



# The Transformative Power of Early Childhood Development (ECD): The Importance of Holistic Interventions



CONFERENCE REPORT



2017  
Asia-Pacific  
Regional ECD  
Conference

1-3 March 2017  
in Siem Reap,  
Cambodia



# Working together for Early Childhood

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All young children  
in the Asia-Pacific  
region realise optimal  
well-being and  
development

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**Dr Sheldon Shaeffer**  
ARNEC



**Ms. [Name]**  
Member of ARNEC and Chair of [Committee]



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## INTRODUCTION

An important gathering of top-level government officials and renowned ECD experts, professionals and practitioners from the Asia-Pacific Region took place on 1-3 March 2017, as the **Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development Conference** was co-organised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia and Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) and the. The event, with the theme, **'The Transformative Power of ECD: The importance of holistic interventions,'** served as a milestone for regional discussions and commitment setting on the importance of equitable access to an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development.

The Conference came about at the most opportune time, as the highly regarded *2016 Lancet Early Childhood Development Series* had been making waves in the ECD movement. The Series prescribes that young children's healthy development depends on nurturing care which ensures health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and early learning. It emphasises the need to deliver multi-sectoral interventions, especially to the most disadvantaged children; essential among these are nutrition, to support growth and health; child protection, for violence prevention and family support; social protection, for family financial stability and capacity to access services; and education, for quality early learning opportunities.

The theme of the event was divided into three sub-themes, which dealt with policies and programmes addressing the holistic nature of ECD, approaches focusing on equitable access and participation, and the quality monitoring of outcomes. These themes are especially significant as they strongly support **Target 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** which focuses on the need for ***all boys and girls to have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education.***

### **The Conference aimed 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; and
- Strengthen partnerships for ECD among a large range of existing and potential stakeholders.

Even on the outset, the energy around the Conference was optimistic, and the expectations high, for as one participant (Karma Gayleg, from Bhutan) expressed:

*“ARNEC Conferences bring a mix of policy makers, advocates, programmers, practitioners and researchers from all around the world on one platform to share their ideas, experiences and commitments to enhancing Early Childhood Development... There are no greater opportunities for learning, sharing, connecting and bonding in any other avenues than at the ARNEC Conferences.”*

Another participant (Monisha Singh Diwan, India) said:

*“ARNEC has truly emerged as a guiding light for ECD in the region with its robust and highly credible work. Its annual ECD Conferences have just emerged stronger and as responsive as ever to the needs of the region. It has the eyes and ears of policy makers, academics and practitioners and manages to do justice to the varying needs of the three and bring them in active dialogue and discussion through its well-planned programmes.”*

The Conference participants were honoured with the presence of the **Kingdom of Cambodia Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN** who opened the momentous gathering, attended by 12 Ministers and Deputy Ministers from 35 countries, and more than 500 policy makers, ECD experts and scholars, and leaders of multilateral agencies and international and national non-government organisations. These distinguished participants shared experiences, new learning and tools that underscore the crucial value and benefits of ECD policies, strategies and programmes that are integrated, inclusive, and supported by effective coordination mechanisms.

With the noteworthy attendance and the dynamic and rich discussions all throughout the Conference, it is anticipated to make a significant impact on how ECD policies and programmes will be developed and continually enriched, funded by both public and private sectors, implemented and measured in the context of communities, countries and the entire Asia-Pacific Region.



## WHO ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE

The Conference was attended by government officials (including 12 Ministers and Deputy Ministers), programme planners, practitioners, academics, and development agency staff from 35 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.



- |    |                                  |    |                               |
|----|----------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Afghanistan                      | 19 | Myanmar                       |
| 2  | Australia                        | 20 | Nepal                         |
| 3  | Bangladesh                       | 21 | New Zealand                   |
| 4  | Belgium                          | 22 | Pakistan                      |
| 5  | Bhutan                           | 23 | Panama                        |
| 6  | Cambodia                         | 24 | Philippines                   |
| 7  | Canada                           | 25 | Singapore                     |
| 8  | China                            | 26 | People Republic of Korea      |
| 9  | Costa Rica                       | 27 | Sri Lanka                     |
| 10 | East Timor                       | 28 | Thailand                      |
| 11 | Fiji                             | 29 | United Kingdom                |
| 12 | Germany                          | 30 | United States                 |
| 13 | Hong Kong, SAR                   | 31 | Vanuatu                       |
| 14 | India                            | 32 | Viet Nam                      |
| 15 | Indonesia                        | 33 | Federated State of Micronesia |
| 16 | Kyrgyzstan                       | 34 | Maldives                      |
| 17 | Lao People's Democratic Republic | 35 | Tuvalu                        |
| 18 | Malaysia                         |    |                               |







## PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

### I. OPENING CEREMONY



#### Welcome Remarks

**Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer**, *Chair of ARNEC Board of Directors*, and **Ms. Karin Hulshof**, *UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) Regional Director*, welcomed the guests and participants to the Conference.

Dr. Shaeffer shared that the gathering was a celebration of the increasing global recognition of the importance of Early Childhood Development, as well as an opportunity to learn from Cambodia and from the other represented states, organisations and institutions in terms of their commitment and approaches to ECD. He expounded on the Conference theme, ***“The transformative power of Early Childhood Development: The importance of holistic interventions,”*** along with its three sub-themes:

- Policies and programmes addressing the holistic nature of ECD;
- Approaches focusing on equitable access and participation; and
- Quality monitoring of outcomes.

He urged the participants not just to focus on universal participation in ECD, which is the first indicator of SDG Target 4.2, but to take on the more complex indicator focused on health, learning and psychosocial outcomes. He stressed the importance of building the evidence that good quality early childhood development programmes actually work, especially for the most excluded groups of the population.



Ms. Hulshof, for her part, emphasised that ECD is every child’s right, a smart investment that yields high returns, can protect children well and support development of better brains, can help families increase their incomes by enabling women’s employment and gender equality, and can promote Global Citizenship.

She then congratulated several countries in the region for having holistic ECD policies and legal frameworks already in place. In Cambodia, for example, collaborations across 11 Ministries are leading the way, with the National ECCD Committee established in 2013 under the patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen, and chaired by H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport. However, challenges remain, with global data revealing that 43 per cent of children under 5 in low and middle-income countries are at risk of not achieving their full cognitive potential. Moreover, preschool participation rates are below 30% in East Asia and Pacific and can be as low as 17% in South Asia.

Ms. Hulshof recalled that in July 2016, the Putrajaya Declaration affirmed the Region’s commitment for ECD. This time, she urged the participants to come together to pledge to have better data and evidence-based policies for the first 1000 days of life; commit to offer combined, intersectoral programmes; invest in public financing and social protection for very young children; and ensure that these partnerships do significantly more for the poorest children.





### Opening Speech

The Conference was honoured by the presence of **the Kingdom of Cambodia Prime Minister, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN.**

According to Prime Minister Hun Sen, "Since the end of the Khmer regime in 1979, learning opportunities have been available for all kindergarten children. Kindergartens have contributed to building children's characters, attitudes and prior knowledge for preparing them for primary school."

Prime Minister Hun Sen also professed that "Cambodia loves children and perceives them as future leaders and human capital."

## II. HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF MINISTERS/HEADS OF DELEGATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TARGET 4.2



At the High-Level Meeting, Ministers and Vice-Ministers shared with one another their countries' experiences in achieving SDG Target 4.2 and in meeting the commitments made in the Putrajaya Declaration adopted in the 2nd High-Level Policy Forum on ECCE in 2016. Representatives from UNICEF, UNESCO and the ARNEC Core Team were also invited to the meeting.



Dr. Emily Vargas-Baron of RISE Institute shared recent developments on the SDG Target 4.2 indicators. A presentation was then made on Cambodia's ECD efforts in support of the target, followed by an exchange among the Ministers and Vice-Ministers on specific strategies, significant progress and challenges faced, and future plans to support ECD further in their respective countries.

Among the points shared were as follows:

- Emphasis on the need for a legal framework to support quality ECD;
- Common challenges in developing quality ECD standards and indicators that could be incorporated into household surveys;
- Gaps in the area of nutrition and in service delivery in the context of small isolated islands;
- Challenges in governance and collaboration;
- The need to prioritize quality of teachers/ECD providers;
- The critical importance of parenting programmes; and
- The need for a more inclusive approach considering ethnic minorities and importance of mother-tongue based ECD.



During the conversation, it was noted that there have been improvements made in curriculum development in some countries, while other countries have established monitoring systems to track progress on ECD/ECCE services. The discussants agreed that they are still experiencing common challenges particularly in collecting and monitoring data.

The meeting concluded with the Ministers and Vice-Ministers affirming their respective countries' continued commitment to SDG Target 4.2, as had been previously reflected in the Putrajaya Declaration.



### III. SHORT REMARKS FROM MINISTERS

At various points throughout the event, the following leaders took turns to deliver messages of inspiration and support that expressed their commitment to holistic ECD, and affirmed the high value of the Conference presentations and discussions:

- **H.E. Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman**, Minister of State, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Pakistan
- **Hon. Jean Pierre Nirua**, Minister of Education and Training, Vanuatu
- **H.E. Meher Afroze**, Minister of State, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh
- **H.E. Kalwin Kephas**, Secretary of Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia
- **H.E. Fauoa Manni**, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Tuvalu
- **H.E. Ahmed Shafeeu**, Minister, Ministry of State for Education, Maldives
- **H.E. Dhani Ram Paudel**, Minister, Minister, Ministry of Education, Nepal

### IV. KEYNOTE ADDRESS



**Professor Frank Oberklaid**, Director of the Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital – Melbourne and Honorary Professor of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne, talked about ***"Laying the foundations for a healthy and prosperous society: Investing in early childhood development."***

He shared that Early Child Development (ECD) is specifically mentioned in Target 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals but is also highly relevant to achieving *all* of the 17 goals. He then presented research findings that establish how investing in early childhood is *'the best investment society can make.'* This learning challenges governments, organisations and professionals to develop holistic ECD policies and programmes that facilitate high quality early years' environments.

