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African Conference on Quality Early Childhood Education and Professionalization of Educators

Casablanca, Morocco

4-5 December 2019



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Table of Contents

Background	3
1. DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2019	4
OPENING CEREMONY.....	4
SESSION 1: TOWARD QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND THE CENTRAL PLACE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN ACHIEVING SDG 4-EDUCATION 2030	5
SESSION 2: CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOOD PRACTICES	6
SESSION 3: TOOLS FOR PLANNING, DATA AND PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT.....	9
SESSION 4: PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS ON CHALLENGES, GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS.....	11
2. DAY 2: THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2019	12
SESSION 5: TOOLS FOR PLANNING, DATA AND PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT (CONT'D)	12
SESSION 6: PARTNER PRESENTATION	12
SESSION 7: HOW DO WE DEFINE COMPETENT EDUCATORS AND WHAT IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP QUALIFIED AND COMPETENT ECE PERSONNEL?	12
SESSION 8: DECENT WORKING AND TEACHING CONDITIONS IN ECE	15
ANNEX 1: AGENDA	17
ANNEX 2: CASABLANCA DECLARATION AND CALL TO ACTION	22
ANNEX 3: ORGANIZING COMMITTEE.....	26

Background

Evidence shows that educators and teachers are the key driver of quality education. When they are qualified, well trained and supported, and enjoy adequate working conditions, they are able to provide children with quality learning experiences that will lead to positive developmental outcomes and educational success. Given that early childhood education (ECE) represents an important window of opportunity for laying a strong foundation for children’s learning and sustainable development, education systems should pay increased attention to building a teaching workforce that covers the early years and to implementing measures that encourage the professionalization of ECE educators. However, ECE educators are often confronted with a lack of training and professional development opportunities, pedagogical support, career development pathways and adequate working conditions. These challenges need to be urgently addressed so that children’s rights to quality care and education are met from their early years and so that they are empowered to succeed in later schooling and life.

Against this background, the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kingdom of Morocco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) organized the African Conference on Quality Early Childhood Education and the Professionalization of Educators on 4-5 December 2019 in Casablanca, Morocco, in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (BMZ/GIZ), the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), the Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Pre-school Education (FMPS), the Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE) and the Monegasque Cooperation for Development with the support of Royal Air Maroc airlines company (RAM) as official transporter.

The conference brought together participants from 18 African countries,¹ the Conférence des ministres de l’Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie (CONFEMEN), UNICEF, the World Bank and the Inter-country Quality Node on Early Childhood Development in Africa (ICQN-ECD) to:

- Reaffirm the importance of increasing investment in equitable and quality ECE and the professionalization of ECE educators;
- Exchange good practices, experiences and challenges regarding the professionalization of ECE personnel and the promotion of equitable and quality ECE services.

The Conference culminated in the adoption of the [Casablanca Declaration and Call for Action on Quality Early Childhood Education and Professionalization of Educators](#)

¹ Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia.

Day 1: Wednesday 4 December 2019

Opening ceremony

H.E. Mr Saaïd Amzazi, Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kingdom of Morocco, opened the Conference by confirming the vital role that ECE plays in childhood development, in contributing to quality education and learning outcomes, and in future employability. Broadening existing partnerships and engaging in joint work was necessary to enable children across Africa to have access to quality education. In support of quality education, Morocco had launched a national programme for quality ECE, which aimed to generalize access to ECE within a ten-year period. Results achieved in the first year demonstrated the importance of political will, good governance, and engagement of key partners and stakeholders toward achieving quality ECE. One of the key challenges in both the Moroccan and African experience had been reaching children in rural and disadvantaged areas. The Conference would play an important role in encouraging cooperation and solidarity amongst African countries to create a better future for its children.

Mr Akira Isawa, Deputy Director of the Sectoral Policies Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO), reiterated the importance of quality ECE for the health, socialization, and employment prospects of children and asserted its key role in the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. Quality ECE was an important strategy promoting labour force participation of women and was part of a larger effort for gender equity. It was a first step in the journey to lifelong learning, which was key to well-being and social and economic growth. Quality ECE depended on quality ECE workers. In many countries, however, ECE workers lacked adequate wages, working conditions, social protection, collective representation, and professional recognition. At this Conference, the ILO would be launching the Arabic version of the [ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel](#) to support the development of strategies and policies to foster decent work for ECE workers, with the involvement of governments, employers, and workers.

Ms Golda El-Khoury, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Office for the Maghreb, congratulated Morocco for making ECE a national educational strategy and moving toward the universalization of ECE provision. Teachers and educators played an important role in promoting equity, inclusion, and quality in education, as such their development and training remained a priority area, including for UNESCO. Despite their vital role, they were often among the least prioritized with regards to policy development and investment. Alignment of activities on ECE between different international organizations and engagement of both the public and private sectors and civil society were needed to ensure quality education systems. The Conference was the first of its kind to focus on the development and management of ECE teachers and educators.

Session 1: Toward quality early childhood education and the central place of early childhood educators in achieving SDG 4-Education 2030

The roundtable, featuring high-level representatives from Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, and the Conference of Ministers of Education of Francophone States and Governments (CONFEMEN), reflected on policies and practices, funding developments, key challenges and major initiatives toward achieving SDG target 4.2.

Mr Youssef Balqasmi, Secretary General, Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of Morocco, stated that ECE is supported by national legislation which recognized ECE as the basis for individual and systemic success. The national programme, which aimed to generalize access to ECE by 2027, had strong results in the first year, with an additional 100,000 children enrolling in ECE compared to the previous year and with numerous schools having their ECE classrooms rehabilitated and equipped. Central to the success of the national programme had been political and financial commitment from the state.

