

Hosted by Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology



Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: What is a successful multi-sectoral approach to ECD?

2018 Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development (ECD) Conference Report



Kathmandu, Nepal, Yak and Yeti Hotel 5-7 June 2018



Save the Children



中国发展研究基金会
China Development Research
Foundation



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Acronyms

A

ACEI	<i>Association for Childhood Education International</i>
ADB	<i>Asian Development Bank</i>
AKU	<i>Aga Khan University</i>
ARNEC	<i>Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood</i>

C-D

C4CD or CCD	<i>Care for Child Development</i>
CCT	<i>Conditional Cash Transfer</i>
CDRF	<i>China Development Research Foundation</i>
CSO	<i>Civil Society Organization</i>
CSR	<i>Corporate Social Responsibility</i>
DOE	<i>Department of Education</i>

E

EAP-ECDS	<i>East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales</i>
EAPRO	<i>East Asia Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF)</i>
ECCD	<i>Early Childhood Care and Development</i>
ECCE	<i>Early Childhood Care and Education</i>
ECD	<i>Early Childhood Development</i>
ECDAN	<i>Early Childhood Development Action Network</i>
ECCD	<i>Early Childhood Development and Disability</i>
ECDI	<i>Early Childhood Development Index</i>
ECE	<i>Early Childhood Education</i>
ECED	<i>Early Childhood Education and Development</i>
ELM	<i>Early Literacy and Math (Save the Children)</i>
ESP	<i>Education Sector Plan</i>
EWEC	<i>Every Women Every Child</i>

F-I

FCHV	<i>Female Community Health Volunteers</i>
GER	<i>Gross Enrolment Rate</i>
GPE	<i>Global Partnership for Education</i>
ICDS	<i>Integrated Child Development Services (India)</i>
ICHD	<i>Institute of Child and Human Development (Bangladesh)</i>
IDELA	<i>International Development and Early Learning Assessment (Save the Children)</i>
IECD	<i>Integrated Early Childhood Development</i>

K-M

KAP	<i>Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice</i>
KICCE	<i>Korea Institute of Child Care and Education</i>
LMIC	<i>Low- and Middle-Income Countries</i>
MCH	<i>Maternal and Child Health</i>
MDG	<i>Millennium Development Goal</i>
MOE	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
MOEST	<i>Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (Nepal)</i>
MOLISA	<i>Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)</i>
MTEBP	<i>Mother Tongue Bilingual Education Program</i>

O-P

OMEP	<i>World Organisation for Early Childhood Education</i>
OSF	<i>Open Society Foundation</i>
PEDS	<i>Pakistan Early Child Development Scale Up</i>
PPP	<i>Public-Private Partnership</i>
PRC4ECD	<i>Pacific Regional Council for ECD</i>
PSD	<i>Partnership for Sustainable Development (Nepal)</i>
PWG	<i>Pregnant Women's Group (Nepal)</i>

R-S

ROSA	<i>Regional Office of South Asia (UNICEF)</i>
SAFECDP	<i>South Asia Forum of ECD Professional</i>
SDG	<i>Sustainable Development Goal</i>
SES	<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>

U-W

UNESCO	<i>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</i>
UNHCR	<i>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</i>
UNICEF	<i>United Nations Children's Fund</i>
VAC	<i>Violence Against Children</i>
WASH	<i>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</i>
WFF	<i>World Forum Foundation</i>
WHO	<i>World Health Organization</i>



Objectives and scope of conference

The conference objectives are to:

Provide opportunities for policy makers and practitioners to contextualise ECD on the global agenda in their own countries;

Strengthen the advocacy for holistic and inclusive ECD;

Share knowledge, tools and noteworthy practices on ECD policies and programmes, especially those which adopt a multi-sectoral approach and able to implement to a large scale; and

Strengthen partnerships for ECD among a large range of existing and potential stakeholders.

Conference sub-themes

The 2018 conference theme is
**'Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:
What is a successful multi-sectoral approach to ECD?'**

The sub-themes represent starting points for effective ECD intervention:

Health and nutrition:

Health and nutrition services which can serve as effective entry points for delivering nurturing care and promote ECD

Responsive caregiving:

Effective parenting/ caregiver programmes and interventions that promote nurturing care and quality ECD

Early learning:

Quality early learning environments, formal or informal and located in the home, the family or the community; these may include formal services which address issues such as access to quality day care services and pre-schooling which facilitates a smooth transition to formal schooling.

This domain should also bring focus to services for under 3's which promote cognitive and linguistic development but are also often very limited

Safety and security:

The protection of young children from violence and maltreatment, specifically looking at how ECD activities can be integrated into services for vulnerable groups such as children of refugees from conflict and natural disasters and those "left behind" by migrant parents.



Conference sponsors and partners

We would like to acknowledge the following organisations for their financial contribution and technical support to this Conference:



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work for children.

<https://www.unicef.org/>



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China Development Research Foundation (CDRF)

The China Development Research Foundation is a nationwide organisation initiated by the Development Research Center of the State Council. It has received not only profound support from leading members of the State Council but has also received kind instruction and assistance from the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the People's Bank of China. The aims of establishing this Foundation are threefold: 1) to support and promote policy consultation and academic research in China, 2) to render service to the social and economic development of China, and 3) to keep the government decision-making procedure operating in a scientific and democratic manner. The Foundation was formally registered in December 1997. Mr. Xue Muqiao and Mr. Ma Hong, founders of the Development Research Center of the State Council and initiators of the Foundation, were appointed its honorary presidents.

<https://cdrf-en.cdrf.org.cn/>



Open Society Foundations (OSF)

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people. OSF, which began in 1979, remain today committed to the global struggle for open society and responding quickly to the challenges and opportunities of the future. Their Early Childhood programme promotes the healthy development and well-being of young children through initiatives that emphasise parent and community engagement, professional development, and government accountability. The programme's rights-based approach and social justice framework pays attention to the development challenges faced by children who are members of minority groups, children with developmental delays, malnutrition and disabilities; and children living in poverty. The Open Society Foundations implement early childhood programmes in select countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa.

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org>



Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF)

At the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we believe that giving all children a good start in life is both the right thing to do and the best way to build healthy, prosperous and creative societies. We are a private foundation focused on sharing insights, innovations and best practices from around the world on what works in early childhood development. This work is underpinned by our programmes in a diverse set of core countries. Currently, these include Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Israel, the Netherlands, Peru and Turkey. We are also launching a regional initiative to support Syrian families forcibly displaced across the Middle East and Europe. Our 2016-2020 strategy: transition to scale. After five decades of investing in early childhood development, the Bernard van Leer Foundation is entering a new phase where we believe the major challenge is the transition to scale. Plenty of ideas to improve the youngest children's health, nutrition, protection and learning have proven their worth in small-scale projects – but how do we effectively reach hundreds of thousands or millions of children? Our strategy will help answer this question by building partnerships in three areas:

Parents+ Combining coaching for parents in early childhood development with services that meet families' basic needs.



Urban95 Incorporating a focus on early childhood development into the planning and management of cities.



Building Blocks Promoting the science of nurturing care and sharing best practices in how to transition successful early childhood programmes to scale.



Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International has been working in Nepal since 1978, helping marginalised children, their families and communities to access their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. At present, Plan International works in 42 districts through the support of local partners in Nepal. The new strategy (2018-2022) of Plan International Nepal focuses on a robust gender transformative approach with an equally strong emphasis on inclusion for children with disabilities and other ethnic groups in the programme. Impacting 1 million girls to eliminate child, early and forced marriage in Nepal is an overarching goal of the strategy.

<https://plan-international.org>

<https://bernardvanleer.org>



ChildFund International

ChildFund International exists to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children have the capacity to improve their lives and the opportunity to become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change in their communities. ChildFund International promotes societies whose individuals and institutions participate in valuing, protecting and advancing the worth and rights of children. ChildFund International currently works in 24 countries and assists over 11 million children across the Americas, Africa and Asia through integrated, multi-sectoral child development programmes. In Asia, ChildFund International currently implements programmes in India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as supports ChildFund Alliance members in Cambodia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

<https://www.childfund.org/>



Save the Children

In the U.S. and around the world, Save the Children does whatever it takes — every day and in times of crisis — to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children’s unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach. We do whatever it takes for children — transforming their lives and the future we share — because we believe every child deserves a future.

<https://www.savethechildren.org>



Seto Gurans National Child Development Services

Seto Gurans National Child Development service is a pioneer organisation in the field of Early Childhood Development at national, district and community level. It is registered as an Educational Non-Governmental organisation, working since 1979 in advocacy, introducing various modules for children, parents, community and other stakeholders. It aims to reach the hearts and minds of children from most disadvantaged groups as well as all ECD age group children, their families and communities. It has shown sincere commitment to the ideals of child centered development approaches and a belief in the rights of all children to grow their full potential – physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. At the time of its origin, there was hardly a non-governmental organisation which worked for such group of children’s rights. The organisation has produced independent District Seto Gurans child development service through the local team of trained human resource in 59 districts out of the 77 districts of Nepal with support of Save the Children. Etymological meaning of Seto Gurans is White Rhododendron, a flower which blooms in the high altitude with environmental bottleneck. It is unfamiliar to those who are concerned to the rights of excluded group of children. At the meantime, Lali Gurans (Red Rhododendron) found in abundance on the foothills of Nepal — is therefore well known and honoured as the National Flower. Symbolically Seto Gurans reflects those children who survive under difficult situation, and context with respect to gender, caste, creed, ethnicity and geographical barriers. They are also deprived of their Early Childhood Development Rights.

<https://nationalsetogurans.org.np/>



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

As UN’s specialized agency in education and lead agency for the Education 2030 Agenda (SDG 4), UNESCO functions as a capacity-builder, global standard-setter, laboratory of ideas, catalyst of international cooperation and clearing house. It advocates for comprehensive ECCE policies and programmes that foster children’s holistic development and learning. The ECCE programme of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) focuses on policy-relevant research and advocacy, technical support to Member States particularly on ECCE teacher policies and strategies, and promotion of community-based parenting and ECCE programmes.

<https://www.unescobkk.org/>

Snapshot of conference participants

The 2018 ARNEC conference attracted

950

participants from 45 countries

30

Concurrent paper presentations

6

Ministers and Vice Ministers

3

Keynote Presenters

4

Subtheme Speakers.

79%

Education and Early Learning

9%

Health and Nutrition

2%

Child Protection

3%

Parenting

7%

Others



Though majority (79%) of participants are from the education and early learning sector, over the years, we have also seen an increase in the number of participants from other sectors such as Health and Nutrition (9%), Parenting (3%) and Child Protection (2%).



What do the participants say?

66.7% of the participants participated in the survey responded that content presented in the conference is very helpful in relation to their scope of work while mentioned that **18.5%** it is extremely helpful.

Over **90%** of the participants would recommend the Asia Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development Conference to colleagues and professionals

Over **81.4%** would attend the conference again themselves.

“ I love the big gathering of ECD specialists who came from all over the globe. I had the chance to meet and learn from them. It is a great platform for ECD workers and a very good occasion for sharing ideas and work.

”
Nasrin Akter, Bangladesh

“ It was fabulous and was most learning moment for me. Some of the key moments are: Speech of our PM about ECCD All the key notes by the specialist of ECCD. I will say that it is the learning floor to all the ECD personalities and we must attend it.

”
Reeta Tamang, Nepal

“ I was inspired by the energy, commitment and passion of people involved in ECD at different levels. The keynote addresses were outstanding - calling for rigorous research to inform evidence-based practice. At the same time, local Nepalese people that I met - including ECD practitioners at the site visits, NGO members and staff - were incredibly welcoming and warm, going out of their way to accommodate my particular area of interest (disability and inclusion).

”
Sue Philpott, South Africa

“ Attend this conference to improve your perception on a wholistic approach to Early Childhood Development.

”
Joel Denty, Solomon Islands

Participants are represented from a total of

45 Countries

Afghanistan
Belgium
Cambodia
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Fiji
Indonesia
Republic of Korea
Malaysia
Micronesia
New Zealand
Philippines
Solomon Islands
Tajikistan
Kingdom of Tonga
Republic of Uzbekistan

Australia
Bhutan
Canada
Timor-Leste
Hong Kong
Japan
Kyrgyzstan
Maldives
Myanmar
Pakistan
Samoa
South Africa
Thailand
United Kingdom
Vanuatu

Bangladesh
Brunei Darussalam
China
Egypt
India
Kiribati
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Marshall Islands
Nepal
Papua New Guinea
Singapore
Sri Lanka
Timor-Leste
United States
Viet Nam

Pre-conference study visit and workshops



Group Photo



A

Study Visits

Two study visits were conducted.
Group A visited the Shree Chandi Adarsha Saral Secondary School in Lalitpur.
Group B visited the Vidyarthi Niketan Ma. Vi school in Bhaktapur.

The objective of the study visit is to provide participants with the opportunity to see an actual Early Childhood Services in Nepal and learn from these centres.



B



Group Photo

Pre-conference workshops

Education Diplomacy: Advancing ECD through leadership, advocacy and diplomatic action

Facilitated by Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)

This workshop was centered on a new, emerging, and dynamic approach of education diplomacy which fills a critical gap that exists currently between leadership and advocacy training. Both leaders and advocates need sets of skills that employ broader diplomatic strategies to promote and advance ECD policies and services. ACEI's 5L Education Diplomacy Training, delivered during the workshop, provided an overview of Education Diplomacy and discussed critical diplomatic skills and strategies that can lead to transformative change in ECD. Such skills include negotiation, consensus building, compromise, coalition, and partnership building. Individuals working to advance ECD at every level – from formal and non-formal learning environments, family and community, to local, national, and global initiatives – require skills-based strategies to place ECD at the forefront.



