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ARNEC
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood

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CONFERENCE REPORT

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development

"Early Childhood Development
on the Global Agenda   ~
Giving all children equal opportunities
to lifelong learning, health
and success"

Co-organised by ARNEC and ARNEC core partners

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United Nations
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Plan

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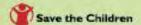**Save the Children**

SEED
institute

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This report was edited and reviewed by the ARNEC Secretariat.

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from right: Hon. Rueben Dick Inoana Ha'amori, Guest of Honour Dr. Lee Tung Jean, Keynote Speaker Dr. Pia Rebello Britto with a selection of distinguished guests and ARNEC Steering Committee members, Directors and Secretariat staff.

Introduction

This year's Conference focused on giving all children equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success. Particular emphasis was given to promoting ECD on the global agenda and speaking with "One Voice!" as the post-2015 Millennial Development Goals are re-visioned and revised. Fourteen Concurrent Sessions were held that supported learning in four areas:

1. Expanding access to holistic ECD services
2. Enabling policy environment for holistic ECD
3. Strengthening capacities of parents, families and communities
4. Support holistic development and learning of young children—good quality EC interventions and equity

Specific topics and workshops included national networks and policies; child voice; parenting; localising ECD programmes; programme evaluation; special needs; mother tongue playschools; literacy; gender and peace-building; fathers; differentiated teaching; health and nutrition; costing and financing ECD; and executive function skills.

Two recurring themes were the leadership that ARNEC has provided in coordinating ECD advocacy at the international level and the evolving capacity of the early childhood community in the Asia-Pacific Region. A number of countries have passed or have placed ECD on their respective national agendas in the past five years. Asian countries are developing their own quality frameworks and child development scales, working from the ground up rather than adapting or adopting from western countries. The Conference closed with the consolidation of an ECD goal and a plan to advocate for ECD inclusion in the post-2015 global agenda with "One Voice!"

Keynote Speaker Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, Senior Advisor ECD, UNICEF NY HQ, 'The World we want: achieving every child's potential'

Conference Objectives

1. Advocate for ECD as a critical aspect in the global agenda, building on existing consultation done by ARNEC
2. Share knowledge and noteworthy practices on equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success for all children
3. Provide opportunities for policy makers and practitioners to contextualize ECD on the global agenda in their own countries
4. Strengthen partnerships for ECD among various stakeholders

Plenary 2: Panel Session—'Positioning ECD on the global agenda: Insights and actions for the future' from left: Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Dr Manzoor Ahmed, Dr Mami Umayahara, Dr Cliff Meyers, Dr Maggie Koong and Ms Junko Miyahara

Day 1: Monday, 18 November 2013

Plenary 1: Opening Programme

Welcome Address

Dr. Kok Siat Yeow, *Deputy Director, Programmes Office of Academic Affairs,*
SEED Institute, Singapore; Chairperson ARNEC

Dr. Kok delivered a welcome on behalf of ARNEC and the local host, SEED Institute, to honoured guests, speakers and all participants. She noted that there were nearly 200 participants from more than 14 countries from the Asia Pacific region and beyond, making it a truly international conference. Dr. Kok highlighted the conference's importance in providing an opportunity to discuss early childhood development on the global agenda, and in particular giving all children equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success. She commented on the value of human capital and that investing in our youngest citizens is a wise and right thing to do, sharing the recent experience of the Singapore early childhood sector which has been making efforts to raise the quality of ECD services. Recent initiatives include launching of ECDA, the Early Childhood Development Agency that integrates all aspects as an effort to improve service quality and efficiency.

Four years ago, ARNEC was registered as a professional network for early childhood to build strong partnership with institutions and actors from across sectors and diverse disciplines. In the beginning, there were only 150 individual members of ARNEC. Now, there are more than 1500

individual members from 66 countries. There are also 20 institutional members from the region and around the world. (The sharing of this wonderful achievement brought loud applause from the delegates.)

Dr. Kok enumerated the objectives of the current conference:

- Advocate for ECD as a critical aspect in the global agenda, building on existing consultation done by ARNEC
- Share knowledge and noteworthy practices on equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success for all children;
- Provide opportunities for policy makers and practitioners to contextualize ECD on the global agenda in their own countries;
- Strengthen partnerships for ECD among various stakeholders

In closing, she thanked the conference organizing team and the ARNEC Secretariat, as well as ARNEC's co-sponsors and partners, namely UNICEF, UNESCO, Plan International, Open Society Foundation, Save the Children and SEED Institute, for their support which made the conference possible and for their continuing close collaboration on the ARNEC mission.

Dr. Kok wished all a good stay in Singapore and a fruitful conference.

Opening Remarks
Ms. Tina Hyder, *Deputy Director, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundation, UK*

On behalf of the core team, the executive and steering committees, and the secretariat, Ms. Hyder welcomed all to ARNEC's fifth annual conference which this year focuses on ECD on the global agenda, giving all children equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success.

She commented on the fact that much has happened since the 2012 annual conference in Jakarta, where messages about the importance of early childhood development were articulated and refined. ECD should be an essential part of any future Millennial Development Goals and Education for All. Ms. Hyder drew attention to the white paper *Promoting Holistic Development of Young Children—An Imperative for the Advancement of Nations in Asia-Pacific* which reflects the collective thinking of the region. It has been translated into several languages and has been a critical tool used at a number of events across the region in the past year.

The messages in the white paper have been disseminated at the PECERA Conference, the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation Forum on ECD, and the OMEP conference in Shanghai.

More importantly, the white paper has been used at the international level to inform advocacy efforts for ECD to be included on the global agenda. Yet she pointed out that advocacy was something we could all play a part in, by adding our names to the petition to get ECD on the global agenda and to make ECD one goal in the new Human Development Goals.

It is notable that ARNEC has provided one of the most coordinated regional perspectives to inform

the international advocacy that is taking place. And we still have the opportunity before the post-2015 agenda is finalized to raise our voice and ensure that holist, integrated early childhood services are recognized as playing a crucial role in human and sustainable development, poverty reduction, efforts to promote equity and should be every child's right.

In addition to the regional and global advocacy in the past 12 months, ARNEC has worked to share knowledge and stimulate dialogue about all aspects of early childhood development. These efforts include further documenting of noteworthy practices in the region, a peace-building initiative, more country coordinators in place, continuing research and piloting for regional ECD scales, data compilation noting progress in ECD in countries across the region, as well as a new web portal to make it easier for members to exchange ideas and share information.

Ms. Hyder closed by commenting on the opportunity not only to hear from a range of distinguished speakers, but also to engage in discussions regarding policies, programming and practices and continue that process of expanding our knowledge and finding common ground. She encouraged participants to reach out to others, connecting with old friends and making new contacts in order to forge a stronger voice to promote the message of ECD in the region and across the globe.

