Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) Curriculum Framework for Africa: A Focus on Context and Contents

Patience O. Awopegba, Esther A. Oduolowu and A. Bame Nsamenang

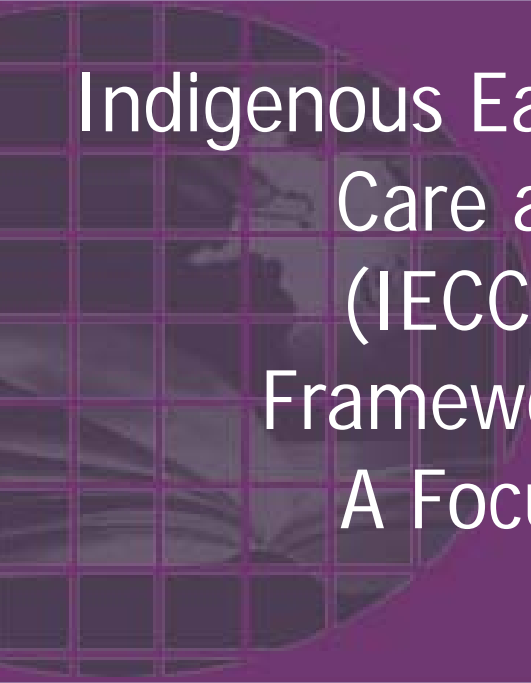# Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development   6

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About IICBA

Established in 1999, the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) is one of six UNESCO category 1 institutes and centres under the administrative direction of the UNESCO secretariat. As the only UNESCO Institute in Africa, it is mandated to strengthen the capacities of teacher education institutions of its 54 member States. This is carried out through a range of initiatives, including introducing information and communication technology for education; establishing networks of partner institutions to foster the sharing of experiences; undertaking research and development on teacher education institutions in Africa; utilising distance education for improving the capacities of teacher education institutions; and promoting international cooperation for the development of education through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Foreword

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) encompasses both "Care" (which includes health, nutrition and hygiene in a secure and nurturing environment) and "Education" (which includes stimulation, socialization, guidance, participation, and learning and developmental activities). In order to ensure a complete development of a child, both "Care" and "Education" must be seen as inseparable and reinforcing each other. Globally, countries are striving towards the achievement of the six *Education for All* (EFA) goals, which focus on Early Childhood Care and Education, Universal Primary Education, Youth and Adults skills, Adult Literacy, Gender Parity and Equality, and Quality of Education since the countdown to the target year 2015 began in 2000. Nevertheless, many sub-Saharan African countries are likely to miss some of the goals unless drastic actions are taken to expand a variety of care and educational provision to their citizens.

EFA Goal 1 provides for "*expanding and improving comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*". Given that a lot still needs to be accomplished in Africa, the Director General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, in her address during the Global Action Week (GAW) of 2012[1], stressed that in spite of increases in enrolment in pre-primary education in sub-Saharan Africa, among other regions, since 2000, action still needs to be stepped up to reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. This is especially so given that in 2010, 7.5 million of the 7.6 million children who died before the age of 5 were from developing countries, of which close to half of these children lived in sub-Saharan Africa. The Director General further reiterated the

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1   GAW is an annual awareness-raising campaign organized by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a coalition of NGOs and teacher unions in over 100 countries. The Global Action Week (GAW) 2012 on Education for All (EFA) took place from 23 to 29 April 2012 and focused on early childhood care and education (ECCE) with the slogan "*Rights from the Start! Early Childhood Care and Education Now!*

fact that in 2009, while the global gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education stood at 46 per cent, sub-Saharan Africa reached only 18 per cent. Indeed, much is still to be done because young children simply cannot wait to enjoy the benefits from ECCE, which according to her is a "*force for human dignity with lifelong benefits*; and a *powerful motor for the sustainable development of societies over the longer term*".

Countries have practiced different forms of ECCE over the years. These range from parenting programmes to community-based childcare, centre-based provision and formal pre-primary education often attached to primary schools. Most of these programmes are still out of reach to children living in rural areas. Some of the existing ones are also not sufficiently contextualized to meet the needs of those currently excluded.

IICBA is pleased to present the sixth issue of its booklet series on *Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development, under* the title*, "*Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) Curriculum Framework for Africa: A Focus on Context and Contents". This effort is in line with the global campaign that Young children are right holders, as inscribed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the General Comment 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood (2005), adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The provision underscores that "….*young children are holders of all rights enshrined in the Convention and that early childhood is a critical period for the realization of these rights*." Likewise, in 2009, Ministers of Education in Africa adopted the inclusion of ECCE as a priority for the African Union Plan of Action for the Second Decade on Education for Africa (2006-2015). Furthermore, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has one of its eight working groups focused on Early Childhood Development. During the ADEA Triennial in Ouagadougou (2012), the working group on ECD adopted the implementation of IECCE modules

as one of its flagship programmes. It went on to support IICBA on the implementation of a validation of the seven modules designed. Other partners in this endeavour include the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Uganda, Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire (OMEP) Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, Centre International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (CIEFFA) and the mass media in Nigeria.

Moreover, the AUC endorsed early childhood development as one of its programme priority areas at the Conference of Ministers of Education (COMEDAF) IV in Nairobi in 2010. The African Union Manual on Indicators (AU 2011)[2] specified early childhood development as one of the eight indicators. These indicators were identified and agreed upon by a Technical Committee of members of the AU Observatory and endorsed at various points by representatives from Member States, Regional Economic Communities and some key partners such as UNESCO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Finally, the booklet finds its relevance in the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child[3] under Section 11(c) on education, which advocates the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures. It endorses IECCE as a fundamental and powerful tool for handling discrimination and bridging gaps of inequity and avoiding irrelevance to the context.

At this point, I would like to commend the colleagues and experts in IECCE who have contributed immensely to the writing and elaboration of the seven modules and the finalisation of this booklet that carries articles on IECCE. Since the inception of the series on

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2   African Union. 2011. A manual on *Definitions and Properties of African Union Indicators for monitoring the Plan of Action in the Second Decade* stating the priority area of the African Union's Plan of Action with specific goals.

3   OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990), *entered into force* Nov. 29, 1999 (c) the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures

Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development in 2009, Dr. Bikas C. Sanyal has been the General Editor of the series. He provides technical advice and guidance to ensure that the aims and quality of the series are maintained.

I am grateful to the authors for this important and timely contribution. I thank Patience Awopegba who coordinates the series and the IECCE project in IICBA and who took the initiative in the publication of this booklet. My special thanks go to the two external authors, Esther A. Oduolowu and Bame A. Nsamenang, who brought their well-known expertise and wisdom to enrich IICBA. Their detailed profile is given in the back cover of this booklet.

Arnaldo Nhavoto,
Director, UNESCO-IICBA

Preface

According to UNESCO, early childhood is defined as the period from birth to the age of eight years, a time of remarkable brain growth and decisive for human development. These years lay the foundation for subsequent learning and development. However, the statistics on early childhood in Africa are appalling. Most recent statistics available at UNESCO show that less than 12 per cent of African children currently have access to ECCE services. Of the 76 per cent of children entering primary school each year, 38 per cent have experienced moderate or severe malnutrition impacting on their psychomotor and cognitive development. 12,000 African children die every day under conditions that could have been avoided with proper care and education.

UNESCO advocates for ECCE programmes that attend to health, nutrition, security and learning, and provide for children's holistic development. To contribute to this mission, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), with its modest resources, launched the laudable project in 2007 on *Country Case Studies on ECCE in selected sub-Saharan African Countries* to identify some key teacher issues for teacher development and policy recommendations for relevant stakeholders. The results were published by IICBA in 2010. It was observed that most of the programmes were not contextualized and remained out of reach to rural areas. There was a need for an indigenous approach. This motivated IICBA to launch in 2011, a programme of training modules for teachers and caregivers. Dr Patience Awopegba was given the responsibility of coordinating the project at IICBA. She invited African experts of international repute to contribute to the preparation of the training modules.

Seven training modules were prepared and validated in 2012. A need was felt to synthesize the results of the case studies and the seven modules in the form of a booklet to be published in IICBA's series of *Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development* as its sixth booklet on "Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) Curriculum Framework for Africa: A Focus on Context and Contents". The purpose of the booklet is to explain the rationales of an Africa centred approach to early childhood care and education, emphasizing on indigenous social and cultural values and norms. The authors explained the term indigenous with all its characteristics, indigenous education, indigenous values and culture etc. The explanation led to the elaboration of a model for the development of IECCE, articulated in a popular way to be used by different stakeholders in teacher education development in Africa especially for the teachers and caregivers of IECCE.

According to the authors, "One of the thrusts of this booklet is making early childhood education relevant to the needs of the indigenous child by considering what is in the best interest of the child. Such an approach can track and develop culturally acceptable best practices that are available in the cultural background of the child. The message here is that it is pertinent to pay attention to cultural processes that are underlying the differences in the patterns of behaviours of indigenous and non-indigenous children. It then advocates that developmental programmes and services should be contextually relevant to the African child."

The booklet provides the curriculum framework for the modules developed. It highlights the method of delivery and the underlining principles of the care and education for a holistic development of the African child. The specialty of the IECCE model is that it is "eco-cultural", taking

into account the different environmental systems in which a child grows. Five different environments have been identified in the design of the curriculum and its delivery to make the applicability of the approach exhaustive. For ensuring benefits of the programme, the booklet gives hints about the requirements of resources and instructional material support, gives detailed guidelines for teachers and caregivers about assessment methods and emphasizes on the need for partnership with all stakeholders.

The authors have identified ten groups of them at the end and make an appeal "by calling on all stakeholders to come together and begin the process of identifying Africa-friendly possibilities in an ECCE landscape that has long denigrated Africa's knowledge and practices." IICBA is grateful to the two internationally well-recognized African experts in early childcare and education, Bame A. Nsamenang and Esther A. Oduolowu for contributing their expertise to the project of this booklet.

I thank Patience O. Awopegba, the coordinator of the project and also an author for making this happen. I fervently hope that the above "call" of the authors will be heard to make a better Africa for the early child and thereby a better Africa for all Africans.

Bikas C. Sanyal

General Editor of the Series

Assisted by Patience Awopegba

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of Abbreviations

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEMIS	District Education Management Information Systems
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
IECCE	Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education
OMEP	Organisation Mondial de L'Education Préscolaire
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ECDVU	Early Childhood Development Virtual University
ZPD	Zones of Proximal Development

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Chapter 1: Background to the Early Childhood Care and Education

1.0. Introduction

This opening chapter focuses on concepts of early childhood care and education (ECCE). It discusses basic ECCE principles and developments and explores the rationale for indigenous ECCE frameworks for vulnerable and marginalized or difficult to reach children across the African continent. It also explores some of the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the promotion of ECCE approach in Africa.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) includes a wide range of integrated programmes planned and delivered to enhance the cognitive, social, moral, nutritional and physical development of children prior to the time they begin primary school. UNESCO publications generally put this age at between conception and8 years. Good quality ECCE programmes contribute to healthy child development outcomes, in the broadest sense of the term, that ensure a strong foundation for lifelong development and learning. It also monitors health and nutrition status during childhood, and affords many adult or older members of a household responsible for childcare and education, some free time to either engage in other income generating activities, or to attend school or engage in other social or community based activities that are beneficial to the society at large and wholesome child development in particular.A good start for the young child begins from conception. This is even before he or she attends school. Various types of early childhood programmes demonstrate the value of providing and monitoring the health, nutrition, stimulation and education of young children. Most African homes, for example, traditionally

train their children regarding different cultural and religious values that help a child throughout life, but this model of ECCE has seldom been considered. An effective ECCE programme should ensure a strong connection between home and school. Children are taught simple manners of behaviours in different circumstances. This includes daily routines like what should be done before, during and after eating, when attending public occasions, the manner of speaking to the elderly, comportment between people of the opposite sex and other key socio-cultural ways of behaving.

For instance, an essential value taught in a typical African family is conveyed by an African proverb that translates to "if a child can learn the act of washing his or her hands well, he or she can be permitted to eat with adults". While this proverb has deeper applications, ranging from personal hygiene to that of appropriate public comportment, such a habit is developed at home and built upon during different types of social interactions everywhere, including the school. In addition, atypical family in Africa is traditionally communal in which the critical role family members play in the lives of children is care, protection from external aggression and education, although several forces have been contributing to erode this pattern of child care and social security.

Thus, for continuity and to meaningfully implement ECCE programmes within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles of children's rights to a cultural identity, an effective ECCE programme ought to adopt a strength-based approach. It should retain and merge the connection between the strengths and requirements of both home-based and school-based care and education. Early childhood care also takes place in family contexts in which parenting practices have strong effects on learning and development (e.g., Myers, 2004 cited in UNESCO, 2004) from an early age. Therefore, any quality ECCE programme must find ways of ensuring that

a strong foundation is laid by mothers, fathers, guardians, older siblings, among others, if the quality and contextual and cultural relevance of ECCE programme would be achieved.

1.1. *The practice of Indigenous Childhood Care and Education in Africa*

Indigenous education can be defined as the body of context-evolved cultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, and cultural values and aspirations transmitted from one generation to the other. It is all embracing and the curriculum, though not written but tacitly followed by the indigenes. Indigenous education is a means to an end; one of its central components is social responsibility, aspects of which include imbibing moral and spiritual values, participation in ceremonies, rites, imitation, recitation and demonstration (Zulu, 2006). Other strategies for the acquisition of the body of knowledge and skills in indigenous education are poetry, reasoning, riddles, praises, songs, story-telling, proverbs, folktales, games, dance, music, tongue-twisters, and more (Majasan, 1974). Most of these context-based pedagogic strategies used to occur within the family, and peer group activities but could be adapted and integrated into the school curriculum. This implies that early childhood education is an integral part of indigenous education.

The early years of life have been established to be very important not only because children in their early years are quite vulnerable but more so because what happens during these early periods of life have significant effects on later life. In fact, a Kenyan proverb refers to children as the 'foundation of humanity' (Lanyasunya and Lesolayia, 2001), which implies the foundation for national development.This is supported by a Yoruba proverb that says "*omo ti yo je Osaka, kekere lo ti ma nse enu samusamu*", meaning, 'a smart child will show the evidence from a very early age' (Oduolowu, 2011). Therefore

education for the child begins at birth, his or her survival, health, nurturance, upbringing and socialization ought to be patterned for him or her to appreciate the cultural values, and to acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge that would make him or her a functional and successful member of his or her group or society but not losing sight of it as part and parcel of the global community with its obliging requirements.

As at August 2012, twenty six (26) (African countries have included ECD in their sector or national development plans. At least 76 per cent of countries in Africa are engaged in ECCE policy planning or implementation (19 countries have developed ECCE policies and 20 are engaged in a planning process)[4]. The challenge facing Sub Saharan Africa is not only that of adopting a compulsory pre-primary education policy, but more so that of contextualizing ECCE programmes in particular and educational curricula in general within the stark realities and cultural meaning systems of diverse realities of African countries. In spite of the growing interest, ECCE remains one of the under-resourced sectors in African countries. Consequently, the sub-sector suffers from poor quality of infrastructure, teaching materials, lack of a coordinated and culturally appropriate curriculum, and a scarcity of qualified teachers and child caregivers who are sensitive to the children's cultural realities. Limited state budgets for ECCE programmes has resulted in poor access to ECCE services benefits. There is therefore a dire need for an indigenous ECCE model that is designed to reach the majority of children in Africa that ongoing ECCE programmes designed on imported models have left behind.

In Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) reveals that about two out of three children from the richest 20 per cent of households attend pre-school, compared with less than one in ten from the poorest 20

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4   My Joy Online. 2013. http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/education/201205/85949. php, Published on August 3, 2012, 10:00 GMT. Retrieved September 18, 2013

per cent of households. Sometimes, the fees charged do not reflect the quality of service provided due to the limited training and poor educational background of a large number of teaching and care-giving personnel (UNESCO, 2012). Other factors that affect the quality of care are unsuitable working conditions, low salary or wage rates, gender insensitive curriculum, poor pedagogical methods by teachers, inadequacy of policy, and insufficient budget allocations by government, private proprietors and parents to ensure provision of quality ECCE to children.