Trainers:

- Ms. Diane Whitehead, Executive Director of ACEI
- Ms. Yvette Gatilao Murphy, Director of Global Advocacy and Director of the Center of Education Diplomacy



Trainers:

- Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Director of the Human Development Programme and Associate Professor for Department of Community Health Sciences, AKU, Karachi, Pakistan
- Dr. Kausar Waqar, Senior Instructor, Human Development Programme, AKU

Science of ECD Seminar: Brain Development and Nurturing Care

Facilitated by Aga Khan University, Department of Community Health Sciences-Human Development Programme

The Science of Early Child Development (SECD) Seminar series was designed as a resource to help share the emerging science through its media rich content and includes a wealth of recent research, as well as programme examples from around the world. The SECD Seminar Series was developed by the Red River College (RRC) in Canada, in partnership with the University of Toronto and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

The SECD Seminars have been designed for use with professionals, leaders and policy makers, and enables the participants to explore the key research underscoring the importance of early development in setting a foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing. The one-day pre-conference seminar on Science of ECD focused on "Brain Development and Nurturing Care". Recent research on early brain development has shown us that in the first few years of life, the brain is highly sensitive to external influences.

Embryos and infants are dependent on environment and adults for sustenance, care and love. Sensitive and responsive interactions and caregiving positively influence their development.

The interactive and activity-based sessions helped ECD practitioners and leaders to develop an enhanced understanding of ECD and to plan, implement and advocate for young children and their families more effectively.

Learning through Play

Facilitated by BRAC Institute of Education Development (BIED), BRAC University

The Workshop shared philosophy behind and the experiences with the Play Model introduced by BRAC Institute of Education Development (BIED), BRAC University for Children aged 1-3 and 3-5 years. BIED's Play Model treats children as resources and facilitates early years learning in Play Labs, which are child care centers designed based on the visions of communities and their children. The workshop was divided into four main sessions (Session One – Introduction to Play Model, Session Two - Creating and Monitoring Play Spaces, Session Three – Play Model in Fragile Settings and Session Four – Experience Adapting and Scaling Up) with an array of interactive exercises, videos, games, presentations and discussion to lead participants through a journey to the heart of childhood - playfulness. The workshop was complemented with displays of materials, classroom and playground designs, and photo displays of real examples.



Trainers:

- Ms. Ferdousi Khanom, Senior Lecturer, BIED, BRAC University
- Dr. Nishat F. Rahman, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of ECD Academic Programme and the Center for Psychosocial well-being, BIED, BRAC University

Day 1 (June 5 2018)

- 13** Conference opening ceremony
- 14** Keynote address
- 15** Nepal's progress and plans on early childhood development (ECD)
- 16** ARNEC's journey: An invitation to ARNEC's 10th year anniversary exhibit
- 17** Sub-theme 1: Presentation on health and nutrition
- 17** Sub-theme 2: Presentation on responsive caregiving
- 18** Exhibit launch and poster presentation
- 19** Thematic panel discussion: Health and nutrition
- 20** Thematic panel discussion: Responsive caregiving

Conference Opening Ceremony

“ **Right Honorable Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli (Nepal):** Capital development is critical to the development of a country. Investment in early childhood development (ECD), proper care, and education can lead to a prosperous society. The period between conception to eight years are crucial to children’s development as 90% of the brain develops by the age of five.

The Government of Nepal has been promoting ECD through multi-sector programmatic services with much success. In 2018, there has been a massive enrolment campaign in Nepal to ensure that all children can enroll and attend schools. 500,000 children who might have been out of school have been reached this year. Additionally, the government is providing free basic education, child-friendly schools, services to pregnant women and children. Nepal’s constitution has also guaranteed ECD for children via one-year free pre-primary education for all four years old. There are more than 36,000 ECD centers offering holistic services to children and the quality enhancement of ECD centers will be prioritized. 84% of children below five receive ECD and education. Net enrolment rate of children between aged 1-5 years have reached 97%. Additionally, Nepal has reached a number of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including child mortality and enrolment rates.

Going forward, the Government of Nepal wishes to ensure that no child will be deprived of ECD opportunities given its recognition of ECD as the basic rights of children. As part of holistic development, ECD is interlinked between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of 2.2. nutrition, 3.2 health, 4.2 education, and 6.2 protection as part of the holistic development. To reach the relevant SDGs by 2030, ECD programmes will be more prominently focused in future plans across ministries. Partnerships would be key in moving forward the agenda, specifically collaboration between government partners, civil societies, and various stakeholders.



INAUGURATE:
Right Honorable Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli
Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal



CHAIR:
Honorable Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel
Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Nepal

This conference is a useful platform for cross-country exchange and learning on best practices in the region. The Government of Nepal has set high priority in providing a good foundation for children. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees child rights and there have been numerous interventions initiated on health, nutrition, and protection to align with the SDGs, with a high priority on ECD programme.

Nation-wide, there are a million of children who have received early childhood education which contributes to net enrolment rate. Further work will be conducted on more rigorous mapping and quality management of ECD centers, as well as ensuring that all school-age children attend schools.



SPEAKER:
Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer
Chair, Board of Directors, ARNEC

This conference is not just a gathering of ECD policy-makers and practitioners but also a celebration of ARNEC’s 10th anniversary since its inception in 2007. ARNEC has grown over the years with now more than 2,000 individual members from a total of 68 countries. ECD is essential in achieving the SDGs, including SDG target 4.2. Holistic development of young children can best be achieved through a multi-sectoral approach and this is featured prominently in the Nurturing Care Framework endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) Assembly. The conference is organized around four sub-themes of the Framework. Dr. Shaeffer recognized Nepal’s commitment to accessible and high-quality education, as well as strong presence of the civil society organisations (CSOs) and local ECD network of Nepal.



SPEAKER:
Ms. Jean Gough
Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA)

Ms. Gough recognized ARNEC’s 10th anniversary and the importance of the conference given growing evidence on ECD. Brain develops at a remarkable rate especially from conception to age two. She also highlighted the release of a new report on child stunting by ROSA to address the severity of malnutrition, costing nations 11% of GDP. Additionally, investment in the early years is critical as there are only 69% of children with access to pre-primary education in the region. The May 2018 Learning Generation conference co-hosted between ROSA and the Education Commission aspired to strengthen investment and political commitment towards early education. Multi-sectoral approach is needed to tackle holistic development of children and taking it to scale. Engagement between the government and all sectors is essential. The case for increased investment in ECD, especially targeting the most disadvantaged and particularly children in emergencies setting, is clear and the time is now.



SPEAKER:
Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi
Regional Director, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

Mr. Aoyagi congratulated ARNEC on its 10th anniversary and recognized collaboration with UNICEF on high-level policy forums since 2013. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in ECCE has seen an increase from 12% (in 2010) to 84% (in 2016). Huge challenge remains, with 250 million of children worldwide not reaching their developmental potential. He highlighted the importance of holistic development - security, safety, nutrition, sanitation, and education for school readiness. The role of the Ministry of Education (MOE) is critical. To move the needle forward, there is a need to engage relevant ministries as well as NGOs. He related to UNESCO’s mandate and importance of fostering peace and harmony in children – through a sense of tolerance, respect of others, and living with others.

Keynote Address

“ We need to think much more deliberately about multi-sectoral coordination, we need leadership and decision makers that have the authority to make the decisions. We need comprehensive understanding of what makes cross-sectoral works, and consistency messaging across sectors. ”

Implementation research, practice and partnerships: Informing a multisectoral approach to ECD

CHAIR:

Dr. Mae Chu Chang

ARNEC Board of Directors

SPEAKER:

Dr. Aisha Yousafzai

Associate Professor of Global Health
Department of Global Health and Population,
Harvard T.H. Chan, School of Public Health



In 2007, the launch of Lancet series on ECD revealed that there are more than 250 million children who fail to reach their developmental potential. There has been an explosion of science and advocacy to help transform knowledge to action. In 2014, we see an increase to 68 multi-sectoral policies across relevant sectors of ECD, including reducing child poverty, hunger, survival, as well as safety and protection of young children. The key question moving forward is how best to transform policies into action.

Dr. Yousafzai provided an overview of the Nurturing Care Framework; evidence-based principles; addressing challenges and opportunities in implementation; and partnerships. She emphasized the importance of country contexts.

1) In May 2018, the Nurturing Care Framework was launched in the World Health Assembly to meet the needs of young children across sectors. It focuses in three areas, including promotion of new interventions in current programme, working differently with caregivers, and strengthening cross-sector partnerships.

2) The evidence-based principles include starting early, providing protective inputs to promote nurturing care and mitigate risks, support child and parents or caregivers, and boost development

in life course. Care for Child Development helps to promote opportunities for early learning through health cards and integrating play and responsive care messages into well-baby visit. Specifically, tackling multiple risk factors can amplify benefits as it has been discovered that nutrition intervention alone is insufficient to improve cognitive development. The integration of both nutrition and stimulation can amplify impacts.

3) One of the key challenges in implementation is to ensure equity across programmes.

4) The recent publication of the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences demonstrates some key lessons, including adaptation of local contexts; integrate behavior change techniques that encourage uptake of innovations; investment in skilled workforce; promoting demand and going beyond awareness raising; and measuring implementation and impact.

5) Importance of strong research-practice partnerships and fostering research practice communities.

She concluded with the need to strengthen individual sector and existing platforms; as well as better coordination within and across sectors.



Nepal's progress and plans on early childhood development (ECD)

CHAIR:

Dr. Mae Chu Chang
ARNEC Board of Directors

SPEAKER:

Dr. Teertha Raj Dhakal
Joint Secretary,
National Planning Commission,
Government of Nepal

Dr. Dhakal presented an overview on policy, institutional framework, and practice in Nepal. He first presented on ECD trends in the country. The Government of Nepal takes ECD as a foundation for education and sustainable development. It takes on a multi-sectoral and inclusive approach in engaging different stakeholders. Significant achievements have been made by the country in social sector investments and progress. The Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) in early childhood education jumped six-fold from 2001 to 2016. There are almost a million of students in ECD centres and pre-primary classes. The Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) in Nepal is 64.4% in 2014 with higher rates among females, in urban areas, and children whose mothers are educated. Nepal has operationalized SDGs through the creation of a 3-tier institutional framework and integration of the goals within national plan.

Nepal has progressed in the area of policy and institutional framework. For example, with the Constitution of Nepal; Education Act; School Health and Nutrition Strategy. The ECD strategy 2004-2015 is intended to create child-friendly learning environment to enable every child to develop their optimum potential through well managed services by the schools and communities. ECD in Nepal is a multi-sectoral involvement with the National Planning Commission and five relevant ministries. The ECD Caucus has been instrumental in their advocacy to

include ECD within the constitution. He also presented various achievements in the areas of health; water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection, and social protection (including child grant schemes). He shared information about resource allocation towards ECD, including five times increase in the education sector budget in 10 years. However, the current level of financing falls short with significant share towards the salary of facilitators but remain minimal on capacity building and quality improvement aspects.

Key challenges include the identification of ECD centers and mapping; facilitators enhancement; adoption of ECD pedagogy; and limited capacity of local government officials; access (inclusion of children and parental awareness); quality (capacity of facilitators); and management (vertical and horizontal coordination).

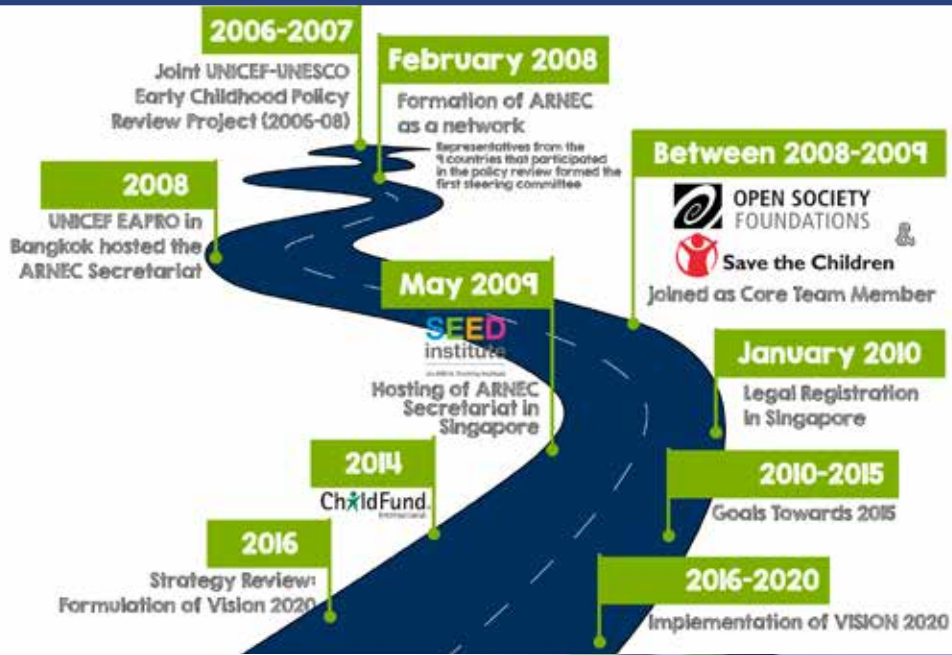
Overall, progress has been made in Nepal but not uniformed across different regions in the country. ECD services appear to be sustainable with constitutional provision and strong political commitment. There is also strong parliamentary oversight through the ECD Caucus. In the future, coordination can be further strengthened with further institutionalization of multi-sectoral plans.



Delegates attending the key note address

ARNEC's journey: An invitation to ARNEC's 10th year anniversary exhibit

Vision 2020



ARNEC is the largest and fastest growing network for ECD in the Asia-Pacific Region since its creation in 2008 emerging from the joint UNICEF-UNESCO Early childhood Policy Review Project (2006-2008). In 2010, the ARNEC's office transitioned from Bangkok to Singapore. Dr. Meyers recognized the cross-sectoral nature of ARNEC's membership, including paediatricians, nutritionists, social protection, etc. with the involvement of various stakeholders, ranging from governments, NGOs, bilateral institutions, and academia. The strategic partners and core team of ARNEC include UNICEF, UNESCO, Open Society Foundation, Plan International, Save the Children, and ChildFund International. It now comprises of over 2,000 individual members. ARNEC focuses on policy advocacy and generates documentation of innovative ECD practices. It is currently driven by its Vision 2020 to advance ECD with four strategic goals.

