margarita (Independent Organization, Mexico) tells of her experiences with the Huichole people of the Sierra Madre and her experience in the rural region of Sinaloa.

Universalization of ECCE

Renu (India) refers to India’s legislation of 2001 making education a fundamental right for children from 6-14. What about children between 0 and 6 years of age? She wants governments committed to EFA to wake up to the realization that 3-6 year olds must be given stimulation during these critical years. Upendranadh (India) regrets the fact that EFA and MDG goals do not include the very young child. He asks if this is not as attractive a theme to politicians, planners and donor as *microfinance!*

Lynn (AdoptALibrary, USA) strongly supports Upendranadh’s point of last week that childhood care can be developed as an enterprise in urban and semi-urban areas. Lynn sees this as an incentive for governments to put resources into ECCE.

Conditions of service and pay for ECCE workers

Guadalupe (Mexico) points to the fact that elementary school teachers get fringe benefits for working in parts of the country where access is difficult. Why don’t pre-school teachers or other ECCE staff get the same? Upendranadh (India) is of the same opinion. Salaries, benefits and working conditions have been an issue of contention in the ICDS of India. Most of the underpaid workers are women, and Upendranadh believes that much of the neglect here is due to gender bias, but also to low political priority given to this sub sector.

Fernanda (Brazil) speaks of the “FUNDEB” (Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education) which has now been extended to include benefits to Early Childhood Education. Some of the resources in this fund are to go to the training of pre-school teachers.

Some Areas for Further Discussion during Week 3

Seen from the perspective of the GMR team response has been satisfactory to the questions we posed for the 2nd week of discussions. Still, we would appreciate some additional feedback on:

- Specific comments to the draft outline
- Is civil society consulted on and involved in the formulation of ECCE policies in your country?
- Can you tell us about the historical roots of ECCE in your country? To what extent do ECCE settings support traditional childrearing practices in your countries? To what extent do they value diverse linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of children and families?
- Please tell us about your country’s national policy for ECCE. What does it address? To what extent is it implemented in the field? What are the main implementation challenges?
- Are there certain requirements of children to enter primary school in your country? How is “school readiness” defined and addressed? What are some promising strategies to facilitate children’s transition from either home or ECCE to primary school?
- Can you help us understand what is going on within ECCE programs? What are the dominant pedagogical approaches used? To what extent are these approaches covered in staff training?

Welcome to the third week of the consultation!

Betsy Heen

Moderator

Paris, December 13, 2005