Dr Hamidu Bobboyi, Executive Secretary, Universal Basic Education Commission of Nigeria, said that financial allocation on the part of the federal government was key to quality ECE, recommending a 2 per cent commitment of its overall budget to basic education (which included ECE), with 5 per cent of that directed toward developing the ECE sector. Pre-primary education became compulsory in 2013; however, major challenges persisted including: population growth; unqualified education workforce (45 per cent of ECE teachers are unqualified); weak public provision in some states and regions; instability and neglect in rural and remote regions. To address these challenges, funding had to be committed toward teacher training and professional development, incentives needed to be developed to attract teachers to rural and remote areas, resources were needed to promote the integration of ICT in the ECE sector, and collaboration between different stakeholders and international partners needed to be pursued.

Mr Mohamed Mahmoud Sidi Yahya Oul Abdarraahmane, General Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Family of Mauritania, highlighted the importance of ECE for the economic participation of women and the need for international partners and agencies to prioritize ECE within their institutions. Mauritania had had an ECE policy in place since 2005 and every city now hosted an ECE centre; however, recent World Bank data indicated that only 12 per cent of children aged 2 to 4 in pre-primary schools were being taught by a trained educator. Given low state capacity, private initiatives and communal kindergartens had been encouraged. Incentives, such as loans with low interests, were being offered to trained educators to encourage them to open ECE centres and 53 projects are being funded to scale-up the ECE sector.

Professor Abdel Rahamane Baba Moussa, General Secretary, Conference of Ministers of Education of Francophone States and Governments (CONFEMEN), stated that funding deficits were a major challenge to integrating and developing ECE. In the francophone context, there was a need to: develop and invest in teacher training programmes; improve teacher-student ratios; integrate special needs education; align stakeholders and their initiatives; and address the

discrepancy between the language of instruction (French) and language spoken at home. Public authorities had to improve their governance structures and practices to successfully implement policies and strategies toward improving the provision of ECE.

Session 2: Celebrating achievements and good practices

Introductory messages

Mr Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education International, asserted that ECE was a public good and a human right and that countries were not on track to achieving SDG 4 on quality education, and recommended the following: governments needed to professionalize ECCE, including upgrading the skills of those already in the field that did not receive adequate training; provide quality induction training; provide context-relevant continuous professional development to all teachers without cost; work with teachers to develop professional teaching standards; involve teachers and unions in the development, implementation and evaluation of education policies; ensure that teachers received the same degree of qualification for all levels of teaching; and implement the ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel.

Ms Yeshimebet Zewoldie Belete, Human Resources Director, Paul Ries & Sons, Ethiopia, explained that educational disparities persisted across regions, rural and urban settings and gender lines in Ethiopia and that geographic constraints and lack of parental education inhibited participation in ECE. ECE was an important step for preparing successful transition to school, and quality ECE teachers were necessary to have good ECE.

Mr Aziz Kaichouh, Director-General, Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Preschool Education (FMPS), explained that FMPS, which was in charge of 50,000 pre-school students in Morocco, worked to ensure that all children have access to quality ECE. Quality consisted of three elements: educator qualification and training profile; curriculum, resources and tools used by educators inside and outside the classroom; and ECE centre infrastructure and management. Identifying individuals with the capacity to work with children, training educators and equipping educators with appropriate tools for the classroom were some of the key activities of FMPS. Major challenges to ECE integration included geographic barriers and lack of access to educators in some regions. In the Moroccan context, there was a need for local educators fluent in mother-tongue languages, technology-based interventions and approaches, educators equipped with ICT skills, and collaboration between various stakeholders.

Ms Raki Bal, Early Childhood Development Resource Person, Inter-country Quality Node for Early Childhood Development (ICQN-ECD), explained that ICQN-ECD was an intergovernmental organization for policy dialogue and collaborative action among African Ministers of Education and strategic partners for advancing ECE in Africa. ICQN-ECD, in collaboration with education stakeholders, facilitates work on data collection in ECE, human resource development, and training initiatives through different modalities.

Challenges and best practices by country – state representatives:

Country	Challenges and best practices
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have been working on ECE for six years ▪ established a department responsible for ECE ▪ developed training centres to prepare educators (two-year training period)
Comoros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ opened more pre-schools ▪ increased enrollment numbers in the public system ▪ instituted transparency in pre-primary development
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trained 400 educators to work in rural areas ▪ integrated pre-school module into the wider education programme
The Gambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pre-primary teachers are not paid a salary even after attending training college – perceived as not being 'quality teachers'
Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ access, governance and management are major challenges ▪ 67 per cent of educators lack appropriate qualifications to work in the field ▪ in collaboration with UNICEF, providing training of pre-school educators within specialized centres that grant certificates (33 educators trained) ▪ in collaboration with World Bank, enrolling children in rural areas into kindergartens at the age of four
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created a national specialized institute for the training of preschool educators (ENEP) in 1978 ▪ Merged the specialized institute for the training of preschool educators (ENEP) and the national institute for the training of primary school teachers (ENI) to become one polyvalent institute called EFI in 1991 ▪ Transformed the EFI into Regional Centres for the Training of Education Personnel in 2011 including ECE personal ▪ categorized three types of personnel: government (permanent and contract aligned with primary school teachers in terms of salary, career plan), communal, and private
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ included ECE in the development plan since 2014 ▪ elaborated a curriculum harmonized for all pre-schools ▪ developed guides for educators and trained them to use the guides ▪ developing new scheme where educators complete two years of training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ participated in the development of an international ECE personnel survey instrument called STEPP (Survey of Teachers in Pre-primary Education) led by UNESCO
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ elaborated a comprehensive programme with UNICEF and World Bank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ incorporates children aged 3 to 6 years ○ requires baccalaureate for entry to teacher training ▪ validated multi-sectoral strategy by creating synergies between ministries and departments directly and indirectly involved with ECE