The goal of ECD, he shared, is to diminish or remove risk factors and to strengthen protective factors. Doing so entails the implementation of integrated, multi-sectoral, evidence-based interventions. Critical to doing this is political commitment, which is essential to improving ECD through the creation of enabling environments for caregivers, families and communities, and the provision of nurturing care that can be accessed by all children.





## V. SUB-THEME KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND PARALLEL SESSIONS

### Sub-Theme 1: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ADDRESSING THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF ECD



The keynote message for this sub-theme was delivered by **Dr. Emily Vargas-Baron**, Director of RISE Institute. She identified the following essential elements of ECD policies: equity and rights, multisectorality and interdisciplinarity, participatory policy planning and structures, standards and regulations, quality assurance, accountability, phased investments to go to scale, and policy advocacy. Further, ECD covers health, nutrition, sanitation/hygiene, responsive caregiving, early learning and development, inclusive preschool education, and child and maternal/parental rights and protection. Lastly, countries should also look into their policies for Early Childhood Education (ECE)—up to 8 years of age—as well as for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services for children (and their parents) suffering from developmental delays, malnutrition, chronic illnesses, disabilities and behavioural disorders.

Dr. Vargas-Baron reported that only 36 percent or 17 out of the 47 ARNEC-covered countries/territories have ECD policies in place. She expressed hope that nations will be able to develop a “continuum of care” coordinating all ECD, ECE and ECI services, for all children and families. She urged the participants to undertake participatory, multi-sectoral planning processes and to inspire government leaders to invest generously in early childhood.

The first panel discussion featured regional UNICEF advisors who explained why it is critical for governments and the private sector in the Asia-Pacific region to invest significantly in holistic ECD. They gave an overview of the importance of learning opportunities, nutrition and health, child protection and social protection in a child’s early years, both in terms of the child’s long-term development and in terms of impacts on national and regional development. They also emphasised the huge gap between current and needed investments in holistic ECD in the region, and provided examples and recommendations for actions that can be taken at the country level and collaboratively across the region.

Presentations on programme practices emphasised the need to localise national frameworks for holistic ECD. A study of FORCES in India found that understanding of holistic development is a critical element missing in programmes at the local level. *UNICEF Thailand* shared its experience involving parents and families in implementing their ECD Demonstration Programme in line with the National ECD Plan. *Save the Children Indonesia* gathers different community stakeholders to plan, implement and evaluate programmes. Likewise, *Child Fund Laos* is utilizing community involvement in their Early Childhood Education Intervention.

Policies and programmes addressing the holistic nature of ECD include that in Vietnam, supporting all children’s access to Integrated Early Childhood Development, and in Pakistan, where holistic ECCE is implemented through a national education policy and curriculum. A study by Ewha Women’s University in South Korea that looked into 10 countries based on accessibility, affordability, accountability, sustainability, and social justice found that a number of them have already achieved sound solutions to ECE challenges.

Participants shared efforts to address health and child protection needs in ECD. *Save the Children Nepal* shared how they found early stimulation and responsive care and safety to be the key ingredients to addressing adversity. *World Vision Indonesia*, meanwhile, is piloting Community Based Child Protection in a village that used to have no ECD centre, and *Child Fund Cambodia* is operating a “Community Based Child Protection Mechanism” in a district where issues on child protection thrive.

Multi-sectoral collaboration was highlighted by several presenters. ChildFund International equipped mothers to become volunteer peer educators in Sri Lanka, resulting in 100 percent recovery of participating underweight children. In Cambodia, ChildFund's pilot Community-Led Child Nutrition Project resulted in significantly increased weight among the participating children. Lastly in the Philippines, Cartwheel Foundation involves family and community stakeholders in its education and health programme among indigenous children.

Research and model approaches to support school readiness were presented, such as case studies from Canada that revealed how the implementation of full day kindergarten helped move preschool from child welfare into the public education system. Setogurans Child Development Service, Nepal, presented study findings that recommend an ECD policy to address holistic and contextual modalities and require parent education. UNICEF Cambodia discussed a research that reveals the need for a comprehensive approach to tackle stunting in specific population groups. Lastly, Child to Child United Kingdom talked about its Getting Ready for School model to reach children from the most marginalised communities.

### **Sub-Theme 2: APPROACHES FOCUSING ON EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION**



Keynote speaker **Dr. Manzoor Ahmed** of Bangladesh Early Childhood Development Network (BEN) discussed how prevailing socio-economic inequities and lack of multi-agency collaboration prevent children from accessing needed programmes and services.

Various presentations showed how this marginalisation could be addressed. A study by the University of Hong Kong found that attending pre-school significantly helps reduce the inequalities in child development borne by socio-economic status. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, meanwhile, recommends a three-pronged intervention consisting of child literacy, parent literacy and parenting skills, to support children from ethnic minorities. In Cambodia, Save the Children recommended home-based ECCD and floating centres to serve children in flooded and floating communities. Meanwhile, a "demystification process" was applied by MindHaven to parents and caregivers in the Philippines, resulting in a collaborative home-school programme. A study by VVOB Vietnam enabled teachers to acknowledge and proactively address barriers to learning and participation.

Other innovations presented include the holistic ECCD programme implemented by The Life Skills Development Foundation (TLSDF), which builds capacity and facilitates collaboration among multiple stakeholders in remote indigenous communities on the Thailand-Myanmar border. Save the Children's programme on Listening and Discussion Groups in the province of Kratie, in Cambodia, gathers parents to listen to radio broadcasts on maternal and child healthcare. Lastly, Project Tinker Kit in Singapore encourages lower socioeconomic status families to spend quality time through art and craft activities.

A panel discussion took up the important issue on the use of mother tongue in delivering ECD. Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer stressed that for both cultural and educational reasons, and as a child's right, early care and education should be provided in a child's mother tongue. Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi shared that ECD in Nepal is mostly operated in mother tongue, but there is a challenge in transitioning to Grade 1 which is taught only in Nepali and English. H.E. Prak Kosal of the ECCD National Committee, Cambodia, reported implementing a multilingual education programme aimed at reaching up to 10,000 children by year 2018. Likewise, a national policy on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education is in place for kindergarten in the Philippines, as reported by Education Undersecretary Dina Ocampo.

A number of presenters shared existing initiatives and tools in support of ensuring children's access to quality ECD. These include a resource pack on Innovative Pedagogical Approaches in ECCE in the Asia-Pacific Region produced through the joint initiatives of UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau of Education (UNESCO Bangkok) and ARNEC, in collaboration with UNICEF and OMEP, with financial support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan featuring cases from nine countries; the Global Compact for Early Childhood Development, which hopes to promote evidence-based ECD in over 100 urban cities; and the multi-country ECD study using Save the Children's International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) that reveals the need for serious investments to reach the most vulnerable children.

### Sub-Theme 3: QUALITY MONITORING OF OUTCOMES



**Dr. Venita Kaul** of Ambedkar University Delhi gave the keynote message on this sub-theme, and recommended shifting focus from inputs to outcome-based monitoring; and calibrated mechanisms for early learning development standards (ELDS) and adaptation of country-level assessment tools.

In the panel discussion on country strategies and regional initiatives, representatives from the Ministry of Education of Malaysia, Ministry of Education and Sports of Laos, Save the Children, World Bank Cambodia and ARNEC stressed the need for cross-sectoral planning and support, establishment of standards and development of quantitative and qualitative tools for monitoring ECD quality outcomes.

The significance of data in ECD policy development was presented by USAID India, which saw the need for policy makers to be informed of progress particularly in lower-income areas. Likewise, findings from a study by the American Institute for Research on Save the Children's Early Child Stimulation (ECS) Programme in Bangladesh implies that government should scale up early childhood development in partnership with NGOs.

Measurement tools presented include the University of Toronto's Early Childhood Education Report, initially developed for Canada; the Randomized Controlled Trial applied by the German Institute for Economic Research early childcare programmes in Cambodia; and the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS), which assesses the holistic developmental progress of children 3 to 5 years old based on regional education standards and goals, and allows for contextualization across different countries. UNICEF administered the EAP-ECDS among children in Cambodia, leading to recommendations to increase ECD provisions in rural areas, promote parenting classes and maternal education, and emphasise the need to address malnutrition.

Various participants also shared the importance of measuring learning outcomes and undertaking impact studies. Save the Children's First Read programme in Cambodia has been found to be a low-cost means to engage and support parents, and to monitor and evaluate behaviour change. Plan Cambodia's Integrated ECCD programme, meanwhile, resulted in participants' higher scores in all domains of the EAP-ECDS and decreased likelihood to suffer from stunting.

In Bhutan, Save the Children's study of a one year ECCD intervention showed that participating children were better prepared for primary school. Likewise, a preschool programme by Aga Khan Foundation, developed with Save the Children, in two provinces in Afghanistan resulted in very strong school readiness among attendees. Lastly, Save the Children's programme for 0 to 3 year old children in Bangladesh was found to have a positive impact on children's language and cognitive abilities.



## VI. CLOSING CEREMONY



**H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron**, *Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, and Chair of NC-ECCD*, officially concluded the Conference. He expressed appreciation for the conduct of the event in Cambodia, and affirmed the conference theme as timely, relevant and urgent. He discussed the strong messages that came out of the gathering, among them:

- The evidence on problems faced by children in the region that underscore the importance of early interventions and the need to give attention to both ECD access and quality;
- The need for integrated policies and coordinated implementation;
- The need for good policies and investments that produce real, measurable outcomes; and
- The challenge to educate the society on the importance of early childhood education.