While many middle and high income countries are able to either create or sustain access to services for children of pre-school age, many in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have not done very well. The World Development Indicator of the World Bank (2013) shows dismal statistics for many countries in SSA. The available data on relevant age group for preschool in some SSA countries were: Chad (2 per cent), Burkina Faso and Mali (3 per cent), Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cote d'Ivoire and Djibouti (4 per cent), Ethiopia (5 per cent), Central African Republic and Niger (6 per cent), Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone (7 per cent), Madagascar (9 per cent), Togo and Rwanda (11 per cent), Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda (14 per cent), and Botswana (19 per cent).The average for Low Income countries and SSA were put at 17 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. There is certainly a lot more to be done when more than one in two children are not attending; rising to five out of six in the poorest countries (UNESCO, 2012). The poorest of the poor who could benefit the most from pre-school programmes are missing out. Because ECCE facilities are located more in the urban than rural areas of every African country, the percentage of unreached children becomes a frightening responsibility.

According to the Global Monitoring Report 2012, UNESCO estimates underinvestment in pre-schooling is a key reason for low coverage for ECCE. This is evidenced by a less than 10 per cent share of the education budget in most countries,

and this share tends to be particularly low in poor countries like Niger which spends under 0.1 per cent of GNP on pre-school, and Madagascar and Senegal less than 0.02 per cent[5]. Some of the reasons for under investment by governments can be attributed to insufficient political commitment as well as competing developmental needs of governments in Africa. The integration of a cheaper and contextually relevant alternative such as the IECCE model will stimulate the interest of other stakeholders in the sector to invest in early childhood care and education.

Progress in the expansion of pre-school services can be largely attributed to several initiatives taken globally, regionally, sub-regionally and nationally. Key among the global drivers has been:

i.   Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)1989 and the African Charter on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999;

ii. Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All (EFA), 2000;

iii. Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation-Harnessing the Wealth of Nations, 2010 and the outcome document of the World Forum on ECCE (2010);

iv. African ECD International Conference series (1999, 2002, 2005 and 2009), which among others highlights Africa's keynotes on ECD provision. The conferences underscores that the Heads of State, First Ladies, and Ministers of Finance, Planning and ECD are exerting striking leadership for expanding investment in early childhood development in the region. It was agreed that Africa's future generations rests in the hands of national decision makers and communities mobilised to develop comprehensive, nationwide ECD services.

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5   Relatively, Niger allocates (0.1 per cent) more than 50 time what Madagascar and Senegal allocates (0.02 per cent)

v. In 2009, Ministers of Education in Africa adopted the inclusion of ECCE as a priority for the African Union Plan of Action for the Second Decade on Education for Africa (2006-2015);

vi. ADEA Working Group on Early Childhood Development (WGECD) was created in 1997 to influence policy supporting integrated approaches to the development of the young child (The ADEA WGECD http://www. ecdafricanetwork.org/). It provides an informal platform to enhance cooperation and collaboration among organizations that are actively engaged in ECD promotion in Africa, such as national governments, regional networks, UN agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO, and multilateral and bilateral organizations. During the ADEA Triennial in 2011, it adopted the IECCE initiative as one of its flagship programme of implementation.

vii. In 2010, Ministers of Education in Africa adopted the inclusion of ECCE as a priority for the African Union Plan of Action for the Second Decade on Education for Africa (2006-2015). Recommendation 9 of the Report adopted "Early Childhood Development (ECD) as the eighth area of focus of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (POA), and amended the first area of focus to read "Culture, Gender and Curriculum Development"(AUC, 2010 page 7).

These and many more conventions, conferences, fora and associations have supported campaigns in Africa about the benefits of the provision of ECCE programmes, and the need for all stakeholders including governments to invest in it. However, the African perspectives, values and useful practices are surely missing from these international statements and documents.

The African Union Commission (AUC) Manual on Indicators (AUC 2011) also specifies early childhood development as part of the eight indicators for assessing implementation of the priority areas. The group of indicators identified and agreed upon by members of the AU Observatory's Technical Committee and endorsed at various points by representatives from Member States, Regional Economic Communities and some key partners such as UNESCO and UNICEF specified the following priority areas: 1) Gender and Culture 2) Education Management Information Systems 3) Teacher Development 4) Higher and Tertiary Education 5) Technical and Vocational Education 6) Curriculum and Learning Materials 7) Quality Management 8) Early Childhood Education. In relation to Early Childhood Education indicators were developed in the area of:

- Annual Population Growth Rate of 0-4 Years
- Gender Parity Index for Gross Enrolment Ratio
- Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre Primary Education by Gender
- Infant Mortality Rate;
- Net Enrolment Ratio in Pre Primary
- Percentage of Female Pupils in Pre-Primary Education
- Percentage of Female Teachers in Pre Primary Education
- Percentage of Teachers Qualified to teach in Pre-Primary Education
- Percentage of Under Five suffering from Stunting
- Pupil Teacher Ratio in Pre Primary Education
- Under-five Mortality Rate
- Grade One Repetition Rate
- Fertility Rate

Box 1.1. Some articles on the rights of the child

"Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate." (Article 5, World Declaration on EFA, Jomtien, 1990)

".... good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development." (Paragraph 30 of Dakar Framework for Action, 2000)

"We adopted a broad and holistic concept of ECCE as the provision of care, education, health, nutrition and protection of children from zero to eight years of age. ECCE is… a right and an indispensable foundation for lifelong learning. Its proven benefits are manifold, and include better health and nutrition, improved educational efficiency and gender equity, greater employability and earnings, and better quality of life." (Paragraph 2, Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation: Harnessing the Wealth of Nations, 2010)

"… young children are holders of all rights enshrined in the Convention [on the Rights of the Child] and that early childhood is a critical period for the realization of these rights" (General Comments 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood, 2005)

UNESCO Strategy paper, 2012

Dawes, Bray, and van der Merwe (2007) in their publication highlighted rights based models of indicators. The indicators examined "…what children need to survive, be healthy and protected; to develop their potential; to be economically secure; and to participate in society". The book contains five distinct types of indicators which measures child outcomes as well as the contexts that support or challenge children's development, and the provisions for children through law, policy and, ultimately, services (Dawes et al, 2007).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the then Organisation of African Unity- OAU, 1998) under Section 11(c) on Education advocates the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures.

Notable progress has been made at the global level with a substantial decrease in under-5 mortality rates; declining from 88 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 60 in 2010, but current rates of decline are insufficient to achieve the target of 29 by 2015 (UNESCO GMR, 2012). There are still 28 countries out of which 25 are sub-Saharan African countries where more that than 10 in 100 children die before the age of 5 where the child mortality rate exceeded 100 per 1,000 live births.

1.2. IICBA's work on ECCE in Africa: Towards a search for an appropriate ECCE curriculum framework

It was the search for expanding the options to the excluded children across the African continent that informed the conduct of studies in the Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). The studies also benefited from the GMR 2007, captioned "Strong Foundation-Early Childhood Care and Education", in which the benefits of ECCE were globally promoted. The core issues examined in the country case studies were the following:

1. Access to pre-primary education, programmes of intervention for improving the progress and achievement of children in pre-primary schools and to establish current challenges and the national strategies for addressing them;

2. Rationale for linking Early Childhood Development and Education with future educational attainment in selected countries;

3. Approaches to and types of training given to ECCE management and teaching personnel including the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy adopted;

4. Legal framework for protecting the rights of children to benefit from the existing forms of care and education and for protecting them from possible abuses or exploitation;

5. National, state or local government policies for training and retraining of teacher for pre-primary education and budgetary provisions for their career development, provision of facilities, curriculum, safety, sanitation, inspection and effective administration; and measures taken to prevent any existing violations of the rights of the child at the pre-primary level of education; and

6. Protection of children from the behaviour of educators and caregivers who may be also predisposed to the scourge of HIV and AIDS and measures to cope with shortages of trained ECCE personnel as a result of HIV and AIDS.

The findings and recommendations showed that most of the countries were either at the stage of expanding access to pre-school care and education or in the process of implementing their planned policies or strategies. Most reported inadequacy of budget for procuring the necessary inputs like qualified teachers and caregivers, quality learning materials, and play facilities. Specific budget allocation for a systematic training of teachers and caregivers towards the improvement in the quality of services offered was suggested. This could be carried out through designated higher educational institutions and teacher training

centres with a consideration for open and distance mode for training and retraining. Training methods and curricular content used should be culturally acceptable, contextually relevant and cost-effective.

Although many of the countries were opting for an integrated approach, none reported a compelling evidence of a long-standing coordinating mechanism equipped with competent staff to handle the multi-sectoral nature that ECCE programmes necessitates. An autonomous body for the management, coordination and monitoring of ECCE activities for both public and private sector operatives was recommended as an option.

1.3. Documentation: monitoring and assessment

In order to ensure effective management, coordination and monitoring of ECCE activities, operators of any system require skills in documentation of information, experiences and practices that support an effective programme implementation. Data are required to the documented at both the level of the districts (District Management Information System-DEMIS)and at the level of the province and national levels (Education Management Information System (EMIS)).This practice of documentation is still rudimentary in many local African communities; hence the existence of a dearth of planning and implementation data. Therefore, the education data management system in each country should integrate ECCE data needs into existing Education Management Information System (EMIS) or District Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS) on criteria considered useful for ECCE planning and plan implementation The establishment or strengthening of DEMIS and EMIS where they already exist should be accompanied by systematic training and re-training of pre-school managers and administrators on data collection, compilation as new practices and approaches are initiated by countries.

The countries also reported inadequate or non-provision of a specialized budget for ECCE in spite of the acknowledgement of its ability to provide a strong foundation for formal education and the achievement of EFA goals. It was then recommended that a specific percentage of the education budget be allotted for programmes and projects in ECCE. All stakeholders such as government (at all levels), working citizens, corporate bodies and international organizations should make financial contributions towards the implementation of established ECCE plans and programmes.

The six country reports underscored a high attrition rate for teachers and caregivers from ECCE centres. Many of the workers in the centres or homes only sought the jobs in the absence of their desired jobs. It was therefore recommended that government should establish good and attractive working conditions of service for those seeking to make ECCE their career. Also, students should be encouraged to pursue careers in ECCE and specialized education and training in this area be made available to those indicating interest.

The six country reports also highlighted a lack of organized training mechanisms to combat a depletion of ECCE workforce as a result of HIV and AIDS. There was also no reported evidence that ECCE teachers have pre-service capacity to protect the children or themselves from the spread of HIV and AIDS. Preventive actions in the pre-schools were either based on the general knowledge of the disease or on the national guidelines that exist on how to take care of HIV and AIDS infected and affected children. Very little research existed on the success of these measures and the extent to which they are applied by the pre-school administrators. It was then recommended that education policy makers should take the lead in sensitizing relevant stakeholders to embark onresearch that examines the progress made on polices and programmes implementation and the improvements required.

As a follow-up to the above research, UNESCO-IICBA conducted a validation workshop that took place in Addis Ababa in 2008. It was observed also that some rich traditional practices in ECCE provision already existed in the region but some of them needed curriculum support. Some good practices identified include home and community-based preschool programmes which addressed multiple areas of development, linked nutrition and cognition, and made efforts to address issues of inclusion and gender equality. Some of these ECCE practices were as follows:

- **Burkina Faso-** *Bisongos* for the poorest of the poor, but needing more government investment and private sector involvement;

- **Congo-** *Espace d'eveil* provides opportunities for children of mothers working in the fields so that their children are well taken care of as their mothers are involved in economic activities;

- **Lesotho- Home-based Approach** enables parents from poor homes to be trained to give the care and education to their children in designated centres that give the comfort of the home to children being cared for

- **Mauritius-Parental Empowerment Programme** is being practiced to train young parents to be more productively involved in the care and education of their children

- **Nigeria-**The establishment of **child care centres in workplaces** for proximity of standard ECCE centres to working nursing mothers and the centres serve as models to private ECCE providers

- **Senegal-The '***Mbour'*** involves parents and community participation in the provision and management of ECCE facilities, and using local materials to ensure sustainability

- **South Africa-** NGOs like *Ntataise* partner with the University of Pretoria to offer enrichment programmes to parents, caregivers and teachers on HIV and AIDS awareness and management among others (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010 — www.unesco-iicba.org).

In order to stimulate efforts in the direction of these programmes (as opposed to mainstream ECCE models, which refers to the conventional practices in more formalized ECCE centres or those attached to primary schools) the indigenous or local model refers to those designed to use indigenous practices, approaches and cultural values for child stimulation in the planning and delivery of ECCE Programmes. As a result, a curriculum framework such as the indigenous ECCE was contemplated. Chapter two describes the process by which the IECCE curriculum framework was developed and outlines the various dimensions of what it looks like as well as the justification for it.

Chapter 2: Concepts in indigenous education

2.0 Introduction

This chapter defines and clarifies some key concepts central to the approach to an indigenous early childhood care and education curriculum for Africa. It discusses some selected age-long African cultural norms and values that are increasingly being eroded by acculturation. Important concerns and concepts discussed include: indigenous language, mother tongue, local and home language, culture, social norms, etc

2.1. Key concepts used in the Indigenous ECCE approach

2.1.1. The term Indigenous

According to the American Heritage Dictionary and the Collins Dictionary, the word indigenous refers to originating or occurring naturally in a particular place (country, region, etc); native, original, aboriginal, autochthonous, local, domestic or home-grown. It could be interpreted as idea, practice, tool, artefact, plant, etc existing naturally or being "native" to a specific place. In this sense behaviour or attitude may be indigenous or typical of people of a given ethnic or racial group. The sense conveyed here that of originating in and characteristic of a particular group, society, region, country or race. The adjective indigenous has the common meaning of "from" or "of the same origin". All it implies is that ideas, attitudes and practices may be described as being indigenous to particular geographical place, region or location. However, during the late twentieth century the term Indigenous peoples evolved into a legal category that refers to culturally distinct groups that had been affected by the processes of colonization. These are usually collectives that have preserved some degree of cultural and

political separation from the mainstream culture and political system that has grown to surround or dominate them politically, economically, culturally, and even geographically.

Indigenous peoples are also ethnic groups in any given location. In the late twentieth century, the term indigenous peoples began to be used primarily to refer to ethnic groups that have historical ties to groups that existed in a territory prior to colonization or formation of nation states, and which normally preserve a degree of cultural and political separation from the colonially imposed mainstream culture and political system of the nation state within the border of which the indigenous group is located.0 The political sense of the term defines these groups as particularly vulnerable to exploitation and oppression by nation states and international interest groups, especially those associated with resources exploitation, so-called eco-tourism industries, and human science researchers engaged in unethical practices. As a result, a special set of political rights, accorded to indigenous people and in accordance with international law have been set forth by international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. The United Nations has issued a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect the collective rights to their culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and natural resources.

2.1.2. Indigenous language

This refers to the language spoken uniquely by an indigenous community and/or with origins in a given community or country (Spolsky, 2002). Given the nature of language change, however, many 'indigenous' languages have been changed from their original forms, especially due to the processes of colonization and imposition. The languages of First Peoples communities of the Americas are referred to as indigenous languages (UNESCO, 2008). The term *indigenous* was chosen to highlight the need to respect the good cultural practices that

exist among the local African peoples. The indigenous ECCE model draws from the native, original, aboriginal, home-grown and local approaches for child care and infuses modern practices of hygiene and knowledge of the effects and impact of actions taken or not taken on young children.