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Cliff Meyers

ARNEC Board of Directors

Ms. Marilyn Manuel

ARNEC Steering Committee Member



Four Strategic Goals



Strategic Goal 1:
Improve advocacy for holistic and inclusive ECD



Strategic Goal 2:
Increase knowledge base on ECD



Strategic Goal 3:
Increase strategic partnerships and memberships



Strategic Goal 4:
Strengthen ARNEC's reach and impact at the country level

Sub-theme 1: Presentation on health and nutrition

CHAIR:

Dr. Christine Chen
ARNEC Board of Director

SPEAKER:

Dr. Jena Derakhshani Hamadani
Scientist, Maternal and Child Health Division, Iccdr, b



Multidisciplinary approach is needed to address health, nutrition, and ECD in the region and globally as development is multifactorial. ECD is relevant to several of the SDGs, including goal 1 eradicate poverty; 2 end hunger and improve nutrition; 3 ensure healthy lives; 4 lifelong learning; 6 clean water and sanitation; 8 decent work for all; 10 reduce inequality within and among countries; 16 promote peaceful societies.

Children's development requires nurturing care, particularly since 43% of children below five are not reaching their developmental potential. It is important to attend to vulnerable populations given what we know about sensitive periods from conception to age 2. Disadvantaged children are less sensitive to contextual improvement after two years. Dr. Hamadani shared the ECD Action Network (ECDAN)'s G20 background document which has identified key health and nutrition aspects to attend to.

She shared evidence in Bangladesh on conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes, maternal mental health interventions, ECD or violence prevention, handwashing and nutritional interventions. Evidence in Pakistan were also shared. Overall, it is evident that responsive stimulation and enhanced nutrition interventions produce significant improvement in children's development than on nutrition intervention alone. However, there remains mixed evidence on CCTs, violence prevention, maternal depression, Health-Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). There needs to be further evidence generation on humanitarian interventions. Challenges remain given the limitation in evidence, lack of political will and policies, lack of funds and public awareness.

There are opportunities to engage in the following: policies, government sector collaboration and programmes (including the use of media in building awareness among parents and community; identification of local champions), research and advocacy (including validity of measurement tools adapted to regional contexts).



Sub-theme 2: Presentation on responsive caregiving

CHAIR:

Dr. Christine Chen
ARNEC Board of Director

SPEAKER:

Dr. Vibha Krishnamurthy,
MD, Founder, Executive Director Ummeed
Child Development Center, India

Dr. Krishnamurthy provided an overview on the importance to focus on responsive caregiving, particularly towards disadvantaged groups, and outlined how responsive caregiving can be integrated into ECD programmes. She also offered scaling up lessons from India and Pakistan and provided a roadmap for the future.

The brain requires input or stimulation to develop (experience-expectant). Responsive mothers tend to have children with richer vocabularies. Two-way interactions are critical to responsive caregiving and comprise of several components: being sensitive and understanding that the child is an individual; observing child for cues and interpreting; being responsive to children's cues by being prompt, consistent, warm and positive, contingent. Plasticity

is maximum in the early years so early interventions are more effective than later.

She shared lessons from two countries: the Pakistan ECD Scale Up (PEDS) to enrich programmes through local adaptations of the Care for Child Development (CCD) and the India Ummeed ECD and Disability (ECDD) Programmes. Several components are integral to the Ummeed programme, including active coaching, continuous monitoring and feedback, utilization of adult learning principles, training and supervision. She emphasized the importance of contextualized and culturally appropriate ways of responsive caregiving

Exhibit launch and poster presentation

Poster exhibit on ARNEC's 10-year anniversary



List of poster presentations and presenters

"Nature Based Learning Projects to Support Toddlers' Eco-Literacy and Eco-Intelligence"

by **Ms. Priya Subasinghe**, Early Childhood practitioner, Manukau Institute of Technology Childcare Centre, New Zealand.

"Parenting for Well Being and Peace - Lessons Learnt from A Collaborative Intervention Model for Schools and Families"

by **Dr. Namita Bhatt**, Assistant professor, Department of Human Development Family Studies, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India.

"A First Year of Reading: Books from Birth"

by **Ms. Mary Ann Hood**, lecturer, Yew Chung Community College, Hong Kong SAR, China

"Gender-Responsive Early Learning: Towards Equal Support for Girls' and Boys' Holistic Development in Mountainous Areas in Vietnam"

by **Ms. Ly Tran Thi Kim**, Education advisor, VVOB Vietnam, Viet Nam

"Implementing A Play Based ECD model in the Government Schools in Uganda"

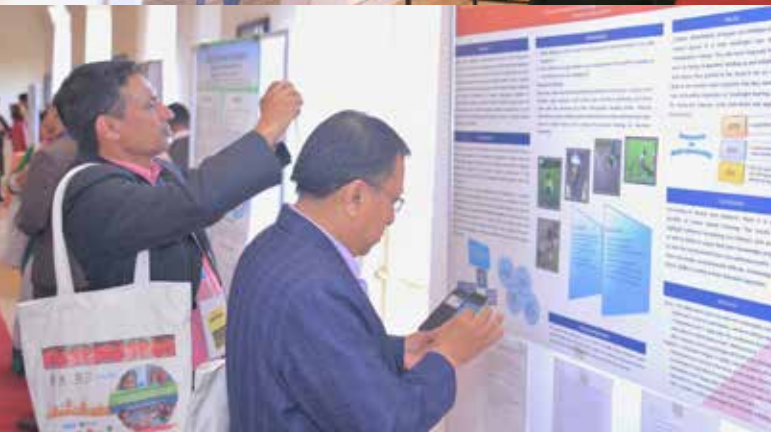
by **Ms. Rafiath Rashid**, Head of Early Childhood Development and Girls' Education, BRAC International, Bangladesh

"Maternal, New-born and Child Health, and Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Rural and Hard to reach areas of Bangladesh"

by **Dr. Abu Syem Md Shahin**, Health Programme Specialist, Plan International, Bangladesh

"Early Childhood Education Trauma Informed Practice"

by **Ms. Kathleen Price**, Instructor, Delta Early Childhood Diploma Programme, Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, Canada



Thematic panel discussion: Health and nutrition

MODERATOR:

Ms. Sara Dang

Save the Children;
ARNEC Steering Committee Member



SPEAKER:

Dr. Harriet Torlesse

Regional Advisor on Nutrition, UNICEF ROSA

Dr. Torlesse presented a new UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA) report on 'Stunting, Hidden Hunger and Human Capital in South Asia'. The report looks at connections between stunting and hidden hunger (Vitamin A, iodine, iron) and its importance for human capital. This focus has relevance to the SDG 2 target 2.2 to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. South Asia is home to 40% of the world's stunted children, numbering 60 million. It is also home to 37% of anaemic women globally at 227 million. Overall across the region, stunting rates are decreasing but inequities persist. Bangladesh is the only country in the region on target to reduce stunting. Nutritional deficiencies have negative impact on brain development. For instance, iodine deficiency in infancy and pregnancy lowers cognitive development by 10%. The cost to nations is significant: Lack of vitamin A will cost a lost to 1% GDP; lack of iron will bring about 4% cognitive impairment costing; lack of iodine leads to a 10% fall in IQ. However, for every dollar invested to prevent stunting, it will yield an \$18 return. In South Asia, there are three main drivers of stunting and hidden hunger, including poor nutritional status of adolescent girls and women, both before and during pregnancy; poor diets of children in the first two years of life; and poor sanitation and hygiene. Coordinated multi sectoral approaches from before birth for young women to the first 1,000 days and universalization of programmes for all women and children are needed to address those drivers.

SPEAKER:

Ms. Karma Dyenka

Education Programme Manager,
Save the Children Bhutan

Save the Children Bhutan is working closely with the Ministry of Health to provide early stimulation to children. The aims are to help improve the cognitive development of children affected by stunting and capitalize on strengths of the Ministry to reach communities in remote parts of the country. Interventions include: early stimulation for children 0-3 years, Early Literacy and Math (ELM) at home for children 3-5 years; Care for Child Development (C4CD) Plus pilot with an added early stimulation component. Additionally, health workers are trained to use the developmental milestones screening booklet to identify delays. Piloting of these interventions have been conducted for children in the age groups of 0-3 and 3-5 years. Maximum gains in literacy and numeracy have been discovered for children 3-5 years whose parents have attended the C4CD Plus programme.

SPEAKER:

Mr. Aaron Merchen

Senior Associate for Global Policy and Advocacy, RESULTS

His presentation focused on the role of advocacy on nutrition and World Bank's ECD investments in the Asia-Pacific region. RESULTS is an organisation centred on poverty-alleviation policies. It conducted a study on ECD investments from 2012 and discovered that in 2017 World Bank has a total investment of \$3.3 billion. In that regard, investment towards ECD should be growing along the same rate, especially with the President of the World Bank declaring that ECD is a priority of the institution. Nutrition is part of 34 of 43 of the World Bank programmes in the Asia-Pacific region between 2012 and 2018; these programmes could be used as a doorway for increased investment. Overall, investment towards nutrition in the Asia-Pacific region has seen an increase. However, it is largely spread across three countries. Mr. Merchen concluded with suggestions to influence World Bank's investment, including demonstrating demand, building networks of influence, and push for transparency

SPEAKER:

Mr. Som Bahadur Syangtan

Programme Manager, Education, Tuki Association Sunkoshi,
Sindhupalchok – a local NGO in Nepal

Mr. Syangtan introduced the audience to an early stimulation package comprising of 9 sessions of 36 games aimed at children from birth through to under three. The programme is delivered by female community health volunteers at 1.5 to 2 hours sessions every month to parents. There are quarterly meetings for the Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) to conduct these home visits. Coordination is a central component of this programme. For example, with the SUA AHARA health and nutrition programme. Early stimulation is done jointly with district health and community organisations as well as focal person from municipalities. This programme is innovative and utilizes a no-cost approach with inclusion of father in parenting. At the end of the programme, parents can assess progress and strengths of their children's development as children get ready for schooling. A key challenge of the programme is to observe behavior change in a short duration.

Key panel discussion points

- Importance of building accountability for cross-sectoral action in ECD through focus on data, resources, and targets. Citizen and sub-national levels accountability are also key to monitor efforts and keep donors accountable;
- Incorporation of early stimulation into health/ nutrition efforts does not bring burden to health workers as parents trust these services and are happy with the results. Health volunteers who do joint monitoring visits also are incentivized when they see positive results.



Thematic panel discussion: Responsive caregiving

MODERATOR:

Mr. Sven Coppens

Plan International;
ARNEC Steering Committee Member



SPEAKER:

Dr. Dipu Shakya

Education Specialist, ECD, UNICEF Nepal

Dr. Shakya's presentation was on strengthening knowledge and skills of parents through parental education. UNICEF and the Department of Education (DOE) in collaboration with SetoGurans have developed an illustrated package for a multi-sectoral parental education that aims to improve Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice (KAP) of caregivers for children aged 0 and 5. The package consists of 33 sessions with messages covering multiple sectors. Supported by mentors, 20 sessions are delivered via a participatory modality with 4 mandatory sessions and 16 sessions selected by participants. There is a cost of \$20 at \$1 per session per facilitator. There has been a high participation (73.4% of caregivers attended 11 to 20 sessions) from the piloting efforts in 5 districts through 500 centres targeting 10,000 caregivers. Parental education is found to be a major source of information at 93.6% in informing parents' attitudes and behaviour. Dr. Shakya shared lessons learned, including packages that should be made more participatory, integrated with other services, and moved away from project-based approach.

SPEAKER:

Ms. Silvia Devina

WASH & ECD Advisor, Plan International, Indonesia

Ms. Devina presented BKB-HI which is an integrative holistic community development programme. It integrates Early Childhood Education (ECE) with Health and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), nutrition, as well as components of home parenting - protection and safe environment. This is conducted in collaboration with the National Planning in Indonesia within all 34 provinces. There are monthly topics conducted in separate mothers' and fathers' classes (formed separately to encourage open discussions; more flexibility needed in engaging fathers given their busy work schedules and some hesitancy in involvement). Meetings are generally interactive and participatory with relevant tools and materials. The cost is around \$200 per group package. Since 2010, BKB-HI has been funded by the Australian government benefitting 12,500 caregivers. It has since been scaled up by the government through the National Planning Agency and is well received with local government support via national advocacy. Involvement of village heads and community leaders are integral in this programme, particularly relevant in the country context where 27% of Indonesia children are stunted.

SPEAKER:

Dr. Mdm. Vu Thi Kim Hoa

Deputy General Director, Children Affairs Department, Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Viet Nam
(supported by Dr. Friday Nwaigwe, Chief of Child Survival and Development Programme, UNICEF Viet Nam)

Dr. Nwaigwe presented on the Viet Nam National ECD scheme 2018-2025. Vietnam is the first country in Asia (and second in the world) to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Children. The country has a 98% coverage on ECE for children at 5 years. The government is now prioritizing comprehensive ECD given the opportunity and return on investments on cognitive capital. He presented the guiding principles in the National ECD Scheme: child rights; life cycle approach; equity; and linkages with SDGs. He reiterated the importance of multisectoral engagement, as

SPEAKER:

Ms. Le Thi Bich Hanh

ECCD Manager, Plan International Vietnam

Ms. Hanh provided an overview on issues of parenting in Vietnam. Parents have limited ECCD knowledge, skills, and involvement. Additionally, children below three have limited ECCD access. The project is formulated at a basis that parenting could be a potentially powerful factor in mitigating risks of poverty. Parenting education package are developed to target children aged 0 to 8 years. There is also a parent group component where children under 3 are led by parents and community volunteers. The project takes on a multi-disciplinary approach and incorporates indigenous or local knowledge and behaviour change aspects, as well as engages multi-sectoral stakeholders. Scalability is considered in the project as it partners with Vietnam Women in scaling up the parenting education modality within 45 provinces. Specific aspects have been taken into consideration as it scales, including providing responsive support to local needs, extending culturally appropriate services, keeping costs low with operation model, and partnering with the Women's Union to mainstream the project into existing system.