H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron shared that Cambodia has fully subscribed to the holistic approach to ECCD and applies a result-based framework to implement the ECCD Action Plan; however, it still has many fundamental issues to address particularly in the area of quality and especially care in the first 1000 days of life and before birth. They have learned that they need to build a system that delivers results by linking policies, teacher training and preschools; ECD is multi-dimensional and should link to primary education; qualified teachers play a crucial role; a holistic approach is instrumental in fostering both cognitive and non-cognitive potential of the young children; educated parents can have a transformative power; and it is crucial to have an ECCD planning, monitoring and evaluation system.

H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron affirmed that the conference gave an opportunity to explore different approaches to achieve equity and to overcome limitations to producing healthy, smart, confident and capable children. He said that participants could return to their respective countries with renewed energy and motivation for their ECCD implementation.

Dr. Mae Chu Chang gave the closing remarks on behalf of ARNEC. She expressed gratitude to the Government of Cambodia for hosting the conference, and thanked all the participants who came from various parts of the world.

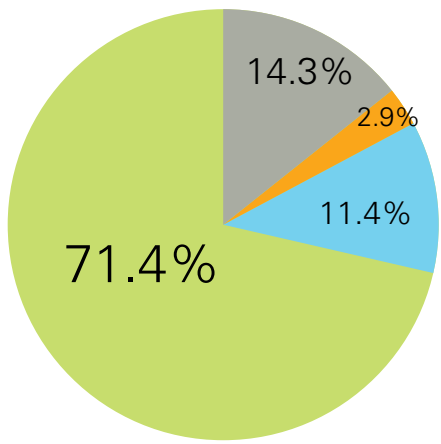
Inspired by the results of this ECD conference in Cambodia, the Honourable Minister from Nepal, **H.E. Dhani Ram Paudel** announced their desire to host the next conference which will happen in 2018. ARNEC then will work with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other ECD stakeholders in Nepal to prepare for the next Conference.

**WHAT THE DELEGATES ARE SAYING**



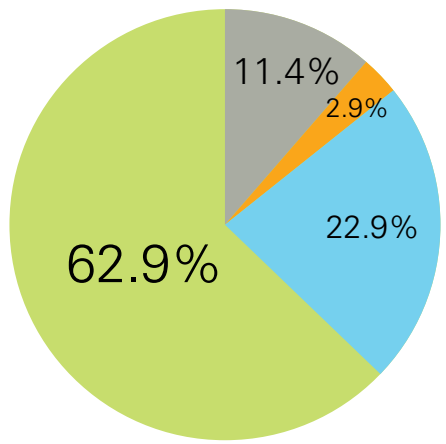
The positive feedback received from Conference participants has been remarkable. In the post-event survey, more than 85 percent expressed that the content presented at the Conference was very helpful or even extremely helpful in relation to their work. Moreover, more than 74 percent found the Conference speakers very engaging or extremely engaging.

**Chart 1:** How helpful was the content presented at the conference in relation to your scope of work?



- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not so helpful

**Chart 2:** How engaging were the speakers at the conference plenary sessions?



- Extremely engaging
- Very engaging
- Somewhat engaging
- Not so engaging

*"ARNEC conferences are always informative, relevant and backed with relevant resources and best practices... If you want to learn more about what's happening in the region, then you should attend this conference."*

– Regina Joseph Cyril, Malaysia

*"The Regional ARNEC Conference is an excellent platform to promote, learn and share noteworthy practices of ECD and status and developments in the sector. Participants across not just the Asia Pacific region but also from other continents participated at the Conference in Siem Reap."*

– Amrita Goswami, India

*"As a global leader and an early childhood educator in Fiji, I have never heard nor experience a conference that had so much to give back, a conference that was filled with so much knowledge and unity. The conference was so enriching through knowledge not only in early childhood development and education but the holistic approach to eradicating poverty and creating sustainability in our nations."*

– Temesia Tuicaumia, Fiji



## HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE COMMENTS GIVEN BY GLOBAL LEADERS AND DELEGATES



*"I would say this added a great knowledge—how it is important to take care of a young child—this has not only made me a good father but also a good advocate of ECD. Simply a great learning experience...It's a complete package of networking, mobilization, advocacy, information and knowledge. More importantly it touches heart and makes changes inside."*

– Ghulam Nabi, Pakistan

*"The ECD experts from across Asia and the Pacific have so much to share and are so passionate... There is so much to learn from the parallel sessions. The experts are so approachable."*

– Cliff Meyers, Laos

*"As someone living on the rim of the Asia-Pacific region (New Zealand), I found the conference to be a valuable overview of the current political, social and ethical situation for early childhood throughout the region. The speakers, both the plenary speakers and the workshop presenters, shared advice, suggestions for action and words of wisdom."*

– Diti Hill-Denee, New Zealand



### Annex 1: PAPER PRESENTERS

Ms. Merly Klass, Save the Children, Indonesia

***Taman Pawodda: The initiative strategies to implement ECCD Holistic and Integrative programme in West Sumba, Indonesia***

Author: Merly Aclin Nuasizta Klaas ,S.Psi.,M.S

Ms. Savitri Ray, CWDS-FORCES Network, India

***Care within ECD: Reflections from FORCES Network***

Mr. Hugh Delaney, UNICEF Thailand

***Holistic Early Childhood Development Demonstration programme in Thailand***

Mr. Oulath Saengouthay, ChildFund International, Laos

***Holistic Approach to Improved Early Childhood Development in Northern Laos***

Mr. Sarang Out, Save the Children, Cambodia

***Challenges and opportunities for deprived children in flooded and floating communities to access ECCD services***

Dr. Eva Chen, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong  
***Closing the Gap: Supporting Ethnic Minority Children and Caregivers in Hong Kong***

Authors: Eva E. Chen, Carrie Lau, Olivia Lo, Diana Lee, Yvonne Becher, Ben Richards, and Nirmala Rao

Ms. Nilda Delgado, MindHaven School, Inc., Philippines

***Demystifying the Diagnosis: An Inclusive School's Approach in improving the Socio-Emotional Skills of Children with Disabilities***

Mr. Filip Lenaerts, VVOB Vietnam

***Addressing children's barriers to learning and participation through well-being and involvement in preschools in disadvantaged, ethnically diverse districts in Vietnam***

Mrs. Eng Kalyan, ChildFund International, Cambodia

Mr. Sopheak Nuon, ChildFund International, Cambodia

***Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms Project***

Ms. Jessica Chlaudia Wahana Visi, Indonesia

***Pawis Hilir: the journey to becoming a child/ECD friendly village***

Authors: Nurman Siagian and Jessica Chlaudia

Ms. Sara Dang, Save the Children

***Adversity and early childhood in post-earthquake in Nepal: examining the relationship between cumulative adversity and children's holistic development***

Ms. Amrita Goswami USAID, India

***Early Childhood Care & Education Policy – where are we? (Case of India)***

Dr. Romona Gananathan, (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, OISE/University of Toronto, Canada)

***Evaluating Early Childhood Policy Frameworks***

Authors: Akbari, E., McCuaig, K.

Ms. Sophea Nhonh, UNICEF, Cambodia

***How are Cambodia's Children Developing? The Evidence-based policy recommendations for Early Childhood Care and Development - An Analysis of Cambodia's Data from EAP-ECD Scales by HKU***

Mr. Jan Berkes, DIW Berlin/World Bank, Germany

***Combining Supply and Demand-side Interventions: Evidence from a vast Early Childcare programme in Cambodia***

Authors: Jan Berkes, Adrien Bouguen, Deon Filmer

Ms. Maria Johanna Pia Ortiz-Luis, Cartwheel Foundation, Philippines  
***Building the Child's Resilience through Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in Education and Health***

Authors: Coleen Rae P. R, Maria Johanna P.G.O., Maria Regina A.A., Helen R.G.

Ms. Manjula Sandamali Rajapaksha Pathirage, ChildFund International, Sri Lanka  
***Conducive Environment to Achieve Proper Growth and Development for Infants and Young Children– "Lead Mothers as Agent of Change"***

Mr. Sopheak Nuon, ChildFund International, Cambodia  
***Community Led Child Nutrition Project***

Dr. Ben Richards, The University of Hong Kong  
***Why should we focus on equitable access and participation? Evidence from the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales***

Authors: Ben Richards and Nirmala Rao

Ms. Romi Laskin, The Life Skills Development Foundation, Thailand  
***Promoting Holistic Child Development in Remote Indigenous Communities on the Thailand-Myanmar Border: Collaborating with Community Stakeholders and Government Partners to Maximize Impact***

Authors: Romi Laskin, Kreangkrai Chaimuangdee, aria Rose, Charlotte Lee

Ms. Madhu Rajbhandari Munankami, Setogurans Child Development Service  
***School Readiness of Children in Nepal: Issues, Efforts and Results***

Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed, George Brown College, Canada  
***Integrating early education and care with primary education -Schools at the Centre: Lessons from Ontario's Full Day Kindergarten Programmes***

Dr. Arnaud Lailou, UNICEF, Cambodia  
***Early Child Development in 6 districts of Cambodia – challenges for appropriate growth: 2016 data***

Authors: Arnaud Lailou, Somphos Vicheth Som, Frank Wieringa, Chhoun Chamnan, Ludovic Gauthier, Etienne Poirot

Mr. Habibur Rahman, Senior Education Advisor, Save the Children, Bangladesh

Ms. Roxana Khanom, Save the Children, Bangladesh

***Building the Human Capital of Tomorrow: An Impact Evaluation of the Early Childhood Stimulation Programme in Bangladesh***