2.2. *Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education framework*

The Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education framework is a strength-based approach that acknowledges and seeks to incorporate the knowledge, skills, values and timeless wisdom of early child care and education that originated in Africa and are still usefully relevant for rapidly globalizing requirements for early childhood development. In fact, without preserving indigenous values and other aspects of cultural background, African children would soon lose their cultural identity, a right enshrined in the CRC. However, indigenous ECCE frameworks should not lose sight of globalizing trends in the UNCRC that enshrines the non-denial of any child's right to her or his own cultural identity. It is designed to address the perceived lack of resources for conventional and elitist models by encouraging the creative use of local resources and positive cultural capital. Appropriate indigenous models involve the participation of knowledgeable indigenous individuals and make use of available resources in the indigenous setting for providing early stimulation and education for the African child. The expectation from this approach is such that the contents and methodologies used for delivering the curriculum is structured using an "open architecture" (Pence and McCallum, 1994). This process leaves room for voices from the teachers, the children, the caregivers and the community to enter into the active, constructivist teaching and learning process. Regular meetings will be held by those involved in the delivery of the programme to share knowledge and experiences of cultural traditions and community history pertaining to various aspects

of child care and development covered by each of the seven modules. This will allow the community-based component of the designed curriculum to be generated to reflect the uniqueness of each of community. The African-ness is assured during the delivery process as teachers and caregivers discusses with the elders, parents and experienced individuals who understand the context of the community. Discussion will be centred on historical, social, political, and cultural factors affecting children in their community. The stakeholders involved are able to learn about the principles of child development and within the context of their culture and how to help the children of our community with such generated knowledge.

This makes access to ECCE services easier and systemic because of the involvement of local communities as owners and primary stakeholders. An important feature in this approach, which is consistent with longstanding African family-based early years' education, is that the adults within the households and extended families can fully identify with the learning to which their children are exposed. The quality of teaching and learning can be improved with the availability and use of training modules which have been developed, produced and adapted to the local culture of the indigenous child, and which employ the child's mother tongue or local language as a tool for effective teaching and learning. Importantly, indigenous children are to be educated within their cultural context. Evidence abounds 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. Therefore, these modules are being produced as living documents to build on the capacity ofparents, of 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 the local language. The learning therefore can be home-based, community based or institutional based. Eventually, versions that

will be amenable to self-learning through a combination of modes (face-to-face, on-line, open and distance learning, etc) should be made available to those requesting them.

2.3. Arguments for advocating IECCE

The Rights Basis for IECCE Programmes

The IECCE curriculum framework for Africa is exploring several existing arguments for inclusion of all vulnerable and disadvantaged children in education for all. These arguments hold in terms of children's rights, respect for their psychological development, prevention of cultural and linguistic loss or endangerment, need to secure educational equity that cuts across gender, socio-political class, productive labour force participation, and empowerment for a person's engagement with the immediate community and the civil society at large. Some of these are as follows:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (UNICEF, 1989) Article 30: stipulates right of Indigenous Peoples to use their languages.

- According to the UNCRC General Comment 7: Young children are holders of all rights enshrined in the Convention; Early childhood (from birth to 8 yrs) is a critical period for realization of these rights; Programmes and policies should realize rights in early childhood; Recognize and incorporate diversities in culture, language, and child upbringing (HELP, 2005).

- UNCRC Article 29 Education of the child shall be directed to development of respect for the child's parents, and the child's own cultural identity, language and values, as well as for national values of the country in which the child is living (Also Article 5)

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UN, 1992, Article 4) affirms the rights of minorities, including Indigenous Peoples, to learn and/or have instruction in their mother tongue or heritage language.

Children are also better psychologically developed when learning is associated with their cultural identity because cultural knowledge is embodied in native language. The rate of cultural and linguistic endangerment or loss could be reversed or reduced with the use of IECCE in preparing children for formal education. As captured by *Early Childhood Development Partnership, "About 6000 languages spoken globally now. 10-50 per cent will be spoken by end of* 2099; leading to what was referred to as *"Linguistic genocide" (Skutnabb-Kangas)"* (Ball, undated). It was also underscored that language loss endangers identity, heritage, belonging, and cultural knowledges. The world's repository of language and culture is steadily depleted by language in education policies that impose dominant languages on children's learning journeys. This limits the possibilities of a smooth transmission between home and school. On the contrary, when children are taught in their local languages, it has been discovered that it enhances emotional and consequently, cognitive stability for effective learning. A lot of learning is disseminated through the language spoken in their original form, and which do not have direct translation in existing languages. With the loss of these minority or local languages, a repository of knowledge and culture is also lost to ECCE programmes and education curricula. The content of teaching and learning is also limited because children are forced to learn at an early age, in a language that they know little or nothing about.

In order to promote educational equity, UNESCO (1953) encourages mother tongue based early learning. Teaching and learning in kindergarten, preschool, early primary school and

even parenting education programmes become the first context of vulnerability for minority children by virtue of language in education policies that denigrate their home languages and associated cultures, and demand that children enter unfamiliar learning environments in an unfamiliar language. This is a significant contributor to persistent high rates of early school non-attendance, non-engagement, and failure among minority and Indigenous children.

In many African countries, the current practice, in spite of the acknowledged advantages of IECCE, the colonial and dominant languages are still being enforced on young children from local minority languages and cultures for learning in the majority of pre-schools. Many African parents contribute to the demand for the use of foreign languages of former colonial masters to establish a sense of belonging to the class of the privileged, high status in the society, better standard of education, and the argument that the children require the dominant or foreign languages for learning throughout life; whereas, this view is contrary to research findings that children learn best in their mother tongue. It is in the child's mother tongue that his or her thought processes are developed (Ball, Undated). Cummins (1984) posits that a child begins to pick up non-mother tongue as soon as he or she is proficient in the mother tongue. This age at which this happens varies from child to child but it is accelerated or delayed by the exposure the child has in the environment. However, the average age at which this happens could be between three and five.

The difference in the language of the school and those spoken at home excludes the involvement of the parents and the local communities from the educational process of their children. This is especially so if parents are illiterate in the foreign language used in schools. IECCE programmes provide support to parents and other adults involved in the lives of young children to

participate actively in nurturing their children. It promotes social adjustments and improves communication skills that children require so that it is not left to the school or centres alone. The fact remains that children can acquire additional languages in their early years since languages do not seem to compete for 'mental space' nor is bilingualism confusing to children in reality if they receive adequate inputs and opportunities for interaction. Children are known to be able to acquire multi-lingual proficiency and proficiency in two or more languages (Lightbown, 2008, p.8 cited in UNESCO, 2011).

Further to the acquisition of language skills, there are cultural practices and values as well that provide cost effective dimensions to the provision of IECCE in the African context. The traditional family unit (whether nuclear or extended) still demonstrates more intimate psycho-social surveillance of the growing child. This includes a lot of child to child practices, as in the role of elder siblings in early childhood care. Given the fact that the immediate environment is the locale for education, socialisation within the child's realistic environment should take precedence over everything else. The physical location of ECCE centres in rural communities, many of them enclaved, excludes many children from access and more so the benefits of ECCE.

2.4. Child-to-child practices

In African societies, child-to-child practice is where older siblings help in the upbringing of the younger ones. In other words, the older siblings contribute in raising the younger ones within the culture in child-to-child play activities, helpfulness and stimulation. For example, the older children assist in providing custodial care for younger ones while the parents are away in the farm or to the market. The younger children could be from the same parents or other parents of the same extended family or in families in the same compound. Among the Yorubas of Nigeria,

this type of setting is called "*agbo-ile*" (a group of houses, which is made up of housing units where family members reside). While the younger ones are with the older children, the older children use the opportunity to organize activities that help in developing the physical skills of the younger ones by engaging them in sand play, hide and seek, competitive games, sing song and rhymes to which the children dance. According to Uka (1966), the older children engage the younger ones in activities that develop their intellectual and language skills. For instance, they tell stories which they hear from their parents or other adult members of their extended families to the younger ones. These stories are usually about great hunters, fighters, animals, towns and cities. The younger ones are asked to mention moral values or lessons learned from the same stories. The younger ones may be asked to retell the story or tell their own stories in turn. This corroborates the African saying that "a child who has siblings to play with has a great opportunity to learn to speak". In addition, the older children assist in making the younger ones develop positive social skills, moral values and cooperative spirit. During play activities, the older children gather other children and organize dramatic plays in which adult roles are imitated. The younger ones are made to gather materials which they share among themselves to facilitate their play. Character and acceptable behaviours of the cultural setting are encouraged.

2.5. Psychosocial surveillance

Psychosocial surveillance is one of the African child upbringing practices where adults within a family or community closely observe children to monitor and ensure acceptable interactions with others and encourage positive behaviours of the children. For example, it involves a situation whereby adults in the environment of children serve as carers, facilitators, teachers and parents in all respects. Whenever any adult has the opportunity to

be with children, the adult will use the opportunity to teach the children one skill or the other, correct children's wrong doings and tell them stories about their ancestors, riddles and jokes that help to promote logical and critical thinking of children (Akinbote, 2006). Psychosocial surveillance is important because it serves as a vital means of transmitting indigenous knowledge and values to children. However, as Africa becomes increasingly urbanised and internet connection and global communication becomes more and more accessible, there would be the impact of increasingly additional prevailing philosophies. Western philosophies that might not be acceptable to Africans will require adults' close supervision and monitoring to curb African children from imbibing them.

2.6. African social and cultural norms

2.6.1. Social norms

Social norms can be described as 'laws', mostly unwritten, that govern the behaviours of any group of people. Although these norms are not necessarily formal laws within society, they still work to promote a great deal of social control. Norms in every culture create conformity that allows for people to become socialized to the culture in which they live. Norms dictate the interactions of people in all social encounters and are used to promote the creation of roles in society. They also allow people of different levels of social class structure to function effectively. As social beings, individuals, including young children learn when and where it is appropriate to act in certain ways, to say certain things, to use certain words, to discuss certain topics or wear certain clothes, and when it is not. Social norms can be enforced formally (e.g., through sanctions) or informally (e.g., through body language and non-verbal communication cues.) If people do not follow these norms then they become labelled as deviants or seen as abnormal and this

can lead to them being considered the outcast of society. What is considered "normal" is relative to the location of the culture in which the social interaction is taking place.

2.6.2. Transmission of social norms

This takes place within and outside the home. Groups internalize or acquire norms by accepting them as reasonable and proper standards for behaviour within the group. Once firmly established, a norm becomes a social fact, and thus, a part of the group's working structure, and is difficult to change. With that being said, newcomers to a group can change a group's norms. However, it is much more likely that the new individual entering the group will adopt the group's norms, values, and perspectives, rather than the other way around. Also, norms that are counter to the behaviours of the overarching society or culture may be transmitted and maintained within small subgroups of society. Social groups have a big influence on social norms. Social norms have a way of maintaining order and organizing groups. Social norms demonstrate how an 'ideal' society should be. It is the job of groups in society to carry out these social norms. Norms affect the way one behaves in public. This 'descriptive norm' refers to people's perceptions of what is commonly done or expected in specific situations. An 'injunctive norm' refers to people's perceptions of what is commonly approved or disapproved of within a particular culture. For example, among the Hausa people of Nigeria, the youngsters must speak in indigenous language (Hausa) when conversing with older people in the community even when both of them understand and speak the official language (English).

'Prescriptive norms' are unwritten rules that are understood and followed by society; they state what we should do. Everyone does these every day without thinking about them. Example: locking the doors of your home or car at night. 'Proscriptive norms' are unwritten rules that are known by

society that one shouldn't do, or follow. These norms can vary from culture to culture. Example: arriving late to appointments or meetings. A 'subjective norm' is determined by beliefs about the extent to which important others want them to perform. Social influences are conceptualized in terms of the pressure that people perceive from important instructions to perform, or not to perform. Deviance is "nonconformity to a set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society." In simple terms, it is behaviour that goes against norms. 'The Looking-Glass Self' is a theory formed by Charles Cooley which states that our self-concepts are formed as reflections of the reactions, responses and evaluations of others in our environment that feedback to us.

2.6.3. Cultural norms

Although culture is a powerful human tool for survival, it is also fragile because it changes over a period of time and could be easily lost because it exists in the minds of people who practice its norms. Written languages, systems of government, building architectures and artefacts are ways that culture of a people has been expressed. Archaeologists are constantly digging up artefacts of ancient people to uncover the material remains that reflect cultural patterns of those that lived during ancient times. These reflect the creation based on cultural knowledge and skills. They nevertheless, reflect the cultural background of a people, especially that of young citizens that influence their cultural identity, which the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC, 1959) upholds as sacrosanct.

In order for children across the African continent to have equal access to a high quality education, their mother tongue, or indigenous languages, all must be valued and respected, especially by the educational system in each country. Even educators may unknowingly assist in the academic impairment

of children from local communities. This may happen when children switch abruptly from home language or mother tongue to foreign language. This is a form of hijacking the mental processing from its natural course.

The consequences are that not only do we lose a huge human resource by impeding the mental growth of millions of the world citizens; many of them are also lost to the entire system of formal education. In actual fact, three foundational educational principles are violated as many children begin institutional schooling. The first principle is that ***cognitive development and development of a child's mother tongue go hand in hand*** but this is not promoted in most school systems in Africa*.* Development of a child's mother tongue should "feed" his or her broad-based academic development, because it lays a solid conceptual foundation for all the skills needed for intellectual growth. Recent research shows that support of one's first language facilitates academic success, even with a second language as medium of instruction (Collier and Thomas 2004). Jim Cummins' *Common Underlying Proficiency* model is one attempt to explain this phenomenon of linguistic abilities and understandings which transfer across languages (Cummins, 1986).

The second principle, supported by abundant evidence gathered in the last three decades, is that ***mother tongue education in the formative years does not retard acquisition of a second (or third) language; it facilitates it*** (Muskin, 1999; Dutcher, 1995). In many places in Africa there is still a widely held belief that the sooner children begin learning a second language, the better they will master it (Muthwii and Kioko, 2001). On the contrary, Cummins' findings (1984) suggest that a child's second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. The more developed the first language, the easier it will be to

develop the second language. When the first language is at an early stage developmentally, the challenge of learning a second language is much greater (except for pronunciation).

Third, **children bring with them a broad array of skills when they go to school**. These should be leveraged. A school system should develop them, rather than setting them aside and introducing a completely different phonology, syntax, semantic framework, and vocabulary with which children must try to learn. The former is facilitation; the latter is hindrance to learning. As Colin Baker (1996:148) says, "The language the child is using in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to be able to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom." That development, begun at home, should continue unimpeded when he enters school.

2.7. Cultural values

Values exert major influence on the behaviour of an individual and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. In this sense, *values* can be defined as those things that are important to or cherished by someone. Values are the motivating power of human actions and a *necessity* of her or his survival, psychologically as well as physically.

2.7.1. The concept of values

The concept "value" is not an endpoint or end in itself; it presupposes an answer to the question: of value to *whom* and for *what*? It presupposes an entity capable of acting to achieve a goal in the face of an alternative. Where no alternative exists, no goals and no values are possible. "Value" is that which one acts to gain and keep; "virtue" is the action by which one gains and keeps it. It is only an ultimate goal, an *end in itself* that makes the existence of values possible.

2.7.2. Personal and cultural values

A personal or cultural value is extremely absolute or relative ethical value, the assumption of which can be the basis for ethical action. A *value system* is a set of consistent values and measures. A principal value is a foundation upon which other values and measures of integrity are based. Those values which are not physiologically determined and normally considered objective, such as a desire to avoid physical pain, seek pleasure, etc., are considered subjective, vary across individuals and cultures and are in many ways aligned with belief and belief systems. Types of values include ethical or moral value, doctrinal or ideological (religious, political) values, social values, and aesthetic values.

Personal values are obtained in many different ways. The most important place for building values is a person's family. The family is responsible for teaching children what is right and wrong long before there are other influences. As it is said, a child is a reflection of the parents. As a child starts school, school helps some to shape some of the values of children. Then there is religion that the family introduces to a child that plays a role in teaching the right and wrong behaviours. Values are formed during four significant periods:

1. Imprint period from birth to 7 years.
2. Modelling period from 8 –13 years.
3. Socialization period from 13 –21 years.

Education as deliberate transmission of knowledge, skills and values traverses the other three periods.

Personal values provide an internal reference for what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable, constructive, etc. Values generate behaviour and help solve common human problems for survival by comparative rankings of value, the results of which provide answers to questions of why people do what they do and in what order they choose to do

them. Over time, the public expression of personal values which groups of people finds important in their day-to-day lives lay the foundations of law, custom and tradition. Personal values in this way exist in relation to cultural values, either in agreement or in conflict with prevailing norms. A culture is a social system that shares a set of common values, in which such values permit social expectations and collective understandings of the good, beautiful, constructive, etc. Without normative personal values, there would be no cultural reference against which to measure the virtue of individual values and so culture identity would break up.