SPEAKER:

Ms. Jessica Staines

Director of Koori Curriculum, Australia

The practice of separating Aboriginals has been in place in Australia until 1969 which results in intergenerational trauma with high rates of crime, violence, drugs and substance abuse, and mental illness. The Australian Prime Minister released the 'Closing the Gap' report in 2018 to address the issues as gap continues to widen between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. Aboriginal children are more likely to end up in jail. There have been joint efforts in providing holistic delivery of services. However, much more needs to be done given the low-take up of ECD services among aboriginals as indigenous populations still tend to have the belief that early learning services are not culturally safe. An organisation called 'Reconciliation Australia' was formed to engage business organisations in providing early learning services to aboriginal children. Aboriginal playgroup that consults community elders have also been set up. There are inexpensive ways to bridge the gap, for instance, through play, via utilization of recycled play materials, and modelling responsive caregiving practices

well as leadership accountability at national, provincial, and district levels. This is a nation-wide scheme with priority towards localities of low socio-economic. He shared the drivers of change, including holistic parenting; reducing maternal and newborn mortality; eliminating stunting; clean environment and good hygiene; and early stimulation and learning. In particular, there is much opportunity in using ECD to strengthen social cohesion and peacebuilding in the context of Vietnam.

Key panel discussion points

Government's ownership is essential. In the scale up efforts, it needs to be government led. There has been progress as government moves away from working in silos towards a holistic approach. From the discussion, some lessons shared in government-led scale up includes: the importance of operationalizing legal instruments and high-level coordination mechanism; engaging officials from different ministries

to plan together via an integrated process; strong evidence generation linked to local academics. Implementation works when there is coordinated efforts both ways: trickling down to the communities, as well as upward tracking mechanism and communication on activities conducted at the ground village levels.

Day 2 (June 6 2018)

- 22** Keynote address
- 23** Short presentation on China's poverty alleviation and ECD:
From pilot to policy
- 23** Introductory remarks on the Nurturing Care Framework
for Early Childhood Development: A framework for helping
children survive and thrive to transform health and human
potential
- 23** Presentation of the Nurturing Care Framework for Early
Childhood Development: A framework for helping children
survive and thrive to transform health and human potential
- 24** Sub-theme 3: Presentation on early learning
- 26** Private sector innovation and partnerships in ECD
- 28** Concurrent paper presentations 1
- 29** Concurrent paper presentations 2
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Keynote Address

“ The case articulating the importance of ECD has never been clearer with ample neuroscience and economic evidence. There is a need to move from ‘basecamp’ to higher elevations of ‘how’, especially in achieving outcomes and delivery through political commitment ”

CHAIR:

Dr. Margaret Sims

ARNEC Steering Committee Member

SPEAKER:

Dr. Pia Britto

Chief and Senior Advisor,
Early Childhood Development,
UNICEF, New York



Dr. Britto presented global trends on ECD and emphasized the importance of building political commitment. The case articulating the importance of ECD has never been clearer with ample neuroscience and economic evidence. There is a need to move from ‘basecamp’ to higher elevations of ‘how’, especially in achieving outcomes and delivery through political commitment. She presented the current situation of children under age 5: 43% of children are at risk of not achieving their development potential; 75 million children are in areas affected by conflict, exposed to toxic stress, potentially inhibiting brain

cell connections; 300 million children live in areas with toxic air, which can damage developing brains; and 155 million children are stunted.

Dr. Britto shared six call-to-action points which have been endorsed by multiple parties, including the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN), Every Woman Every Child (EWEC), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Global Partnership, UNICEF, World Bank, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The six call-to-action points are:

- 1. Increase investment urgently:** Presently, there are less than 1% of health funding towards interventions to reduce stunting and wasting; less than 2.9% of education funding towards pre-primary; there is an opportunity to tap on traditional and innovative sources of funding. For example, payroll tax, lottery funding, social impact bonds or SIBs;
- 2. Expand services building on systems of delivery;**
- 3. Make family friendly policies a priority,** in formal and informal sectors;
- 4. Collect national data on ECD indicators,** particularly SDGs target 2 on goals 2, 3, 4 pre-primary education, 16 end abuse;
- 5. Provide dedicated leadership to show us the vision forward given the multi-sectoral nature of ECD;**
- 6. Demand driving is key.** Parents and caregivers are natural advocates who can keep the momentum alive. They are the single most important factor in giving children the best possible start in life.

There is no better time than now to capture this political commitment opportunity. For the first time, ECD is included as a key focus on the G20 Argentina 2018. 20 most powerful head of states are on this global platform and there is an opportunity to fuel this political commitment. Audience also had a chance to share their thoughts on the question of ‘What will you do to move your government partner to do a bit more? And which new

partner will you engage in ECD?’. Countries have pledged to further leverage local media, agreed that political commitment from the highest level is critical, acknowledged the importance of evidence in scaling up, strived to focus on improving data collection, and committed to complete strategic plans and to put forward frameworks to increase investment.

Short presentation on China's poverty alleviation and ECD: From pilot to policy



SPEAKER:
Mr. Zhixin Du
China Development
Research Foundation (CDRF)

Mr. Du's presentation is titled 'For a poverty-free future: Child development and ending extreme and intergenerational poverty in China'. He shared China's aspiration to end poverty by 2020 given the wide urban-rural gap in child development. He shared numerous education and nutrition programmes. For example, the local governments are prioritizing universal preschool education in rural areas. The China REACH home visiting programme are targeted to improve parenting skills. Additionally, he shared the school nutrition improvement initiative as an example of successful experiment to policy. The Yingyangbao nutrition sachet pilot has been scaled up to national policy. There has also been promotion of breastfeeding in China given low rates of breastfeeding as well as promotion of e-learning to rural schools.

Introductory remarks on the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development: A framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential



SPEAKER:
Dr. Md Khurshid Alam Hyder
Public Health Administrator,
World Health Organization, Nepal

Based on current estimates in South Asia, there are 70 million children under five at risk of missing developmental potential due to stunting and stimulation. The need to invest in ECD is immense. Based on the Lancet publication, the ECD agenda is important.

He shared the four vital pillars of: investment to start early; families and communities must be at the center; health sector and multi sector involvement. The Framework has been developed by WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, with support of partnership from Maternal Neonatal Child Health, and Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN). Over 1,000 individuals in 111 countries have been engaged in the consultation for this framework from conception to children age 3. The Ministries of Health were fully engaged in this effort. Member States have provided strong support of the framework at the WHO Assembly in Geneva. Simultaneously at the Assembly, the WHO work programme 2019-2030 has been endorsed with 1 billion people benefitting from universal health coverage and enjoying better health. Key to the framework is how it can be tailored to local situations, as well as partnership in a unified way towards a common goal and movement of nurturing care.

Presentation of the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development: A framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential



SPEAKER:
Dr. Pia Britto
Chief and Senior Advisor,
Early Childhood Development,
UNICEF, New York

The Framework is useful as a narrative to understand multisector collaboration (partnerships between different agencies and individuals) towards child's outcomes. It surfaces what a child needs from different sector through the identification of optimal elements essential for a child's development. It has a beginning from the ECD Lancet series 2016, which identified key messages that the most formative experience of young children comes from nurturing care. The experiences of young children are culmination of many elements, including nurturing care, life course development, role of policies, information and services.

The framework is a roadmap for action and stresses the importance of starting in the earliest years by offering the indivisible five components of nurturing care. There is a degree of complexity to this with some of the components which are center- or platform-based while some are parked at home. It offers a life-course approach, identifying many enabling environment and levels of support for nurturing care: policies; services; communities; caregivers. The role of communities as mediators of services to families is recognized. Of all the elements, the areas that need the most attention would be on responsive care (e.g. via CCD), and opportunities for early learning as well as parental mental health as these are the least developed areas and not yet at scale.

Dr. Britto shared five guiding principles: child's rights to survive and thrive; leave no child behind; a whole of society approach; family-centered care; whole of government action. She also shared the five strategic actions of: lead and invest; focus on families; strengthen services (including workforce development); monitor progress; data and innovation (including local research).

The Framework provides a narrative for co-ownership to build core ingredients for the child's development. It is essential that all sectors and stakeholders work together in national and global milestones.

Sub-theme 3: Presentation on early learning

CHAIR:

Ms. Urmila Sarkar

Regional Education Advisor,
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)

Introductory presentation

The early learning framework serves to strengthen pre-primary sub sector. It has flexibility and provides key entry point to work with other sectors. The key elements of pre-primary sub-sector conceptual framework comprise of: four enabling environment and five action areas (curriculum, teachers, families and communities, planning and resource allocation, quality assurance). This is much needed as less than 10% of government expenditure goes towards education.

The framework provides a systematic approach to effective pre-primary planning and management of resources. The diagnostic and planning tool complement the principles for application of the framework. It offers a way of connecting across action areas and translating to sub-sector levels. Ms. Didi emphasized that a strong pre-primary sub sector is as strong as its district or local level structures and shared the sub-sector building principles of: equity, efficiency, coordination, responsiveness.

Overall, multisectoral coordination, ministerial leadership are critical, in extension of a wide stakeholder base. Key to success in strengthening the pre-primary sub-sector is to translate financing, policies, and quality towards action on the ground. We need to also recognize the importance of contextualization and within the framework, there has been identification of different typologies of country contexts related to progress towards pre-primary education



SPEAKER:

Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi

Education Specialist and ECD Focal Point,
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)

Presentation from the region/ countries:

Mapping of early learning interventions in South Asia (collaboration between UNICEF ROSA and ARNEC)



SPEAKER:

Dr. Emma Pearson

Senior Lecturer,
Bishop Grosseteste University,
United Kingdom

Dr. Pearson shared her initial findings on the mapping. In her presentation, she shared the purpose and methodology of mapping study; key characteristics of pre-primary provision in South Asia; brief snapshot of progress and findings; and insights into importance of multi-sectoral approaches. A key limitation of this regional overview mapping is in regional oversimplification in the reduction of complexities.

There are massive diversity and differences in the region. Pre-primary enrolment rates in the region range from close to 0% to 100%. The region has among the largest and smallest education systems in the world. She shared the mapping methodology of desk review (of over 150 documents) and online survey with 24 key informants to understand current status on enabling environment and action areas. The survey comprised of 80 item-questionnaire with the answer options of: not established; partially; established; don't know.

Participants defined pre-primary in different terms, such as ECD, ECCD, ECED etc. Participants also identified some of the key characteristics and strength of pre-primary provision, including support by networks of ECD and community development NGOs, as well as identification of countless noteworthy practices – for example, Bhutan and Bangladesh shared practices of innovations in financing; Nepal and Sri Lanka practices on peacebuilding initiatives.

The mapping reveals a strong awareness on the importance of pre-primary education; policy for free universal pre-primary education in country; implementation of pre-primary policies supported at ministry-level by team of committed staff with strong knowledge of ECE. Pre-primary is included in the education sector plans for most countries. However, participants understanding of what constitutes quality is still rather limited and have identified barriers and bottlenecks in planning; finance and investment; multi sectoral; coordination.

The mapping also identified action areas on curriculum, standards and monitoring, and the core functions of teachers and personnel. The study revealed that training of ECD facilitators or teachers is widespread but limited to individual initiatives and not part of formalized career pathways. There are interests and substantial activity on pre-primary education across a wide range of stakeholder groups. However, there is the need for leadership's commitment in strategic planning to support synchronized multi sectoral approach to effective implementation of policies and curriculum to avoid overlap.

Moving forward, there is a further need to utilize the multi-sectoral approach to ECD, through strong awareness, will, and commitment; substantial expertise and activity to address key issue. Development of a sustainable, cost effective model for implementing ECD within resources available would be a valuable endeavor.

Promoting evidence-based, accelerated school readiness at scale in Lao PDR: Experiences from Plan International's LEARN Project



SPEAKER:
Mr. Sven Coppens

Plan International;
ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Mr. Coppens presentation title is on 'Can accelerated programmes help bridge the gap for disadvantaged children?'. His presentation drew relevant lessons from Lao PDR's experience in accelerated school readiness programming to inform efforts in bridging gap for disadvantaged children in Asia and the Pacific. There is an equity imperative in SDG4 with the equity gap in school readiness service provision as 30% of children are not reached by formal school readiness provision. Only 4.76% of overall education budget goes towards pre-primary.

The LEARN Project, funded by Dubai Cares, is a partnership between Save the Children and Plan International to focus on the role of accelerated interventions. It has seen an increase from 60% to 80% increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for five-year-old in school readiness.

The project works with the Ministry of Education and Sports to strengthen impact. There is also a parenting education component that reinforces children's learning and school readiness competencies. It utilizes global tools to measure accelerated impact to ensure comparability to learnings. The project looks into lessons for adaptation and scale up, including the benefit of teacher familiarity with children since pre-primary through their transition to primary schooling. This multi-partnership project is one of several models of scale up to reach disadvantaged children, including Turkey ACEV, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Kiribati.

Experiences of Myanmar in implementing the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS)



SPEAKER:
Dr. Naing Naing Maw

Proferts Head Department of
Education Psychology (*supporting*
Dr. Aye Aye Myint, Rector,
Yangon University of Education)

The EAP-ECDS questionnaire consists of different domains in cognitive development, socio-emotional development, etc. The survey findings identified that older children had higher scores than younger children and girls tend to perform better than boys. There are variations in overall development of children with differences among children in urban (with higher scores than rural children in most domains), rural and Yangon satellite areas. Preschool attendance seems to benefit the most disadvantaged children. Ethnic minority children show better development when they receive instructions in the minority language. Some key challenges from the EAP-ECDS implementation are the language barriers in some cases between the assessors and child, as well the difficulties in rapport building with children.