Ms. Rany Khoy, Save the Children, Cambodia

***First Read: The Transformative Power of Home-Based ECCD Interventions to Improve Learning Outcomes for Children***

Ms. Soth Sakan Plan International, Cambodia and Dr. Emma Pearson International Consultant

***Outcomes of an integrated approach to early childhood care and development in Siem Reap, Cambodia***

Authors: Borany Aum; Sakan Soth; Andrew Hill, Emma Pearson, Sun Jin, Sok Uttara

Ms. Hosneara Khondker, Save the Children, Bangladesh

***Follow up impact study of 0-3 programming on parents and children in SCI Bangladesh***

Mr. Abdul Wakil, Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan

***The impact of investing in ECD Afghanistan***

Ms. Karma Dyenka, Save the Children, Bhutan

***National ECCD Centre Programme Impact Evaluation 2015***

Ms. Ding Zhen Xin, Preschool Market Pte. Ltd, Singapore

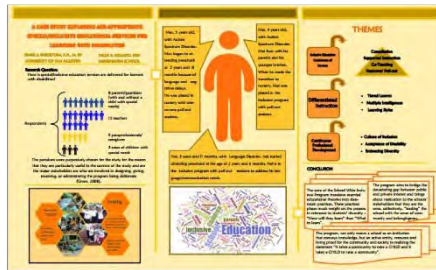
***Parent-Child Bonding through Meaningful Play Experience***

Authors: Cheong Su Fen, Ding Zhen Xin

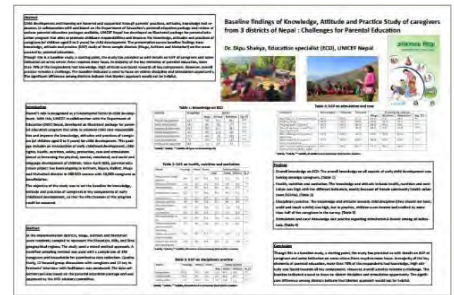
Mr. Sovann Yim, Save the Children, Cambodia

***Utilization of listening and dialogue groups to facilitate the delivery of health, growth and development messages for children in Kratie Province, Cambodia***

**Annex 2:  
POSTER PRESENTERS**



Mr. Frank S. Emboltura, Assistant professor, University of San Agustin, Philippines and Mrs. Nilda B. Delgado, Director, MindHaven School, Inc, Philippines  
***A Case Study Exploring Age-Appropriate Special/Inclusive Educational Services for Learners with Disabilities***



Dr. Dipu Shakya, Education Specialist (ECD), UNICEF Nepal  
***Baseline findings of knowledge, attitude and practice study of caregivers from 3 districts of Nepal: Challenges for parental education***



Semual Apsalon Niap and Mr. Nugroho Indera Warman, ECE Programme Advisor, Plan International, Indonesia  
***Become a Great Parent: An Evidence Based Advocacy for Holistic Integrated ECCD in Indonesia***



MS. Huang Yaqin, Programme Team Lead, Plan International, China  
***From Seed to Plant—Child Health and Development Project in Yunnan***



Dr. Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker, Head of Health Programme, Plan International Bangladesh,  
***Ensuring bright future in first two years of life in rural Bangladesh***



Mr. Vijayanti Kurukundi, Head, Resource & Research, Akshara Foundation  
***ECCE - Making a quality public sector pre-school a reality: Akshara's experience***

Mrs. Hanh Le Thi Bich, Education Manager, Plan International, Vietnam  
***Introduction to the Child Play and Reading groups - more learning opportunity for young children***

Ms. Oulayphone Dethkongxay, Education Specialist, Plan International, Laos,  
***Summer Pre-School in Remote Ethnic Communities in Lao PDR***



**Annex 3:**  
**CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AGENDA**

<b>DAY 1: MARCH 1 (Wednesday)</b>	
	<b>Plenary 1: Opening Ceremony and Welcome</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:05am</b>	<b>National anthem of the Kingdom of Cambodia</b>
<b>09:05 – 09:15am</b>	<b>Welcome Speech:</b> <b>Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer</b> Chair of ARNEC Board of Directors
<b>09:15 – 09:30am</b>	<b>Welcome Speech:</b> <b>Ms. Karin Hulshof</b> Regional Director UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)
<b>09:30 – 10:15am</b>	<b>Opening Speech:</b> <b>Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN</b> Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
<b>10:15 – 10:30am</b>	<b>Photo Session with the Prime Minister</b> <b>(Prime Minister, MoEYS, ARNEC Board of Directors and Core Team, UNESCO, UNICEF and Heads of Country Delegations)</b>
<b>10:30 – 10:45am</b>	<b>Press Conference (MoEYS, ARNEC and UNICEF)</b>
<b>10:45 – 11:00am</b>	<b>Short Remarks from the Ministers</b> <b>H.E. Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman</b> Minister of State, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Pakistan <b>Hon. Jean Pierre Nirua</b> Minister of Education and Training, Vanuatu
<b>11:00am – 12:00pm</b>	<b>Plenary 2: Keynote Address</b> <i>Laying the foundations for a healthy and prosperous society: Investing in early childhood development</i> <b>Professor Frank Oberklaid</b> Director of the Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital – Melbourne Honorary Professor of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne
<b>12:00 – 01:30pm</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b> <b>Video Presentations</b>
<b>01:30 – 03:00pm</b>	<b>Plenary 3: Panel Discussion</b> <i>Early Moments Matter</i> <b>Introduction of the session:</b> <b>Dr. Mae Chu Chang</b> ARNEC Board of Director <b>Moderator:</b> <b>Dr. Chemba Raghavan</b> Regional Education Specialist, UNICEF EAPRO, Bangkok <b>Panel Speakers:</b> <b>Dr. Gaspar Fajth</b> Regional Advisor, Social Policy, UNICEF EAPRO <b>Dr. Douglas Noble</b> Deputy Representative, UNICEF China <b>Mr. Stephen Blight</b> Regional Advisor, Child Protection, UNICEF EAPRO <b>Ms. Christiane Rudert</b> Regional Advisor, Nutrition, UNICEF EAPRO <b>Ms. Urmila Sarkar</b> Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF ROSA <b>Ms. Maki Hayashikawa</b> Chief of Section for Inclusive Quality Education in UNESCO Bangkok, Thailand

03:00 – 03:30pm	Coffee Break
03:30 – 05:30pm	<p><b>High-level Meeting of Ministers/Heads of Delegations on SDG Target 4.2</b></p> <p><b>Chair: H.E Dr. Hang Chuon Naron</b> Minister of MoEYS, and Chair of NC-ECCD</p> <p><b>Co-chair: Ms. Karin Hulshof</b> Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)</p>
03:30 – 05:30pm	<p><b>Concurrent Paper Presentations</b></p>
<p>VENUE 1 Grand Ballroom 1</p>	<p><b>Session Title: <i>Holistic approach to ECD: Some programme practices in the Asia-Pacific Region</i></b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi</b> UNICEF-ROSA</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Mr. Lee Jiao Hao</b> ARNEC Intern</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Merly Klass</b> Save the Children, Indonesia <i>Taman Pawodda: The initiative strategies to implement ECCD Holistic and Integrative programme in West Sumba, Indonesia</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Savitri Ray</b> CWDS-FORCES Network, India <i>Care within ECD: Reflections from FORCES Network</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Hugh Delaney</b> UNICEF Thailand <i>Holistic Early Childhood Development Demonstration programme in Thailand</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Oulath Saengouthay</b> ChildFund International, Laos <i>Holistic Approach to Improved Early Childhood Development in Northern Laos</i></p>
<p>VENUE 2 Grand Ballroom 2</p>	<p><b>Session Title: <i>Providing ECD access to the most marginalized young children</i></b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Ms. Monisha Diwan</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Dr. Eunhye Park</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Sarang Out</b> Save the Children, Cambodia <i>Challenges and opportunities for deprived children in flooded and floating communities to access ECCD services</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Eva Chen</b> The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology , Hong Kong <i>Closing the Gap: Supporting Ethnic Minority Children and Caregivers in Hong Kong</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Nilda Delgado</b> MindHaven School, Inc., Philippines <i>Demystifying the Diagnosis: An Inclusive School's Approach in improving the Socio-Emotional Skills of Children with Disabilities</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Filip Lenaerts</b> VVOB Vietnam <i>Addressing children's barriers to learning and participation through well-being and involvement in preschools in disadvantaged, ethnically diverse districts in Vietnam</i></p>
<p>VENUE 3 Annex 1 Meeting Room Ground Floor</p>	<p><b>Session Title: <i>Addressing health and child protection needs in ECD</i></b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Dr. Chiam Heng Keng</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Ms. Marilyn Manuel</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Sopheak Nuon</b> ChildFund International, Cambodia <i>Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms Project</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Jessica Chludia</b> Wahana Visi, Indonesia <i>Pawis Hilir: the journey to becoming a child/ECD friendly village</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Yasmeen Mehboob</b> Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan <i>Health Screening in early stages: An approach towards healthier in whole life</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Sara Dang</b> Save the Children <i>Adversity and early childhood in post-earthquake in Nepal: examining the relationship between cumulative adversity and children's holistic development</i></p>

VENUE 4  
Executive  
Meeting Room  
2nd floor

**Session Title: *Data analysis and policy support for effective ECD***

**Moderator: Dr. Christine Chen** ARNEC Board of Director

**Rapporteur: Mr. Karma Gayleg** ARNEC Steering Committee Member

**Presenters:**

**Ms. Amrita Goswami** USAID, India

***Early Childhood Care & Education Policy – where are we? (Case of India)***

**Dr. Romona Gananathan** (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development,  
OISE/University of Toronto, Canada)