Opening Speech by Guest of Honour

Dr. Lee Tung Jean, *CEO, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), Singapore*

Dr. Lee began by warmly welcoming all to Singapore and ARNEC's annual conference. She thanked ARNEC as well as the SEED Institute for organising the event. The theme of getting early childhood development on the global agenda and giving all children equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success is important for all. In Singapore, the Early Childhood Development Agency, or ECDA, was formed to oversee and integrate all aspects of early childhood care and education and address the affordability, accessibility and quality of early childhood services to support the development and well-being of every child.

Dr. Lee remarked that the early years are critical to a child's development. Children acquire important cognitive and non-cognitive skills in these years such as a love of learning, interacting with others and a curiosity to explore the world around them. For most children this happens in the context of their home and in school learning environments. Hence, it is important to create opportunities for children to develop these skills through their early childhood education. Enabling every child to have access to quality early childhood education impacts social mobility. Dr. Lee referenced evidence that children from economically less advantaged backgrounds benefit more from a quality early childhood education as preschools provide a safe, nurturing environment for them to learn and grow.

Dr. Lee shared the Singapore experience where there is almost full participation in early childhood education by age five. Nonetheless there are ongoing efforts to increase access and provide more children with good quality, affordable early childhood education. Several initiatives have been launched to meet these goals. To increase accessibility, 20,000 more childcare places will be provided by 2018. This will translate to a full-day childcare base in Singapore for one in two children, up from one in three today. To achieve this, the government works closely with the day-care operators to scale up provision of good quality and affordable early childhood services. Other

operators are supported through infrastructure funding to expand capacity in high demand areas and defray the cost of learning and teaching resources. In addition, these efforts are complemented with outreach to children who have not enrolled in preschools. Key stakeholders in the community make home visits and refer the children for placement in preschools near their homes. Through these efforts the proportion of children not enrolled in preschool has been reduced to about 1% of each age-level cohort to age six. For those already enrolled in schools, Singapore recently launched a fund that is open to all centres to support the holistic development of children from less-advantaged backgrounds. There is also a programme to assist children to overcome mild developmental delays and ease them into mainstream primary schools. And children with more severe developmental delays attend preschools that provide special educational services tailored to their needs.

While improving the accessibility of early childhood education services, emphasis is also placed on the affordability and quality of child care. On the affordability front, assistance is provided to families through child subsidies. On the quality, a preschool accreditation framework was established in 2011. This framework provides a structured approach for preschools to examine their processes and outcomes, and address the gaps and work toward improving the quality of their educational programmes. Early childhood professionals are key to providing quality programmes. In 2012, a framework for continuing education was introduced as well as a scholarship programme was also to attract new manpower to the early childhood sector.

Dr. Lee closed by noting that Singapore has been a strong supporter of ARNEC and today's conference is an excellent backdrop for countries in the region to examine early childhood policies, share experiences and good practices and learn from one another. These are exciting times for the field of early childhood education. And with this regional collaboration she expressed optimism that we will raise the policy level of early childhood programmes and achieve better outcomes for our children. Dr. Lee wished all an enriching and fruitful conference.

ARNEC Web Portal Launch

The new portal is an educational element of the ARNEC website and supports the "knowledge domain." It provides a platform information exchange between individuals and organisations from throughout the region. It includes policy statements and statistics from member countries.

The logo "Birth 2 8" emphasises that care for young children begins before birth and goes through age eight. The "B" in the logo is shaped to denote pregnancy.

Opening Keynote: Early Childhood Development: The indispensable foundation for a secure and sustainable world

Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF NY HQ

Dr. Britto greeted all as fellow visionaries, change-makers and believers that we can have a more beautiful world for children. She presented a PowerPoint entitled *The world we want: Achieving*

every child's potential. She remarked that this conference could not be more timely as the world is on the cusp of designing a whole new agenda to move us forward and we can change that direction to benefit the world's youngest children.

She presented an overview of where we stand with Millennial Development Goals as well as the post-2015 agenda. She noted that it was critical to get an ECD goal and develop a plan for how to move forward with advocating for that goal to be included in the post-2015 agenda.

Dr. Britto began with the unfinished business of the MDGS and presented much that has been accomplished and much that can be celebrated. The MDGs have been a powerful tool as an instrument of change. The statistics indicate that the MDGs were successful in many areas, with survival rates declining and more children in school. If we want to see similar statistics in regards to early childhood 10 years from now, there needs to be an EC goal. Now is the time to act.

Yet the one area in which the current MDGs have failed has been in the area of equity. The successful statistics have masked inequity. There is an immense population around the world that has not benefitted from this global action. The inequity is reflected in basic indicators of survival and the right to education. And the answer lies in early childhood programmes and services that can reach the most marginalised families. One of the most effective ways to keep children in school is through supporting early learning programmes.

With respect to moving forward, Dr. Britto gave the background of the post-2015 agenda and how it has unfolded. The UN post-2015 development agenda determined to focus on human rights, equality and sustainability. Economic and social development needs to be inclusive and the biggest threats, namely conflict and degradation of our planet, must be addressed. She outlined the process of consultations that were held to help shape the post-2015 development goals. The consultations emerged along four work-streams, and each work-stream has produced its own report:
- High Level Report contained two or three indicators linked to ECD
- Private Sector Compact had no indicators linked to ECD
- Sustainable Development Network Solutions contains an ECD goal that connects early childhood, lifelong learning, and inter-generational learning for sustainable development
- Open Working Group has still a possibility of proposing a specific goal related to ECD

She proceeded to give a brief analysis of how ECD figured in each of the work-streams. In the High Level Report, age period was stressed in the indicators related to ECD but not development. The difference is crucial and it is this area that may still be impacted as these indicators will be drafted in the coming six to eight months. A way needs to be found to influence how those indicators are written.

The Sustainable Development Network Solutions work-stream provides a strong platform for ECD advocacy as it has a goal directly related to early childhood and linking it to lifelong learning and sustainable development.

In addition to these post-2015 agenda work-streams, there has been active and on-going advocacy among the early childhood community. Dr. Britto pointed out that this meeting was actually a

coming together of multiple advocacy movements and she paused to recognise those in the room who have been very vocal on behalf of early childhood in relation to the post-2015 agenda, as well as recognising the efforts of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, the Institute of Medicine and the University of Northampton Early Years Summit. There have also been political advocacy movements, namely The National Consultation on ECD in the Post-2015 Agenda championed by Mayor Topas of Istanbul and the Petition to Ban Ki Moon championed by RT Honourable Dame Tessa Jowell. Hillary Clinton and China are talking about early childhood being a bridge between US and China. There have been multiple efforts and entry points have been identified. There are champions. It is urgent to determine how to coordinate efforts to move forward with a united voice to influence the post-2015 agenda in favour of an ECD goal. There is only four months left because by March 2014 most of the writing will be in place. She urged that the early childhood community continue its efforts to turn the political will to pay attention to ECD.