Private sector innovation and partnerships in ECD

CHAIR:

Dr. Cilff Meyers

ARNEC Board of Director

Dr Meyers presented a global overview of public-private-partnerships (PPP) on early childhood. A high percentage of pre-primary children are enrolled in the private sector in South Asia (e.g. India 75%). He introduced participants to two great relevant resources by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Brookings Institution. The resource shared a framework for private engagement in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The characteristics of PPP on early childhood include flexible, transparent, increased competition, and focus on results with potential benefits or challenges, i.e. may increase disparities, depending on policy levers. There are different types of PPP, including ECE service delivery, non-state management, voucher initiatives, professional support services, infrastructure services, philanthropy. Inequity of access and low inconsistent quality of ECE services are primary issues facing the sector.



SPEAKER:

Mr. Abhishek Gopalka

Partner and Director, Social Impact and Public Sector, Boston Consulting Group, India

He presented technology-driven transformation of ECE in Rajasthan. BCG has a social impact practice on initiatives to empower governments. A key initiative is in leveraging digital tools for holistic ECD transformation in Rajasthan via two key ECD components: ECE and nutrition.

1) ECE 'Sakhi' mobile app to enable 10k instructors to deliver high-quality ECE. Staff regularly visits the Anganwadi centers (government childcare centers) to ensure alignment of input, outputs, and outcomes.

2) Nutrition app-based validation and triage of growth monitoring of all 0-3 children.

A key challenge for transforming ECE is the capacity building and motivation of 60k Anganwadi workers. Anganwadi workers generally lack the skills and motivation to perform job given their low educational qualification. The initiative utilizes technology to up-skill and engage Anganwadi workers with three key design principles: simplify, demonstrate, engage. 'Sakhi' is a mobile app to provide ongoing job support and nudge positive behaviour. It provides step-by-step and calendarized journey in videos to demonstrate to the worker in an engaging comprehensive manner that is contextualized to the Rajasthan context. The app used four key levers to drive engagement among Anganwadi workers: competition, celebration, cues, and curiosity.

The pilot has been conducted in rural and urban areas with 82% workers who visit the app daily and 71% reported completing at least 2 ECE tasks out of 3. Three trends were discovered: the app makes the job of Anganwadi workers easier, the videos have high impact, and gamification is changing. A third-party assessment identified that workers are spending more time on ECE with 64% increase in ECE time. There is a government-led scale up plan to ramp-up this initiative across 20,000 Anganwadis in 2018.

SPEAKER:

Mr. Mashook Mujib Chowdhury

Deputy Manager, Sustainability department, DBL Group, Bangladesh

In the DBL Group, 62.6% of staff continued jobs after returning from maternity leave in 2016-17. The company offers different programmes focused on the first 1,000 days in partnership with UNICEF Bangladesh on its Mothers@Work programme. Pregnant mothers are trained based on principles, including seven minimum standards for maternity protection and breastfeeding programme. The Mothers@Work programme is guided by multiple institutions, supported by UNICEF, ILO Better Work, and civil society organisations. Some of its innovative aspects include new-born gift hampers, Mothers@Work kits, breastfeeding corner for its worker's children in community, community knowledge exchange programme (including community knowledge exchange programme). It also offers

SPEAKER:

Dr. Maggie Koong

Immediate Past World President of World Organisation of Early Childhood Education (OMEPE); ARNEC Steering Committee Member

She provided an overview on government and private sectors cooperation trends in East Asia. There is a high enrolment rate for pre-primary education in East Asia with 108% in Hong Kong as some children are enrolled in double shifts education. Public spending on ECE is important in the guarantee for equity. More children are now enrolled in private pre-primary schools than in public kindergartens.

In China, there has been an increase enrolment rate for kindergartens though it remains the weakest area in education system. The country strives to universalize early child education by 2020. ECE is currently receiving 4% of education budget. There are two types of preschools, including the state-run preschools and Minban (non-governmental sectors or individuals run) preschools which are receiving strong support. The government is encouraging more non-profit making Minban preschools paired with stringent mechanisms for quality assurance. In Hong Kong, there would be 80% of Minban preschools by 2020. The government is incentivizing enrolment through re-primary kindergarten voucher scheme.



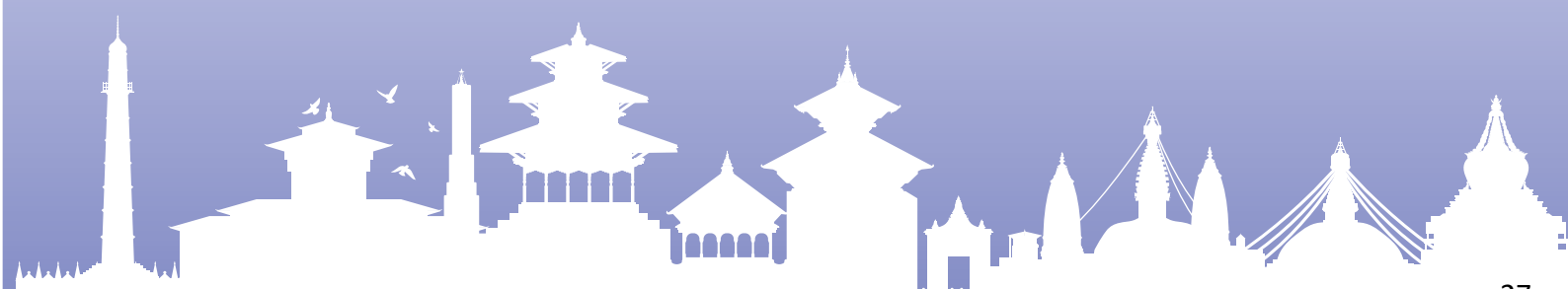
daycare centers incorporating aspects of early stimulation and play-based learning. There are challenges to the expansion of the programme in addressing community children age 3-8, public-private partnerships, community ECD centres for 3-5 years; and community day cares for children aged 0-3. Overall, the programme benefits workers and has been effective in attracting new and potential workers.

SPEAKER:

Ms. Kinnari Pandya

Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University, India
(representing Azim Premji Foundation)

The Azim Premji Foundation was established in 2001 and is funded by corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative with two operating units, including field institutions and Azim Premji University. It engages across the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) eco-system to transform Aanganwadi centres into learning centres. The Sangareddy ECE initiative reaches out to different layers of stakeholders. The initiative strengthens ECE provided by ICDS. Some of the impact shown includes: significant changes in quality preschool programme, including sense of ownership among teachers about the preschool programme; and children's performance on developmental assessment. The Foundation also advocates for policy and curricula reforms. Some of the key learnings are: preschool teachers require knowledge of developmentally appropriate curriculum and pedagogy to offer quality preschool programme; consistent and quality in-service capacity development is critical in strengthening the whole ECD eco-system.



Concurrent paper presentations 1

MODERATOR:

Ms. Melissa Kelly

Director, Child Development and Protection,
ChildFund International; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Strengthening parenting knowledge and skills in marginalized communities of Nepal

SPEAKER:
Dr. Dipu Shakya
UNICEF Nepal

Dr. Shakya shared a study that looked at the effect of parental education in fostering and supporting children's development. The primary objective of the study is to understand how a parenting package (designed by UNICEF, Department of Education, and NGO SetoGurans) contributed to improvement in parenting skills to support development of children between 0 and 5 years. The package consists of over 33 sessions with information on child development, nutrition, safety and protection, health and hygiene, stimulation and learning. It is delivered in 5 districts through 500 ECD centers targeting 10,000 caregivers. Participation rate is rather high with 74% of caregivers who attended 11-20 sessions. The findings revealed positive impact, including increases in the use of mosquito nets and number of postpartum visits by mothers; positive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) indicators among adults with increase in handwashing after toilet visits and before food preparation. However, the study also revealed negative results, including negative nutrition indicators given limited availability of food due to extreme weather conditions; negative safety and protection indicators due to deep social norms; weak stimulation and learning indicators with low participation among men.

Child rights commitments as a way to ensure the safety and protection of children

SPEAKER:
Dr. Kausar Waqar
Aga Khan University, Pakistan



The presentation shared a paper that explored child development issues during flooding, a common natural disaster in the Punjab province of Pakistan, where disadvantages are especially prevalent to children. Findings from the paper highlighted community perceptions, responses to children during floods, and rehabilitation and mitigation efforts. The community has the perception that children are not affected by disasters, thereby driving the need for child protection efforts. Furthermore, there is a gender and social norms with a preference towards young and healthy females resulting in child marriages, early pregnancies, short intervals between pregnancies, and unsafe labor delivery practices. During floods, it was discovered that children experienced neglect in their psychological needs. Alarmingly, children with special needs were sometimes left behind to drown. Overall, the rehabilitation and mitigation efforts were not driven nor guided by rights-based framework; they were haphazard, not very well coordinated, and mostly NGO-agenda driven. Dr. Waqar shared recommendations which include: the use of SDGs to develop a framework for achieving the goal of protecting all children; development of psychological first aid, support, and capacity of various village support organisations; conducting awareness raising campaigns as well as mock drills.

First Read Southern Thailand: Tackling inequality by strengthening home and community-based approaches

SPEAKER:
Ms. Kate Mcdermott
Save the Children, Thailand
Dr. Kessaree Ladlia
Yala Rajabhat University



The project started in 2016 with an objective to strengthen emergent literacy, learning and development for ethnic minority children aged 3 to 6 through improved parenting practice and access to quality, age-appropriate reading materials in local languages. In the deep South of Thailand, the population is poor with 80% Muslims and uses mother tongue. The project targeted 500 families to improve parenting practice with reading materials in local language. Participants were divided into 2 groups with one consisting of all males for the session and the other comprised of mixed gender. There was only 1 male participant who completed the mixed gender sessions, whereas there were 23 male graduates from session with male trainers from the community. An end line data collection was conducted in January 2018. Overall, positive changes were observed in all domains and International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) scores. Some of the outcomes shared by families include: positive difference in children observed which proved to be a great motivator; more time spent with children thereby stronger bond built; increase in the use of mother tongue books.

How biweekly home visit changes the development of children aged 0-3: Evidence from China

SPEAKER:
Ms. Ming Liu
Save the Children
International, China

The presentation showcased a bi-weekly home visit intervention to stimulate child development in China. The objective of the 2-year project was to reach out to rural children aged 0-3 years in Hebei and Yunnan through bi-weekly home visits at county, township, and village levels by family planning staff or ECCD workers. The workers shared with parents a toolkit and demonstrated ways to utilize it to stimulate child development with the hopes to improve children's health, motor, language, cognitive and socio-emotional domains. The ECCD workers were provided 2 trainings and monthly sharing. Monitoring took place in the form of onsite supervision and phone calls to caregivers to ensure that these visits took place. The findings revealed that home visits had a delivery rate of 76% with statistically significant changes in caregivers' awareness, knowledge skills, and behavior. Caregivers also yelled and spanked less following these home visits. Recommendations provided include: improving content to focus on children's socio-emotional development and emphasis on responsive care, as well as child protection and safety; and providing coaching for ECCD workers.

Concurrent paper presentations 2

MODERATOR:

Mr. Filip Lenaerts

VVOB Vietnam & ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Every Newborn – Simplified measurement integrating longitudinal neurodevelopment and growth

SPEAKER:
Dr. KC Ashish
UNICEF Nepal

The presentation highlighted the study findings conducted to assess neurodevelopmental outcomes of children aged 6 months to 5 years. Dr. Ashish highlighted the importance of kangaroo mother care, prevention of neonatal infection, and neonatal resuscitation for the prevention of disability and neonatal death. Highest investment is required during prenatal period for both mother and child.

What is the quality of teacher-child interactions in Singapore preschool classrooms

SPEAKER:
Dr. Nirmala Karupiah
National Institute of Education, Singapore

The presentation is about a longitudinal study conducted by the National Institute of Education in Singapore to understand how preschool experiences affect socio-emotional development of children as they progress to primary schools. The presenter highlighted that interaction between the teacher and the child influence the development of children's socio-emotional, academic, and cognitive skills. The following score was revealed from a classroom quality assessment: both emotional support and classroom organisations as medium; instructional support as low. The presenter highlighted that an emotionally nurturing environment is as important to physical development as good nutrition.

Child protection through playful early stimulation and psychosocial support for displaced Rohingya children at Cox's Bazar

SPEAKER:
Dr. Nishat Fatima Rahman
BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, Bangladesh

BRAC is working to support 693,000 forcibly-displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar who require ongoing humanitarian services to address their basic needs. It is implementing comprehensive interventions for building skills and resilience for these displaced populations' long-term well-being. Some of the interventions are: Mother-tongue based and culturally appropriate learning environment through play-based method; psychosocial support and clinical supervision support with a team consisting of experts, psychologists, para counsellors and barefoot counsellors. This presentation stresses on the need to support the children on the move within the border and outside.



Multisectoral integration at the grassroots level for quality holistic ECD programme

SPEAKER:
Ms. Lham Tshering
District Education Administration, Bhutan

Ms. Tshering highlighted in her presentation multi-sectoral integration by providing examples from the grassroots level. The integration has been possible through parental support and ECD management committee for the management and promotion of ECD services. This presentation showcased the importance of grassroots level support from the local government and leaders in promoting multi-sectoral services for children below 5 years.