***Evaluating Early Childhood Policy Frameworks***

**Ms. Sophea Nhonh** UNICEF, Cambodia

***How are Cambodia's Children Developing? The Evidence-based policy recommendations for Early Childhood Care and Development - An Analysis of Cambodia's Data from EAP-ECD Scales by HKU***

**Mr. Jan Berkes** DIW Berlin/World Bank, Germany

***Combining Supply and Demand-side Interventions: Evidence from a vast Early Childcare programme in Cambodia***

**18:30 – 20:30pm**

**Gala Dinner with cultural presentation hosted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia**

**DAY 2: MARCH 2 (Thursday)**

**09:00 – 09:10am**

**Day 2 Welcome/Short Remarks from the Ministers**

**H.E. Meher Afroze**

Minister of State, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh

**H.E. Kalwin Kephias**

Secretary of Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia

**09:10 – 09:15am**

**Daily Announcements**

**09:15 – 10:15am**

**Plenary 4: Sub-theme 1 Keynote Presentation**

***How can early childhood policies help to achieve service equity and quality?***

**Speaker:**

**Dr. Emily Vargas-Baron**

Director, RISE Institute

**Q&A**

**10:15 – 10:45am**

**Coffee Break**

**Q&A**

**10:45 – 11:45am**

**Plenary 5: Sub-theme 2 Keynote Presentation**

***Structural Challenges to Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Holistic ECD***

**Speaker:**

**Dr. Manzoor Ahmed**

Professor Emeritus at BRAC University in Dhaka and Chair of Bangladesh Early Childhood Development Network (BEN)

**Q&A**



12:00 – 01:30pm	Lunch Break Video Presentations
01:30 – 03:00pm	Parallel Sessions
VENUE 1 Grand Ballroom 1	<p><b>Panel Discussion:</b> <i><b>Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in early years</b></i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Ms. Maki Hayashikawa</b> UNESCO Bangkok</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Ms. Kyungah Bang</b> UNESCO</p> <p><b>Panel Speakers:</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer</b> ARNEC Chair of the Board of Directors</p> <p><b>Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi</b> Chief, Nepal Language Commission</p> <p><b>H.E. Prak Kosal</b> Director of Early Childhood Education Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; and Deputy General Secretary for the ECCD General Secretariat, ECCD National Committee, Cambodia</p> <p><b>Undersecretary Dina Ocampo</b> Office of the Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Department of Education, Philippines</p>
VENUE 2 Grand Ballroom 2	<p><b>Session Title: <i>Policies and programmes addressing the holistic nature of ECD</i></b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Dr. Sukhdeep Gill</b> Associate Professor, Penn State University</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Mr. Zhixin Du</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Eunhye Park, Professor</b> Department of Early Childhood Education, Ewha Women's University, Seoul, Korea <i>Different Problems and Same Theme: Policies addressing holistic nature of ECD</i></p> <p><b>IECD in Viet Nam 2017-2021</b> <i>From Policy to Practice</i></p> <p><b>Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir</b> Joint Educational Advisor, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Trainings, Pakistan <i>Holistic ECD in Pakistan</i></p>
VENUE 3 Annex 1 Meeting Room Ground Floor	<p><b>Session Title: <i>Orientation on the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS)</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction to the Scale: ARNEC or UNICEF EAPRO</b></p> <p><b>Presenters/Facilitators: Dr. Diana Lee and Dr. Yvonne Becher</b> The University of Hong Kong</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Ms. Andrea See</b> ARNEC Secretariat</p>
VENUE 4 Executive Meeting Room 2nd floor	<p><b>Workshop on International Development and Early Learning Assessment (Save the Children)</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Ms. Sara Dang</b> Save the Children</p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Mr. Karma Gayleg</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member</p>
03:00 – 03:30pm	Coffee Break

03:30 – 05:30pm

Parallel Sessions/Concurrent Paper Presentations

VENUE 1  
Grand Ballroom 1

**Panel Discussion:**

***Addressing equity and inclusion in ECD: Achievements and Challenges***

**Moderator: Mr. Cliff Meyers**

**Rapporteur: ARNEC**

**Panel Speakers:**

**H.E Lor Chhavanna** Deputy General Secretary for the ECCD General Secretariat, ECCD National Committee, Cambodia

**Mr. Tibor Van Staveren** Regional Programme Manager, ChildFund International, Asia Region

**Ms. Elaisa Mendoza** Educational Research and Innovation Office, SEAMEO Innotech

**Dr. Melanie Swan** Global Advisor Early Childhood Development, Plan International

**Mr. Sherab Phuntshok** Chief Programme Officer, ECCD&SEN Division, MoE Bhutan

**Ms. Ufemia Bera Camaitoga** PRC4ECCE, Pacific Council

VENUE 2  
Grand Ballroom 2

**Session Title: *ECD Noteworthy Practices and Initiatives***

**Moderator: Ms. Silke Friesendorf** ARNEC Secretariat

**Rapporteur: Mr. Zhixin Du** ARNEC Steering Committee Member

**Presenters:**

**Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago** ARNEC

**Ms. Kyungah Bang** UNESCO Bangkok  
***Effective Pedagogical Approaches in ECCE in the Asia-Pacific Region:  
A resource pack***

**Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago** Executive Director, ARNEC  
***The Global Compact Initiative for Early Childhood Development  
(An initiative in partnership with New York Academy of Sciences)***

**Ms. Sara Dang** Save the Children  
***IDELA Cross-country report***

VENUE 3  
Annex 1  
Meeting Room  
Ground Floor

**Session Title: *Multi-sectoral collaboration for ECD***

**Moderator: ARNEC**

**Rapporteur: Ms. Andrea See** ARNEC Secretariat

**Presenters:**

**Ms. Maria Johanna Pia Ortiz-Luis** Cartwheel Foundation, Philippines  
***Building the Child's Resilience through Multi-Stakeholder  
Collaboration in Education and Health***

**Ms. Manjula Sandamali Rajapaksha Pathirage** ChildFund International, Sri Lanka  
***Conducive Environment to Achieve Proper Growth and Development  
for Infants and Young Children– "Lead Mothers as Agent of Change"***

**Mr. Sopheak Nuon** ChildFund International, Cambodia  
***Community Led Child Nutrition Project***

VENUE 4  
Executive Meeting Room  
2nd floor

**Session Title: *Equitable access to ECD***  
**Moderator: Ms. Marilyn Manuel** ARNEC Steering Committee Member  
**Rapporteur: Mr. Lee Jiao Hao** ARNEC Intern  
**Presenters:**  
**Dr. Ben Richards** The University of Hong Kong  
*Why should we focus on equitable access and participation? Evidence from the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales*  
**Dr. Tsendsuren Tume** Mongolian National University of Education  
*Home-based early childhood education for the most disadvantaged children in peri-urban areas*  
**Ms. Romi Laskin** The Life Skills Development Foundation, Thailand  
*Promoting Holistic Child Development in Remote Indigenous Communities on the Thailand-Myanmar Border: Collaborating with Community Stakeholders and Government Partners to Maximize Impact*

VENUE 5  
Executive Meeting Room  
4th floor

**Session Title: *Getting children ready for school***  
**Moderator: Dr. Mae Chu Chang** ARNEC Board of Director  
**Rapporteur: Dr. Mugyeong Moon** ARNEC Steering Committee Member  
**Presenters:**  
**Ms. Madhu Rajbhandari Munankami** Setogurans Child Development Service  
*School Readiness of Children in Nepal: Issues, Efforts and Results*  
**Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed** George Brown College, Canada  
*Integrating early education and care with primary education -Schools at the Centre: Lessons from Ontario's Full Day Kindergarten Programmes*  
**Ms. Patricia Young** Child to Child, United Kingdom  
*Getting Ready for School: A Child to Child approach*  
**Dr. Arnaud Laillou** UNICEF, Cambodia  
*Early Child Development in 6 districts of Cambodia – challenges for appropriate growth: 2016 data*

**07:00 – 08:30pm** Film Showing: "The Beginning of Life"

**DAY 3: MARCH 3 (Friday)**

**09:00 – 09:10am**  
Grand Ballroom

**Day 3 Welcome/Short Remarks from the Ministers**  
**H.E. Norbu Wangchuk**  
Minister of Education, Bhutan  
**H.E. Fauoa Manni**  
Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Tuvalu

**09:10 – 09:20am**  
Grand Ballroom

**Sharing of highlights from the High-Level Meeting of Ministers**  
**H.E. Ahmed Shafeeu**  
Ministry of State for Education, Maldives