Dr. Britto asked the question "What is it that we, the early childhood community, want?" She challenged to conference attendees to identify the goal we want and then take it forward, take it to the leaders of our respective countries, take it to those working on the post-2015 agenda. She presented a specific ECD goal with three targets and relevant indicators for consideration.

She gave guidance on how to write a goal. A goal must be ambitious—no one wants to support a target or indicator. Heads of state want to support an ambitious goal and they want to be a global leader, so the goal has to be huge and it has to be specific. The criteria for a goal are that it must solve a critical issue, it must be easy to understand and it must be measurable. In dialoguing with UN officials, one of the push-backs is the question of measurement—where are the measures and how will it be measured? The measurements must be credible.

Another important aspect is the voice of the people—what are people saying? For early childhood, we have every parent—every parent wants their child to succeed! Therefore, early childhood has the most advocates of any goal. And there must be consensus. The early childhood community must put aside differences and come up with one goal that all can agree on and support.

Dr. Britto proposed a goal that met the above-mentioned criteria: it is compelling, it is big, it addresses all children and it is easy to understand:

Goal: Ensure that all boys and girls have the best start in life.

She noted that it was best not to use "developmental potential" as that is more professional jargon and it is a challenge for leaders to get support for something that might or might not happen in the future. The "best start in life" is here and now. She also outlined a formula that would be useful in communicating with leaders and others about the importance early childhood and the impact of a good start in life and which denotes the targets: person interacting with environment yields human potential. The targets are the child (target 1) and the environment, which includes families (target 2) and services and systems (target 3). As the child and environment interact, human potential is unleashed and momentum for sustainable development is released as well.

The targets and indicators that support the goal are as follows:

Target 1: All children will be physically healthy, mentally alert, socially competent, emotionally

sound and able to learn
    Proposed Indicators
        •Increase % of children achieving developmental potential (EDCI, UNICEF)
        •Regional Metrics (EAPRo) or Learning goal from LMTF
        •Stunting indicator (MICS)
        •Health indicators: decrease child morbidity (diarrhoea, pneumonia, etc.)
        •Pre-primary and early grade competencies

Target 2: Increase number of children experiencing positive, responsive, and sensitive parenting
    Proposed Indicators:
        •Increase by X% of children living in physically safe environment
        •Increase by X% parental/adult involvement in early learning at home
        •Increase by X% number of books, toys, and learning materials at home
        •Decrease by X% rate of children left home alone
        •Decrease by X% number of children experiencing harsh discipline and other forms
of violence and abuse

Target3: Close the gap by ensuring equality and equity through access to quality early childhood
programmes and policies that work together for the best start in life
    Proposed Indicators:
        •Increase access to ECD services by X%
        •Increase attendance by X% to "quality" organized early childhood care and
education programmes
        •Increased access to quality 2 years Pre-primary and preschool
        •Increase access to quality child care services by X% with specific focus on working
poor families with young children
        •Increase number of poor families with young children with access to social
protection and social welfare

With the indicators, Dr. Britto illustrated with credible measurements (illustrated with graphs and
charts in the PowerPoint). A particularly powerful measurement was the correlation between the
ECD index and the human development index.

In closing, she discussed three ways that could be used to achieve the goal of getting ECD included
in the post-2015 development agenda. The questions that guide us as we move forward are:

1. What are our opportunities?
2. Who are our partners?
3. What advocacy action is required?

Particularly attention should be paid to how we communicate with the non-ECD voices that are
writing. This is critical as those voices are sceptical and have other agendas they are pushing.
Therefore we must be mindful on how to communicate with those who do not share our
conviction. Possible actions:

1. Indicators in the High Level Report are still open—need to provide indicators that enhance
   outcomes.

2. Inclusive social and economic growth is supported by early childhood investments, so what statistics and measures can we provide to strengthen the rationale for ECD?
3. The Open Working Group needs to be approached by high level government leaders to get early childhood on the agenda—how to get the message to the highest level of policy makers in your country who are members of the Open Working Group? (members listed on slide of PowerPoint). The final meeting of the Open Working Group is 6 February 2014 and the topic is equality. This is last chance to get on the agenda and need to be advocating NOW.
4. Need to get partners outside ECD to help advocate for us to show that it is not a special interest group, but rather a broad consensus.
5. Have to speak as ONE voice for now, advocate for ONE goal.

Dr. Britto challenged participants to champion and advocate for greater political well, and to pledge one concrete action to be taken when the participants return to their home country. We are close, we have a lot of people listening, we need to charge forward with that mandate and achieve our goal of including ECD in the post-2015 agenda.

Questions and comments:

Q1: The delegate was inspired by the presentation, but questioned whether something was missing. Where is the opportunity to bring the voice of children caught in conflict into this?
A: Dr. Britto agreed and said we need to bring it into our targets.

Q2: How to get this message to a higher level? You are the best ambassador to do this...
A2: Dr. Britto warmly agreed, and requested that she be given something to take back—fill the gap, write the goal about children in conflict that she can take back and use to advocate with.

Q3: A comment on Target 3—we usually begin with pre-primary school and there is nothing for birth to 2 or the transition from the early years learning to the primary school years. We need to address the transition and advocate for better student-teacher ratios in grade one, perhaps we should have a target to ensure smooth transition and quality in the early grades of primary school.

Q4: A comment, perhaps we should define EC from pre-birth to age eight and instead of adding a target, just add an indicator. (Q3 interjected that then we need to ensure that people understand early childhood as birth to age eight, rather than just pre-school.)

Q5: Why three days to write the goal?
A5: There are four requests from high level UN officials asking for this information and it should be provided by the end of this week. They are asking, "What is your goal? What is it you want?" Timing is critical.

Q6: Comment on Target 3, perhaps need also to look at ethnic-linguistic marginalization and education.

Q7: Where would a target for children with special needs belong?
A7: Suggested it might go under Target 1, pertaining to development/learning.

Q8: The under threes do get neglected so need to talk in particular about early stimulation.
A8: Agree, but how to measure it and provide an indicator?

Q9: How can we get the seed that this ECC is important and to communicate with our country's policy makers?
A9: Once more reiterated the challenge of asking ourselves what concrete thing are we going to do when we return to our countries, to get the message out.