Concurrent paper presentations 3

MODERATOR:

Ms. Sara Dang

Save the Children; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Community-based integrated services for children: Programme practice in China

SPEAKER:
Dr. Xuefeng Chen
UNICEF China

Dr. Chen's presentation was on the community-based integrated services for children conducted in partnership with the National Working Committee for Children and Women and 31 ministerial departments of China. First, she provided an overview on the situation of children in China with 40 million children in poverty. Of those, 4 out of 10 children are affected by migration and urbanization; 3 out of 10 children are left behind and 1 out of 5 children is a migrant child. Dr. Chen shared two main approaches of child protection in China: protection system, laws and policies; and protective environment of children through the set-up of child-friendly spaces (community model set up in response to the Sichuan earthquakes in 2008) for children at community level and provides referral services for children and families in need. She also shared China's National Policy which calls for one Children's Place to be established in over 90% of urban and rural communities in China by 2020. The Policy resulted in the creation of Child Friendly Services (CFs) and ICFDC (Integrated Child Friendly Development Center) to provide multisectoral services on education, health and protection and serve as a platform for multi-sectoral collaboration (between MOE, National Health Commission, National Working Committee for Children and Woman). Additionally, the Technical Support Hubs (TSH) has been formed by an expert group of multidisciplinary teams, from sectors including Psychology, ECD, Health & Nutrition, and Protection.

Going forward, there will be further capacity building to increase competencies of community staff, further development of resources such as guidebook on development and implementation on positive parenting, and enhancement in data collection with the use of technology. It would be useful to document the evidence on the effectiveness of such programme to ensure that families are supported through collaborative multi-sectoral approaches.

Successful multi-sectoral programming: A systems-level review of regional best practice and its applicability to the Cambodian context

SPEAKER:
Ms. Holy-Jane Howell
Save the Children,
United Kingdom

Ms. Howell shared the elements of multi-sectoral programming and examples in the region. Much of the current multi-sectoral approach (health, safety and security, parenting, learning) are present in implementation though yet to be fully integrated. Some interventions may be focused in a particular sector but having the multiplier effect with the positive effects on other areas of child development. Ms. Howell also shared 6 principles (decentralize decision making; understand the behaviors of the 'end-user'; invest; find appropriate entry points, provide support for provincial level and collection of data) to better integrate approaches as she highlighted the need for integration among the 5 Nurturing Care domains in both national policy and programmes. Finally, she shared a few examples from the corporate sectors India and the Philippines ECCD Council.

Khaleer Jogot: A low-cost, high quality scalable play-based model for 1-5-year-old children

SPEAKER:
Ms. Syeda Zaman
BRAC Institute of Educational
Development, Bangladesh

Ms. Zaman shared an innovative play-based model of the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in Bangladesh that builds on learning from pilot phase and generates evidence for learning through play, and scaled up for sustainability. She emphasized the importance of sustainable and low-cost programme that does not compromise on quality. The programme caters to children in Bangladesh between the age group of 1-5 years old and in Uganda between the age group of 3-5 years old. Each center consists of 2 play leaders and 2-3 mother volunteers to support the session. The core components of the programme include play-Based Curriculum, quality play Leaders and workforce, parent engagement and parenting, designing Child-Friendly play spaces in indoors and outdoors, and low-cost, recycled materials. There is a total of 303 centers that have been set-up in close partnership with the government.

Exploring sustainable financing mechanism for Early Childhood Care and Education through Multi-sectoral Partnership: Findings from Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam

SPEAKER:
Dr. Keiichi Ogawa
Kobe University, Japan
Dr. Akemi Ashida
University of Tokyo, Japan
Dr. Katsuki Sakaue
Kobe University, Japan



An overview on the financing situation in ECCE in Asia-Pacific and study objectives were provided. Even though there is strong evidence on the importance of ECCE, the sub-sector remains underfunded in the Asia Pacific region. There are a few in-depth studies that have been conducted to identify specific challenges and innovative practices in financing. The objectives of the study are to review current national ECCE policies with a focus on sustainable financing mechanism and to identify existing innovative financing mechanisms or partnerships in target countries.

The study research questions are centered on:

- 1) What are the policy contexts and main challenges in ensuring adequate, efficient, equitable, and sustainable financing for ECCE;
- 2) What are the existing innovative practices for financing ECCE? Desk review and field research through survey and structured interviews were conducted involving central, provincial, district and institutional level as well as with education partners.

The key findings revealed that in Cambodia, the budget gap is very high in ECE sub-sector. In Laos, financing gaps are observed between financial requirements and allocated budget and there is a need for additional financing resources at school level. In Viet Nam, public institutions have limited budget on non-teacher-salary spending and financial resources have not met development requirements. In summary, unique financing practices in community preschools were observed in Cambodia. Viet Nam also have some innovative practices initiated by local governments in the urban areas. Presenters also shared recommendations, such as increase government funding for ECCE sector; develop an efficient grant disbursement system and proper monitoring mechanism; prioritize equal access to ECCE, especially for children from the disadvantaged group; promote sustainability and reduce high dependency on external funding.

Concurrent paper presentations 4

MODERATOR:

Ms. Alice Wong

Senior Director of Global Programmes, OneSky

Strengthening nutrition and hygiene through holistic ECD services for children aged 3-5

SPEAKER:

Ms. Tanaporn Perapate

UNICEF Thailand

This presentation centered on interventions in Thailand to address health and nutrition issues facing children aged 3 to 5 in ECD centers and kindergartens. There is a high level of junk food consumption by children under 5 with a national stunting rate at 1% and 8% of underweight children. The intervention is focused on capacity development of teachers and parents and engages multiple stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, experts, and caregivers (including fathers). Key content of the intervention includes: information on food provision, safe drinking water and use, sanitation, cleaning and waste management.

Mother tongue based early learning & parents+: A sustainable early childhood intervention with 10 indigenous communities

SPEAKER:

Ms. Priyadarsini Mohanty

Ministry of Women and Child Development, India



This presentation was focused on a sustainable partnership approach with the Woman and Child Development Department of Odisha in India to strengthen holistic ECD programmes. This intervention targeted 7,202 ECD centers in indigenous communities in implementing mother tongue-based classrooms. ECD workers were trained to promote Mother Tongue Bilingual Education Programme (MTBEP) with capacity building efforts rolled out at various levels of government and stakeholders. The Nurturing Care narrative is helpful in strengthening the idea of holistic ECD intervention. The strong government and community involvement has been integral throughout the intervention process. Overall, improvements have been observed from this intervention, particularly in the participation and care practices of parents and learning outcomes of children.

Positive parenting as a critical element in child development: The Philippines experience

SPEAKER:

Ms. Maria Perlita de Leon

Save the Children, Philippines

Ms. Catherine A. Manzano

Save the Children, Philippines



This presentation was on home-based mentoring on Save the Children's Early Literacy and Math (ELM), a community-based family education which promotes care. This initiative addresses 11 of the 17 SDGs. It promotes positive parenting and reduction of corporal punishment with content that is aligned with the Nurturing Care framework. To date, it has reached 130,000 families. Partnership is a key component of the intervention. The content has been integrated in the family development course of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. A midline assessment showed positive impacts of the intervention with increased involvement of fathers, improved social and emotional development indicators, and reduced parental stress.

ELM programme in Nepal: An innovative solution for early learning and development

SPEAKER:

Dr. Laxmi Paudyal

Save the Children, Nepal

Dr. Paudyal shared outcomes of the 3-year Save the Children's Early Literacy and Math (ELM) intervention in Nepal. The intervention commenced in 2013 with a 10-day ELM Training of Trainers conducted in partnership with the government and NGO. ELM play-based learning activities and materials have been utilized in ECD centers and at home. Significant impact was observed based on the baseline and end line survey carried out with International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA).



Ms. Tanaporn Perapate
UNICEF Thailand

Day 3 (June 8 2018)

- 33** Sharing of highlights from the 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on ECCE
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- 35** Thematic panel discussion: Safety and security
- 36** Emerging networks, partnerships and initiatives for ECD
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- 42** Closing remarks and word of thanks

Sharing of highlights from the 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on ECCE



CHAIR:

Maki Hayashikawa

Chief, Section for Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) UNESCO Bangkok
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

SPEAKER:

Mr. Khag Raj Baral

Secretary, Education, MoEST, Nepal

Outcomes from the Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on ECCE were shared in this presentation. On the first day, two ministerial roundtables were conducted. Outcomes from the first roundtable include sharing of: a regional synthesis of the Putrajaya Declaration follow-up reports by Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE); monitoring SDG 4.2 by UNESCO; and measuring ECD in the SDGs by UNICEF. Outcomes from the second ministerial roundtable include sharing of: updates on ECCE status, challenges, implementation and monitoring from 28 countries; and best practices in implementing and monitoring SDG 4.2. On the second day, the third and fourth ministerial roundtables were conducted. The third roundtable identified five priority areas and developed Putrajaya +2: Regional Action Plan for advancing and monitoring SDG 4.2, in addition to sub-regional group discussions.

The Kathmandu Statement for Action was developed during the Forum. It includes 5 priority areas: financing; ECCE in the Education Sector Planning; equity in access for all; quality improvement; monitoring 4.2 indicators:

1. Financing: There is commitment towards a gradual increase in financial investment by incorporating innovative financing policies and developing Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP);
2. ECCE in Education Sector Planning: Inclusion of pre-primary level into the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and strengthening governance;
3. Equity in access for all: Guaranteed provision of at least one year, ideally two years, of targeted interventions for marginalized children;
4. Quality improvement: With well-trained educators and developmentally-appropriate quality curriculum and learning materials;
5. Monitoring 4.2 indicators: To develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems and build capacity in data collection and analysis.

The next steps are to review and finalize the Kathmandu Statement for Action for member states' review and final endorsement.



Sub-theme 4: Presentation on safety and security

CHAIR:

Ms. Melissa Kelly

Director, Child Development and Protection, ChildFund International; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

SPEAKER:

Professor of Child Health, Child Development and Behaviour, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica and Learning Group Co-chair, Know Violence in Childhood



Safety and security are both related to the SDG target 1.2 reducing poverty (child social protection) and 16.2 protection from violence. There are two core areas on safety and security: environment safety and security; and emotional safety and security. Dr. Samms-Vaughan shared the history of violence against children (VAC). Globally, corporal punishment, bullying, and physical flights are the most common cases of VAC. Regionally, South Asia has the fourth highest prevalence of VAC. Children are exposed to violence in different settings - at home, institutions of care, school, online, community, organized violence, and state. Childhood violence has impact during childhood, lifelong effects, and intergenerational transmission. Economic and development costs of violence with an estimated range from 2-5% and up to 8% of global GDP or about US\$ 7 trillion. The loss of human potential impairs human development and its country. Vulnerability risk factors can occur at home, in institutional care, schools, online and cyberspace, communities and public spaces.

The intersection of violence against women and against children and can be addressed simultaneously. Different approaches to address violence: prevention and intervention services; life cycle approach to build on state services that already exist. The need for policy and legislation to address violence. For example, policy and legislations in Jamaica under protection agencies, development agency, and parent support agency, and community programmes.



It is essential to engage both fathers and mothers in antenatal programmes, and birth and well child clinic programmes. Father depression is between 10-15% and can impact children's well-being. We need to engage community members on importance of ECD and child protection. It is important to set high quality standards for ECD centers: paying attention to staff training and qualification (including adequate ratios for supervision; child care and protection act), educational programmes (teaching socio-emotional development; programmes to stimulate cognitive, language), promotion of positive behaviors. Challenges include resource constraints to implementation; and to provision of high quality ECD services. Suggestions on key next steps to countries were shared, including making safety and security as part of comprehensive ECD network; ensure legislative and/or policy support for the comprehensive ECD framework; ensure cross sectoral responsibility and accountability.



Thematic panel discussion: Safety and security

CHAIR:

Ms. Melissa Kelly

Director, Child Development and Protection, ChildFund International; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

SPEAKER:

Ms. Marcela Donaal

Child Protection Specialist,
ChildFund Philippines

Ms. Jackie Bennett

First 1000 days Australia Regional
Implementation Manager

Ms. Monisha Diwan

ECD Consultant, UNICEF EAPRO

Dr. Nishat Fatima Rahman

Assistant Professor, BRAC Institute
of Educational Development,
BRAC University



The panel had a focused discussion on questions, including: important focus of child protection; how to address safety and security issues, especially noting entry points and partnerships; recommendations to strengthen implementation of child protection into ECD multi-sectoral programming; recommendations on the most effective arguments to policymakers to generate investment; and on panelists' favorite resources in the region.

Panelists discussed the important focus on child protection from the diverse contexts in the region that they work in ranging from Rohingya children who are vulnerable to abuse, trafficking, and trauma to aboriginal Australian children who are still suffering from intergenerational trauma as children are removed from families, as well as violence on children in the Philippines. The need in the region to develop responsive caregiving and socio-emotional framework to build cohesive communities is clear.

There were discussions on entry points and ways to address these issues. For example, BRAC provides early intervention and mental health support to Rohingya children, as well as conducts parenting sessions and community meetings to support vulnerable children. The First 1,000 Days Australia recognises importance in engaging fathers and has set up a fathers group. In the Philippines, ChildFund utilizes an informal tribal-system approach to address indigenous communities and an evidence-based policy advocacy. The UNICEF EAPRO curriculum guidance on socio-emotional learning competencies looks at policies, programmes, partnerships. It has been piloted in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea.

Panelists shared recommendations to strengthen the implementation of child protection into ECD multi-sectoral programming. Understanding as well as engaging parents and families came up as a common theme across the panelists. Families and communities are key in making improvement and it is important to understand their values, hopes, and aspirations, in addition to involving them across different sectors. Capacities of ECD workforce in socio-emotional learning are also seen as key and need strengthening

Recommendations on arguments that can best resonate with policymakers were also shared. It is essential to understand what policymakers want but also to change the way they perceive families, hence the importance of using evidence-based results, as well as engaging children's voices, to make the point. The panelists also suggested relevant resources, including UNICEF Socio-Emotional guidelines, ECD policy in Bangladesh, UNHCR child protection, Child Protection Minimum Standards which is currently under revision; First 1,000 Australia's website; Early Childhood Australia; and the Australia Early Years Learning Framework.

The main takeaways from this panel are: Parents are children's first teachers and it is essential to engage caregivers, including fathers, at different levels; importance of understanding local cultures and identities though parenting sessions can help parents make the needed changes; partnerships are key in engaging different stakeholders across services; importance of socio-emotional learning and competencies teaching which can lead to pro-social behavior towards cohesion.