2.7.3. Cultural values

Cultures have values that are largely shared by their members. The values of a society can be identified by noting which people receive honour or respect. In the US, for example, professional athletes at the top levels in some sports are honoured (in the form of monetary payment) more than college professors. Surveys show that voters in the US would be reluctant to elect an atheist as a president, suggesting that belief in God is a value. There is a difference between values clarification and cognitive moral education. Values clarification is, "helping people clarify what their lives are for and what is worth working for. Students are encouraged to define their own values and understand others' values. Cognitive moral education is based on the belief that students should learn to value things like democracy and justice as their moral reasoning develops. Personal and cultural values can be varied by the living standards of a person.

2.7.4. Strong moral values

Hard work, which is carried out with a good sense of responsibility and work ethic are taught from an early to children at home. They learn these by examples given by the adult members or senior siblings of the household. Vices such as stealing, cheating, lying, fighting in the public place was considered as anti-social behaviours and publicly redressed.

Children still need to be taught the ethics of dignity in labour and that hard work carried out with a good sense of responsibility pays. Politeness and courtesy in speech and behaviour is communicated to children through the use of different idiomatic expressions of different African languages. Training begins at home, hence the foundation of good behaviour and sign of good upbringing including being polite and showing courtesy to everybody requires a direct engagement of all stakeholders from parents of children and the community. While there are no direct costs attached to teaching these virtues, they bring great rewards and opens valuable doors and opportunities for peaceful living throughout life. Strong moral values are being successfully enforced because the tasks of enforcing or inculcating these are not limited to the immediate parents but all other members of the family and community are involved. Therefore children are being guided and supervised in and out of the home at all times.

Values are related to the norms of a culture, but they are more global and abstract than norms. Norms are rules for behaviour in specific situations, while values identify what should be judged as good or evil. Flying the national flag on a holiday is a norm, but it reflects the value of patriotism. The colour of the clothing worn and the manner of appearance are normative behaviours dictated by the occasion such as weddings, funerals, formal meetings, relaxation or while engaging in commercial activities. In certain Different cultures reflect different values.

2.8. Respect for elders

This is highly valued in Africa such that children are taught to have a great deal of respect for their elders, whether or not they are related to them. It is the cornerstone of our culture. In some languages, the way elders are addressed differs as they are loaded with words that connote honour and reverence. For instance, elders are rarely addressed by their first names. Appellations such as uncle, aunty, brother, sister, mother (mammy, mummy or mama), father (baba, papa or daddy), his highness, queen or

king etc are used with the appropriate actions that match the words being used. These include a bow, genuflection, prostration, smile, soft tone, and the like. It is generally considered unspeakable and unimaginable for children to call their parents by their first names. That is considered a taboo in communities where these norms are practiced. This culture of respect for elders fosters an atmosphere of conflict resolution and order in the society where it is practiced.

2.9. The concept of extended family

Unlike in most developed countries, the concept of the extended family operates as the built-in social security system. In principle, the African is his or her brothers' or sisters' keeper, although this mutually helpful practice is gradually eroding. It is customary in some African communities to take up the responsibility of educating and training their siblings, relatives and children not related to them through school up to High School and College. Unrelated dependents are provided for in terms of food, clothing and shelter depending on the ability of the provider. Whenever there are unresolved conflicts at home with spouses or at work, there is always an uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin who will listen sympathetically and offer useful advice while maintaining confidentiality and ensuring lasting stability in our relationships. It was system that helped to ensure that irreconcilable differences were rare.

2.10. Effective parental control and discipline

parental control is strictly maintained during decision making in the family. An important aspect of parental control is the assumption that having a father at home is very important in raising children and they must be raised with one voice. Even when children were smart enough to realize that one of their parents is more tolerant of their misdeeds or more compassionate to grant their demands. Spanking as opposed to physical abuse was a cherished form of discipline, which many advanced countries view

as a taboo today. Reward and punishment are frequently used to guide the behaviour of children. For example, there are usually time for break and refreshment for children that work very hard. Such children are allowed to take their meals earlier than the lazy ones.

2.11. Personality, appearance and self image

There is an African adage which can be interpreted to mean that *the way you dress is the way you will be addressed*. While one's personal appearance and comportment have the propensity to create unimaginable opportunities for a person, it is the character displayed that will keep such doors of opportunities open. Children in Africa are taught to respect and appreciate the value of their cultural heritage in the building of their personality, appearance, identity and self image. With more and more acculturation and the power of modernization or westernization which erroneously depicts the African way of life as primitive, many of the age long traditions which are useful for human co-existence, including languages, are becoming extinct. Many young people think being educated is to change your laws, customs, practices, or beliefs so that it resembles or is replaced by those from Europe or North America, France, Portugal, or Arab regions. On the contrary, while cultures of a people can change, no single culture has the monopoly of great human values and customs that the world needs for growth and development. People can be categorized (by tribe, profession, calling etc) on the basis of their appearances, tendencies, self image, self respect and a feeling of wellness. When taught at an early age, negative peer influences will find it difficult to rob children across the African continent of their African-ness except if they decide to give it away. Initiation rites performed for children from ages 5-8 to later childhood through adolescence is an example of personality development and self-identity. The rites mark the summary of the achievement in the passing stage

and development of the child and what is required of him or her in the next phase of development. This aspect of African culture helps build in the child some desirable values such as integrity, hard work, a sense of responsibility etc. However, some negatively impacting rites such as Female Genital Mutilation and Cut and other rites that violate the international Human rights of the child must be guarded against.

2.12. Mother tongue, local language or home language

Obanya (2004) noted that education on the African continent is failing the majority of its learners. This was evidenced by the high drop-out and repeater rates, low learner participation and poor academic results. This is especially so in sub-Saharan African countries where education is delivered in the language of the former colonial masters. The low learning outcomes were attributed to the underutilization of learners' home or first languages as a medium of instruction Obanya (2004). In other words the first language is the language transmitted by the family as members (the mother tongue or native language); the non-mother tongue but most widely used language in the immediate environment of the learner; the widely spoken language in a community in which the learner is growing up, but which is not necessarily the language of his or her parents or immediate family; the languages learnt and regularly used by an individual; or the most frequently used, the most perfectly mastered which might not necessarily be the first in the chronological order of acquisition by the individual. It is therefore necessary to examine the use of the terms- mother tongue, local language or home language and how they impact on learning outcomes.

Scientists have found that every language can be traced back to a long-forgotten dialect spoken by our Stone Age ancestors in Africa. The further away from Africa a language is spoken, the fewer distinct sounds - or phonemes. That is, every language in the world - from English to Mandarin - evolved from a prehistoric

'mother tongue' first spoken in Africa tens of thousands of years ago (Derbyshire, 2011 and Atkinson, 2011). The findings do not just pinpoint the origin of language to Africa - they also show that speech evolved at least 100,000 years ago, far earlier than previously thought.

Research has proven that using the learners' mother tongue or *home language* which refers to the language or languages spoken at home by children is crucial to effective learning. This will be useful when teachers and caregivers are also native speakers of the children's mother tongue or home language as it makes it easier for teachers and caregivers to communicate knowledge in a manner that facilitates assimilation.

According to UNESCO (2008, Page 5-6), *some educationists have argued that the only countries likely to achieve EFA are those where the language of instruction is the learners' mother tongue.* However, the use of indigenous or local language will not exclude proficiency in international and regional languages at higher levels of education so that students can gain access to wider opportunities and to meaningfully participate in other societies of the world as global citizens. *Local language* refers to the language spoken in the homes, street and marketplaces of a community. This is different from a regional, national or international language. *Mother tongue* refers to a child's first language, the language learned in the home from older family members; and *Home language* refers to the language or languages spoken by the child at home (See UNESCO, 2008, for related definitions). A comprehensive early childhood education and care programme should ensure the use of mother tongue or home language to ensure inclusiveness.

Chapter 3: Indigenous ECCE curriculum framework

3.0. Introduction

Chapter 1 has highlighted the global picture and trends in ECCE, with special reference to the foundational work UNESCO in Africa. Chapter 2 sketched elements of an IECCE curriculum ought to take into serious considerations. This chapter describes the process of developing an Indigenous IECCE curriculum framework for Africa's marginalized and hard-to-reach children in their early years. It equally includes the guiding principles for such a curriculum and a brief description of what each of the seven modules of the curriculum entails.

3.1. Key orienting principles of the indigenous approach

Although there has been an expansion of ECCE in the selected countries and in Africa as a whole since 2007, the importance of developing a strong teaching and caregiver-staff as well as relevant curriculum framework and modules for Africa cannot be overemphasised. For the Education for All Goal 1 (Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children) to be achieved, there needs to be the exploration of possibilities guided by the norms and values relevant to the local people of Africa.

Although there are several home-language-based bilingual ECCE programmes the world over, they are still far from being commonly available and accessible in all communities, especially enclaved rural areas. In addition, research on their effectiveness is still very limited. For instance, a local child whose ancestral language is neither spoken in the home or community faces a

lot of challenges unless fluent native speakers are available to deliver the ECCE programmes to them. Some useful indigenous programmes that have influenced work in this area include the Hawaiian and Navajo in United States of America, the Mi'kmaq in Canada, and the Maori in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Heymann and Cassola, 2012).

The proposed IECCE model gives attention to helping children learn in their local context from birth to age eight. It promotes a smooth transition from ECCE to primary education and beyond such that cultural values and practices that are capable of adding values to the lives of the children to make them functional members of their society are ensured.

3.2. Guiding principles of the IECCE framework

Users of the IECCE framework will be guided by some principles that will distinct the approach from others in a manner that shows the value added to ECCE programmes by its widespread adoption for use and applicability in African cultural contexts. The guiding principles are basically to ensure the following:

- The IECCE service should be delivered in the best interest of the African child in his or her context. This is consideration should be given to the usefulness of learning and care being provided for the child's environment, first and foremost, and gradual transition into the world beyond the home environment.

- The programme should be accessible to all children, without discrimination of any kind and as long as the child and their parents value the cultural underpinnings of the programme.

- It should portray good cultural values from Africa that can give a sense of pride and identity to the child without the feeling of inferiority.

- It should be conducted in the local language or mother tongue spoken by the child so that parents, guardians and community members can actively be involved in the education of their children.

- Resources required by the providers of the IECCE must come from local sources. The materials should be creatively collected (with the involvement of the children and their parents and guardians) and used by teacher and caregivers who are local native speakers or versatile in the local language in order to ensure the appropriateness of their use.

- The IECCE adopt a multi-sectoral approach that takes into account all aspects of child development such as care, growth, development and education.

- Every community where the programme is practised should have a sense of ownership of the curriculum framework and modules developed. This will be evidenced in the generative approach adopted for ensuring that practical examples and learning materials are obtained from local environment. Contents should also promote self determination.

- Contents of the indigenous ECCE modules should be generative. It should not be static nor should it replicate existing western systems. This suggests that as more valued and relevant local information is acquired; it should be used to improve the learning that takes place in the centres or homes where the service is being provided.

Given the fact that good quality pre-school centres have essentially been the exclusive reserve of the privileged few living in the urban centres in Africa due to their prohibitive cost; the programmers designed to work through the Teacher Training Institutes and Ministries of Education to reach the currently excluded and disadvantaged groups, indigenous peoples and

the most vulnerable segments of the African society. However, the enormity of the work necessitates the collaborative efforts from all stakeholders in the care and education of children. Therefore, IICBA is working with partners like UNESCO BREDA, Teacher and Higher Education section of UNESCO Headquarters, International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, Commonwealth Secretariat, ADEA working Group on Early Childhood Development, UNICEF, ACALAN, Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU)etc to take push the frontiers of knowledge on ECCE by promoting culturally friendly models of pre- school education and care programme to all African communities especially those living in rural communities.

According to Obanya (2005), culture and education are inseparable, as they are *simply two sides of the same coin*. He asserted that the two concepts can be indistinguishable, as the primary definition of education is *acculturation.* According to him, "*societies in which education has not lost touch with acculturation; to be educated is also to be cultured*". Given that culture is contextual, the transmission of valuable cultural heritage to the young children in Africa must be given considerable attention through the adoption of a programme like the IECCE. The advantages of trans-generational transmission of culture through education (formal, non-formal and informal) cannot be overemphasized. Culturally based education plays a role in cementing team spirit in communities and promotes continued survival of societies from one generation to the other in order to prevent a looming cultural genocide in many African countries. Prior to the establishment of formal educational institutions or centres, each human society had a way of transferring knowledge. This took place in society, where the young and the not so young became educated by simply *living their culture.* The ordinary people are the "custodians of African culture in the true sense of the term" (Obanya, 2005). Therefore, the IECCE is designed to use the indigenous people who are knowledgeable about the

African culture to teach or transmit the African cultural values and norms to the African child at a very young age by infusing it into their style of education and curriculum. Teachers and caregivers needs to first have internalized the idea of extracting the great values in the African culture and creatively passing it on the younger generation by actively facilitating the process of acculturationthrough their practices in the ECCE settings.

3.3. Process of developing the indigenous curriculum framework for ECCE in Africa

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states in Article 11 on Education states that, the Education of the child shall be directed to, among others, "the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures". Article 12 on Leisure, Recreation and Cultural Activities states that:

"1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to fully participate in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity (OAU, 1990)."

By these provisions, African Member states have already alluded to the rights of the African child to a culturally appropriate education. Therefore UNESCO, which is the lead agency of the United Nations on matters of education and culture, is mandated to support African countries in developing culturally appropriate training modules that could contribute to training teachers and caregivers. The UNESCO IICBA, in collaboration with ECCE

experts[6] in ten African countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Uganda) drafted the modules. Burkina Faso, was represented by Centre International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique CIEFFA, joined the process during the validation workshop which took place in Abuja in 2012.The module design and development process was made possible through the support of UNESCO Dakar office and the Working Group on Early Childhood Development of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA); the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All; and UNICEF Uganda.

The seven indigenous models, briefly presented below, were validated at the 2012 Abuja Validation Workshop and are now ready for piloting and use in Africa. The modules were essentially designed to empower literate persons interested and committed to the care and education of children from 0-8 years, using a generative indigenous African ECCE models. The modules will empower the child minders with the knowledge, skills and warmth needed to support the development of the African child, and to become more effective and responsive to children's learning readiness and preparation for entry into primary school. The final validated versions of the seven indigenous ECCE modules were initially produced in English and French; and later translated into Portuguese. The expectation is that they will be translated into the appropriate language with locally appropriate examples and illustrations. Hence the modules present frameworks that would be tried out in Africa to allow for variations in diversity in culture, language, and child rearing practices generally considered as acceptable practices.

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6   Bame Nsamenang, Kongne Kenmogni Noélle and Binyet Bi Mbog Alain Philippe (Cameroon);Daniel Tefera, Adane Alemu and Metasebia Demissie (Ethiopia); Evelyn Quartey-Papafio, Salome Praise Otami and Kofi Nyiaye (Ghana); Lilian Akoth Odero and Janet Ndeto Mwitiki (Kenya); Edith Matsietsi Sebatane (Lesotho);Soonita Kistamah (Mauritius); Esther Abiola Oduolowu, Ekine Adefunke Oluwafunmilayo, Adekolarin Wonuola Adewole (Nigeria), Ramatoulaye Sabaly Diop andAbdourahim Gaye (Senegal), Margaret Dabor (Sierra Leone);HajaraNdayidde and Edinance Bakehena (Uganda); Patience O. Awopegba (IICBA Coordinator)

3.4. Highlights of the seven IECCE modules

Module 1 - The Young Child: It focuses on the young child whose growth and development is premised on its social-cultural context. It discusses the variations noticeable in the individual child, which is shaped by the cultural values and beliefs present in the child's environment. The process begins with the duties of parents, grandparents, religious or community leaders and other siblings among others. It shows how all areas of development are interrelated and mutually supportive. It underscores the interplay of genetics, environmental influences and the child's own activities as the main factors impacting on development.

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 in inclusion and inclusive education. It describes the plight of children with additional needs in Africa and outlines the procedures that must be followed to support children with additional needs within their cultural setting. The module also discusses how peoples' perception and attitudes toward children with disabilities are shaped within the culture in which they live and proposes practical ways of managing them. This includes a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of the type of disability, developing positive attitude and skills toward children with additional needs, and raising the level of awareness of members of the community about children with additional needs.