Challenges and best practices by country – non-state actors:

Country	Challenges and best practices
Algeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training (two years) is only accessible to those with a university degree ▪ developed regulations to govern opening of pre-schools ▪ low teacher salaries are a major challenge
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ adopted a policy to decentralize education and maximise education efforts ▪ opened up educational opportunities for all children aged 3 to 5 years (previously only accessible to children in urban areas)
Cameroon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ encouraged participation of private sector to ensure quality in the training of ECE educators
Libya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ laws and legislation are in place; however, the crisis in the country is compromising the promotion of ECE strategies ▪ need to train ECE personnel to work in unstable and crisis situations
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implementation of policies and funding are major challenges ▪ established minimum wage for all teaching personnel, including ECE
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ policies are prepared by teachers and employers and implementation is effective ▪ developed and sensitized the public to home-based ECE (ten houses organize themselves to run ECE activities)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lack of funding to run ECE programmes ▪ working to make pre-primary compulsory (two years) and part of the formal education system

Reflections on guiding principles on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel

Mr Oliver Liang, Head of Public and Private Services, ILO, articulated the importance of involving key stakeholders – governments, private and non-state ECE providers and teachers and their representatives – to reach consensus on strategies for the provision of quality ECE and its improvement, especially drawing on the hands-on and grounded knowledge of ECE workers. This was a key principle of the [ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel](#) (2014), which offered guidelines and principles for governments, employers and workers looking to improve or enhance ECE provision. Quality ECE relied on qualified ECE workers that were adequately remunerated and working under decent working conditions. In recognition of this, key principles presented by the Guidelines included: education and training comparable to that of primary school teachers with similar status and responsibilities; a clear and diversified career structure that allows for lifelong learning through continuous professional development; salaries that provide a decent standard of living and are comparable to other occupations with equivalent professional qualifications; working time that is consistent with the sector and promotes work-life balance; and effective social dialogue that supports input from and involvement of governments, employers and workers.

Session 3: Tools for planning, data and practice improvement

Ms Rokhaya Diawara, Programme Specialist, UNESCO, presented the West Africa Framework for Basic Education Teacher Development, whose underlying philosophy was to make ECE obligatory and part of the overall education system in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The Framework aimed to adopt a system-wide and context-specific curriculum for basic education adaptable to local realities, define professional standards toward certification and support career planning, assist countries in developing initial and continuous training to ensure an adequately prepared and qualified workforce, and provide guidance on the deployment of teaching personnel to ensure quality education that was fair and inclusive.

Ms Diane Coury, Programme Specialist, IIEP-UNESCO, presented on the vital role of data for effective teacher planning in ECE, including for establishing targets, funding goals, timelines and responsibilities. A significant data gap existed in ECE, especially in low income countries, preventing the development of an accurate understanding of the ECE sector, which in turn inhibited effective teacher planning, creating the risk of underfunding, compromising the projection of needs and the monitoring of results, and limiting the expansion of access to quality ECE. ECE should be properly mainstreamed in education sector plans (ESPs) to create greater visibility to the sector, generate internal and external funding and ensure continuity to primary school by facilitating efficient transitions. The implementation of ESPs heavily relies on data, which in the ECE sector was compromised by underreporting of private/non-public providers, lack of critical information on teaching personnel such as level of certification and teaching time, limited information on pedagogical practices in schools, and absence of financial data. Despite these challenges, there were numerous positive national initiatives, including strengthening of

existing data systems (often supported by ICT) and the development of new instruments and data collection tools.

Ms Yuxi Wang, UNESCO Consultant, and Ms Francesca Colombo, Senior Programme Officer, International Step by Step Association (ISSA), presented country profiles on ECE and its personnel for the 18 countries participating in the Conference to facilitate country comparisons, benchmarking and experience exchange. Key findings from the profiles included: the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) varied significantly among countries from 8.2 to 79.7 per cent, with a slightly higher GER for females; for countries with available data, GER showed considerable differences between urban and rural areas; percentage of enrollment in the public sector was higher than in the private sector in the majority of countries; almost all countries in the region exceeded the recommended student-teacher ratio; in countries with available data, the majority of teaching personnel were female; initial training across countries ranged from no training (training on the job) to bachelor degree; provision of in-service training varies in terms of level of responsibility from national to local/regional; and representation of ECE personnel by trade unions is uneven with only specific types of ECE workers represented.

Major ECE workforce challenges among the participating countries included:

- Poor remuneration – some governments do not pay salaries (Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda);
- Lack of adequately trained personnel (Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania and Rwanda) ;
- Inadequate training of personnel (Ethiopia, Rwanda and Guinea);
- Lack of or limited supervision of ECE workforce (Benin);
- Low staff morale (Kenya);
- High turnover rates of trained staff (Ethiopia and Kenya);
- High percentage of volunteer staff (Rwanda).

These workforce challenges were related to regulatory regimes, lack of clear ECE policy and teacher education policy, lack of pre-service training institutions and trainers, absence of quality standards, limited financial investment and insufficient awareness about the importance of ECE.