Emerging networks, partnerships and initiatives for ECD

CHAIR:

Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer

Chair of the Board of Directors, ARNEC



South Asia ECD Professional Forum

SPEAKER:

Ms. Mahmuda Akhter

Member of Executive Council and Secretariat, South Asia Forum of Early Childhood Development Professional (SAFECDP)

This session gave audience an overview on the launch of the newly emerging South Asia Forum of ECD Professional (SAFECDP) with its Secretariat housed in Dhaka, Bangladesh under the Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD). The aims of the Forum are: to create a platform for ECD professionals in the South Asian Region specifically on the Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 of the 2030 Agenda and to strengthen networking amongst ECD professionals in the Region for promoting the rights of the young child. The objectives of the Forum include: develop consensus on SDG 4.2; identify key imperatives for holistic ECD; engage with other regional and global networks on ECD; promote professional exchanges; develop an online knowledge base and information repository; organise theme-based, country-specific and regional meetings. The core functions of the Forum are to: share information; advocate for ECD; promote dialogue; promote and disseminate professional practices; and develop opportunities.

World Forum Foundation (WFF) and its Global Leaders Programme

SPEAKERS:

Mr. Roger Neugebauer

Executive Director, WFF

Mr. Temesia Manuel Tuicaumia

Global Leader, Fiji

Mr. Neugebauer introduced the World Forum Foundation and the Global Leaders for Young Children Programme. The mission of the World Forum Foundation is to promote an ongoing global exchange of ideas on the delivery of quality services for young children in diverse settings. In April 2019, the World Forum Foundation will host their conference in Macao, China with 800 participants from 80 countries. The Global Leaders for Young Children mentored and trained 46 Global Leaders for young children. Two Global Leaders are represented on the ARNEC Steering Committee, closely interconnected with ARNEC. Question on the Global Leaders Programme can be directed to: info@WorldForumFoundation.org

Mr. Tuicaumia, a Global Leader from Fiji spoke about his initiative with Mobile Kindy Fiji. It provides high quality education and care to disadvantaged communities, conducts advocacy on climate change, collaborates with the Pacific Regional Council for ECD (PRC4ECD), and represents at ARNEC Conferences. He shared numerous activities conducted. In 2013, Mobile Kindy offered psycho-social support. In 2009, at Kindy@The Park festival in Fiji, the project was featured as a safe space area for children after Cyclone Winston. He also spoke about the BuBu (Grandmother in Fiji) Help App initiative launched 2018.



Federal Parliamentarian Members Coordination Committee for Early Childhood Development ECD Caucus (Nepal)

SPEAKERS:

Hon. Ms. Satya Pahadi

Federal Parliamentary Member and ECD Caucus Coordinator
(Summarized translation by Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal, Member, National Assembly, Member, ECD Caucus)

Hon. Pahadi shared the process, achievements, and way forward of the ECD Caucus in Nepal. The Caucus was formed with the intention to ensure the rights of young children are established in the constitution through an organized interaction among 80 Constituent Assembly (CA) members. That interaction resulted in formation of a coordination committee consisting 21 CA members to coordinate and lead ECD. The committee worked with multiple stakeholders, including the Government and parliamentary committee of fundamental rights. It also visited existing ECD centers to identify strengths and areas of improvement in existing ECD approach and modality as well as to provide feedback to relevant agencies. All forums were utilized to lobby for child friendly constitution. Technical assistance has been provided by UNICEF, Seto Gurans and Save the Children.

The efforts resulted in ECD provision in the constitution: Part 3, article 39 establishes the right of children to early childhood development (prarambhik baal bikas) and child participation (baal sahabhagita). Challenges have been identified and they include: implementation of the constitutional provision in practice as it requires ownership at every level from policy makers to bureaucrats and service providers. This is not possible unless politicians take a lead role and continue advocacy, lobbying, and monitoring. Ultimately, an ECD Caucus type of alliance is still needed.

Hon. Pahadi highlighted other achievements of the ECD Caucus. Major political parties have demonstrated political commitment by mentioning ECD scale up in their manifesto in preparation for election. A high-level steering committee (with representatives from 12 ministries) which aims to provide guidance on planning and budgeting on ECD in country has been formed under the Vice Chairperson of National Planning Commission for integrated planning. Additionally, the Education Act (8th Edition) has included ECD. The expansion and improvement of quality ECD has also been planned and budgeted in the Annual Plan and budget of the Government of Nepal.

Going forward, the ECD Caucus will continue lobbying to scale up ECD centers and to improve quality, access and equity. It will also lobby and facilitate process to take the ECD agenda to province and local levels so that actual implementation is effective. The Caucus is ready to globally share their learnings as a good practice and is ready to take the lead in pushing the ECD agenda forward.

Pacific Call to Action

SPEAKERS:

Ms. Soana Kaitapu

ARNEC Steering Committee Member, Pacific Regional Council for ECD (PRC4ECD)

Ms. Kaitapu spoke about the Pacific Regional Council (PRC4ECD) and the 'Pasifika Call to Action'. The 9 points of the Call to Action are: Develop and Strengthen national systems on holistic ECD through coordinating multi-sectoral mechanism for the development and review of legislation and policies coordination of budget allocation and provision of quality services for young children while ensuring the inclusion of the 0-3 age group and children with special needs; Incorporate ECD into national development plans with clear implementation mechanisms including cost effective innovative and scalable interventions; Articulate the roles and responsibilities of each Ministry, the lead agency for ECD, and mechanisms for interagency collaboration; Increase government investment in ECD through the recurrent budgets, with the goal of gradually increasing to accept international benchmarks; Improve coordination between government and non-government stakeholders who contribute to ECD workforce; Provide the requisite resources (including adequate compensation, improved working conditions, the sharing of best practice and knowledge and competency frameworks) to professionalize the ECD workforce; promote parents, community, and other stakeholders' awareness of the importance of ECD; develop, Strengthen and use comprehensive data management, monitoring and assessment systems for informed decisions on early childhood; and encourage development partners to increase and harmonize assistance to support regional and national implementation of ECD related priorities.

The New Zealand Aid has agreed to fund the Council for the next 5 years. However, challenges remain as it lacks recognition at an international level. It continues to face financial and resource constraints, especially given the political instability and remoteness of the Pacific islands.



Concurrent paper presentations 1

MODERATOR:

Ms. Christine Chen

ARNEC Board of Director

Impact of a community-based integrated nurturing care and support intervention on ECD in rural China: A difference-in-difference analysis

SPEAKER:

Dr. Xiaona Huang

UNICEF China

Dr. Huang presented the ECD status, on core health and development indicators, for children aged 0-3 years in selected provinces in China. Nearly 40% of caregivers are affected by depression. There are close to 55% of children who experience violent discipline. UNICEF and three government agencies partnered to work on an integrated ECD (IECD) programme in rural areas of China between 2014 and 2016.

There are 5 key IECD interventions based on the nurturing care elements:

1. nutrition counselling and supplementation;
2. responsive caregiving;
3. financial and social security and safety;
4. early learning support;
5. healthy growth and development assessment and follow up.

The IECD programme is delivered through five delivery channels, including:

1. home visits by social worker, volunteer, village doctor;
2. community-based activities by volunteers, social worker, health worker;
3. center-based activities by ES experts/ volunteers;
4. Clinic-based interventions by Maternal and Child Health (MCH) provider; and
5. mobile services by country staff.

A baseline study was conducted in 2013 and an end line study was delivered in 2016 in four parallel counties. The evaluation findings demonstrated that overall developmental delay decreased in both intervention and comparison group between 2013 and 2016. However, the degree of reduction was significantly larger in intervention villages compared to the comparison group. The 43% reduction in overall suspected developmental delays can be attributed to IECD interventions which reduces up to two thirds of delays in specific domains. Protective factors also have improved in intervention groups.

In conclusion, poor rural children lack supportive environment and suffer (around 40% of children with overall developmental delays). Thus, an integrated approach to ECD with multisectoral cooperation could enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors.

The transformative power of ECD: The importance of holistic interventions

SPEAKER:

Mr. Bishnu Bhatta

Partnership for Sustainable Development, Nepal

The Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD) Nepal runs a Nepal Adoptive Families Association (NAFA) Nourishes programme that works in children homes and orphanages between 2015 and 2018. PSD was founded in 2002 with main project areas in ECD and nutrition that have supported over 600 children with strong partnerships globally.

The project works in 15 children homes to enrich nutritional status of unparented and orphaned children in Nepal, for example through the distribution of multivitamins. The project focuses on the transformative power of ECD and the importance of holistic intervention. Additionally, the Child Care Home or CCH programme was formed to provide ECD services to children who are not under parental care. As of July 2017, there are 567 CCHs in 44 different districts. Visible impact has been observed through these interventions, including improved personal hygiene.

Bridging the equity gap in child outcomes through rights-based parenting approaches

SPEAKERS:

Ms. Maricel Ceido

Save the Children, Philippines

Ms. Maya P. Nayo

Save the Children, Philippines

Ms. Ceido's presentation revealed how a programme can reduce equity and encourage fathers' engagement. She provided an overview of Save the Children's quality learning framework and integrated ECCD programmes anchored on children's rights. 6,000 parents have been reached through these programmes with improved ECCE access and quality.

An overview of the 2-hour parent education session was provided. These sessions deliver key messages including the awareness of rights and duties to support children's development; and knowing calamities and preparing emergency kit from multiple modules with content, such as child's rights; gender and positive discipline; and family preparedness on disaster. In 2017, a total of 2,525 parents, caregivers, facilitators, and volunteers were reached.

Participants were introduced to the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), a play-based assessment tool for children aged 3-6. It measures 4 domains, including motor development and socio-emotional development. There is also a caregiver dimension in the questionnaire. The assessment discovered that positive impact, including an increase in practices of parents or caregivers towards supporting children's literacy development; increase in engagement of both mothers (10%) and fathers (11%); increase in caregivers' attitude and practice; and increase of availability of toys and materials in rural areas. In children, it was observed that there is a higher increase in early numeracy skills followed by early literacy skills.

Overall, it is critical that programme interventions consider activities where it can provide fathers or male caregivers opportunities to be more involved with children despite the need to work. Positive improvement was observed in rural and urban communities following parent education sessions.

Thailand's National Universal Developmental Screening Programme for Young Children: Action research for improved follow-up

SPEAKER:

Dr. Joanna Morrison

University College London, United Kingdom

1 in 3 pre-school age children in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) fail to meet cognitive or socioemotional developmental milestones. A national evaluation conducted in Thailand demonstrated that 15% children failed screening during routine vaccination visits (and only 57% of that 15% children returned for assessment).

A qualitative action research was conducted to understand the reasons for children's failure to return for assessment. The health system barriers identified for the implementation of the screening programme, include dense and hard to read Developmental Screening Programme (DSPM) manual; manual not always available; health workers are overworked and did not screen all children. There were also communication barriers as caregivers did not understand the need for screening. When children failed the screening, caregivers (including grandparents) felt blamed and did not believe in the results.

To resolve the above-mentioned challenges, recommendations were provided. They include development of strategies with user groups; focus on grandparent caregivers; health worker capacity development through DSPM champions; task sharing with community health workers; and simplifying the training and handbook.

Concurrent paper presentations 2

MODERATOR:

Ms. Melissa Kelly

Director, Child Development and Protection, ChildFund International; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Promoting evidence-based, accelerated school readiness at scale in Lao-PDR: Experiences from Plan International's LEARN Project

SPEAKER:

Ms. Jodie Fonseca

LEARN Project Director, Plan International, Laos

Ms. Fonseca shared Plan International's LEARN 4-year project which focuses on improving learning, reducing dropouts and repetition in the early grades delivered between 2015 and 2018. While accelerated models may require large samples, it is challenging to obtain large samples in remote areas – as they tend to be costlier, in time and quality. Some of the challenges from this project identified include language issues; socio-emotional sub-tests did not work in the Lao cultural context; and problematic letter knowledge tests.

Taking community-based preschools to scale: Evolution of the community pre-school (CPS) model in Cambodia

SPEAKER:

Mr. Prak Kosal

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia

Mr. Kosal presented the evolution of community-based preschool in Cambodia and in taking these preschools to scale. The government is committed on ECD as demonstrated through the country's ECCD policy and national action plan. The government supports community preschools through the provision of salary for the workers and materials. The commune council will further support these preschools through their own funds. There is also a new policy to mandate that all key ministries support ECCD programmes under the leadership of the Ministry of Education. Given the strong commitment from the government, 57% of children aged 3-5 now have access to community preschools.

Community based sustainable solutions for addressing child's under-nutrition and health – Effective entry points through PD+ for Care and ECD

SPEAKER:

Ms. Pratibha Pandey

ChildFund India

Ms. Pandey shared an intervention using community knowledge to address undernourishment problems. To prevent future undernourishment and to understand good practices in addressing this issue, community-based solutions have been identified. They include assessing volunteer availability; conducting rapid assessment; analyzing outcomes: developing activities through community design; designing sessions and implementing; conducting home visits and follow ups. These strategies have resulted in improvement in children's health and nutrition outcomes. ChildFund intends to scale up this intervention to other states and to create parent

Building a model for children of factory workers to access ECD in Vietnam

SPEAKER:

Ms. Alice Wong

Senior Director of Global Programmes, OneSky

Ms. Wong shared One Sky's programme Vietnam on ECD and childcare support for children of young workers in industrial zones. This initiative is a unique model for ECCD intervention for migrant factory workers and is being implemented based on invitation of the Government of Vietnam. She discussed three components of the programme, such as parenting skill training, early learning centers (ELC) for the age groups of 0-3 and 3-5, and training.