<b>09:20 – 10:15am</b> Grand Ballroom	<b>Plenary 6: Sub-theme 3 Keynote Presentation</b> <b><i>Monitoring ECD Quality Outcomes: Need and Way Forward</i></b> <b>Speaker:</b> <b>Dr. Venita Kaul</b> Executive Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Center for Early Childhood Education and Development, Ambedkar University Delhi  <b>Q&amp;A</b>
<b>10:15 – 10:45am</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>10:45am – 12:15pm</b>	<b>Panel Discussion/Concurrent Paper Presentations</b>
VENUE 1 Grand Ballroom 1	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> <b><i>Monitoring ECD Quality Outcomes: Country strategies and regional initiatives/tools</i></b> <b>Moderator: Ms. Tina Hyder</b> Open Society Foundations <b>Rapporteur: Ms. Andrea See</b> ARNEC Secretariat <b>Speakers:</b> <b>Mr. Simeth Beng</b> Senior Operations Officer, World Bank Office-Cambodia <b>Ms. Marianne O’Grady</b> Technical Advisor International Programme Team, Save the Children <b>Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago</b> Executive Director, ARNEC <b>Speakers from 2 countries (TBD) – Tentative: Lao PDR and Malaysia</b>
VENUE 2 Annex 1 Meeting Room Ground Floor	<b>Session Title: <i>Improving learning outcomes for young children</i></b> <b>Moderator: Dr. Mugyeong Moon</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member <b>Rapporteur: Mr. Zhixin Du</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member <b>Presenters:</b> <b>Mr. Habibur Rahman</b> Senior Education Advisor, Save the Children, Bangladesh <b>Ms. Roxana Khanom</b> Save the Children, Bangladesh <b><i>Building the Human Capital of Tomorrow: An Impact Evaluation of the Early Childhood Stimulation Programme in Bangladesh</i></b> <b>Ms. Rany Khoy</b> Save the Children, Cambodia <b><i>First Read: The Transformative Power of Home-Based ECCD Interventions to Improve Learning Outcomes for Children</i></b> <b>Ms. Soth Sakan</b> Plan International, Cambodia <b>and Dr. Emma Pearson</b> International Consultant <b><i>Outcomes of an integrated approach to early childhood care and development in Siem Reap, Cambodia</i></b>
VENUE 3 Executive Meeting Room 2nd floor	<b>Session Title: <i>Looking at the impact of ECD in some countries</i></b> <b>Moderator: Dr. Eunhye Park</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member <b>Rapporteur: Mr. Karma Gayleg</b> ARNEC Steering Committee Member <b>Presenters:</b> <b>Ms. Hosneara Khondker</b> Save the Children, Bangladesh <b><i>Follow up impact study of 0-3 programming on parents and children in SCI Bangladesh</i></b> <b>Mr. Abdul Wakil</b> Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan <b><i>The impact of investing in ECD Afghanistan</i></b> <b>Ms. Karma Dyenka</b> Save the Children, Bhutan <b><i>National ECCD Centre Programme Impact Evaluation 2015</i></b>

VENUE 4  
Executive  
Meeting Room  
4th floor

**Session Title: *Inclusive and Innovative approaches to ECD***

**Moderator: Ms. Sara Dang** ARNEC Steering Committee Member

**Rapporteur: Mr. Lee Jiao Hao** ARNEC Intern

**Presenters:**

**Ms. Dharitri Patnaik** Bernard Van Leer Foundation, India

**Mr. Vishal Kumar Dev** Indian Administrative Service Commissioner cum Secretary,  
Women & Child Development Department, Government of Odisha

***Language Matters & So Does Many Other Factors-Scaling Up Mother Tongue Based Early  
Childhood Care & Development***

**Ms. Ding Zhen Xin** Preschool Market Pte. Ltd, Singapore

***Parent-Child Bonding through Meaningful Play Experience***

**Mr. Sovann Yim** Save the Children, Cambodia

***Utilization of listening and dialogue groups to facilitate the delivery of health, growth and  
development messages for children in Kratie Province, Cambodia***

**12:15 – 01:45pm**

**Lunch Break**

**02:00 – 02:45pm**

**Plenary 7: Closing and Announcements**

**ARNEC Announcement and Country Commitments**

**Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago** ARNEC's Executive Director

**Closing Remarks and Word of Thanks**

**H.E. Dhani Ram Paudel**

**(on behalf of all the Government Delegates from the Asia-Pacific Region)**

Minister, Ministry of Education, Nepal

**H.E Dr. Hang Chuon Naron** Minister of MoEYS, and Chair of NC-ECCD

**Dr. Mae Chu Chang** ARNEC's Board of Director

## Annex 4: SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

### DAY 1

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#### Panel Discussion: Early Moments Matter

*UNICEF launched a four year Global ECD campaign #EarlyMomentsMatter in early 2017 to increase understanding, engagement, commitment and investment globally around the importance of nutrition, stimulation, love and protection in the earliest years of life. In this panel, the rationale and significance of this undertaking was underscored, particularly in the context of the Asia-Pacific region.*

Ms. Urmila Sarkar, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF ROSA, emphasised that early experiences influence a child's health and brain development as well as a range of skills, capacities and behaviours throughout life. However, public investment in Early Childhood Education is very low. In the South Asia region, for example, India and Nepal spend only about 2% of public education funding on Early Childhood Education as compared to the international benchmark of 10%. Ms. Sarkar called upon governments to increase investment for ECD, and stressed the need to work across sectors and ministries to improve the quality and reach of ECD services.

Christiane Rudert, Regional Advisor, Nutrition, UNICEF EAPRO, explained that the first 1,000 days of a child's life, starting from conception until the child reaches two years of age, is the window to ensure that both the mother and the infant receive recommended feeding, care and health practices. She then shared that stunting reduces individual earning capacity in adulthood by as much as 22%, and also causes losses to a nation's GDP of up to 11%. This is why investing in maternal and child nutrition is such a smart move: the return on every dollar invested is estimated to be 16 dollars. She further emphasised the need for a holistic ECD programme model, in which all available platforms are utilized to combine the delivery of nutrition, early childhood development, health and WASH interventions to children.

Stephen Blight, Regional Advisor, Child Protection, UNICEF EAPRO, shared that in Asia alone, some 800 million children experienced some form of violence over the past year. He explained that in addition to being a violation of children's fundamental rights, violence particularly in young childhood can seriously threaten mental and social development. UNICEF research has also shown that the impacts of violence against children result in the loss of around 2 billion dollars per year of the region's economic potential. Investments in child protection systems are thus critical for national development agendas in the region. He recommended a three-pronged strategy that covers supporting positive parenting, challenging harsh disciplining norms, and pushing for legal prohibitions against all forms of violence against children.

Lastly, Gaspar Fajth, Regional Advisor, Social Policy, UNICEF EAPRO, said that there is now a very strong, global body of evidence suggesting that social protection interventions are effective in helping children's physical, mental and social development. Evidence shows, moreover, that families use cash transfers well and effectively for buying food, medicines and meeting better the education needs of their children. However, Asia-Pacific countries spend on average only 0.2 per cent of their GDP on child-centred social assistance. He stressed that people cannot talk about holistic interventions for young children if social protection programmes are vastly underdeveloped. He cited very promising initiatives in the region – countries offering cash grants to pregnant women and families with young children – that need to be nurtured, financed, monitored and collaborated on so that they can become a success.



## **Holistic approach to ECD: Some programme practices in the Asia-Pacific Region**

*Several groups presented their efforts to bring a holistic approach to ECD and, while there appears to have a national framework in the country where they are, localisation poses as a challenge. Presentations were made on how to address such.*

Ms. Merly Klass of Save the Children Indonesia presented how the Indonesia government's HI ECCD national programme of 2013 was not being realised at the village level. She then described the strategies conducted by Save the Children in the West Sumba district. Taman Pawodda, or the garden of collaboration, makes use of teams led by local First Lady, where different stakeholders come together to plan, implement and evaluate programmes in the six HI ECCD centres. Save the Children supports through a multi-disciplinary approach of education, healthcare and nutrition service, parenting education, and child protection.

Ms. Savitri Ray presented that while a national programme is in place for ECCD in India, studies undertaken by the organisation FORCES found that understanding of holistic development is missing on the local level. Recommendations include incorporating ECCD in the training workshops of the Panchayati Raj institutions and to sensitize them with the needs of women and children, as well as enhancing the budget for ECCD.

Mr. Hugh Delaney spoke about the 13 provinces in Thailand where UNICEF Thailand is implementing its ECD Demonstration Programme in line with the National ECD Plan. UNICEF Thailand's focus on children 0 to 6 years old involves policymakers and stakeholders, ECD professionals, and parents and families. Learnings from the programme include localising context for project design and parenting, setting up a solid baseline for evaluation, and to keep teachers motivated.

Mr. Oulath Saeng Outhay described the Early Childhood Education Intervention of Child Fund Laos in the two provinces in Northern Laos, Huaphanh and Xiengkhuang. ECE is being achieved through community involvement, including youth and children. However, limitations in awareness and language present challenges.

## **Providing ECD access to the most marginalised young children**

*There are different conditions of how young children are marginalised. For the studies presented here, the key intervention lies with the training of the teacher or parents to individualise approaches.*

Mr. Sarang Out spoke about the experience-based study conducted by Save the Children in Cambodia where they found children in the flooded and floating communities to be in lack of supply and space. There is strong recommendation towards home-based ECCD, in addition to floating centres providing services to parents, educators and children.

Recognising the increasing population of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, Dr. Eva Chen presented the three-pronged intervention studied by her group from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, which were child literacy, parent literacy and parenting skills. Results were all positive and from which recommendations to support children from ethnic minorities were drawn.

Ms. Nilda Delgado talked about how MindHaven in the Philippines applied an adjusted version of their Demystification process to parents and caregivers of 3 to 5 year olds. The process led to understanding of the children, an effective feedback system and eventually a collaborative, individualised, home-school programme.

Mr. Filip Lenaerts presented the study by VVOB Vietnam in two disadvantaged, ethnically diverse districts in Vietnam. The study involved teachers of 3 to 5 year olds acknowledging barriers to learning and participation. By initiating actions to address these barriers, increased care and participation was achieved.

## Addressing health and child protection needs in ECD

*Children's rights for health and protection have been gaining recognition through the cooperation of government and organisations. Here, the interventions show to have a positive impact on early child development.*

Mr. Sopheak Nuon shared Child Fund Cambodia's "Community Based Child Protection Mechanism" in Chhloung District, Kratie Province where issues on child protection thrive. By focusing on the National and Sub-national levels, as well as on the communities, they were able to establish 20 informal groups of children, youth and parents engaged in discussion and planning of child protection, and strengthened formal structures functioning to respond to child protection issues.

Ms. Jessica Chludia reported how Wahana Visi Indonesia, a partner of World Vision Indonesia, implemented HI ECCD in Pawis Hilir from 2012 to 2016 in the areas of education, parenting and health. Pawis Hilir was a village that used to be without an early child development centre and 4 year olds were forced by parents to enter primary school and to do farm work. The village has now become the pilot of Community Based Child Protection in West Kalimantan, which will be replicated in other villages.