Recent and ongoing achievements in ECE personnel development and management included:

- Efforts for coordination among sectors and government departments (Ethiopia, Nigeria and Rwanda);
- Establishment of National Early Childhood Development Taskforce (Rwanda) and National Steering Committee on ECE (Ethiopia);
- Development of national standards for ECE services and personnel (Nigeria);
- Launching of early childhood teacher education programmes at colleges/universities (Ethiopia);
- Development of definitions for criteria and job profiles (Cameroon);
- Provision of training activities, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of ECE workforce (Burundi).

Session 4: Parallel working groups on challenges, good practices and recommended actions

The session broke into five thematic groups to discuss challenges, good practices and recommended actions in relation to: qualification, initial training and professional development; recruitment, deployment, retention and career development; ECE personnel in rural and remote areas and those serving disadvantaged populations; working conditions; and data and monitoring of early childhood education with a focus on ECE personnel development and management. The conclusions of the working groups were considered by the drafting group of the Declaration.

Some of the key challenges highlighted by the thematic groups included: inadequately trained ECE personnel; delayed salary payments and insufficient (or non-existent) remuneration; limited opportunities for career progression; inadequate pre-service training, including lack of balance between theoretical and practical training; limited opportunities for continuous professional development; largely feminized workforce due to societal norms; lack of infrastructure and support; high attrition rates in rural and remote areas; devaluing of the ECE profession; under-recognition of the importance of ECE (resulting in some parents keeping children at home or working); limited, conflicting or outdated data on the sector and its workforce, impacting planning and decision-making; lack of inclusivity with respect to minorities, those with disabilities, low-income populations and those living in disadvantaged communities; and insufficient funding.

Some of the recommended actions provided by the thematic groups included: establishing financial incentives for recruitment of ECE personnel, especially in rural and remote areas; providing lodging near schools and recruiting educators from local communities to address personnel shortages in rural and remote areas; ensuring adequate remuneration and timely payment of salaries, with governments responsible for payment of wages in rural and remote areas where parents and communities cannot afford to support ECE; launching awareness raising campaigns to highlight value of ECE and the profession; professionalizing the ECE workforce via pre-service and in-service training and development (with adequate balance between theoretical and practical elements) and certification; making available pre-service and in-service training to those lacking adequate qualifications; re-conceptualizing training beyond traditional practices to include child psychology, soft skills and other social development aspects; developing a clear career structure; establishing quality criteria; ensuring effective regulation; implementing early assessment of students and teachers; allocating a fixed percentage of government funding to ECE, including for data collection and monitoring; and seeking local solutions for funding shortfalls. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance to developing trust and building bridges between governments, employers and teacher representatives to reach consensus on realizing the recommended actions.

Day 2: Thursday 5 December 2019

Session 5: Tools for planning, data and practice improvement (cont'd)

Ms Hanne Huysmans, Education Advisor, VVOB, explained that gender discrimination is manifested within education – from biased teaching and learning materials to gender-based divisions of roles and tasks – and could impact education and career pathways. Given that the concept of gender was formed at an early age, investing in gender equality in ECE is especially important. Data, however, indicated that donor investments in gender equality in education were considerably lower in ECE than in other schooling levels. VVOB along with other partners had developed the Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education (GRP4ECE) Toolkit to assist teachers and school leaders to challenge gender stereotypes before gender identities are developed. The Toolkit included material for lesson planning and games for both students and teachers. It was rooted in play-based learning and is designed to be low cost and adaptable to local settings. Findings from the Toolkit pilot in Zambia showed that there was increased awareness by teachers of the social significance of gender, that teachers actively integrated gender in classroom activities, and that teachers required greater support on gender and play-based learning components.

Session 6: Partner presentation

Dr Abdelrahman Almedaires, Director-General, Regional Center of Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE), explained that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNESCO established RCQE in 2014 to promote quality and excellence in education in the Arab world. Recognizing that the foundation for peace, sustainable development and an educated and qualified population is ECE, RCQE had engaged in research aimed at increasing the number of children enrolled in ECE. Emphasis needed to be placed on: promoting the quality of educators, including by ensuring adequate salaries, incentives, professional development opportunities and effective management; provision of research tools and support for research institutions to allow for data collection to inform decision-making; undertaking research to assess the readiness of children in ECE for primary school; conducting studies toward improving the quality of education; and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of this Conference. Discussions of quality in education could only be effective when ownership amongst all stakeholders had been developed.

Session 7: How do we define competent educators and what is needed to develop qualified and competent ECE personnel?

Ms Wafa Asri, Director of pedagogic coordination and private sector, TVET department of the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of

Morocco, explained that prior to the launching of the national programme to generalize and professionalize ECE, the sector was characterized by limited training of educators, lack of access in rural and remote areas, and presence of multiple actors and providers with lack of coordination. The national programme outlined a number of objectives to address these challenges: improve quality of ECE, including through rehabilitation of traditional schools; provide initial and continuous training; institute positive discrimination in rural areas; and progressively integrate ECE in primary schools. The programme was implemented through a multi-stakeholder process and saw more than 100,000 new children enroll in pre-schools in one year. Pilot programmes were also introduced involving development of pedagogical tools that support reforms at the national level and, with the assistance of UNICEF, a system-wide curriculum reference framework was developed that all stakeholders are obliged to follow.

Ms Latifah Kamili from the Office of professional training and the promotion of work (*Office de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion du travail (OFPPT)*), Morocco, explained that OFPPT, as the main public vocational training operator in Morocco, provided training of educators. The Office had worked closely with experts and all stakeholders to develop a teacher competence framework, which placed emphasis on soft skills, communication, psychology and semiology, among other things. The training programme offered internships that would allow candidates to obtain employment in the private sector.