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. It teaches different combination of partnerships for ensuring child development; awareness raising about harmful traditional practices; and acceptable methods for handling problems relating to behaviours and attitudes among others.Caregivers and teachers are guided on how to identify local constructions of good and bad behaviours in children and to articulate ways of effectively addressed them within the local contexts. Methods for reviewing conflicts and tensions are highlighted, indicating the roles of the fathers, mothers and other members of the local community.

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 the children in a manner that will promote their growth, development and better integration into the environment. This module teaches about food and nutrition, survival and development, health care, environmental safety and child security, and how to traditionally express love, provides warmth and protection for young children. Teachers are taught on how to engage children in decision making and to carryout responsibilities within their local settings. Also addressed are issues relating to culturally sensitive early stimulation and care.

Module 5 - Play and Learning: The African environment is rich in 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. This module provides information and support to educators, parents and community members on the principles and practices of play in the indigenous setting. It teaches about helping children to use play as a tool for learning by revealing the importance of play, types of play and safe materials used to creating play. It demonstrates how to design indoor and outdoor play spaces and explains the role of caregivers in organising play activities. All types of play focus on their cultural contexts and relevance. It also guide educators on how to develop teaching and learning materials for play using indigenous and other materials found in the local environment.

Module 6 - The Caregiver: This module is geared towards producing a caregiver with appropriate qualities needed to take care of the children using locally appropriate techniques. It is intended to guide caregivers on how to apply the knowledge and skills gained from all the other modules to make them effective in their responsibilities. Ultimately, when appropriate care is given to children, the quality of learning will improve. Therefore, issues addressed include the qualities of a caregiver; knowledge and skills that are needed to engage with children; and suitable practices of a professional caregiver in early childhood development programme. The module elaborates on the need for professional development for caregivers.

Module 7 - Assessment and Research: This concluding module discusses the need for the ECD caregivers and 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 knowledge, skills and abilities that a child should have or show at different stages such as zero-two, three-four, five-six, seven-eight years are necessary to plot their physical, mental (cognitive), social, emotional, moral and spiritual advancement. It is important to determine what these changes mean and what they signify in order to better care for and guide the personal growth, development and education of each child. The module provides a guide to stakeholders, especially parents and routine caregivers on how to keep a keen eye and to report about the ways children develop.

Chapter four provides a conceptual and theoretical grounding for the IECCE framework.

Chapter 4: Conceptual and theoretical orientation for an IECCE approach

4.0. Introduction

This chapter attempts to define and clarify some theoretical concepts central to the approach of an indigenous early childhood care and education curriculum for Africa. The theories presented in the chapter foster keen focus of attention on the context of the child and the child's behaviours and actions from an early age in that context that matters, critically.

4.1. What the framework conveys

This indigenous ECCE framework is articulated from a mindset and way of thinking called the eco-cultural model. Eco-cultural is derived from two words, ecology (referring to physical place and its social system) and culture, comprising cultural tools such as oral traditions, literacy or illiteracy, mother tongue, etc. and the different ways of thinking about various aspects of life or issues in living, including the upbringing and education of children. Within this model the child is situated in a context or environment defined by a geographical or physical place and the social system and its cultural elements that exist or are active in that ecology and with its members, including children, even from early ages.

Most theories that explain human development tend to be presented as universally applicable but they are culture-infused while some may inform how context and culture shape biological development. The eco-cultural model is a framework with which to examine the many levels of the effects of the interrelatedness between the physical, social and cultural elements in the environment and what they bring to bear on a developing child. The ecological systems theory positions child development within systems of superimposed 'layers' of environmental settings, each impacting differently on child development. Social ecology is the study of

people in an environment and the influences they exert on one another, including children. The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family and community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and channels development. Thus, interactions with others and the environment are central to human development. As such, it constitutes a theoretical framework or frame of mind to analyzing various types of contexts in which children live and how they are cared for and educated in their early years. This model allows for the integration of multiple levels of interaction with contexts to establish the *big picture* of forces that influence child development. The theory of social development focuses on the connections between people and the social and historical circumstances in which children share experiences, act or interact. Within their circumstances, human beings of all contexts use tools that develop from cultural practices, such as speech and writing to mediate human behaviour. The psychology of *cultural mediation* (Vygotsky, cited in Bavali, Yamini and Sadighi (2011) holds that children gain specific knowledge from social interactions with significant others and more competent others, especially parents, peers, teachers and other adults in Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD).

There have been several adaptations of the eco-cultural model. However, the initial and most utilized version is that of Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (see Box 4.1) that divides factors into four levels, namely: macro-, exo-, meso-, micro-, and chronosystem, which identify influences as intercultural, community, organizational, and interpersonal or individual. Bronfenbrenner (1994)[7] used ecological framework to explain that the individuals and the contexts in which they are situated are explicitly linked. Vygotsky further supported this when he explained that the theory involves the mutual considerations of individual characteristics, interpersonal factors and the broader historical and cultural contexts

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7   Urie Bronfenbrenner believed that children are surrounded by many rings of influences and events that occur in their lives, which in turn affects that way they develop. See http://prezi.com/ddubfgoqeauc/urie-bronfenbrenner/

of the individuals. Traditionally, research theorists like Urie Bronfenbrenner have considered only a dichotomy of perspectives, either micro (individual behaviour) or macro (effect of the media or cultural factors (http://www.floridahealth.gov/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early_steps/training/documents/bronfenbrenners_ecological.pdf). The ecological systems theory was founded on the person, the environment, and the continuous interaction of the two. This interaction constantly evolves and develops both components. However, it is not only the environment that directly affects the person, but there are layers in between, which all have resulting impacts on the next level. The individual, organization, community, and culture are nested factors, like Russian dolls. Each level operates fully within the next larger sphere.

There are many effects that occur from cross-level influences and relationships between and among levels that EST addresses. The eco-cultural theory holds that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems, and it identifies five environmental systems discussed as follows:

4.2. Components of the Eco-cultural theory

4.2.1. Microsystem

This is a setting in which the individual lives or undertakes routine activities. This includes the child's family, peers, school, and neighbourhood. It is in the micro system that the most direct interactions with social agents take place; with parents, peers, and teachers, for example. The child is not a passive recipient of experiences in these interactions, but someone who contributes to construct the nature of the settings. A child's own biology may be considered part of her or his microsystem.

Box 4.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

"This theory looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex "layers" of environment, each having an effect on a child's development. This theory has been renamed "*bioecological* systems theory" to emphasize that a child's own biology is a primary environment fuelling her development. The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers his development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout other layers. To study a child's development then, we must look not only at the child and her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well."

Source: Bronfenbrenner in Dede Paquette and John Ryan http://www.floridahealth.gov/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early_steps/training/documents/bronfenbrenners_ecological.pdf.   Retrieved   2 November, 2013

4.2.2. Mesosystem

Messosystem refers to relations between microsystems or connections between contexts. Examples are the relation of family experiences to school experiences, school experiences to faith communities and experiences, and family experiences to peer experiences. For example, children whose parents have rejected them may have difficulty developing positive relations with peers and teachers.

4.2.3. Exosystem

This system involves links between a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role and the individual's immediate context. For example, a husband's or child's experience at home may be influenced by a mother's experiences at work. The mother might receive a promotion that requires more travel, which might increase conflict with the husband and change patterns of interaction with the child.

4.2.4. Macrosystem

A macrosystem describes the culture in which individuals live. Elements of macrosystms include the cultural contexts of developing and industrialized countries as well as their socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity, amongst many others.

4.2.5. Chronosystem

Although, Bronfenbrenner did not identify this system as a sub-set of ecological theory, its relevance to the theory cannot be overlooked. Chronosystem refers to the structure of environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as across social-historical circumstances. For example, divorce is one transition and family relocation or migration for whatever reason is another. Researchers have found that the negative effects of divorce on children peak in the first year after the divorce. By two years after the divorce, family interaction is less chaotic and more stable. As an example of social-historical circumstances, consider how the opportunities for women to pursue a career have increased during the last thirty years and what Slave Trade means to offspring peoples of African descent around the globe.

Each of the five systems is characterized by roles, norms (expected behaviour) and relationships. For example, children tend to act differently within their own family than within a classroom. A child may speak more often at home, be less goal-oriented, and, almost certainly, will not sit at a desk for hours on end. Other things being equal, when the relation between different microsystems is well-matched, development of the child progresses more smoothly. A common example of this is the relationship between home and school. When role expectations are similar in both settings, e.g., try your hardest, do your home work, be on time, etc., children will be expected to perform better than if role expectations differ substantially from one setting to the next. Furthermore, the roles, norms and rules of each system may shape psychological development. For example, a poor family in a slum neighbourhood faces many challenges which a rich family in a protected or low-density community does not, and vice versa. The slum family is more likely to experience environmental hardships, such as injurious substances and crime. On the other hand, the sheltered family is more likely to lack the nurturing support of the extended family. Thus, these environments — from the family to economic and political structures — have come to be viewed as part of the life course from childhood through adulthood; they are the pre-existing or overarching systems within which child development and education happen.

4.3. The developmental niche framework

The **developmental niche**, developed by Super and Harkness (1986), is a theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing how culture shapes child development. It is theoretically related to the ecological systems theory and shares the same origins with Weisner's (2002) "ecocultural niche," Worthman's (1994) "developmental microniche" and

Nsamenang's (1992) African social ontogeny. The following two overarching principles embed the framework in cultural anthropology and psychology of human development: (1) A child's environment is organized in a non-arbitrary manner as part of a cultural-meaning system, and (2) The child's own disposition, including a particular constellation of attributes, temperament, skills, and potentials, affect the process of development. The developmental niche is seen as the composite of three interacting subsystems:

1. Physical and social settings – who is there, what is available and what do physical spaces and social others provide?

2. Customs and practices of child rearing – what are the inherited and adapted ways of nurturing, entertaining, educating, and protecting the child; and

3. The psychology of the caregivers, particularly parental ideas of child development and parenting, which play a directive role in actual childcare practices.

The three subsystems of the developmental niche — settings, customs, and caregiver psychology – share the common function of mediating the child's developmental experience within the larger culture. The developmental niche framework makes evident the kind of systematic regularity that culture provides — environmental organization that emphasizes repeatedly or with singular salience the culture's core "messages." This quality, called "contemporary redundancy," is important for the acquisition of skills and values as it offers multiple opportunities for learning the same thing, whether that "thing" is reading, caring for others, the communication of emotions, or the value of "independence." The elaboration of themes over the course of developmental time reinforces lessons learned earlier and recasts them in a more adequate format for meeting the challenges of increasing maturity. As an organizer of the environment, culture assures that key meaning systems are elaborated in appropriate

ways at different stages of development, and that the learning occurs across behavioural domains and various scales of time. It is through such cultural thematic areas that the environment works its most profound influences on development.

4.4. An African social ontogeny

Nsamenang's (1992) theoretical elaboration of an indigenous West African social ontogeny is phrased within an ecocultural perspective**.** His formulation of social ontogenesis is rooted in a West African worldview, which Serpell (1994, p. 18) characterized as constituting "a very different psychological frame of reference from that which informs contemporary developmental psychology." This theory of the universe is shared among many different ethnic groups and posits the growth of social selfhood through seven phases, each characterized by a distinctive developmental task, defined within the framework of the culture's primarily socio-affective, developmental agenda. In the first phase, the ceremony of naming projects the kind of socialized being the neonate should become. The major developmental task of the ensuing 'pre-social' phase is success in social priming: babies are cuddled and teased to smile along with adults; parents and other caregivers offer infants food items and playthings, and lure them both verbally and through nonverbal communication to return the 'gifts' – a preliminary step towards induction into the 'sharing and exchange norms' that bond siblings and the entire social system together. Rabain (1979) describes similar teasing in her ethnographic study of Wolof child socialisation practices in Senegal. Among the Chewa and Tumbuka peoples of Zambia's Eastern Province, Mtonga (2012) interprets such interactions of adults with toddlers (in the phase of development known as Chivusa (Babbler), as aimed at cultivating generosity and preventing the development of greediness or selfishness.

The next phase of Nsamenang's West African ontogeny, roughly corresponding with childhood, is termed the period of 'social apprenticing' in which the principal developmental task is to recognize, cognize and rehearse social roles that pertain to three hierarchical spheres of life: household, network, and public. Much of the responsibility for stimulation and guidance in this phase of early childhood development is assigned to preadolescent and adolescent children in the family and the neighborhood. The delegation of responsibility for care and socialization of younger children from adults to preadolescents and adolescents serves the function of priming the emergence of social responsibility. These priming strategies embedded in traditional, African child-rearing practices have important implications for the design of culturally appropriate forms of intervention to optimize developmental opportunities for children in contemporary Africa (Nsamenang, 2009). Indeed, in many African communities with a subsistence economy, far from constituting a form of exploitation or abuse, care giving responsibilities assigned to preadolescents and adolescents are better understood as part of "an indigenous educational strategy that keeps children in contact with existential realities and the activities of daily life—[that] represents the participatory component of social integration' (Nsamenang, 1992, p. 157).

Nsamenang's (1992) theory of social ontogenesis points out how, beginning early in life and through developmental stages, African children are active in the life of their families and societies as well as in self-care and self-learning. This theory presents child development as partly determined by the social ecology in which the development occurs and by how African children, especially in sibling and peer groups, learn from each other in peer group settings. The seminal concept of this theory is sociogenesis, defined as individual development that is explained more in terms of socially observed markers

and culturally perceived tasks but less on biological unfolding, although social ontogenetic thinking does not preclude nature; it assumes that biology underpins social ontogenesis (Nsamenang, 2006). Ngaujah (2003) has interpreted Nsamenang's theoretical approach as revealing the social and affective nature of the environment on the child's cognitive and social learning, as African peers and siblings are accredited skilled partners in children's ZPD (Pence and Nsamenang, 2008).

By positioning children as emerging into levels of selfhood, implying the unfolding of biological potentialities and social competencies, Africans tacitly acknowledge that self-concept evolves with a maturing self-consciousness that accords a sense of self-direction and agentive search for or choice of the resources and exposures that increasingly differentiate and polish self-identity and goal-directed behaviour toward desired or imagined personal status, either of sovereign individuality or relational individuality. Such a dynamic developmental perspective affirms the view that "legal identity is established from birth, whereas personal, social, and cultural identity grows and changes" (Woodhead, 2008, p. 4) not in a universal civilization but in a specific context. In fact, "the process of developing a sense of self is a process of connecting individual personal identity to a changing social identity, depending on a child's ontogenetic group affiliations" (Pence and Nsamenang, 2008, p. 41).

African parents sensitize children from an early age to seek out others from whom to extract local knowledge and situated 'intelligences' (Ogbu, 1994) and in so doing clarify who they are, particularly within sibling and peer spaces. Children extort the social, emotional, practical, cognitive, relational values and other norms ingrained in the activity settings of the home, society, and peer cultures more through their contextual embedment and active participation and less through explicit

adult instruction. In so doing, they, "graduate" from one activity setting and participative sector of the peer culture to another, steadily maturing toward adult identity and roles (Nsamenang, 2012). The 'extractive' processes they engage are similar to the interactional-extractive learning processes Piaget's theory invoked, but differ in being child-to-child interstimulation and mentorship. That is, the mentors in most children's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) are not adults but siblings and peers, who initiate and promote considerable self-education and developmental gains from and through cooperation and antagonism with others. Zimba (2002, p. 94) described one instance of self-definition with the Zulu community of South Africa, as nurturing 'umuntu umuntu ngabantu', which literally translates into "a person is only a person with other people". This relational view of identity development downplays sovereign individuation, implying that a sense of self cannot be attained or adequately understood without reference to the 'community 'of others in which it is embedded. Chapter five examines the contextual issues involved in the delivery of the framework.

Chapter 5:   IECCE in the African cultural context

5.0. Introduction

Some of the contextual issues that will be examined include the use of mother tongue as the medium of delivery, basic needs to be provided, practical guidelines for IECCE programme development and implementation, the main message that the model conveys, the IECCE delivery methodology, a guide to teachers and caregivers, and proposals on types of resource support needed and how they can be resourced from the local environment.