Ms. Sara Dang presented the study by Save The Children Nepal in the Kavre and Saptari districts of Nepal in June 2016. Beginning with the recognition that adversity in early childhood increases likelihood for heart disease as well as result in fewer connections in the prefrontal cortex than a normal brain, the study, conducted for the 0 to 3 year old and the 3 to 5 year old age groups, found that key ingredients to addressing adversity were early stimulation and responsive care and safety. However, the study also found that the impact on developmental outcomes of cumulative adversity is not clear – so future work may consider adverse factors individually rather than as part of a cumulative index.

## Data analysis and policy support for effective ECD

*Proper data analyses promise to expose gaps between practice and policy, leading to appropriate recommendations to delivering early childhood development. Here are examples of data that contribute to policy making.*

Ms. Amrita Goswami of USAID India presented India's position with regard to policies governing the care of children 0 to 6 years old. The National ECCE Policy aligns other policies, envisioning holistic development. However, there are gaps in policy and practice especially in low-income areas so it is important to keep all concerned parents, ECCE workers and policy makers informed as stakeholders in this venture.

Dr. Romona Gananathan of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, University of Toronto, Canada, presented the Early Childhood Education Report, a planning and accountability tool that uses 5 equally weighted categories: Governance, Funding, Access, Quality in the Early Learning Environment, and Accountability. The Report was developed for Canada, which it reveals to be needing comprehensive approaches to ECE service development. It can be adapted for other jurisdictions and can be useful in providing comparative information in federated states where ECE policy and services vary by region.

Ms. Sophea Nhonh of UNICEF Cambodia talked about the administration of the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS) on children 3 to 5 years old in Cambodia, which revealed that ECCD has high impact on children's development. Recommendations include the increase of ECD provisions in rural areas, promotion of parenting classes and maternal education, and an emphasis on malnutrition.

Mr. Jan Berkes of DIW Berlin (German Institute for Economic Research) described how Randomized Controlled Trial applied on the early childcare programmes in Cambodia would help identify primary hurdles to preschool participation in rural Cambodia. A baseline survey was taken in 2016, and midline and end line surveys will be taken in 2017 and 2018, respectively. Baseline data shows that community preschool expansion (supply side) promises to generate impact; while demand side interventions provide crucial insights for inequality, particularly in low-income areas.

## DAY 2

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### Panel Discussion:

#### **Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in early years**

*The panellists presented the necessity and the challenges of mother tongue-based multilingual education in the early years, as well as experiences that show how it can work and benefit children in different contexts.*

Chair of ARNEC Board of Directors Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer emphasised that learning first in one's mother tongue leads to better outcomes in the future –for individuals, cultures, and nations – and that readiness to learn and periods of transition in the early years are made easier if made in mother tongue. He challenged the persistent practice of delivering ECD in a language that children poorly understand, in an environment that represses their cultural identity. He concluded that for both cultural and educational reasons, and as a child's right, early care and education and initial learning should be provided in a child's mother tongue.

Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi, Chief of the Nepal Language Commission, shared that ECD in Nepal is mostly operated in mother tongue, as emphasized in the current School Sector Development Programme, with oral approaches prevailing in ECD centres in collaboration with parents and nongovernmental organizations. There is an existing challenge, however, in facilitating children's transition from ECD to Grade 1, which is taught in Nepali and English.

H.E. Prak Kosal, who serves concurrently as Director of Early Childhood Education Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and Deputy General Secretary for the ECCD General Secretariat, ECCD National Committee, Cambodia, discussed how multilingual education has been introduced in Cambodia from early childhood to address language barriers between Khmer teachers and children from ethnic minority groups, and to facilitate increased enrolment and completion rates of these children. The undertaking involved the development of a culturally relevant curriculum with inputs from community members, teacher training, and workshops for men and women in the communities. In the current year, 1,568 children from nine ethnic groups participated in the programme, and this coverage is projected to reach 10,000 by year 2018.

Department of Education Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Dina Ocampo from the Philippines talked about the national policy on MTB-MLE for kindergarten in the Philippines. The goal is for all children to be literate in their respective mother tongues by the end of Grade 1, in Filipino by the end of Grade 2, and in English by the end of Grade 3. To facilitate this, MTB-MLE materials have been produced and teachers engage in collaborative learning and problem solving in "learning action cells" with school officials. For children in poor communities, a two-year project that incorporated MTB-MLE with parent education and health interventions resulted in improved literacy, mathematics and thinking skills among all the 16,020 beneficiaries.

#### **Policies and Programmes Addressing the Holistic Nature of ECD**

*The session dealt with current challenges to ensuring children's access to quality, holistic ECD, and examples of policies and programmes that have been put in place to address these.*

Dr. Eunhye Park from Ewha Women's University, Seoul, Korea, presented an evaluation of recent early childhood education policies in ten countries across Asia Pacific based on the '3A2S' framework, which refers to accessibility, affordability, accountability, sustainability, and social justice. The evaluation concludes that some countries have achieved sound solutions to ECE challenges within the 3A2S framework, while others lack monitoring and finance mechanisms to ensure and sustain free ECE for all.

Mr. Dang Hoa Nam from the Ministry of Labours, Invalids and Social Affairs, Vietnam, discussed the policies in place in Vietnam to support all children's access to Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD). Continuing challenges include the lack of cross-sectoral coordination to ensure integration of services, and limited government investment

resulting in inadequate implementation and monitoring. These gaps have been addressed by the drafting of a National IECD Scheme for 2018 to 2025 that mandates, among other provisions, collaboration among multiple ministries and organizations at the local and national levels.

Lastly, Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Trainings, Pakistan shared how holistic ECCE is being implemented in Pakistan. Public sector efforts include the implementation of a national education policy focusing on ECE, and the development of a national curriculum. Through public-private partnerships, meanwhile, pioneering programmes have been implemented such as an interactive radio instruction programme called Broad Class-Listen to Learn, adjudged Most Innovative Development Project in the 17th Global Development Network Conference; and the Parwaan Preschool, which provides entrepreneurship and pedagogy training as well as financial access to youth to enable them to establish ECCE centres in their respective communities.

### **Orientation on the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS)**

Dr. Diana Lee from the University of Hong Kong and Dr. Yvonne Becher from The Child Development Centre, Hong Kong presented the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS), which was originated, developed and validated to assess the holistic developmental progress of children 3 to 5 years old in the region. A total of 8,000 children and their parents from six countries were involved in the development of the tool. It is based on regional education standards and goals, allows for contextualization across different countries, and provides comprehensive data covering a child's developmental level, family background and early home learning, health and habits. At present the EAP-ECDS is being prepared for dissemination through translation and in-country training activities.

### **ECD Noteworthy Practices and Initiatives**

*The session on ECD noteworthy practices and initiatives included presentations on a resource publication, a global movement among cities, and a research, all underscoring the significance and viability of innovative models to ensuring children's access to quality early childhood care and development.*

Ms. Kyungah Bang from UNESCO, Bangkok, and Ms. Evelyn Santiago, ARNEC Executive Director, presented the resource pack on Innovative Pedagogical Approaches in ECCE in the Asia-Pacific Region. The publication features cases from nine countries and reflects models for empowering teachers, facilitators, children, parents and communities; overcoming challenges on resources and marginalization; transforming perception, practices, communities and children's lives; and building on existing capacity and maximizing sustainability.

Ms. Evelyn Santiago then shared the Global Compact for Early Childhood Development, a network of cities and experts aimed at sharing best practices, testing new approaches and finding innovative solutions to promote evidence-based ECD. In its first "early adopter cities" workshop in late 2016, participants agreed to focus on developing common standards for ECD-friendly cities, and promoting the ECD Cities Network as a global movement. The network hopes to include over 100 cities extending services to more than 25 million children by 2020.

Ms. Sara Dang from Save the Children was the last presenter in this session, and she discussed findings on ECD access, quality and equity across multiple countries from the International Development and Early Learning Assessment. It reports that the most vulnerable children are not able to access preschool programmes thus, alternative modes to facilitate caring and stimulating environments both at home and in centers must be developed and serious focus and investment are needed to close the early gaps for the most vulnerable children.



## **Multi-sectoral collaboration for ECD**

*This session featured ECD programmes that provide models for collaboration among different stakeholder groups in the community, at varying levels, from individual parents to government and the private sector.*

Ms. Maria Johanna Pia Ortiz-Luis from Cartwheel Foundation, Philippines, shared the highlights of an education and health programme in Palawan province that facilitates resilience building among indigenous children. The programme operates ECD classrooms as safe spaces for healing and learning, strengthens home-school connection, promotes health education and research-informed health services. It illustrates the viability and significance of involving families and community members in the programme development cycle, drawing from indigenous knowledge, systems and practices, and nurturing partnerships to multiply resources and opportunities.

Ms. Manjula Sandamali Rajapaksha Pathirage from Childfund International presented a programme that equipped 33 mothers in Hambantota District, Sri Lanka to become volunteer peer educators promoting home based early childhood care and development in their community. The programme resulted in the recovery of 100 percent of participating underweight children. Moreover, 90 percent of participating families created “child-friendly corners” in their homes. The programme serves as a model for localising national ECCD programmes and developing social service delivery mechanisms.

Lastly, Mr. Sopheak Noun, also from Childfund International, discussed the process and the outcomes of the Community-Led Child Nutrition Project pilot implementation in Kratie, Cambodia. The project involved community leaders, youth groups and parents in various levels of training, education and service delivery interventions, which resulted in significantly increased weight among the participating 0-5 year old children. The project is being refined in preparation for a second phase.