Mr Jon Beaulieu, Chief Operating Officer, Sabre Education, presented on the professional development of pre-primary teachers in Ghana. Noting that education quality and learning outcomes were low due to a number of factors, including lack of trained teachers and lack of social status attached to being a pre-primary teacher, Sabre Education, in partnership with the Government of Ghana, implemented two training models to respond to these conditions. The first involved pre-service training at the tertiary level including the training of college tutors with manuals, developing model practice classrooms with mentors for student teacher placements, and providing refresher training for newly qualified teachers. The second involved in-service training with four components: training of trainers, in-classroom coaching, distribution of classroom resources, and monitoring and quality assurance of the overall impact. Both models had a positive impact on classroom quality and teacher professional well-being, with pre-service training increasing the quality of newly qualified teachers and classrooms from 32 to 95 per cent. Key reflections included recognizing the importance of providing practical support and experiential training, concentrating investment in training and monitoring, and pairing pre-service and in-service training for positive learning outcomes.

Mr Mohamed Matar Mustafa, Expert, RCQE, presented the findings of a study conducted to diagnose the status of the ECD sector in seven Arab countries. Key findings included: lack of reference to monitoring and evaluation, accountability or financing sources in many strategies and policy documents related to ECD; lack of comprehensive national framework to coordinate between different actors and agendas in the sector; limited data collection on the sector; absence of computerization of data; insufficient assessment of learning outcomes; and need for adequately trained and qualified personnel and infrastructure that is age-appropriate and accessible. Key recommendations emerging from the study included: adopting laws and

regulations for compulsory pre-primary education; ensuring presence of one national regulatory entity; developing a unified funding mechanism for the sector under a formal umbrella; adopting a clear strategy for collecting national data on the sector; developing pre-service and in-service training programmes; and adopting general curriculum frameworks and guidelines, which promote learning through playing.

Ms Yoshie Kaga, Programme Specialist, UNESCO, presented on two international projects: the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Teacher Competency Frameworks in [Southeast Asia](#) and [the Pacific Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#); and the [Survey of Teachers in Pre-primary Education \(STEPP\)](#). The purpose of the ECCE Teacher Competency Frameworks was to: provide comprehensive descriptions of knowledge, skills and dispositions that ECCE teachers need to support holistic development of a child; provide systematic and consistent structure and content to support the professional development of ECCE teachers; and supplement existing frameworks or act as a catalyst for framework development (see Diagram I for the four domains of the teacher competency framework). The frameworks were developed inclusively through consultations with national stakeholders. It was important to ensure proper implementation of frameworks, for example, through translation into local languages.

Diagram I: Teacher competency framework domains



Source: UNESCO Bangkok Office and Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE), 2018, ECCE Teacher Competency Framework for Pacific Small Island Developing States, p. 11.

STEPP, a joint initiative of the OECD and UNESCO launched in 2016, was the first international ECCE personnel survey for low- and middle-income countries that would collect data on personnel and setting characteristics, training and professional development, pedagogical beliefs and practices/professional practices and personnel working conditions and job satisfaction. The

survey, which was being conducted in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Namibia, the Philippines, Togo and Viet Nam, would enhance analyses of the impact of ECCE policies. Survey results were expected to be shared in 2021.

Session 8: Decent working and teaching conditions in ECE

Ms Nisrine Ibn Abdeljalil, Deputy Director, FMPS, explained that the work of FMPS is based on four pillars: initial and continuous training; equitable and quality national pre-school education; efficient management; and continuous pedagogical innovation and active scientific research. In developing and delivering training activities, FMPS worked closely with a range of stakeholders, including universities, pre-school associations, local communities and authorities and private sector actors (such as local enterprises). FMPS training included both theoretical courses and practical experiences. Since 2008, FMPS had provided training to 3,732 educators. FMPS had also introduced career pathways for educators, which take into account years of experience and educator evaluations.

Mr Lasse Bjerg Jørgensen, Head of International Relations and National Treasurer, Danish Union of Early Childhood Educators (BUPL), explained that one of the main activities of BUPL was to promote the principles of the [ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel](#) (2014), including by using the Guidelines to develop partner unions' ECE policies, strategic plans and training material for workers' representatives. It was important to adapt the Guidelines to each national context as challenges and structures differ across countries. The Guidelines were an effective tool for supporting unions in their work; however, there was very little or no awareness of their existence among government bodies in the partner countries. For example, none of the associations organising private proprietors of ECE knew about the Guidelines before they were introduced by the unions. It was recommended that opportunities for promoting the Guidelines be investigated, that a training course on using the Guidelines be developed and that awareness campaigns on the existence and value of the Guidelines be launched.

Mr Koffi Ouboènàlè Lantomey, Director of Preschool Education, Ministry of Education, Togo, articulated the various activities engaged to support quality and universal ECE provision, including incorporating ECE in their policy framework, elaborating a programme on teacher competencies, and developing a module to provide some training to community teachers (only government teachers benefit from initial training). Communal teachers did not have the same salary as those employed by the government, as their salaries are dependent on community financial resources. In addition to ensuring financial security for pre-primary educators, other challenges included: absence of social security; lack of accommodation and infrastructure in rural areas; high teacher-student ratios; and funding shortfalls. Teachers needed to be provided with incentives to work in rural areas, both communal and government teachers need to be paid decent salaries, a scheme to allow for the promotion of communal educators, including to the government teachers' stream, needed to be developed and accessible infrastructure needs to be provided. Teacher representatives and the government had to work together to find common solutions to the various challenges, including through a formalized process.