Q10; A teacher trainer—there are many things government and agencies are doing here, but notice that children from disadvantaged families are not always supported, what more can we do at a global level to educate parents on children's development?
A10: Suggested a good life course perspective for parents.

Q11: A comment—we must continue to push for ECC and not forget the context of the children we teach, we need to remember indigenous culture and the cultural practices because these are the safety nets of our children.

Q12: A comment—would like to see implementing and support of professional development, and the support programmes for training the interveners, as well as the need to train those who are implementing the programmes.

Q13: Two comments—need to bring the needs of children with disabilities into the open; also the link between population growth and the correlation between the number of children in the family and the quality of care they receive within the family—needs to be discussed openly, to check the population growth of countries.

Q14: A comment—would like to see issues around youth addressed, because as prospective parents, there is the connection between economic development and the quality of home environment.

Plenary 2: Panel Session—Positioning ECD on the global agenda: Insights and actions for the future

Dr Manzoor Ahmed, Chair, Bangladesh ECD Network
Dr Maggie Koong, World President-Elect of OMEP
Dr Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor – Education, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
Dr Mami Umayahara, Programme Cycle Management Specialist, Education Sector UNESCO Bangkok

The plenary session was opened by Junko Miyahara as the ARNEC Coordinator. She recounted the ECD goals and visions that were set through past ARNEC conferences and reflected on the advocacy journey that ARNEC has taken:
- In 2011, the visions that were set for ECD were:
    - To shift focus from education to learning, care and development
    - To focus not only on health but holistic development
    - To provide fair opportunity and equitable access to education and care

- To provide services in a seamless way from birth to age eight
- In 2012, the conference and workshops had the following goals:
    - To determine what can be done within the Asia-Pacific region to better advocate for ECD and bring them up to the global agenda
    - Formulate potential goals and indicators for 2015, examples being:
        - ECD budget allocation of 1%of GDP
        - Identify groups that are neglected
        - Help children reach their 3-year developmental milestone so that they have a better chance to thrive in the years beyond
        - Improve access to quality preschools for 3 to 5-year-olds
        - Decrease in repetition of primary grade schooling

To stage was then passed on to Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer as the second moderator.

Dr. Shaeffer opened his speech by highlighting the importance of including ECD in the post-2015 agenda. ECD is still not high on the priority list of many countries' and organizations' agenda. He pointed out, as an example, that in February, UNESCO assembled a panel to work on education and development issues but ECD was not mentioned within the panel. Issues such as secondary education and youth skills training were discussed but ECD was side-lined. Dr. Shaeffer then shared his thoughts on issues in early learning: 1) he highlighted that while the focus on early learning and achieving early learning outcomes is great in ensuring that ministries of education put a focus on ECD and sets good foundations for children's future development, the downside of that is an over-emphasis on literacy skills instead of holistic learning; 2) a minimum number of years of pre-primary school (or kindergarten) attendance should be set or mandated at national levels; 3) ministries of education should set aside specific budget allocations for developing young children, rather than just have an overall budget for education. Dr. Shaeffer highlighted that many initiatives to date still do not have ECD as a standalone goal. Early childhood development tends to be absorbed into other education and development goals. He concluded his discussion by reminding the participants that the real work begins after the international plans and goals are set and that countries will then need to adapt accordingly to make them into effective national plans.

The first speaker, Dr Manzoor Ahmed, applauded the Asia-Pacific region for its involvement in the global ECD conversation. He challenged the participants to consider what the ideal position should be for ECD in the global agenda, and think about what could be done to achieve this position. For example, a weakness of the MDG and EFA goals is their lack of consideration for the birth to pre-kindergarten years and for the lack of measurable targets and indicators. He pointed out that it is important that measurable targets and indicators be incorporated into goals during goal-setting, as this could provide accountability and benchmarks and could push countries to do better or more. Goal-setting at the global level can help create favourable policies, mobilize resources, national efforts, workers, champions and decision makers, and help countries benchmark or compare themselves against other countries. He cautioned, however, that while goal-setting is important, it is not the "be all and end all"; it is only the starting point and the success of the efforts will depend much on the work that should follow. Dr. Ahmed also shared his views and experiences about the early childhood field in Bangladesh. He reported that in

Bangladesh, more children are now participating in preschools and the awareness about the importance of ECD has risen in recent years. He shared that comprehensive ECD policies have recently been approved by the government and the policies serve as a good starting point for the real work that will need to be follow suit.

The second speaker, Dr Maggie Koong, applauded ARNEC's growth and success in accomplishing its mission over the years. The organization's missions mirror and support OMEP's mission – OMEP being an organization that has promoted the development and wellbeing of children from birth to eight for 65 years. She underscored the importance providing equitable access to quality education, in giving all children their best start in live and in providing support to the poor and the most vulnerable. OMEP has always believed in the importance of ECD within the realm of education and social development. Many projects have been undertaken by the organization to promote ECD and wellbeing, such as initiatives to provide universal access to water and sanitation is schools and a project on promoting traditional play. Dr Koong urged the early childhood community to advocate for EC outside of the ECE community, to build and increase political support and alliances and work with different sectors to develop the whole child. She also pointed out that the importance of setting measurable targets and goals. Lastly, she informed the participants that at the upcoming UN meeting on December 12, OMEP and the Consultative Group will be hosting a ministerial level luncheon to promote the causes of ECD at the UN and country level. She urged for participation and support for this momentous event.

The third speaker, Dr. Cliff Meyers, pointed out the importance of advocating for ECD as a goal but believed that we should "not put all eggs in a basket". He believed that core ECD indicators should be incorporated and embedded into all the other developmental and education goals as well, so as to ensure that ECD initiatives and goals are well-represented. Dr. Meyers also highlighted that in addition to measuring outcomes at national levels, ECD goals need to have sub-national indicators as well that measure things like the gap between the rich and poor, differences in stunting within a nation etc. When such indicators are in place, governments would be forced to reduce in-country discrepancies. In addition, ECD in emergency situations should not be left out in the ECD conversation. Dr. Meyers concluded his speech by providing concrete strategies that can help move ECD forward:
- capitalize on partnerships, such as via inter-government engagements or study visits, forming partnerships between government officials and academia, forming public-private partnerships. He highlighted the importance of galvanizing private partnerships in areas of training, supervision and quality.
- create a quality framework that can further help create better early childhood environments and improve teaching quality and curriculum standards
- amalgamate research in ECD, making them digestible and applicable to local contexts and educate the public about the research findings. An example of research that ought to be shared with the public is the cost-benefits analysis of ECD and why focusing on ECD is a worthwhile investment.
- note that measurements and indicators can be more effective if they look at gaps instead of national averages, measure quality rather than quantity, focus on holistic learning and measure in-home development in addition to at-school ones.

