

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
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