*Mr. Prak Kosal, Director,
Ministry of Education,
Youth and Sports, Cambodia*

Concurrent paper presentations 3

MODERATOR:

Ms. Sara Dang

Save the Children; ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Toolkit for engaging pre-school teachers in screening for disabilities among children aged 3-5 years: Results from the pilot study in three selected districts in Sri Lanka

SPEAKER:

Mr. Dayana Tilakarthne

Plan International, Sri Lanka

Mr. Tilakarthne shared a pilot study of engaging pre-school teachers in Sri Lanka for pre-school education and disability. The role in the detection of developmental delays and disabilities among children in Sri Lanka falls almost entirely to the Public Health staff of the Department of Health.

Plan International commissioned the Center for Disability Studies at the University of Kelaniya to pilot test a simple but comprehensive toolkit that can be introduced to preschool teachers to screen children who attend their preschools. A toolkit was developed based on globally available non-proprietary tools. These were piloted in 3 districts of Sri Lanka on 6,650 children between ages 2 and 5 years.

The project covers 3 main areas, including

- 1) review of facilities available to children with disabilities, particularly for those under 5, and early education and training of their caregivers;
- 2) screening children aged 2-5 years by using a tool to identify whether they have any disabilities;
- 3) development of resource materials and trainings for preschool teachers and caregivers.

The impact of pre-primary mother tongue interventions on Grade 1 literacy skills of ethnic minority children in Thailand

SPEAKER:

Dr. Kirk Person

Director, External Affairs,
SIL International, Thailand

Dr. Person spoke about ethnic minority children in Thailand and the crisis of linguistic loss in ethnic minority communities throughout Asia as children are placed in ECD centers where caretakers do not speak their mother tongue.

Globally, there are over 7,000 languages spoken in 193 countries with 3,000 in the Asia-Pacific region. UN declaration, as well as the Convention of the Rights of the Child, documents the right of children to have education in their mother tongue and the linguistic and cultural rights of indigenous and ethnic people in 2007.

Four pilot schools in which the Hmong language was used as the main language of instruction in preschool and the early primary grades (for children aged 4-6 years) were paired with four comparison schools where Hmong children were taught exclusively in Thai. Results from a national literacy evaluation on Grade 1, Semester 1, demonstrated that Hmong students in the mother tongue pre-primary programme had significantly stronger Thai literacy skills than their peers in Thai-only schools. This corroborates similar research from Southern Thailand among Patani Malay speaking students. The clear implication is that children in mother tongue pre-primary programmes are better positioned for success in early primary.

Transitioning into Preschool: Enhancing Ethnic Minority Children's Development through Experiential Learning in Vietnam and Flanders (Belgium)

SPEAKERS:

Mr. Filip Lenaerts

VVOB Vietnam & ARNEC Steering Committee Member

Mr. Jo Van de Weghe

Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

This was a joint presentation by VVOB Vietnam and the Karel de Grote University College Belgium. Since 2009, investments by the Vietnamese Government into public preschools through curriculum renovation, teacher qualifications and classroom environments have led to high participation rates among children aged 4-6 years and increasingly attract 2 to 3-year-olds into public preschools. Increased participation is also reaching more disadvantaged and ethnic minority children who do not speak Vietnamese at home and experience a difficult transition when entering preschool. In targeting children aged 2.5-3 years from lower social economic status in school enrollment, a key consideration is if they are able to benefit from the learning and interaction as other children. VVOB is partnering with other child development experts and institutions to learn promising approaches from different countries.

In Antwerp, Belgium with 70 languages spoken in the city, a challenge is in identifying a pedagogical approach to incorporate all diversity in ECE classes. Karel de Grote University College Antwerp developed a roadmap for experiential preschool practice among ECE professionals. The 6-step roadmap guides ECE teachers to respond to the interests and experiences of children by observing, communicating and reflecting together with them. Between 2015 and 2017, a practice-based research compared involvement levels of children in an experimental group (n=316) and a control group (n=207) using a switching replication design to determine whether the roadmap could help close the performance gap between children with low and high socioeconomic status (SES). By using the roadmap, involvement of children in the experimental group was significantly higher than involvement of children in the control group.



Mr. Dayana Tilakarthne
Plan International, Sri Lanka

Concurrent paper presentations 4

MODERATOR:

Sivaprasad Behera

Zonal Programme Coordinator for Infants and Young Children's Programme,
ChildFund India

Pregnant women's group: An integrated approach to improve maternal and neonatal health status

SPEAKER:

Ms. Durga Uprety

Gender Transformative and Nutrition Sensitive WASH
– Project Manager, Plan International Nepal

This project was implemented in partnership between 335 Village Development Committees and 3,428 pregnant women groups (PWGs) to reach 151,177 mothers through sessions conducted in a 7-month period. Facilitated by female community health volunteers, the PWGs (also engaging fathers and fathers-in-law) meet once a month. During these meetings, key messages on maternal, neonatal and child health are delivered with linkages to existing service delivery points. A comparative study between treatment and control group was conducted. It demonstrated a 10% increase in behavior change and 10-20% increase in knowledge; thereby signaling that the PWG model was cost-effective and can be effectively scaled up.

Some of the lessons learned from this approach, include: improvement in knowledge can lead to better health-seeking behavior among women who participated in the intervention; social impact, including group coherence and support from one another and from community members, played a key role in positive outcomes for the women; PWG tool kits, such as social map, engaged fathers and mothers-in-law, thereby widening the potential for increased involvement of men in safer pregnancy, delivery services and practices; the establishment of PWG with meeting running cost of 7 sessions between \$131 and \$173 is cost-effective in the context of Nepal.

Addressing malnutrition among children of migrant construction workers in India

SPEAKER:

Dr. Verghese

Mumbai Mobile Creches, India

Dr. Verghese shared global trends on child undernutrition. Among the 32 million casual laborers, trade unions estimated that there are approximately 40 million of laborers working in the construction industry. It is estimated that by 2022, there will be 76 million construction workers. Some of the health issues affecting children of these workers are prenatal undernutrition, lower immunity, under nutrition, communicable diseases, micro nutrients deficiency, injuries and accidents.

The Mumbai Mobile Creches (MMC) was set up in 1972 for children of migrant construction workers. It enables children to have a safe, happy, healthy and educated childhood. The MMC's approach is to empower mothers to enter and stay in workforce; free up older children from sibling care; support overall growth and development of children (as data indicated higher prevalence of underweight and stunted children among this population compared to the state and national prevalence)

The objectives of the research were to: assess the prevalence of undernutrition amongst children under 5 years of migrant construction workers attending MMC day care centers and to facilitate early identification and intervention of undernourished children attending MMC daycare centers. The research demonstrated reduction in wasting at MMC as compared to wasting prevalence in Maharashtra and India.

Comprehensive multi-sectoral ECD programme has been successful in bringing down the extent of undernutrition. Key factors in addressing undernutrition among migrant children, include regular screening of children to facilitate early identification and treatment, multi-sectoral partnerships with government health system and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), intensive community engagement and persuasion.

Key strategies going forward, include strengthening community-based models; strengthening existing policy frameworks for inclusion of hard to reach children; strengthening public-private partnerships under government schemes; increasing awareness regarding food security schemes among migrants.

Multi-sectoral programming to ensure conducive environment for infants and young children

SPEAKER:

Ms. Sandamali

Rajapaksha Pathirage
ChildFund Sri Lanka

This multisectoral project's objective is to ensure that children aged 0 to 5 years in the target communities in Sri Lanka have age-appropriate developmental milestones. The project targeted 4 estates in the Nuwara Eliya district and benefitted 1,042 children under 5 years in 10 ECD centers and 1,000 parents and caregivers. Multiple stakeholders were involved and consulted, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Provincial Ministry of Education, Estate Management, and civil society organisations. 10 ECD centers were identified as Resource Hub to integrate the most critical child development services with interventions, such as monthly "Parent-Child Day", center-based cooking programme, and quarterly stakeholder networking meeting. Success of Multi-Sector Action Plan Implementation is attributed to the capacity building efforts of the Child Development Officers (CDOs).

The end line evaluation revealed significant positive changes in children aged 0-5 years such as: increase from 60% to 88% in attainment of holistic development milestones; increase from 62% to 86% on ECD center attendance; and a reduction in malnourished children. Increase in knowledge (in verbalizing important topics) has been observed in trained mothers and caregivers. Additionally, there is an increase in the application of learning in trained mothers and caregivers – such as use of a variety of nutritious food for cooking; hand washing before cooking, child feeding, and after defecation; providing age-appropriate play and learn opportunities for children within the home environment.

Key challenges encountered for this project include: gradual buy-in from estate management on the importance of integrated multi-sectoral programming for development of the children in their estates; gathering of all stakeholders through semi-regular meetings amidst competing priorities and varying geographical locations of stakeholders.

To move forward, a few strategies have been identified, such as: connecting estate management and government stakeholders to form common understanding and approach on the urgent need to improve child development; providing an opportunity parents and caregivers to access ECD-relevant stakeholders and services at the divisional and community levels; identify mothers or caregivers of children and CDOs in the area as key agents of knowledge dissemination and coordination for improving child development; establish regular, consistent divisional-level coordination and planning that is ongoing as a result of the platform for coordination this project established.



Closing remarks and word of thanks

MODERATOR:
Dr. Cliff Meyers
ARNEC Board of Director



Speaker:
Mr. Khag Raj Baral
Secretary, Education, MoEST
Government of Nepal

Huge appreciation was extended to the Prime Minister of Nepal. Nepal prioritizes quality enhancement of ECD services and has indicated commitment to focus on ECD in future plans. Minister Giriraj has demonstrated the government's commitment through mapping of ECD centers and compulsory education of pre-primary education. Appreciation was also extended to Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer (ARNEC), Dr. Jean Gough (UNICEF ROSA), and Mr. Aoyagi (UNESCO) for their opening remarks.

The Government of Nepal considers ECD as the foundation of development by extending one-year free pre-primary to all four-year old. Much progress can be observed, including a six-fold jump in enrolment rate between 2001 and 2016 and the instrumental effort by the ECD Caucus in strengthening ECD policy and plan.

The conference has been useful in learning and gathering best practices across the region. Outcomes from the conference will contribute to overcoming of challenges and putting ideas into actions. Partnership between organisations and institutions has been instrumental in making this conference a success.



SPEAKER:
Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi
Regional Director,
UNESCO Asia and Pacific
Regional Bureau for Education

Mr. Aoyagi highlighted UNESCO's close collaboration with ARNEC and the importance of ECD/ ECCE towards achieving the SDGs with involvement of many stakeholders. He applauded the high commitment and initiative of the Ministry of Education Nepal towards ECD, including the Presidential decree on ECCE Act, establishment of ECCE department, and high enrollment rates from 12% to 84% in the last 15 years. He is hopeful that this convergence of two events can accelerate high commitment into actions and highlighted the development of innovative financing approach at UNESCO. He shared that in 2019, UNESCO will organize global citizenship education forum with a focus on ECCE, including socio-emotional learning. The 4th ECCE policy forum will be organized in 2020.



SPEAKER:
Mr. Philippe Cori
Deputy Regional Director,
UNICEF South Asia

Mr. Cori extended his appreciation to the Government of Nepal. He highlighted the importance of building cognitive capital, especially girls, as a great country investment at a low cost with big returns. This conference has served as a useful knowledge exchange platform and convergence across sectors and ministers in achieving the SDG agenda. He emphasized the importance of social cohesion in the region. With one third of children in South Asia, the demographic window of opportunity needs to be tapped in addressing issues such as youth migration. Further engagement with the parliamentarians, Ministers of Finance, and religious leaders would be useful in continuing efforts from this conference



SPEAKER:
Dr. Mae Chu Chang
ARNEC Board of Director

ARNEC is one of the fastest-growing networks globally with more than 2,000 members from 68 countries. We have seen a steady increase in the attendance for ARNEC conference from 2014 to 2017. The conference in Manila in 2014 had more than 400 attendees. The 2015 conference in China attracted more than 500 participants, followed by the 2017 conference in Cambodia with over 600 participants. The 2018 ARNEC conference in Nepal consisted of 750 participants from 45 countries. She has observed evolution on the content development of the ARNEC conferences addressing the different facets of ECD through the engagement of global, regional and national speakers. Dr. Chang extended her appreciation to the Prime Minister of Nepal in inaugurating the conference and applauded Nepal's commitment to ECD: with the instrumental effort of the ECD Caucus in the Nepali parliament in obtaining approval of ECD in the Constitution, as well as the National Planning Commission's effort to translate SDGs into ECD budget codes. Finally, she extended appreciation to partners and sponsors, such as UNICEF ROSA, UNICEF EAPRO, UNICEF Nepal, UNESCO, Open Society Foundation (OSF), Plan International, ChildFund, China Development Research Foundation (CDRF), SetoGurans, Government of Nepal, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) Nepal.

Recognition of the conference's planning committees, country participants and ARNEC's National Representatives

SPEAKER:
Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago
Executive Director,
ARNEC Secretariat

On behalf of the ARNEC Secretariat, Ms. Santiago expressed her appreciation towards all parties who have been instrumental to the conference preparation, including the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) Nepal and the conference organizing technical committees with special mention to Joint Secretary Aryal and Undersecretary Mukunda. She acknowledged the technical support provided by Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi of UNICEF ROSA and Dr. Dipu Shakya of UNICEF Nepal Country Office, local registration support provided by SetoGurans, and Working Committees for the pre-conference workshops and study visits. She also extends her appreciation towards the ARNEC Secretariat team - Ms. Silke Friesendorf, Ms. Andrea See, and Mr. Pemba Tamang.

The presence of ARNEC's National Representatives was also recognized. The representatives have played a critical role in supporting and pushing for ECD agenda in the countries. They supported ARNEC in disseminating research and studies at the country level and also in advocating for ECD and representing ARNEC at ECD national events.

Lastly, country roll-call was conducted to recognize the active engagement of 45 countries participating at both the ARNEC ECD conference and the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on ECCE.



The Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) extends its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Government of Nepal, for hosting the 2018 Regional ECD Conference!





Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:
What is a successful multi-sectoral approach to ECD?
Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
'Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action'



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3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
'Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action'



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What is a successful multi-sectoral approach to...
Specific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education
'Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action'