Ms Thérèse Tchouanga, Head of the administrative department of the Inter-Patronal Grouping of Cameroon, articulated the importance of ECE private providers being part of an employers' association to ensure that work was carried out according to established norms and standards, that building human capacities was placed before making profit and that teachers were adequately remunerated and working in decent conditions. The Inter-Patronal Grouping of Cameroon had been working with the government, but had limited contact with the ECE private sector.

ANNEX 1: Agenda

African Conference on Quality Early Childhood Education and the Professionalization of Educators

Hyatt Regency Hotel
Casablanca, Morocco
4-5 December 2019

In partnership with:



Agenda

Evidence shows that educators and teachers are the key driver of quality education. When they are qualified, well trained and supported, and enjoy adequate working conditions, they are able to provide children with quality learning experiences that will lead to positive developmental outcomes and educational success. Given that early childhood education (ECE) represents an important window of opportunity for laying a strong foundation for children's learning and sustainable development, education systems should pay increased attention to building a teaching workforce that covers the early years and to implementing measures that encourage the professionalization of ECE educators. However, ECE educators are often confronted with a lack of training and professional development opportunities, pedagogical support, career development pathways and adequate working conditions. These challenges need to be urgently addressed so that children's rights to quality care and education are met from their early years and so that they are empowered to succeed in later schooling and life. Against this background, the Ministry of Education of Morocco, ILO and UNESCO are organizing the African Conference on Quality ECE and the Professionalization of Educators on 4-5 December 2019 in Casablanca, Morocco, in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (BMZ/GIZ), the Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Preschool Education (FMPS), the Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE), the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), the Monegasque Cooperation for Development, and Royal Air Maroc (RAM). The Conference will provide a platform for dialogue and sharing of challenges and good practices regarding the professionalization of ECE educators and the development and management of the educator profession.

Objectives

The objectives of the Conference are to:

- Reaffirm the importance of increasing investment in equitable and quality ECE and the professionalization of ECE educators;
- Exchange good practices, experiences and challenges regarding the professionalization of ECE personnel and the promotion of equitable and quality ECE services.

The Conference will culminate in the adoption of a Casablanca declaration (provisional title) to renew a collective commitment to quality ECE and the professionalization of educators, as well as outline strategies and actions for ways forward.

DAY 1

Wednesday 4 December 2019: Morning	
08:00 – 09:00	Registration of participants
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Opening ceremony</p> <p>Moderator: Master of Ceremony from Morocco</p> <p>Opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr Saaïd Amzazi, Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Morocco • Mr Akira Isawa, Deputy Director of Sectoral Policies, ILO • Ms Golda El-Khoury, Director and Representative, UNESCO Office for the Maghreb
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Session 1: High level panel: Toward quality early childhood education and the central place of early childhood educators in achieving SDG 4-Education 2030</p> <p><i>Strong political will and commitment is essential to achieving SDG target 4.2 on early childhood care and education, which calls for quality provision for all children. In this session, Ministers of Education will share their experiences about policies and practices and debate major challenges facing their countries in achieving SDG target 4.2, particularly the development of qualified and competent ECE personnel.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Golda El-Khoury, Director and Representative, UNESCO Office for the Maghreb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Youssef Belqasmi, General Secretary, Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Morocco • Dr Hamidu Bobboyi, Executive Secretary, Universal Basic Education Commission, Nigeria • Mr Mohamed Mahmoud Sidi Yahya Oul Abdarrahmane, General Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Family, Mauritania • Prof. Abdel Rahamane Baba Moussa, General Secretary, Conference of Ministers of Education of Francophone States and Governments (CONFEMEN) <p>Exchange with audience</p> <p>Information about the Drafting Committee for the elaboration of a Casablanca declaration</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Group photo and coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	<p>Session 2: Celebrating achievements and good practices</p> <p><i>This session will provide an opportunity to highlight and share one major achievement or good practice per country related to the professionalization and management and/or working conditions of early childhood educators. One government representative per country will speak for 2 minutes to briefly explain the achievement or good practice. The sharing of achievements or good practices will be preceded by (1) remarks by the representatives of social partners on achievements and challenges regarding the professionalization of early childhood educators, and (2) reflections on guiding principles on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms Rokhaya Diawara and Ms Yoshie Kaga, Programme Specialists, UNESCO</p> <p>Introductory messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education International • Ms Yeshimebet Zewoldie Belete, Human Resources Director, Paul Ries & Sons,

	<p>Ethiopia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Aziz Kaichouh, Director-General, Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Preschool Education (FMPS) • Ms Raki Bal, Early Childhood Development Resource Person, Inter-country Quality Node for Early Childhood Development (ICQN-ECD) <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on guiding principles on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel: Mr Oliver Liang, Head, Public and Private Services, ILO • Sharing of country achievements or good practices: Government representative per country <p>Exchange with audience</p>
<p>13:00 – 14:00</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>Wednesday 4 December 2019: Afternoon</p>	
<p>14:00 – 15:00</p>	<p>Session 3: Tools for planning, data and practice improvement</p> <p><i>The session will introduce some international tools and resources that exist for improving the planning, data collection and practice development that impact the capacity and working conditions of ECE personnel.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Mr Binyam Sisay Mendisu, Programme Specialist, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and Mr Mohamed Alaoui, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Office for the Maghreb</p> <p>Quick ice-breaker</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Africa Framework for Basic Education Teacher Development: Ms Rokhaya Diawara, Programme Specialist, UNESCO • Data for effective planning of early childhood education personnel: Ms Diane Coury, Programme Specialist, IIEP-UNESCO • Country profiles on ECE and its personnel: Ms Yuxi Wang, UNESCO Consultant, and Ms Francesca Colombo, Senior Programme Officer, International Step by Step Association (ISSA) <p>Exchange with audience</p>
<p>15:00 – 16:20</p>	<p>Session 4: Parallel working groups on challenges, good practices and recommended actions</p> <p><i>This session will break into thematic groups to discuss related challenges, good practices and recommended actions. At the end of the working group session, each group will have shared the challenges and good practices concerning the theme, and will have generated inputs and recommendations that can feed into the elaboration of the Casablanca declaration. Each group will be provided with key guiding questions for discussion, and a copy of the draft declaration to facilitate the discussion on the groups' inputs and recommendations. In each working group, there will be a pre-assigned moderator, who will introduce the theme of the working group and the related guiding questions. Each group will identify a rapporteur who can report on the results of the discussion in the following session.</i></p> <p>Working Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Qualification, initial training and professional development • Group 2: Recruitment, deployment, retention and career development • Group 3: ECE personnel in rural and remote areas and those serving disadvantaged