5.1. Thrust of an IECCE curriculum for Africa

The *Kaugel first language first education programme* and the *Pūnana* Leo pre-school programme are examples of indigenous ECCE programmes which were developed as a result of grassroots demand in Papua New Guinea and Hawaii, USA respectively, as well as the Kohanga Reo Language Nest programmes that evolved in New Zealand (Bushouse, 2008). Pūnana Leo means language nest, and just as young inexperienced persons (fledglings) are fed directly from the mouths of their mothers, the Hawaiian language is fed into the ears of children of 3–4 years of age from the mouths of the native speakers of the Hawaiian language. As children from the Pūnana Leo family (*ohana)* enter preschool, they are immersed in a rich and stimulating environment *(honua)* where all must observe the *kapu* of "Hawaiian language only." This experience is said to facilitate the learning of the Hawaiian as quickly as possible[8]. Fresh preschoolers learn simple phrases, sentences,

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8   More information on the Pūnana Leo pre-school is available on http://www.ahapunanaleo. org/index.php?/programs/youth_programs_-_punana_leo , Retrieved November 5, 2012

and songs with the help of fluent *kumu* (teachers) and older classmates. Many, if not all, Pūnana Leo preschoolers are said to be able to speak Hawaiian within three or four months. There are 11 Pūnana Leo throughout the state of Hawai'i located on the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu and Kaua'i. All preschools are accredited through the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium.

In the case of the Kaugel First Language First programme of Papua New Guinea, there is a total family commitment. The curriculum resources are generated by parents and there are highly proficient speakers of the heritage mother tongue available who can be trained and possess the energy necessary to work with young children[9]. Several existing research, policies and associated practices that discusses the effects of language on child development outcomes highlights the following among others: social inclusion or exclusion, loss or gain of talent for societies, creation of social and cultural affiliations, extent of educational attainment, possibilities in labour force participation, extent of civic participation, and the creation of unique identities needed for children to make positive contributions for the development of human society. These arguments present a strong basis for exploring the use of IECCE programme in Africa. Several international conventions have supported the fact that children from local communities are entitled to a start in their educational journey that enables them to make the necessary connections between their values and those presented to them in their learning centres. When these culturally relevant connections are absent, there would be learning challenges leading to absenteeism, failure in the learning process and disinterestedness in schooling.

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9   See more information on http://www.seameo.org/LanguageMDGConference2010/doc/presentations/day1/JessicaBall-ppt-ecd.pdfRetrieved November 5, 2012

5.2. In-Door and Out-Door IECCE environments

Creating learning spaces for children in local communities encompasses the preparation of the physical, social and emotional environments. This has great implication for parent and family engagement (Jarman, E. n.d.). The physical environment has been observed to have an impact on children's behaviour, communication, emotional well-being and general engagement. It is therefore imperative to get the environment right so as to enhance the overall learning achievement of children. The environment should be calming, welcoming and stimulating. It should take into account children's preferred learning contexts. Teachers of IECCE model would require a good understanding of the rich cultural endowments of the local community and creatively simulate these in the child's learning environment. Teachers should be able to observe and reflect on how the environment affecting the children and how it could be adapted to create the best possible learning spaces for transition to happen.

Furthermore, the learning environment should be a safe place where children are protected from danger and are easily supervised, and it is where the important activities of the day take place, such as playing, eating, sleeping, washing hands, and going to the bathroom. Beyond the basics, however, an environment for young children implements and supports a programme's philosophy and curriculum (Wardle, 2012).

5.2.1. Preparing the indoor and outdoor environment with local resources

The world has become so technologically advanced and so have games or sports become sophisticated with the advent of several video games and digital entertainment for children. Nevertheless, long established African games are still as exciting and full of fun if teachers and care-givers can be creative in their use.

Some of these games range from out-door game like jump rope, ballgames, racing, circle games, shooting of marbles, etc and in-door games like Ludo, riddles and jokes, thinking games, toys, rhymes, tongue-twisters and spelling games among others. These cost nothing in terms of cash. The fun derived by the children and adults involved depends of the creativity and presentation styles of the teachers, caregivers and other adults involved in the lives of children. Most adults can refresh themselves about the games they played as children and the rules attached and teach them to their children and ground children. Age appropriate modifications can be made to them to make them even more interesting. Creativity or ingenuity must be encouraged in the developments of appropriate activities and the corresponding environment for children to play and learn in the African context. Africa is very rich in natural resources for creating in-doors and out-doors activities and environment for children. What is created will certainly depend on the geographical location in which a child lives. For instance the activities for children that live in the delta regions will differ from those living in arid or desert areas. Objects like sea shells, coastal stones, sharp sand, water and soft wood, plants and different types of leaves among other will form the bulk of the materials for planning the activities children living in the coastal areas. On the contrary, those living in regions close to desert or arid areas will be rich in different types of objects ranging from skeletons of wild animals, pictures of camels, snakes, spiders, lizards, scorpions, cacti, ants, coyotes etc. the type of plants would be more of the cactus plants, fine sand, hard rocks and desert type of houses among other. Stories would include those that children in the local communities can relate with. The IECCE personnel should be able to reflect on the best use of the natural endowments to stimulate critical and logical thinking, attentive listening and writing mechanics of the child. In every case, the interest of the child is given the prime consideration.

Parents and extended family members, elders, older siblings and peers are the primary educators of young children through both formal and informal learning process as children grow up. Children watch how these knowledgeable people around them carry out their tasks and they learn from them through some kinds of interactions different from the conventional styles peculiar to Western oriented styles. In the indigenous settings, pedagogy that scaffolds, co-constructs, promotes meta-cognitive strategies (riddles, stories, fables, proverbs, tongue twisters etc.) and facilitate children' learning in the context of adult or older children is adopted (Majasan, cited by Akinbote et al, 2001). Experimentation is encouraged during games period with peer groups when children are free to explore on their own, interact with friends and mates from other families. The environment is stimulating with natural forests, trees, attractive foliage, animals and their tracts, birds and their nets etc. There are also in the natural environment vocational laboratories like the palm oil mills, the blacksmith's billows, the dyer depot, the portal's depot etc. Children are free to explore these sites, observe and participate in these activities as they are available in their environment. The rationale for this approach is to make the child to be self- sufficient, work out some things and learn to think for oneself. This form of learning style is not quite the same with the conventional one the indigenous child may be exposed to in formal schooling where talk and chalk and asking of questions dominate the classroom practices.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) theories are springboards for those involved in child care and learning to take off. They are the frameworks on which care and learning activities for children are built. The theories provide useful guides to parents, caregivers and teachers, researchers and others on how to handle children's care and learning at the critical stage of early childhood. The guiding principle is that every child's development requires health care, nutrition, safety

as well as learning opportunities. The ultimate goal of early childhood development is to improve young children's capacity to develop as they learn, especially through play. Therefore, the facts and information gathered from theories are to be put into practice to bring the best out of children. The goals emanate from the holistic approach and rationale for the child's all round development. ECD programme must be delivered in such a way that it will take care of the child's holistic development and in his or her best interest. Support will have to be provided by the trained and experience teachers, elders, community members among on practical ways of turning every object in the child's environment into a tool for learning. Teachers and caregivers should need to be further supported to carry out research into pedagogical use of everyday objects for teaching and learning.

Child's development theories have some common grounds on issues relating to child development such as the pedagogical, cultural awareness, acquisition of knowledge and basic skills for problem solving, parents and community involvement, the natural environment and other activities that support the child's best interest. Furthermore research results based on many of these theories have established some benefits which children and families gain when they are exposed to quality ECD programme.

5.3. *Africa focussed Early Childhood pedagogies and local learning materials*

Philosophies of Montessori, for example, require well-designed classrooms with low shelves, four basic learning areas, and places for children to work and learn independently. The materials used do not have to be imported but made from local materials to which children in local communities can relate. The traditional African setting provides a rich environment that can be creatively designed to ensure that it is child friendly. The natural outdoor environment provides shady trees, rocky sites

where children could sit down to enjoy fantastic stories from the resource persons from the local environment, caregiver or teacher. British infant or primary programmes have classrooms with a variety of rich learning centres, a cosy reading area with couch and carpet, and a lively science area that contains pets and plants. Froebel's 'gift'(Hill 1908) which includes rods of different shapes, colours and sizes are used to teach concepts and relationships in arithmetic can also be stimulated through the thoughtful use of materials naturally found in Africa. Different colours of wooden rods of varying lengths can be carefully chosen by teachers to engage children in explorations of arithmetic concepts and relationships among the objects. Examples of naturally coloured woods are: African Blackwood native to Eastern Africa, known as Mozambique Ebony or Senegal Ebony; the African Mahogany with a deep reddish brown colour is called African mahogany, munyama, red mahogany, Uganda mahogany and also known as Khaya Nyasica, mululu (in Bemba and Tongan), mbawa, mlulu (in Nyanja), mkangazi (in Swahili); the bamboo tree found also in sub Saharan Africa are green when fresh and brown when dry are useful for making *green schools* and learning materials; and timber with variable colours from pale-yellow to medium-brown when fresh is called Iroko in Nigeria universally adopted as Iroko on the international market and also known as Mvule in East Africa are a few example of woods that can be sourced from the sawmills, local wood shops and bushes. Teachers can use them to teach various lessons in and outside the centres and homes where IECCE is taking place.

5.4. IECCE delivery methodology

Putting theory to practice requires that users will be able to fully appreciate the place of mother tongue in the delivery of the model by examining the place of L1[10] Methodology in IECCE. Indigenous ECCE modules are unique in the sense that

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10 local language or mother tongue is referred to as L1 for teaching in lower grades including the delivery of ECCE services

they promote the use of local language spoken by the children in their communities. As part of the arguments for the use of mother tongue education, Leila Schroeder (2007) clearly attested to the fact that children from minority language groups are impeded academically by the most unlikely of institutions such as schools. The paper cites evidence for the interdependency between overall cognitive development and that of the mother tongue in children (UNESCO, 2003; Baker, 1996; and Dutcher, 1995). It further explained that if children are allowed to follow a natural process of language acquisition, a solid foundation is laid for all their further learning. The IECCE is a curriculum promotes a foundation in early pre-primary years and advocates that this foundation is not suppressed or discarded. In order to assure progressive learning outcomes, these efforts should be sustained in early primary education. Schroeder assert that mother tongue education in the formative years does *not* hinder or delay acquisition of a second language; rather, it facilitates it. Provocative indicators of this phenomenon are found around the world, even in African rural communities (Muskin 1999). A convincing argument is the mother tongue curriculum currently in use in Kenya as explained by Schroeder. This is a mother tongue language arts program-in-process, targeting over 30,000 children in 152 schools among the Tharaka[11] people of Kenya. The programme shows that mother tongue language skills are inseparable from other areas of mental development. In the programme, linguistic and cognitive skills are used to further children's education. A curriculum which allows this natural process to continue has proven to bring tremendous gains to the other academic disciplines, as well (Collier and Thomas, 2004). The benefits of such programs should extend nationwide, where mother tongue-based bilingual education programmes are part of the national policy.

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11   Tharaka live in a hot dry area of central Kenya and are representative of many rural people groups

Learning assumes a more impactful, meaningful and relevant when the cultural background and experience of children are taken into cognizance. IECCE enable a child to develop their cultural identity. This is made possible when children are rooted in their indigenous knowledge and skills. Indigenous knowledge equips children with cultural values and practices in their environments. These serve as tools with which they function in their environment. Indigenous knowledge provides the platform on which elements of culture can form and shape the personality of the child.

Some other indigenous knowledge that would otherwise benefit children in Africa remains hidden due to neglect as a result of external influence (Opata, 1998 and Zulu, 2006). African countries embraced these foreign models which came as a result of colonization, evangelization and trade to the neglect of indigenous education system (Akinbote, 2006). As a result, the Western and Islam models spread across Africa. The current practice of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in African has its roots in Western philosophies and traditions. These have been propagated and infused into the African educational system.

With IECCE approach, native teachers and care-givers also get the opportunity of being taught the skills of using the local language to do their jobs well. There are many challenges facing teachers in Africa on the use of African languages as a medium of instruction. The Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions for Chichewa and Cinyanja languages discovered that most teachers in the Member States of the African Union have teacher training programmes for languages other than the vehicular languages. Therefore, they can facilitate training in the use of these other foreign languages other than theirs. The IECCE programme is therefore collaborating with the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN) of the AUC to develop the capacities of teachers in the use of L1. The advantages of the use of mother tongue are numerous as shown by research (Patrinos and Velez, 1996).

5.5. Community ownership

The L1[12] capacity building programmes which will be used as a complementary programme for upgrading the capacities of the teachers and caregivers in the IECCE will specifically address issues relating to how a language plan of action of Africa can be organized and implemented. Issues such as relevance of local language in culture, identity creation, self-esteem, economy and power would be portrayed. The programme will build skills in the area of strategies that local language teachers or practitioners, translators, interpreters, terminologists and other writers will require in language elaboration activities. This will provide an avenue for local languages to function in their highest field of knowledge. African languages, like in other minority languages elsewhere are criticised for their unsuitability for teaching specialised subjects like mathematics, science, technology and other fields of knowledge. Capacity building programmes of this nature will promote the development of relevant textual materials for curricular development that ensures ownership of the process by Africans. Modern technology could be used as a facilitating tool for facilitating the databases for the terminologies developed; and for making them accessible to all national and local institutions and initiatives as needed. Like many of the foremost languages have evolved and are still developing, the same process will be applied to local languages.

The concept of mother tongue education or the use of a language familiar to the child as a medium of instruction has been supported by research. One is the earlier studies in Africa was conducted by Fafunwa (1989). The results of this research indicated that the group of children taught in Yoruba throughout the six years of primary school achieved significantly better results in all subjects than its counterparts from the control group (ADEA,

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12   L1 means first *language,* native *language*, mother tongue, or arterial *language.* L1 is the *language*(s) a person has learned from birth or within the critical period of their life.

2003). This and many other later studies earlier mentioned have illustrated the point that the use of mother tongue as medium of education leads to a higher competency in all curricular subjects than the foreign languages. A child will learn to read and write only that which he or she understands and makes meaning. Therefore, the oral language with which a child is in contact is best for introducing literacy learning.

Other aspects that the capacity of teachers and caregivers will need to be developed include areas relating to the methodology and skills required in teaching first language literacy. Teachers require skills for teaching and practicing concepts that are been taught, class organization and management styles consistent with the cultural norms. They should be aware of the need for creativity in the use of local materials for designing culturally sensitive and conducive learning environments for children in their local communities. The appropriateness of these learning spaces should be monitored and evaluated for corrective measure to be appropriated by means of further policy and programme reviews.

In spite of all the advantages of learning in local or mother tongue, many challenges are yet to be surmounted for it to be effective. These include lack of training materials, limited training in L1 methodology, and discrepancies between the spoken and written form certain words in cross border languages, lack of community participation in promoting the use of local languages for teaching and inadequate government support in terms of policy design and implementation. All these and more challenges require a strong political will matched with the right local community drive for the use of local language for early learning.

Poor response given to children from marginalized and minority communities can be seen in an analysis carried out on primary school enrolment (UNESCO, 2007). This research finding suggested that while school enrolment increased, rates of enrolment children from marginalized communities remained low. Some possible causes were attributed to the cultural, social and linguistic differences between families and the mainstream school culture. Consequently there was low school enrolment, poor attendance rates, which further created inequities. Teachers from local communities in Africa are without the skills and competencies required to support children from local communities to transit smoothly from home to school. The knowledge of an indigenous approach to ECCE will also have the added advantage of preparing teachers of lower grades in the primary schools such that they are more responsive to the needs of local or indigenous children as they transit from pre-school to the formal education. This will also help to ensure retention of indigenous children in school.