The last speaker, Dr. Mami Umayahara, opened her speech by encouraging the participants to come up with a simple and clear goal without complicated terms like "holistic". Like other

speakers, she recommended a two-pronged approach: that we should push an ECD-specific standalone goal and at the same time, embed ECD goals within other education or related goals. She brought up the possibility of using lifelong learning as an entry point for including ECD goals as birth is the start of lifespan and lifelong learning should begin with development in early years. Another potential entry point for ECD is school readiness. Dr. Umayahara shared that at a recent high-level policy meeting in Korea, school readiness was a topic of interest. She believed that preparing for school encompasses getting ready across different domains. It also includes the whole-child and the family, environment and infrastructure involved in the process of not only preparing the child for school but the school for the child. She also pointed out that there should be measures and indicators in each of the domains of development, such as language, cognitive and social-emotional development, in order to promote children's holistic development. Similarly, Dr. Umayahara urged for ECD professionals to partner and communicate with different parties such as government authorities, other countries and cross-industry practitioners. Evidences and studies carried out by members of academia should be used to build the case for support and investment in ECD. She closed her remarks by asking the ECD practitioners to be united and "speak the same language".

The questions and comments shared during the question and answer time:

> 1) A delegate from the Philippines agreed with how getting ready for school typically involves the child, family and the community and pointed out that a multitude of resources are available from ARNEC and other organizations to help the various parties achieve the goal. She also pointed out that academia needs to have a stronger linkage to school, that academic findings ought to be translated into school curriculum. This should be the case for ECE as well.

> 2) A delegate from India suggested that health, nutrition and social welfare specialists be represented in multi-panel discussions about ECD as ECD is not just about education and learning. He also pointed out that there is a lack of conversation about governance in ECE and how governance can properly ensure that ECE serves to reduce income gaps and break intergenerational poverty.

> 3) A delegate from Cambodia raised the point that ECE can potentially play an important role in stopping violence against women in Cambodia in two ways: Firstly, parent education which occurs in some early childhood programmes can serve as an intervention, and secondly, children learn about gender roles from a young age and good ECE programmes provide the opportunity for such education.

> 4) Another delegate from India concurred that there is a lack of convergence and integration between education, nutrition and health, especially across countries. She agreed with the importance of private or corporate sector in contributing to ECE growth, and pointed out that the private entities should be scrutinized for quality and made accountable as well.

> 5) A delegate from Pakistan pointed out that assessments that measure learning and development across the five domains are a good way to ensure holistic development and secure funding.

6.) A delegate from India reiterated the importance of ECE in protecting children's rights and well-being. She mentioned that in many countries, child abuse occurs more frequently when young children are not in school but are at home with their parents. Children are more protected when they are in schools.

Concurrent Session 1: National Networks and Policies

1.1 Comprehensive early childhood care and development policy in Bangladesh: How it evolves with GO-NGO collaboration

Iqbal Hossain, Advisor, quality Primary Education Programme Plan International, Bangladesh

The presenter introduced the status of ECD in Bangladesh and highlighted how GO (government organisations) and NGOs (non-government organisations) have partnered in the development of ECD policy. The importance of involvement of agencies such as GO's relevant ministries, NGOs, the university, donors and the private sector in the implementation of programmes, especially to ensure the quality of the services delivered, was discussed. The highlights of the policy and implementation strategies were also briefly outlined.

Some of the questions raised were:
How did you manage to involve various ministries and get prioritised EED in the agenda?
How was BEN (Bangladesh ECD Network) formed?
What is the structure of BEN?
How are the members drawn from various organisation?
Answers were provided by the presenter as well as Chairperson of BEN, who elaborated on the composition and function of BEN. Great effort has been made to keep the Network open to all.

1.2 Preliminary Strategy paper for the proposed National ECD Network of Pakistan

Siraj Narsi, Rupani Foundation, Volunteer

The presenter gave an overview of ECD in the global context and discussed the situation of ECD in Pakistan. The high rate of population growth rate in Pakistan has made it challenging to keep up with and increase the enrolment rate of children in preschools. The process by which the national ECD network was formed in Pakistan is as follows:
- a bottom up approach was adopted
- open to all
- tried to develop national consensus
- emphasised the importance of having one vision for all organisations

The questions included:
Q1: What is the GO's role in the formation of the network?
Is it registered?
A1: GOs are involved and the process of registration is underway.
The network works as a facilitator. It is not a programme implementing organisation.

1.3 Enabling Policy Environment for Holistic ECD: A case of Fiji

Lavinia Tiko, Lecturer and Coordinator EC-University of the South Pacific, PhD Candidate-University of New England

The presenter discussed the importance of considering indigenous knowledge, practice and culture in ECD policy in the context of Fiji. In Fiji, the concept of what comprises holistic development should be defined by indigenous Fijians. The Fijian concept and practice of child care is different from the western concept and practice.

One question raised after the presentation:
Contextualisation is necessary but what are the some examples of differences?
If you include only local language and culture how can you meet the global need of a child?
Ms. Tiko explained that local culture needs to be introduced in schools first. It is important to have a broader mind and second language, other than the child's first language, which can be gradually introduced.

In summary, the first two papers from the South Asia region were focused on formation of national ECD Networks. Both the papers indicated the need for partnering among various relevant agencies.
The third paper from the Pacific region indicated the importance of considering indigenous culture and practice in developing ECD policy.

Concurrent Session 2: Child Voice

2.1 Voices of children: Childhood and early education in Singapore

Dr. Christine Chen, President, AECES, Singapore (Friend of ARNEC)

The speaker presented findings of a qualitative study involving 20 boys and 23 girls from a preschool. The children were asked to paint a picture of childhood and early education in Singapore. Subsequently, focus group discussions were conducted by their teacher asking these children to describe their own drawings. Each discussion group was made up of five children. The children's drawings reflected mostly playing time with family (70%), friends (20%), and alone with self (10%). Not one drawing portrayed their life in preschools, or in the enrichment classes that many of these children attend. There were similarities and differences between drawings of boys and girls. Gender differences existed in the way they reflected pictorial realism and fantasies. The findings showed that Singapore children primarily relate family with early childhood and education.

Questions:
Q1: Is it true that Singapore children focus on studying?
A1: Children in Singapore accept study as part of their life. It is good that they have the weekend where they have free times with their family.

Q2: Does it look like from their drawings that the children like outdoor activities?
A2: Yes, the finding of this study can be an advocacy piece. It looks like children are happy with

outdoor activities, and also activities related to drawing and singing as they drew these activities.