	<p>populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 4: Working conditions • Group 5: Data and monitoring of early childhood education with a focus on ECE personnel development and management
16:20 – 16:50	Coffee break
16:50 – 18:00	<p>Session 5: Tools for planning, data and practice improvement (cont'd) and reporting on the results of the Working Groups</p> <p>Moderator: Government representative</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit for promoting gender-responsive pedagogies in ECE in Africa: Ms Hanne Huysmans, Education Advisor, VVOB • Reporting on the results of the Working Groups <p>Exchange with audience</p>
18:00 -	Dinner (for participants to arrange themselves)

DAY 2

Thursday 5 December 2019: Morning	
09:00 – 09:20	<p>Session 6: Summary of work from the first day and partner presentation</p> <p>Summary of work from the first day: Mr Oliver Liang, ILO</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Regional Center of Quality and Excellent in Education (RCQE) in promoting the quality of education in the Arab World: Dr Abdelrahman Almedaires, Director-General, RCQE
09:20 – 11:00	<p>Session 7: How do we define competent educators and what is needed to develop qualified and competent ECE personnel?</p> <p><i>This session will provide an opportunity to reflect and discuss what encompasses “competent educators” in ECE, and what is required to develop qualified and competent early childhood personnel, drawing from different national and international experiences.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Mr Erfan Diebel, Senior Education Policy Advisor, German Development Cooperation (BMZ/GIZ)</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences from Morocco: Representatives of the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Morocco • Experiences from Ghana: Mr Jon Beaulieu, Chief Operating Officer, Sabre Education • Experiences from the Arab region based on a study on increasing kindergarten enrolments: Mr Mohamed Matar Mustafa, RCQE Expert • Experiences from international projects: Ms Yoshie Kaga, Programme Specialist, UNESCO <p>Exchange with audience</p>

11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30	<p>Session 8: Decent working and teaching conditions in ECE</p> <p>This session will highlight good practices in securing and promoting decent working and teaching conditions for ECE personnel, including approaches for collective representation, sustainable and tailored infrastructure, and innovations in professionalization and practice.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Akira Isawa, ILO</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences from the Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Preschool Education (FMPS): Mr Aziz Kaichouh, Director-General, FMPS • Experiences from the Danish Union of Early Childhood Educators (BUPL): Mr Lasse Bjerg Jørgensen, Head of International Relations and National Treasurer, BUPL • Experiences from government: Mr Koffi Ouboènalè Lantomey, Director of Preschool Education, Ministry of Education, Togo • Experiences from employer organization: Ms Thérèse Tchouanga, Head of the administrative department of the Inter-Patronal Group of Cameroon <p>Exchange with audience</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
Thursday 5 December 2019: Afternoon	
14:00 – 16:00	<p>Session 9: Discussion on and adoption of the declaration of the Conference</p> <p><i>The session will present the draft declaration to be considered for adoption at the end of the Conference. The draft will include the inputs and recommendations that emerged from the previous sessions.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Mr Gwang-Chol Chang, Chief, Section for Educational Policies, UNESCO</p> <p>Presentation of the draft declaration: Member of the Drafting Committee</p> <p>Exchange with audience</p> <p>Presentation of the final declaration: Member of the Drafting Committee</p> <p>Closing remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of Morocco • ILO • UNESCO

ANNEX 2: Casablanca Declaration and Call for Action

African Conference on Quality Early Childhood Education and the Professionalization of Educators

Casablanca Declaration and Call for Action on Quality Early Childhood Education and the Professionalization of ECE Teachers and Educators

5 December 2019

Preamble

1. **We**, ministers, representatives of governments, of United Nations organizations and other inter-governmental organizations, of employers and workers organizations, of teacher training institutions and of civil society, actively involved in promoting early childhood education, met in Casablanca, Morocco on 4 and 5 December 2019 for the African Conference on Quality Early Childhood Education and the Professionalization of Teachers and Educators.
2. The Conference was co-organized by the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kingdom of Morocco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)), the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), the Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Pre-School Education (FMPS), the Regional Centre of Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE) and the Monegasque Cooperation for Development. The Conference brought together participants from 18 African countries², the Conference des Ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la Francophonie (CONFEMEN), UNICEF, the World Bank, the Inter-country Quality Node on Early Childhood Development in Africa (ICQN-ECD).
3. We reaffirm our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Education 2030, a centrepiece of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, directed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Notably, we seek to achieve its target 4.2 (quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education) and target 4.c (qualified teachers)
4. We recall that this Declaration is a follow-up to the **Rabat Declaration on Early Childhood Development** (2016), signed by nine countries from the Arab and West Africa regions, and the

² Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cameroun, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia.

Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action of the Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE 2018), which set out a harmonized vision for educational transformation to meet the commitments of the **African Union 2063 Agenda: *The Africa We Want***.

5. We recognize that education is a fundamental human right and a public good, and note that the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child asserts children's rights to education from early childhood.
6. We believe that early childhood education (ECE) is the foundation of lifelong learning and child development, and thus of societies, but is often overlooked. Quality early childhood care and education lay the foundation for good health, socio-emotional development, educational success in subsequent schooling and lifelong learning, and future labour market participation.
7. We recognize that developing a quality ECE workforce can be a strategy for employment growth within the growing care economy, especially for youth and women, and can support the integration of working parents into the labour market.
8. We assert that ECE should address the child's overall development through holistic and child-centred approaches and should be seen as an important investment in promoting sustainable and dynamic development and peaceful, equitable, and inclusive societies.
9. We affirm that governments should establish legal, institutional and policy frameworks to make quality ECE free and accessible to all children without discrimination, and to progressively universalize access to quality ECE, working in partnership with all stakeholders.

Quality teaching and decent work in ECE

10. We recognize that qualified teachers and educators are key to quality ECE. This is a challenge that arises above all in Sub-Saharan Africa, where in 2017 only 54% of pre-primary teachers were trained as compared to 88% in Northern Africa (UNESCO-UIS). Ensuring quality training and professionalization for teachers and educators as well as decent working conditions is a priority for achieving SDG target 4.2.
11. We affirm the importance of developing and implementing national norms and standards for quality ECE provision, including professional, teaching and ethical standards, staff qualifications, development of capacities and competencies, and career development. We therefore recommend the establishment of clear pathways for the professionalization of ECE personnel that include certification, qualification frameworks, and quality assurance by ECE authorities, taking into account national and cultural context.
12. We call for the institutionalization of pre-service and in-service training for all ECE school leaders, teachers, educators, and caregivers, as well as recognition and valorization of their profession by ensuring decent working conditions and a voice in decisions affecting their work.
13. We affirm that gender equality should underpin all aspects of work in ECE. Therefore, the methods and content of education to be used by educators and teachers should be guided by curricula that

promote gender equality as well as facilitate the transition from home to pre-school to primary school, while taking into account the specific needs of the very young, children with disabilities and those affected by geographic disparities, poverty, conflict and disaster, and giving importance to play, socio-emotional development, creativity, joy, self-confidence and autonomy.

14. We acknowledge that decent work is an essential strategy to attract and retain quality ECE teachers and educators. Decent work for ECE personnel should take into account fundamental principles and rights at work in light of national labour law. The 2014 ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel as well as the 2019 Education International/UNESCO Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards can serve as guidance on such matters. Policies and practices concerning ECE personnel should be developed through social dialogue and in coordination with relevant authorities.
15. We emphasize the importance of optimal class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios for ensuring decent working conditions and thereby guaranteeing quality ECE.
16. We call for the integration of ECE into national data systems and education sector plans so that planning, standard-setting, implementation and monitoring with regard to the development, training, management and working conditions of ECE personnel are duly addressed and adequately budgeted.

Call for regional cooperation

17. We recognize that transformation for knowledge-based societies in Africa requires stronger regional standards, collaboration, partnership, peer learning, knowledge sharing and networking. We therefore commit to working towards:
 - 17.1 Definition, development, adoption and implementation of an African quality framework for ECE, including a teacher and educator competency framework. As a joint activity involving all stakeholders, a competency framework would allow for harmonization while also respecting individual country contexts and policy and legal frameworks.
 - 17.2 Strengthening regional and inter-regional cooperation and exchange of expertise, experience and good practices to improve the quality of ECE, especially through developing concrete joint actions in areas of professionalization of teachers and educators.
 - 17.3 Leveraging digital opportunities by strengthening the development of digital skills and competencies through partnerships in support of information and communication technologies (ICT) in ECE, including through access to open educational resources and assistive technology, as well as by creating mobile and online education and training platforms that would provide equitable access for ECE personnel.
 - 17.4 Convening stakeholder meetings through the International Teacher Task Force for Education 2030 platform to inform on national and regional progress, share good

practices, provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and networking, and to advocate for the professionalization of teachers and educators and quality ECE.

18. We encourage UNESCO and ILO to continue strengthening technical cooperation and partnerships at national, regional and international levels, involving social partners (including trade unions), civil society, the private sector, development partners, and national and regional networks as well as communities.
19. We encourage governments, social partners and other relevant stakeholders to implement the ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel.
20. We adopt this Declaration and Call for Action and agree to refer it to the African Union Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Cluster of the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) for integration into their agenda.

ANNEX 3: Organizing committee of the conference

Organizing committee of the conference:

1. Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research

- Ms Fatima Ouahmi
- Mr Omar Matini
- Mr Abdelkbir Tiwari
- Mr Rachid Taleb
- Mr Mohamed Bounou
- Mr Said Chamkhi
- Mme Hanae Rami

2. International Labour Organization (ILO):

- Mr Oliver Liang
- Ms Nikolina Postic

3. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

- Ms Yoshie Kaga
- Ms Rokhaya Diawara
- Mr Mohamed El Hosni Alaoui
- Mr Samuel Grimonprez
- Ms Meryem Aquesbi
- Ms Ghita Bou
- Mr Reda Belfekih

4. Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BIZ/BMZ)

- Mr Erfan Diebel
- Ms Hedwig Osvath

5. Fondation Marocaine pour la Promositon du Préscolaire (FMPS)

- Mr Aziz Kaichouh
- Mr Ahmed Al Fallah