5.6. A generative curriculum approach indicating differing teaching and learning styles

Traditionally, educators have been observed to insert culture into the education instead of inserting education into the culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This attempt has had their consequence of isolating minority groups from the system of education practiced. Consequently researchers in the field of culturally relevant pedagogies has come up with terms such as "culturally appropriate", "culturally congruent", "culturally responsive", and "culturally compatible"(Ladson-Billings, 1995). It is a teaching method that blends a child's experience at home and what they experience at school or in their learning centres; using the language of communication best understood by both teachers and the learner to ensure fruitful and effective learning. According to Gloria, it is a pedagogy that uses culture as vehicle for learning,

respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice. This approach seeks to provoke a generative approach works to bring together international or other practices with local understandings to see what new approaches might be generated.

5.6.1. Letter and sight word recognition

Alphabet charts in the mother tongue can be used to represent vocabulary from the environment of the child especially with the older kids preparing for formal schooling. This does *help* (rather than *hinder*) the development of pre-reading skills. For instance, these preschool alphabet cards in Swahili (see Picture 4.1.) show pictures of some native animals most of the children of that language group can identify with.[13]

Picture 4.1.   Preschool alphabet cards in Swahili showing pictures of some native animals
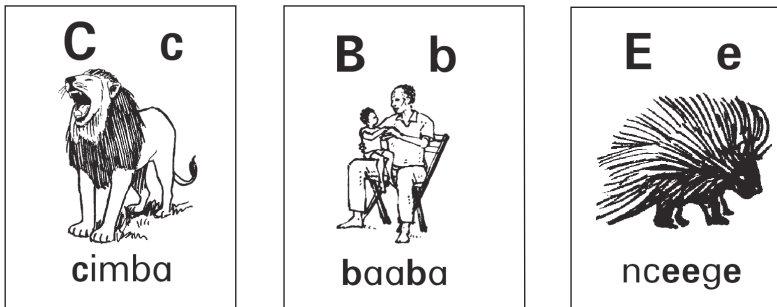
They will be able to incorporate the *newly* acquired vocabulary for animals with the words they already know, incorporating them into their existing schemata or systems for organizing their world (Davis 1991:20).

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13   The images are used with permission from Leila Schroeder from the Tharaka Preschool Language Arts Curriculum, Kenya

5.6.2. Categorization

This helps young children to identify, name and classify and use new information about different types of animals or objects to develop their vocabulary. It also helps them to create an organizational hierarchy or groups in their mother tongue.

5.6.3. Picture Interpretation and Description

Picture 4.2.   A scenes showing an example of realities in which children from local African communities live

Scenes such as the one represented by Picture 4.2 are typical of the realities in which children from local African communities live. It draws upon the rich context of their home experiences. These experiences and the vocabulary linked with them enable the children to look for details, logically interpret what they see and develop their ability to describe what the picture conveys.

5.6.4. Story sequencing

Pictures from common process of activities that they are very familiar with are shown to the children. The children look at all the pictures and tell the teacher what they observe. Then they describe the sequence for carrying out procedures depicted in the pictures they are observing. For instance pictures of a woman preparing a local dish from maize or yam or cassava as the case may be. Children are able to learn the sequencing of events.

5.6.5. Listening to sounds (Auditory Discrimination, Placement of Sound in a Word, Vowel Length Awareness)

Children, like anyone else, can distinguish the sounds within a word which actually make a difference in meaning of a word in their own language. If their mother tongue has a given set of vowel system, the sounds of which can only be learned by hearing it from native speakers. These vowels cannot be learned in colonial languages except in the respective local language.

5.6.6. Grammar and spelling exercises

This is the transition from recognition of grammatical elements in words to their use in proper grammar in sentences. Attention to mother tongue grammar not only facilitates good writing or comprehension, it also lays a foundation for second language acquisition at a later stage in the child's learning process.

5.6.7. Creative writing development

At the preschool stage, a foundation for creative "writing" can be sequentially developed. It is laid with development of children's oral expression. Their vocabulary develops along with correct usage of the grammar of their mother tongue. This process continues during formal education at the lower primary levels. As their vocabulary expands, so do their language abilities to compare, contrast, note details, describe and comprehend what they read and hear from people in their communities with whom they interact. As children become exposed to formal education, written expression can be refined and enriched, in such a way that they reflect the subtle nuances, unique beauty, humour, and emotive power of that particular language. This process is further enriched as the children progress through early primary school by **exposure to a wide variety of literature** such as traditional poetry and songs, proverbs and riddles, folktales, study of cultural phenomena such as the marketplace and seasonal events, fiction and nonfiction literatures. **Comprehension exercises**

encourage initial readers to reproduce the natural speed, rhythm, and melody of a language, further develop their vocabulary, condition them to expect *meaning* from books and encourage whole word recognition, demonstrating direction, reading fluency, dramatization of stories, oral repetition of whole sentences and phrases, and a meaningful context for isolated words.

5.7. *Monitoring, assessment and evaluation*

Record keeping is an essential component in the achievement of quality within early childhood setting whether it is indigenous or non-indigenous. It is a standard practice for caregivers and teachers to keep extensive observation records about children in the ECD centres. The goals of record keeping include- accountability requirement, to demonstrate the child's growth to parents and families, to monitor the child's learning and involvement in various activities, to provide information to key stakeholders and to reflect on the extent to which the goals of the programme are achieved.

The assessment tools that can be used to carry out the observation records vary and may include profiles, running records, anecdotal notes, rating scale, checklist, collection of children's work samples, learning stories and others.

The areas of the child's development commonly assessed are:

- Physical Health and well- being of the child
- Social and Emotional competences
- Language and cognitive development skills and
- General knowledge.

Evaluation is usually through practical tests relevant to the child's experience and level of development in indigenous settings. This is in consonance with the nature of traditional education which is pragmatic. Evaluation is designed to form a gateway into the life of the community. There is no room

for theoretical abstractions. Moreover, there is no basis of comparing one child to another; rather every child is measured against himself or herself. There is pass or fail but evaluation has one of the goals as indices for scaffolding a child at the zone of proximal development.

5.8. Resource and instructional material support

Indigenous education is a type of education designed by the indigenes of a particular setting, the resource and materials are drawn from the immediate environment and according to the goals and needs of the people. Furthermore, because indigenous education emphasizes both practical activities and participation, the children are given opportunity through play and games to see and possibly handle some materials used for particular vocations. For example, a child from agricultural environment can start using wooden hoes and machetes at a tender age while that of a fishing environment would start experimenting with abandoned nets to learn how to mend broken nets and fish with basic fishing tools. Pastoral children learn by playing with wooden animals, twigs, grasses and start following their parents to lead cattle to graze. Parents, knowledgeable adults or older siblings are always at hand to provide guided support and supervision with the use of these materials. The plays and games of children usually reflect real life experiences such as being chased by animals, enclosing a big fish or guarding imaginary cows against raiders. This implies that there are ample instructional materials in the immediate environment of the child which he or she uses for learning the values, norms, morals, knowledge and skills of his or her people.

5.9. A guide to teachers and caregivers

The young of every species have basic needs that must be met for them to develop and mature. Children are no exception. For children, these essential needs include warm, caring, and responsive adults; a sense of importance and significance; a way

to connect and relate to the world around them; opportunities to move and play; and people to help structure, guide and support their learning. In the past, these needs were met at home and in the community, but now these needs are being met also in centres and classrooms to complement home-based approaches. Children need to explore, experiment, and learn basic knowledge through direct experience. Indeed, childhood is a time when children should learn firsthand about the physical world the feel of water, the constant pull of gravity, the stink of rotten fruit and dust or mud, and the abrasive feel of concrete on a bare knee.

Play provides a way for children to integrate all their new experiences into their rapidly developing minds, bodies, emotions, and social skills. Brain research supports this idea, stressing that children learn best through an integrated approach combining physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth. The role of the teacher is critical in a child's life. Children depend on teachers to be their confidant, colleague, model, instructor, and nurturer of educational experiences. Clearly children need lots of exposure to other people in their early childhood years. A basic human need is the need to belong. Children need to feel they belong, too. They need to be close to people they know from the local community where they are raised, have familiar and comfortable objects, and be in a setting that has a personal history for them. Children living in cities may have less exposure to the diverse group of people living in the local villages—baker, farmer, gardener, carpenter, bricklayer, painter, etc.

ECCE caregivers and teachers are the most critical providers of stimulation, care and support for young children all over the world. The caregiver is an enabler of the curriculum who is expected to fulfil various roles in the course of his or her duties in ensuring that children attain appropriate and relevant standard education. The caregiver's roles include that of building relationships, scaffolding children's learning, planning for assessing learning and engaging in lifelong learning to improve his or her knowledge and competences. Caregiver's functions

vary from facilitating, modelling, partnering, collaborating, communicating, negotiating, creating, observing, recording, assessing, listening, supporting and investigating to mention a few. For the caregiver to function effectively in the ECD learning environment, he or she must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the child's growth and development, environment and its resources, parental or societal expectations and values etc. He or she must possess the required competences in working with children and their parents. A critical function of the caregiver is that of maintenance of child and environmental hygiene. As indicated by the UNICEF Executive Director, Ann M. Veneman during the Global week on Global Hand-washing Day, "Unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene habits play a major role in child mortality." The child mortality figures released in 2012 by UNICEF showed that some 2,000 children under five die each day from diarrhoeal diseases; of which a majority of about 1,800 children per day die from diarrhoeal diseases due to a lack of safe water, sanitation and basic hygiene (New York, 15 October 2012; Press Release Global Hand Washing Day). It is therefore imperative for the culture of cleanliness to be modelled by both the teacher and the caregivers.

Older family members have traditional practices for eliciting the good, appropriate and socially acceptable practices for children. Therefore, ECCE practices are not novel in the indigenous African setting. It has been part of the process of educating the youngest citizens of the African societies. The capacity to use child-friendly approaches that benefit from the available resources in the natural environment where children live needs to be reinforced among the adult members of the household.

5.9.1. The best interest (of child) principle

The child's best interest should be paramount importance in all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of the child. The caregiver must consider the child's interest

when making decisions about the child care, development and other form of intervention. This implies that the caregiver must always bear in mind that some factors in his or her planning, preparation and arranging learning activities for the child. The factors include:

- The child's age, interest, needs, maturity and stage of development.
- The child's gender

5.9.2. The holistic development of the child

The caregiver must be aware of the all aspects of the child's development- mental, physical, social, emotional, spiritual and moral development. The caregiver will need to plan his or her daily activities for the children to provide opportunity to help the child to develop his or her full potential. They should be given opportunities to play and discover things for themselves, encourage to be creative, talk and interact with others, share feelings and worries, relax and have fun etc. Children should explore and learn about their world, develop coping skills (resilience), become more independent, respect themselves and others, and have the opportunity to develop love and respect for differences they observe in other people. This practice could be encouraged through the use of games, cartoons, pictures etc. Children must be cared for in a constructive manner which would give them support, security and ensures development of positive social behaviour.

5.9.3. Interactive learning

This involves experimenting, exploring, investigating, discussing and responding, particularly in peer groups, as referred to in the section on African social ontogeny. Children gain knowledge, skills and other valuable skills as they construct personal understandings in the activities they are actively engaged

in their environment. Therefore, the caregiver should encourage this approach by ensuring that children establish positive relationships with people and materials in their environment. This he can do by providing a lot of open-ended materials that will provide and allow children to use them in a variety of ways. Children should be able to manipulate such materials in a variety of ways to discover relationships, cause and effect and acquire skills using tools relevant to real life situations.

5.9.4. Interaction

This is a fundamental experience that is important for children to acquire in the early years of development (Malaguzzi, 1993). Interaction could be from one child and another child; one child and one teacher; among one child, one teacher and another people (from the school or immediate community); or among one child, one teacher and the child's family. Children need a nurturing environment that will promote meaningful interaction and the caregiver should be able to provide this. This will also satisfy the innate yearning and the needs of the children to explore, discover, learn and know. The caregiver will not only be able to scaffold children's learning through interaction but it will ensure acquisition of knowledge, skills and positive disposition.

5.9.5. Learning through play

Play is a behaviour that is self-motivated, freely chosen, process oriented and enjoyable. Maria Montessori (1967), Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky argue that "play is children's work". Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children.

- Common characteristics of play listed by Henniger (2009) include the following
  - Play is pleasurable and enjoyable

- It is voluntary and spontaneous

- Play is active and all engrossing

- It is free from external rules and social oriented

- Play is non-literal and is a child's private reality.

- Play is at the care of developmentally appropriate practice. It is a natural activity for children. It allows them opportunity to create, invent, discover and learn about their world. Play helps children to develop cooperative relationships and gain mutual trust. It provides opportunities for many types of learning. Play offers children opportunities to make choices, decisions, solve problems, interact with one another, adults, and pursue their interests, experience learning as fun and exciting and build language and literacy skills.

- Caregiver or teacher should enhance and promote children's play by:

  - Creating a positive and safe place for play

  - Respecting and encourage individual differences in play abilities

  - Providing a play environment that reflects attitudes and values of the surrounding culture

  - Encouraging cooperation among children and allow them time without scheduled or externally focused activity. It is important to stress the warning that if the focus is shifted from play during early years to a strong emphasis on the formal instructions of isolated skills like learning symbols of letters, sound, numbers, as the case is in most existing early childhood settings, children literacy skills as well as their numeracy and inquiry skills may be reduced (Bennett, 2004).

5.9.6. Authentic assessment

This can be defined as the process of documenting and evaluating growth and development of children overtime using real-life situation. Purposes of assessment are to understand children's behaviour, evaluate their development and their learning progress. It gives accurate picture of who the child is and how he or she is growing. Observation is the process of observing various aspects of children in an early childhood facility or centre or school by taking in information and interpreting it for meaning. Child observation is the cornerstone of an assessment system in early childhood. There are several types of observation. These include anecdotal records, running records, specimen records, time and event sampling checklists and rating scales. Other observation tools include- samples of children's work (scribbling, writing, and drawing), parents' interviews, self-portraits, portfolio etc. Purposes of observation are similar to that of assessment. They are to promote children's learning and development, identify them for health and social services, monitor the trends and evaluate programmes and services and assess academic achievements to hold stakeholders accountable. Caregivers and teachers must acquire the necessary skills to carry out authentic assessment of children using appropriate observation tools. This is an important component of their responsibility in ECD learning environment.

5.9.7. Partnership and relationships

Caregivers should place importance on building and establishing trusting relationships with key stakeholders involved in the care of the young children in the community. These people could be the parents, grandparents, older siblings etc. The caregiver should honour indigenous and local knowledge about child rearing and goals and aspiration of these people for their wards. Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young

children. The web of family and community is the child's anchor for early development because families are the first and most powerful influence on the child's early development. Relationships between families and the community benefit children when those relationships are respectful of family structure, culture, values and knowledge (Weiss, Caspes and Lopez, 2006).

Knowledgeable, responsive and skilful early childhood professionals are essential components of ECD programme. These are caregivers and teachers. Their role cannot be over emphasised in the curriculum delivery. Shortage of qualified professionals to do this job characterised most existing ECD settings even in urban centres and it is worse in indigenous and rural areas. It is therefore imperative to employ facilitators and/ or trainers within and outside the community who generally have higher levels of basic education who can be trained on short term and regular basis to carry out the responsibility. Such personnel must be equipped with the skills to perform some of the following functions:

- Integrate their own knowledge and daily experiences to guide their interactions with the children and their families.

- Create supportive, trustworthy and pleasurable relationships that children will enjoy and benefit from early learning.

- Create learning environment where children play collaboratively and participate in the daily routine.

- Observe children and keep records of their development to inform planning.

- Use a range of appropriate strategies in play to help children to extend their learning.

The benefits of IECCE and the key messages will be discussed in chapter six.