Q3: What is our role as teachers or family members of young children?
A3: We need to allow them to do things that they like.

Q4: Did the children in the study need coaxing to draw?
A4: No, they seemed to like to draw and drew readily. However from a more recent survey conducted in Singapore, Singapore's children seem not to know how to draw anymore. In a recent programme conducted in Singapore, it was found that the facilitator/teacher needed to talk to the children and ask them some questions before the children felt confident to draw on their own.

Q5: What is the next step from this study?
A5: The demand of family time is real for children and needs to be given importance.

Q6: Did the study explore possible factors contributing to the way these children draw?
A6: No, it did not.

Further comments from speaker and audience:
- Some teachers do not let children do free drawing. They determine how the children should draw, and some ask the children to colour given drawings. Children seem to lose their ability to draw.
- Getting parents and children to draw together is a good idea. This activity can be integrated in a parental programme.
- In a programme in Cambodia, parents are asked to sing about the possible content of a drawing; so parents will sing and the children will be more aware and confident in what they draw. This encourages expression, strengthens family ties and improves language skills. The importance is not only the drawing but the discussion and expression and prewriting. Children can also do drawing with yoga activities.
- There is a gap between parents' aspiration and childrens' wishes.
- Giving children the opportunities to draw or express themselves requires a change of mind set and pedagogy among the teachers. The teachers need to restrain themselves to give answers.
- Further research can be done on children's drawing by looking at drawings of children from various backgrounds such as refugee children, children in poverty etc.
- Often time we don't look from children's perspective; we tell children to draw things they experienced but do not consider the context of their observation.
- Teachers often comment on the children's drawing and not giving encouragement might be a factor why children do not know how to draw now.
- There is a need for more outdoor play. In China, every child must have two hours of outdoor play every day.
- We need to understand that attending enrichment classes such as music class is not play for children.

2.2 Sustainable future with children: Children's voices to be heard

Professor Eunhye Park, Ewha Women's University, Seoul, Korea; OMEP World Vice President of Asia Pacific Region

The speaker provided explanations on the definition of education for sustainability (ESD), concepts of ESD and children's play as an important role in shaping a sustainable future. She also delved into various recommendations of ESD by organisations such as UNESCO etc. She also provided a detailed description of the phases in ESD programmes and what OMEP has done for each of these phases such as the WASH project, traditional play among children etc.

Questions, comments and sharing from the speaker and audience:

- Many of the examples or projects done by OMEP in ESD can be emulated in other countries such as the traditional play among children, save the animal project, etc.
- A participant shared about University of Maryland's project on traditional songs and children's songs.
- The principles of the "5 E's" (engage, explore, explain, extend, evaluate) in children's activities.
- Participant shared about traditional play in Indonesia.
- In an island in the Philippines, the national curriculum is used along with a traditional curriculum which emphasises how the local children play.
- A participant from the Philippines shared about a project done where children commented on what he or she has learned from the lesson through a puppet. In this way, children expressed their thinking and the childrens' voices are being heard.
- Childrens' voices can be investigated through the tracking practices of teachers and carers during circle time, guided book activities, guided visits etc. These activities provide great potential and opportunity for children's voice.
- A participant from Myanmar shared about role play and circle time in a private early childhood centre.
- There is also a need to be sensitive to cultural differences among children.
- Plan International promotes corner play, where materials such as sand or blocks are placed in a corner and children can play freely with these materials. Teachers will ask open questions at these corners, letting children learn to express themselves. In this way, skills such as language skills and social skills can be developed.

Further comments included highlighting the new ARNEC portal. Such a portal can be a good place for sharing of children's voices. The conversation among early childhood advocates, practitioners and researchers can continue using the portal. Also, it was felt there are many in the field who are not aware of this need and advocacy on this matter is a necessity. More needs to be done to create this awareness and take further action.

Concurrent Session 3: **Workshop—Skilful parenting: From awareness to empowered change in parenting**

Ms. Pia Van den Boom, Child Protection Officer, Investing in Children and Societies (ICS), Asia
Mr. Ros Pheak, Skilful Trainer Skilful Parenting, Investing in Children and Societies (ICS), Asia

Ms Pia started the session with a game called "If". For example, "if" you are a Singaporean, please stand up. "If" you are a parent, please stand up, etc. This game engaged the participants and provided exercise after lunch. The presenter then went on to discuss the "why?" of parenting

interventions and encouraging the participants to share. She gave a brief Introduction of ICS – Investing in Children and their Societies, an organisation that provides trainings for locals and all the facilitators who are mainly social workers, healthcare workers, teachers etc. The ICS programme on parenting skills looks at seven cores elements:
- roles and responsibilities
- self-esteem of parents – time for me!
- values and discipline
- family communication
- family conflict or violence: peaceful families
- child protection
- family budgeting – financial planning

The Skilful Parenting programme is implemented as part of various social businesses and other programmes and places high priority on child protection and prevention of violence.

Mr. Pheak shared his personal story of growing up during the time of the Khmer Rouge Regime and the difficulties faced by his widowed mother. He provided insights from Cambodian parents. Then he engaged the workshop participants in two exercises taken from the Skilful Parenting Programme curriculum that allowed them to see how the process worked. The exercises asked for contributions from participants and provided time for them to reflect on their own childhood and parenting experiences, then share what they had written on the flip charts or on the exercise sheets.

Questions and discussion was as follows:
Q1: In developing your programmes, how do you adapt to their culture?
A1: Two examples given: Cambodian parents not comfortable to give praises to their children, so this must be considered. Also, a majority of Cambodians are Buddhists, so they therefore tap into topics such as 'KARMA' to adapt it in the roles and responsibilities of parenting session.

Q2: What is the sustainability of the groups in Cambodia?
A2: Parents see value in it and ICS is working with local government to garner more support

Q3: How to get fathers to attend the sessions?

Q4: How you select Facilitators?
A4: Attitude is very important in selecting facilitators.

A conference participant from Bhutan posing questions during the plenary session at the opening ceremony

Day 2: Tuesday, 19 November 2013

Plenary 3 Regional Keynote: **ECD in the Asia-Pacific Region: Influencing Policy through Impact Evaluations**

Professor Nirmala Rao, Faculty of Education and Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Studies at The Graduate School, The University of Hong Kong

Professor Rao opened by remarking the importance of advocacy and why early childhood community needs to speak with unified voice. Yet for the presentation she proposed taking a step back in order to talk about evidence that is needed to influence policy, namely impact evaluations. She defined what impact evaluations are and how they are conducted, presented two projects from the Asia-Pacific region and closed with four conclusions.