## **Equitable access to ECD**

*The two presentations in this session highlighted the importance of reaching all children, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable, so that they can benefit from ECD.*

Dr. Ben Richards from the University of Hong Kong shared research findings on the relationship between socio-economic status and child development, as established using the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS) survey with data covering 7,588 children 3 to 5 years old from six countries. The study reveals that maternal education and household wealth have strong positive relationship with child development, most notably the cognitive, language and literacy, and socio-emotional domains. Attending pre-school, however, significantly helps reduce the inequalities in child development borne by socio-economic status; thus, focus should be given to equitable access and participation in early childhood education.

Ms. Romi Laskin from The Life Skills Development Foundation, Thailand then discussed the work of The Life Skills Development Foundation (TLSDF) in remote indigenous communities on the Thailand-Myanmar border. TLSDF implements a holistic ECCD programme by building capacity and collaborating with parent volunteers, day caregivers and kindergarten teachers, and local government officials. The programme resulted in increased parental awareness on the importance of pre-and post-natal care, supervision, and supporting child development; increased day care attendance; and improved quality of day care and kindergarten. It also enabled local government units to embrace and support ECCD.

## Getting children ready for school

*This session deals with research data supporting the need for intentional, holistic approaches for ECD to facilitate school readiness among children. A sampling of such model approaches are also presented for possible contextualization and replication.*

Ms. Madhu Rajbhandari Munankami from the Setogurans Child Development Service, Nepal presented findings from a school readiness study among 4 to 5-year old children in two districts in Nepal. It shows that almost all the children manifest physical, social and emotional development, but less than half have the pre-literacy and pre-math skills needed for school readiness. The study therefore recommends an ECD policy that will address holistic and contextual modalities, mandate two years of ECD, require parent education programmes, and establish monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed from George Brown College, Canada shared case studies exploring seamless early learning in Ontario, Canada, where the implementation of full day kindergarten facilitated the moving of preschool education from child welfare into the public education system. Lessons from this study inform public policy development to support a more effective and seamless approach to early learning, build stronger professional partnerships and better enable parents to support their children's early learning.

Ms. Patricia Young of Child to Child in the United Kingdom discussed the Getting Ready for School model that builds on the child to child concept, with young facilitators coaching younger learners. It provides children from the most marginalised communities access to early learning opportunities, and results in change at individual, classroom and community levels. The programme has been piloted with UNICEF in six countries and has proven scalability and adaptability. Child to Child offers capacity development for the model to be contextualised and implemented in other locations.

Lastly, Dr. Arnaud Laillou of UNICEF Cambodia presented a research on challenges for appropriate growth among children from six settings in Cambodia. It reveals that a comprehensive approach addressing health, nutrition and WASH components is required to tackle remaining high prevalence of stunting effectively in specific population groups. It also shows that a comprehensive monitoring system put in place in three provinces to monitor high risk vulnerable groups is most effective to guide effective, evidence based programme planning and implementation.

## DAY 3

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### **Panel Discussion: Monitoring ECD Quality Outcomes**

*This panel discussion on country strategies and regional initiatives/tools for monitoring ECD quality outcomes stressed the need for cross-sectoral planning and support.*

YB Dato'P. Kamalanathan A/I P. Panchanathan, Deputy Minister of Education of Malaysia, shared about developing a National Preschool Quality Standard (NPQS) instrument and establishing a National Child Data Centre in order to ensure that quality is ascertained for the provision of ECCE services. He also spoke of improving the National Preschool Standard-Based Curriculum (Revised 2017) to align with international standards. Compliance remains a challenge, as well as technical issues like internet access.

Mr. Simeth Beng, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank Office Cambodia, shared that there is a law that was passed in Cambodia for the creation of community preschools. However, gaps still remain between service standards of community and public preschool. On strengthening the monitoring of learning and development outcomes, he recommends comprehensive, cross-sectoral support and care, increased financing, and a balance between providing and monitoring.

Khamphay SISAVANH, Deputy Minister for Ministry of Education & Sports of Laos recommended that each ministry and service should establish minimum standards for ECCE services. Deputy Minister Sisavanh moreover stressed the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration and for monitoring of the care of and violence against children and women, as well as health & nutrition.

Ms. Marianne O'Grady, Technical Advisor, International Programme team, Save the Children shared how Save the Children is supporting countries by partnering with Ministries in measuring the development, defining benchmarks and getting policy in place after data collection. To strengthen monitoring of development outcomes, she recommended a supporting platform for cross sectoral planning.

Ms. Evelyn D. Santiago, ARNEC Executive Director, spoke of initiatives on measuring quality outcomes, such as: the EAP-ECD Scales, a population measurement tool that is culturally sensitive and is based on 7 domains ELDS in the region and was validated in the region; and the Regional ECD Data portal, a portal that tracks quantitative and qualitative ECD indicators in the East Asia Pacific region, based on secondary or existing sources of data. ARNEC is working towards generating and consolidating regional data.

### **Improving learning outcomes for young children**

*It is important for organisations to measure their milestones in order to improve their services. This session presented the use of randomised controlled theory and anthropometric surveys to establish programme efficiency and effectiveness.*

Mr. M. Habibur Rahman presented a study by the American Institute for Research on the effectiveness of Save the Children's Early Child Stimulation (ECS) Programme in Bangladesh. The study compared 39 community clinics delivering the National Nutrition Service (NNS) with ECS, with 39 other clinics that did not have ECS. Larger impacts were made in areas that incorporated ECS, which was also found to be cost-effective. This finding implies that government should explore opportunities to introduce and scale up early childhood development, in partnership with NGOs.

Ms. Rany Khoy talked about First Read, a holistic, home-based ECCD programme implemented by Save the Children in Cambodia for children 0-6 years old. It is now in its second phase of implementation, and has been found to engage and support parents, and monitor and evaluate behaviour change and progress, all at a low cost. Recommendations for future implementation include involving parents in contextualising the programme.

Ms. Sakan Soth spoke about Plan Cambodia's Integrated ECCD programme in Tbong Khmum and Ratanakiri (recently launched) but mostly in Siem Reap (launched several years ago). Baseline and midline studies in Siem Reap found that the intervention group appeared less likely to suffer from stunting. Children also scored higher in all domains of the EAP-ECDS in intervention groups. The EAP-ECDS is recommended to be used as a monitoring tool along with the Outcomes Monitoring System being developed by Plan International.

### **Looking at the impact of ECD in some countries**

*Studies on the impact of early childhood interventions have shown their effectiveness on long term effects, thus serving to encourage governments to support ECCD programmes.*

Ms. Karma Dyenka spoke on the impact study by Save The Children in Bhutan, of a one year ECCD intervention, aligning the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) with Bhutan's Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS). The study looked into home learning environment and ECCD programme quality and their effects on preparedness of children for primary school. Results showed that children who attend ECCD are better prepared for primary school, with strongest learning gains coming from private, community and CSO centres. More learning is derived from higher quality classrooms, which is a function of facilitator-children interaction and ratio. Children with more leaning and play at home make stronger gains, and while children in rural homes have weakest home learning environments, they gain as much as children in urban homes if subjected to ECCD intervention.

Mr. Abdul Wakil Fekri presented the impact of a preschool programme by Aga Khan Foundation, developed with Save the Children, in two provinces in Afghanistan. A study on the programme showed very strong school readiness among those that attended the preschool intervention. The achievement results of those finishing first grade were strongly in favour of those that attended preschool the year before. The study also showed that parenting and preventive health was delivered more strongly by parents who participated in the preschool programme, both of those about to enter first grade and for those who have just finished it.

Ms. Hosnara Khondker spoke on the longer term effects of Save the Children's programme for 0 to 3 year old children in Bangladesh. Evaluation results using IDELA and Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Demonstrated a positive impact of the programme on children's language and cognitive abilities. However, further research is needed to identify programmes for 0 to 3 year olds that have both positive short-term and long-term impact on child development.



## **Inclusive and Innovative Approaches to ECD**

*Parents play an important role in the growth of children. The presentations in this session described unique ways to involve parents in early child development.*

Mr. Sovann Yim from Save the Children presented the programme on Listening and Discussion Groups in the province of Kratie, in Cambodia, where pregnant women, women with children under the age of 3 years old, and these women's husbands would gather at a specific schedule to listen to radio broadcasts and discuss the information delivered. The LDGs were formed to raise awareness, change behaviour and improve practice on maternal and child healthcare through listening to the radio programmes. Due to its success, Save the Children trained additional LDG facilitators and additional messages were created to focus on early language stimulation, positive and consistent parenting, responsive care and feeding practices, and motor skill development. The learning from the programme will be used to engage policy decision makers in the Ministry of Education, Youth Sports and Health in Cambodia.

Ms. Zhen Xin spoke of Project Tinker Kit, a product of her social enterprise, Preschool Market, in Singapore. Started in 2015, Tinker Kit was designed to encourage lower socioeconomic status families to spend quality time engaging in art and craft activities. Ready-made kits were used during workshops involving parents of 0 to 3 year olds and their children. In November 2016, with the help of LearnSG Seed Fund, Tinker Kit was further developed to promote parent-children bonding through activities. It was found that a child benefits from these activities no matter what background the child comes from, and that parents appreciate such efforts.

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### **From the Secretariat**

This Conference Report was prepared by the ARNEC Secretariat.  
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The views of the esteemed guests of honour, session chairs and speakers, experts and resource persons, and partners and delegates during the 3-day Conference do not necessarily reflect those of ARNEC. Please contact resource persons and/or the organisations they represented in the Conference directly, if you need more information on session-specific presentations and/or opinions documented in this report.

Feel free to get in touch with ARNEC at [secretariat@arnec.net](mailto:secretariat@arnec.net) on advancing ECD in the Asia-Pacific Region.







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