Chapter 6:   Benefits of IECCE, conclusion and key messages

6.1. Benefits of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is no doubt fundamental to a child's overall development and the child's later educational achievements and future success. There is now a strong consensus on the many benefits of early childhood education (Sacks and Brown-Ruzzi, 2005; Karoly, Kilburn and Cannon, 2005; Knowledge Universe, 2010; UNESCO, 2010 and Chicago Longitudinal Study, 2011). Research evidences abound to support the benefits of this level of education for children worldwide. These benefits include the following:

6.1.1. Cognitive gains

According to Berk (2008), the brain grows faster than any other organ of the body during infancy and toddlerhood. The work explains the view of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child has formulated several principles to explain the science of brain development. One of these principles states that "genetics determine the when or the timetable for development while experience determines the how or the actual construction of the circuits". Berk explains that during the early years of development, neurons are in place and once they are in place, they rapidly form synapses or connections and release chemicals called neurotransmitters that cross synapses to send messages to other neurons. During the peak period of synaptic growth in any brain area, many surrounding neurons die. However stimulation determines which neurons will survive and establish new synapses and which will lose their connective fibres through synaptic pruning. Brain researchers have discovered that 90 per cent of brain development is completed by the age of three and

conscience and personal responsibility are established. Brain development is activity-dependent. The implication of this is the fact that stimulation of the brain is essential during this sensitive and formative period (period in which the brain is developing most rapidly). Prolonged early deprivation can disrupt brain growth and interfere with the brain's capacity to manage stress. Appropriate early stimulation also promote-expectant brain growth. This depends on daily experiences which early childhood developmental appropriate practices provide for the child. Therefore, a child's exposure to high-quality early childhood facility will not only increases readiness for formal schooling, but also causes positive long-term improvements in the child's school performances and social outcomes. Efforts to support or provide early childhood education will promote growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills and social-emotional functioning during these critical years. These will prevent major learning problems, shrink the achievement gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged children and produce more productive citizens (Reynolds and Ou, 2004). Specifically, the study carried out by Aliyu and Garba (2012) in Nigeria on "the implications of child poverty on the Nigerian economy" revealed that "the well-being of children has direct link with the present time activities of the child, the government, community, organizations, parents, family members etc". They further posited that fulfilling children's rights and values at early stage of childhood would certainly transform them to achieve their full potentials and to participate actively in the society.

6.1.2. Economic gains

There is a strong consensus among researchers that high-quality early childhood education is an excellent investment for the society. Lately, there are strong advocacies for this level of education coming from the unexpected members of the

society- the economists. These experts are supporting the studies that suggest spending money on high quality early childhood education which can lead to economic wealth in the future. They say that investments in early childhood education easily pay for themselves over time by generating very high rates of return for participants, the public and the government. These experts wrote in their paper that "spending money on childhood development programmes will yield more return to economic development, that investing in early childhood education is a sound fiscal policy which has huge potential long-term payoffs (Heckman and Masterov, 2004). James Heckman the 2000 Nobel-prize winner in economics argues that if children have a high-quality early childhood education they will be better able to use higher education and job training later in life[14]. One of the researches to support this view is the study of Head Start graduates in California. The study showed that the society receives nearly nine dollars in benefit for every one dollar invested in the Head Start children. The economic benefits also include:

- Increased earnings
- Employment potentials
- Family stability
- Decrease welfare dependency
- Decrease grade repetition
- Need for special education (remedial education).
- Parents, caregivers and families also greatly benefit in the programme.

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14   Statement is contained in a paper produced by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, "Early Childhood Care And Education In The Pacific Region" A Progress Review. Forum Education Ministers' Meeting. *Crown Plaza Hotel, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 13-14 October 2010.* All Sessions Paper http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2010FEDMM.19_Paper.pdf Retrieved September 2013

6.1.3. Social gains

Front-line experiences have clearly shown that systematic provision of early childhood education help in the development of children in a variety of ways. These include:

- Improving socialization,
- Inculcation of healthy habits,
- Stimulation of creative learning processes and
- Enhanced scope for overall personality development.

However, some indigenous children, those in rural or difficult to reach locations that do not have exposure to quality ECCE are found to be behind from the beginning of their formal schooling. Many may fall further behind by the end of up to two or four years behind by the end of primary education. This does not imply that such children's capacity to learn or their skills, talents and abilities they possess are less than others from urban or industrialized children. The fact remains that the indigenous children are coming from different cultural and social base in which they learn differently. When they begin formal schooling, they enter a domain foreign to them. In order to make this new experience easy and beneficial to them, an appropriate approach must be adopted. According to Serpell (1993), schools are expected to promote economic progress, transmit culture and cultivate children's Intellectual and moral development. However, experience has shown that schools do not always achieve a synthesis of these functions because of the conflicting perceptions emanating from post-colonial contexts, the economic and cultural agendas of schooling as it relates to child upbringing and its relationship to their moral and intellectual development. Citing the case of the Oceania as in most developing countries, Thaman (2001) explained that while the cultural agenda is rooted in Pacific indigenous cultural

traditions, the economic agenda is European-based, informing what teachers and students are supposed to do in school. This situation therefore creates cultural gaps for indigenous children. A realization of this situation should encourage an expanded approach to pre-school programme that promotes cultural inclusion. The approach to preschool should take into account a good understanding of their cultural and social base and build on the strengths that they possess.

Some basic underpinning premises must guide the methodology of delivery of the indigenous curriculum developed to meet the needs of indigenous children. Some of these include:

- Indigenous children live in a wide variety of circumstances in rural and remote communities, difficult to reach community context such as riverine, mountainous and others live where poverty, unemployment, violence and pestilence exist. Very many live in families that have strong traditions and cultural orientation with little formal education.

- Early childhood programme for indigenous children may not necessarily be patterned after those in existence in urban or industrial cities but should be community-based that would meet the needs of indigenous children and their families.

- The programme should be provided within an appropriate cultural context so that sound foundation can be laid and children would not be alienated from their cultural background.

6.1.4. National gains

Today's children are tomorrow's elders and leaders. They are everything that every country needs; hence the foresight is in investing in today's children for a healthier nation in the future.

6.2. Necessary conditions for ensuring benefits

6.2.1. Parent education

It is a fact that Africans, particularly mothers, are equipped with essential knowledge and skills for child upbringing. Most of these capabilities are either inherited or acquired from knowledgeable adults in the respective communities. It is with this knowledge that mothers and fathers nurture and care for their young ones; first at the family unit and later at the community level. Adults often assume the role of teachers to the children in their neighbourhood. Most of the teaching and learning is situational and informal. Unfortunately, when children from the traditional communities commence institutionalized learning, there is disconnection between the practices learned at home and those taught in the school as they are considered uncivilised. For instance, sharing personal family secrets with outsiders is not permitted in many communities. A lady is respected if she does not speak louder than a talking voice when speaking in public. Children are taught to respect elders for their wealth of wisdom and experience. Family ties and bonds are strengthened when children eat together from the same bowl of food and in a hygienic environment. They are taught to report discontentment rather than taking personal revenge in order to maintain peace. A popular African adage teaches that one adds to the number of friends and not to enemies. That if one does not forget the hurt from the past, one will eventually have no one to associate with. This teaches forgiveness and a culture of peace.

Parents' education builds children's understanding, skills, positive social interactions, meaningful and positive partnerships and relationships, and genuine collaboration among key stakeholders such as children, parents, caregivers and teachers, and community members. As knowledge expands,

parents, guardian and elders need new insights, relevant knowledge, information and skills to provide concrete services towards the education of their children. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They model the culturally relevant skills for their children at home before they begin formal education. Therefore, parents' indigenous knowledge, skills and behaviours can only compliment the efforts of the school teacher. However, the success of parent education depends on the way it would be delivered and the materials that would be offered (see Box 6.1. for the necessary conditions for the success of ECCE programmes).

6.2.2. Importance of relationships

For the indigenous children and their families, relationships are central to their lives. The family settings and patterns of living promote relatedness and connectedness. The child is part of this whole of a collective and extended family (Fleer, 2006). There should be a commitment to continue to facilitate this social capital in the learning environment of the indigenous children. For this to be achieved there would be need to develop trust with all these key stakeholders by promoting inclusiveness in all aspects of the educational programmes beginning from pre-school. The local resources and materials should be utilized and the programme should be flexible to accommodate the peculiarity of the communities. In other words, the model of delivery should be appropriate to the context of the environment. This will involve recognizing the strengths that exist within the community, the complexity and ability to respond in flexible and meaningful ways to the programme.

Box 6.1. Necessary conditions for ensuring the success of ECCE programs in Africa

The success of ECCE programs in Africa, as apparent in the EFA 2007 Global Monitoring Report, will depend on delicately balancing and enhancing the benefits of creating institutions and educational systems that reflect indigenous African and imported ECCE, while attentively addressing the vocal and silent but mixed motives of stakeholders and the apprehensions they engender

Source: In A. Bame Nsamenang, "A Critical Peek at Early Childhood Care and Education in Africa" in Child Health and Education, 2009, 1(1), 44–55 Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada ISSN 1911-7758

6.3. Conclusion

This long-awaited and direly needed booklet concludes with seven reflections and eight key messages targeted at various stakeholders, who should be concerned about the fate of the "foundation of humanity" – children.

i. One of the thrusts of this booklet is making early childhood education relevant to the needs of the indigenous child by considering what is in the best interest of the child. Such an approach can track and develop culturally acceptable best practices that are available in the cultural background of the child. The message here is that it is pertinent to pay attention to cultural processes that are underlying the differences in the patterns of behaviours of indigenous and non-indigenous children. It then advocates that developmental programmes and services should be contextually relevant to the African child.

ii. It is obvious that plucking out a particular practice from one culture and inserting to another might not yield positive outcome. It is therefore expedient to think about the indigenous child's cultural background, environment, beliefs and practices when planning programme or curriculum for the indigenous child. Best practices from other locations should be contextualised to avoid cultural gaps. A generative approach should be explored to bring together international and other practices with local understandings to see what new approaches might be generated.

iii. The discussion in the booklet highlighted the need to develop appropriate concepts and tools that would reflect the local cultural realities of the indigenous child. It is when the tools are appropriate that relevant knowledge and skills can be generated for the benefit of the indigenous child.

iv. The indigenous child's play is full of riddles, tongue twister, folktale, games etc. found to be loaded with knowledge and skills that could enhance language development particularly communication skills and emergent literacy. These aid the development of creativity, abstract thinking, imagination and problem-solving skills. These are among the benefits children derive from the indigenous play.

v.   The IECCE framework will depend extensively on the involvement of teachers and indigenous knowledge experts who are conversant with the language, norms, and socio-cultural and political values of the local communities to effectively implement it.

vi. The framework is expected to broaden the existing systems of ECCE. In other words, it is not to replace the existing system of ECCE provision approved by governments in Africa, but it is designed to broaden the relevance and variety of ECCE services available to Member States in Africa as the year 2015 rolls in.

vii. It advocates for the use of the IECCE modules prepared for use by all Teacher training Institutions as well as for existing ECCE centres that lack curriculum for teaching their children.

6.4. Key messages for African children's stakeholders

1. Family members, heads of household, community leaders, activist, etc**:** Commit to the principle of the IECCE approach by volunteering as trainers for the model in the local communities, monitor progress and report on successes achieved and lessons learned

2. Governments: Provide enabling policy environment for the implementation of a variety of ECCE services including indigenous approach to ECCE. This will ensure inclusiveness of the minority groups which constitute the higher proportion of the vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Mechanisms for mobilizing local resources must be institutionalized at the local community level to promote the practice. At the central government level, there should be significant increase budgetary allocation for training IECCE master trainers from local communities that would implement to model.

3. UN and International agencies: Relevant UN agencies and international organizations working in the area of ECCE (UNESCO, UNICEF, International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All, ADEA Working Group on Early Childhood Development and Save the Children among others) should collaborate to support Member States in carrying out educational reforms in order to accommodate IECCE. They should provide policy advice, and build technical and institutional capacity for IECCE, perform the needed back stopping role. When it is possible, financial

support should be provided for programme monitoring and evaluation. Pilot projects should be supported to serve as models for local communities.

4. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): CSOs should campaign among relevant governments and private institutions to ensure that the benefits of Education for all Goal 1 get down to the local level community levels to reaching the unreached, marginalized and missing children in Africa. They should actively participate in ECCE policy development processes in the respective countries.

5. Community based Organizations (CBOs), Faith Based Organization (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs): CBOs, NGOs and FBOs should engage in the establishment of home based, community or centre based ECCE of high quality. These centres should be venues for practicing and experimenting on culturally relevant practices and for developing best practices in the use of IECCE modules developed for Africa

6. African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: Advocate for the implementation of the IECCE initiative by building and supporting the implementation mechanisms at the community, national and regional levels.

7. Independent Experts: Provide the expertise needed for training all adults responsible for young people on the key principles of IECCE so that children in from all cultural background can be given equal rights to quality and culturally sensitive ECCE service in Africa.

8. African Union Commission: Mobilize Member States to pursue the provisions and priorities of the African Union Plan of Action for the Second Decade on Education for Africa (2006-2015) and the African Union manual of indicators.

The arguments here concludes by this clarion call to all stakeholders to come together and begin the process of identifying Africa-friendly possibilities in an ECCE landscape that has long denigrated Africa's knowledge and practices. As Pence and Nsamenang (2008) noted, these possibilities should not be considered in isolation from other perspectives but should form part of a respectful, generative process that opens new channels for discussion, dialogue, and innovative context and culture-sensitive policy development and programming. This booklet has been to introduce and justify an African ECCE framework that could be turned into a powerful international narrative and policy development. The goal of the authors has been to create a space for other ideas and perspectives, in this case from Africa, to be heard, considered and unreservedly implemented. Given the age-old rates of neglect in African ECCE, there is high optimism that this framework "will work", as long as it is well understood and properly and sensitively executed.

There is much Africa's development partners and international organizations can do to support Africa in its quest for child well-being and quality of child life, as funds and influence largely reside with Development Partners and International Organizations in disproportionate quantities. It is wished that those powers and resources should no longer be used to merely demonstrate but to support Africa's efforts to hear its own voices, among others, and to seek its own ECCE way forward. Africa shall find that way through children who understand and appreciate multiple worlds, through young scholars that frame their own contextually sensitive research questions, and through leaders and caregivers who appreciate the riches of the past, as much as the possibilities and uncertainties of the future that anchors on African cultural identities.

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Inquiries about the Institute should be addressed to: The Office of the Director, International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa P.O.Box 2305, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The booklet

The history of human childhoods and efforts to care for and educate children during their early years of life has focused almost exclusively on models with origins from continents outside Africa. These models have been advocated as the universal ideals for early childhood care and education. Thus, this long awaited booklet – *Indigenous Early Childhood Care and Education (IECCE) Curriculum Framework for Africa: A Focus on Context and Contents* – represents a milestone in Africa's struggles to document the preparation of its children for life. This booklet underscores the prime importance of giving children a smart start in early childhood development through a model that communicates a powerful message about the principles and benefits of child development that are mostly African in orientation. Since the focal 'child' is African, it advocates for a variety of developmental practices that can run concurrently with, and/or help re-form, existing western based approaches. Children in Africa live and develop in conditions vastly different from those in other continents. Right from conception, they are immersed in diverse physical and cultural environment. These realities also impact on their genetic makeup. Giving value to context and culture does not mean automatically accepting every custom or every culture's ideas and practices. This is a strength-based approach that acknowledges that in every context and culture, there are worthwhile productive elements for children and their families, caregivers and educators. Contextualizing ECCE policies, programmes and best practices in the socio-historical and cultural context in which children live optimizes the benefits of early care and education.

The authors

Patience Awopegba, PhD, is a Programme Specialist in Education Planning at the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her research and training interests includes economics of education, education planning and management, early childhood care and education, gender issues in development, strategic leadership, population and education nexus, and teacher development issues. In collaboration with early childhood development experts in Africa, she has ensured the development of seven modules of indigenous ECCE for interested users in Africa. This initiative is to contribute to the effort in expanding ECCE services to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the African region.

Esther A. Oduolowu, PhD is an Associate Professor at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research interests are on Early Childhood Education and Care with special focus on early childhood curriculum development, policy issues and capacity building of ECD caregivers and teachers. She has appreciable publications in her area of interests in learned journals. She is a member of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) and Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Présco-laire (OMEP)

A. Bame Nsamenang PhD is professor of Psychology and Learning Science, head of the University of Bamenda (Cameroon) Cooperation Division and founding director of the Human Development Resource Centre (www.thehdrc.org). His research interests (1987-date) are in Africa's future hope - children and youth. He has published influential literatures in these areas and has since 2008 prioritized teacher preparation and Africentric textbook development. He was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors of Childwatch International for the period 2013-2016).