Simply put, impact evaluations measure the impacts of a particular programme by comparing two groups. The two groups are the one which participates in the programme or receives an intervention and the other group which does not. The two groups are compared before and after the programme is implemented. Impact evaluations are important because of the need to know if the programme or intervention benefits children and families, if it is cost-effective and if it is sustainable. Sustainability is particularly problematic for those programmes supported by grants because when the grant ends, the programme ends. Impact evaluations provide the evidence necessary for on-going support of a programme when there is a need to build infrastructure and capacity. With the emphasis on evidence-based policy in the region, impact evaluations are therefore particularly important.

Conducting an impact evaluation requires a rigorous design and includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. In order to effectively evaluate the quality of a programme, all aspects must be considered. Attention must be paid to the intended and unintended results whether they are

positive or negative, and include all components—child development indicators via testing or teacher/parent reports, parenting programmes, etc. A rigorous or a systematic review of multiple studies for critical analysis and statistical evaluation can then be conducted. This process ultimately produces the evidence needed for further programme advocacy.

In selecting studies to include in a rigorous review, several things must be considered. It is very important that the programme itself is implemented in a sound and consistent manner. Political factors and social-ecological context can also be included. Professor Rao again emphasised the dearth of evaluation research in the region, especially in low-resource contexts and its necessity for evidence-based policy-making. Policy-makers are interested in questions such as:

- What are the benefits of childhood interventions in the region?
- What kinds of benefits are most effective?
- What kinds of benefits are most easily scaled up?
- Where should resources be allocated?
- How much will it cost?
- How will it be sustained?

Professor Rao and a team of researchers conducted a rigorous review of the effects of early childhood interventions and cognitive development in studies from low and middle income countries (LAMIC) in the region. She noted that there were no countries using conditional cash transfers in the region with sound reporting, so the use of conditional cash transfers is absent from this review. Also, the literature review focused on English language publications, but also included a review of Spanish publications and the China database. In the end, there were 56 studies from 14 countries and many studies included multiple interventions. These studies revealed that there were four primary kinds of interventions in the region:

- parent-focused interventions
- child-focused education interventions
- nutrition and health interventions
- other comprehensive interventions

The findings of rigorous review supported the investment in early childhood programmes because there is significant impact. Important elements include the quality of the programme and the training of the change agent (teacher, parent, nurse-educator).

Specific recommendations can be made regarding:
- quality of the programme
- types of programme (for example, comprehensive programmes had a greater impact, although there were more child-focused interventions)
- locally developed programmes (implemented well because of community participation)
- increasing capacity of in-country teams to conduct research and evaluations
- adapting traditional approaches to different contexts (for example, parent-child reading is an effective intervention for literacy, but in a country where the mothers were illiterate, the teachers were trained in this kind of reading and found to be just as effective)

One of the challenges is how to assess the impact of early childhood programmes because there

are no regional scales. The EAP-ECDS (East Asia Pacific-Early Child Development Scales) project is seeking to address this need. Professor Rao outlined the process by which the scales were developed, piloted, and refined for East Asian countries. The assessment tool that resulted is therefore from a bottom up process and not simply a translation of a western assessment tool. The pilot studies conducting using the ECDS found that those in preschool were doing better and the plan is to expand the study, using larger samples from multiple countries in the East Asia area.

The presentation ended with four conclusions:

- impact evaluations are needed in LAMIC in the region
- this rigorous review is the first in the region—ARNEC's collection of Noteworthy Practices is a good beginning, but none were rigorous enough to be included in this review; therefore capacity for in-country programme review needs to be strengthened
- the East Asia Pacific-Early Child Development Scales will provide evidence on the impact of preschool participation (over time)
- Conducting impact evaluations and disseminating findings is not enough. We need to engage with policy makers and other stake-holders to ensure that research finding are translated into policy and practice

Questions and comments:
Q1: A comment regarding the interventions effect size being .3 to .7—this is very when taking this evidence to policy makers, because anything above .3 is good and useful. Was there any qualitative evidence on the child-focused interventions? And one further comment, the lower social-emotional learning of those in school was also noted in the peace-building initiative studies.
A1: Yes, there are narrative summaries and other reports.

Q2: Are the results already translated into policies? Are there resources to help this?
A2: It is hoped that people can take the review with its evidence to their policy-makers. The review reports include detailed equations used for each country.

Q3: How was the emergent literacy of child measured? Qualitative or quantitative?
A3: There was quantitative evaluation of individual child, but also there were parent and teacher questionnaires. Additional quantitative data regarding the kindergartens and times attended, etc.

Q4: Good review, but seem to have lost out on the formative, participative experiences that can also reflect impact. Who are the "we" that were doing this review?
A4: Agreed, and said that is why the noteworthy practices ARNEC has gathered were highlighted in the presentation, these get at the formative, participative experiences; but there is also a need to push an evaluation culture, hence the rigorous review. The "we" is the review team, which includes many from The University of Hong Kong, a nutritionist, an economist, international experts such as Sheldon Shaeffer, peer reviewers such as Tina Hyder. The ECDS team is based at HKU but is also inter-disciplinary. Regarding country participation: each country has a chief data manager—the countries government officials and UNICEF/UNESCO manage the data and pass it on.

Q4: A question about the clustering of the domains and the bottom up process and how to use the scales?

A4: Professor Rao reviewed the intentional bottom up process of developing the measure, by starting with what the country valued. About dissemination and using the scale, the next steps are meeting with countries to come up with a strategy to help planning and get them translated into policy.

Q5: About the scales usefulness in other areas?
A5: Professor Rao reminded the audience that this scale is based on East Asian scale and there is a need to develop a South Asian scale.

Plenary 4: Noteworthy Practices from Singapore

Plenary 4.1**: Development and Implementation of Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework**

Mrs. Fong Chin Yoon Fah, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), Singapore

Mrs. Fong began her speech by describing the journey that she and her team undertook to bring the Singapore preschool accreditation framework (SPARK) into fruition. The task was given to her in 2008, after a team of preschool specialists found that the preschool sector was very segregated and had inconsistent quality; the high-end privately run preschools provided high quality education and care, while the affordable public preschools were generally of low quality. The preschool committee hence recommended for a quality assurance framework be set up to monitor and regulate quality of the preschools in Singapore. The first step that the team took was to study quality assessment instruments that were already in use in other countries, to assess their strengths and suitability for the local context. The team found that there were a few established instruments that were widely used in other countries but none could be adopted directly by Singapore. Modifications had to be made as Singapore has a very diverse early childhood landscape.

Mrs. Fong highlighted that there are a few key levers or determinants of quality in the early childhood education sector: 1) Teacher quality – are the teachers competent and responsive educators? 2) Programme quality – are the support that were given to kindergartens sufficient and do they emphasize on holistic development? 3) Centre quality – are there accountability, quality evaluation process, good leaders, sufficient resources and a suitable environment?

She enumerated that the goals of the quality assurance framework is:
- To uplift quality of ECE offered by kindergarten and childcare
- To encourage self-monitoring and evaluation
- To provide parents and other stakeholders with informed choices

Through her team's studies, she ascertained that the framework should reflect the following processes and hierarchy:

1) A mandatory registration or licensing process as a basic requirement to ensure baseline quality is met
2) Self-appraisal as a natural next step to help the ECE community determine what its visions and missions are

3) Quality evaluation and improvement initiatives can then follow with the aid of a quality assurance instrument

Mrs. Fong raised the point that prior to creating a good quality assurance instrument, the ECE community needs to examine what its core values are first. In Singapore's case, the core values that were determined are: Leadership with Vision; Professionalism with impact; Innovation with Purpose; Partnership for growth and Child is our Focus.

The study team found that ECERS-R and ECERS-E from the USA were instruments that appropriately measure math, reading, science and diversity issues. However, it lacked scales in management, teacher training, leadership and resources. To complement ECERS-R and ECERS-E, the team decided to adopt the Programme Administration Scale which appropriately measures programme management and administration issues.

Common in all quality assurance instruments that were studied were scales that measure structural constructs such as programme management and professional development and process-based constructs such as curriculum and pedagogy. During their study, Mrs. Fong's team discovered that improvements made in structural constructs can quickly result in an increase in the quality of early childhood education. As such, the team recommended for teacher training and education to be improved as quickly as possible to lift the quality of the industry. Process constructs such as pedagogical change and curriculum re-design also play a part in affecting the quality of ECE but these changes take longer to implement.

The final rating scale that was developed, called SPARK, has seven key areas of focus and a scoring rubric that uses a six-point likert scale. In 2008, three rounds of field testing were carried out to check for clarity of items, ease of use and comprehensiveness. In 2009, pilot testing took place and 50 early childhood centres were involved. In 2010 another round of testing took place where correlations with the ECERs-R, E and PAS instruments were calculated. High correlations were found amongst the three instruments. SPARK was implemented thereafter in 2011.

Plenary 4.2: **A step towards a more inclusive preschool landscape: The science and art of implementation**
Mr. Tang Hui Nee, Educational Psychologist, Department of Child Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore
Ms. Noradlin Mohamed Yusof, Senior Psychologist, Department of Child Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore

Ms. Noradlin opened her discussion by describing how the programme came into effect. The KK Hospital is the main hospital that conducts child development assessments and it saw that over 2000 referrals were being made every year. They also found out that most of the referred children were attending mainstream preschools and were not obtaining additional support within the mainstream environment.

The development support programme that was drafted had the following fundamental beliefs: 1) that the each child goes through a unique developmental journey and individual differences ought to be respected and supported; 2) that the child, parents/family and early childhood professional ought to work together in order to make an impact in the child; 3) that support

needs to be given in natural settings such as the home and school; and 4) that the goal of the programme is to build capacity and capability amongst parents, caregivers and ECE professionals.

Based on the beliefs, the aims or goals of the programme are: 1) To build capability and capacity within the ECE community to support children with mild developmental needs; 2) To provide early detection and intervention; 3) To use an integrated approach to support a whole-child.

During the programme implementation phase, the following process was carried out: A child with mild developmental needs is identified, observed and evaluated. A statement of need and an individualized education plan is subsequently drafted for the child. The individualized education plan then gets implemented and reviewed. A typical implementation involves three months of preparation, three months of intervention and two months of post implementation support.

A new role called the Learning Support Educators (LSed) was created to provide the necessary support for children in the mainstream settings. The LSed performs the screening, designs the necessary support packages or plans, and helps the child in the classroom directly. LSed also acts as a bridge between parents and medical professionals. Prior to and after interventions, all stakeholders including the parent, LSed and developmental paediatrician get together to review and agree on the intervention direction and outcome.

A small evaluation study has taken place since the programme's implementation. The Brigance (2010) developmental screening tool was used to measure gains across the different developmental domains. It is found the intervention yielded gains in motor and language development. After receiving intervention, as many as 98% of the children displayed improvements in one or more areas of development. Feedback from parents and EC educators was also largely positive.

The development support programme grew from being a one-centre programme to becoming a nationwide programme.

Ms. Noradlin concluded her presentation by sharing her personal thoughts, and they are:
1. That a consistent model will have to be used by all teams from the beginning
2. That ECE, special educators and LSed should "think big, start small and dig deep"
3. That community support is crucial as efforts cannot be successful without teamwork – as the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child".

Comments during the question and answer time:
A delegate from India wanted to find out why SPARK sets out to measure children's eagerness to learn. Mrs. Fong pointed out that one of the intended roles of SPARK is to educate parents and change their perception on child development. By measuring dispositions such as eagerness to learn and persistence, SPARK is indicating to parents that the focus for ECE should not be on rote learning and academic achievements but should be on creating long-lasting and positive dispositions in young children.

A delegate from Indonesia posed a question about the process of referral and diagnosis for disability for children under the age of three. Mr. Tang and Ms. Noradlin pointed out that while

they believe that diagnosis and intervention should occur as early as possible. But in Singapore, parents tend to come to terms with the disability and take actions only when the child turns four when his or her disability become evident in the schools.

Peer Review Session 1: National ECD Policy Reviews from selected countries in the Asia-Pacific Region: How effective are our ECD policies in addressing equity issues?

Peer Review 1.1**: India—Enabling policy environment for early childhood addressing issues of equity**

Dr. Mridula Bajaj, Executive Director, Mobile Crèche, New Delhi, India

Dr. Baja represents civil society, not government, but is very active in advocating and promoting care and development of young children. She made a brief introduction of the socio-political contours of India, which is very complex and diverse. The challenge is how to address equity issues. Even though policy is in place, it is not really implemented as even teachers promote segregation. There are many cultural barriers. The current providers of early childhood services include government/public providers, private providers, volunteer providers and the medical sector. It was noted that there are quality issues with private provides as the focus in on providing an English language environment and is for profit. The volunteer sector is doing good work but has cost issues and cannot readily scale up their programmes. And the only sector attending to the under threes is the medical sector, which address only health questions of malnourishment and early stimulation and not a holistic early childhood development framework. Additionally, there are constitutional obligations and guarantees for children allowing for devolution of power and local governance. The National Policy for Children has been in place since1974. The intent is present, but it is not really worked out well as there are implementation problems challenges.

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is good but has issues. It was revamped last year which indicates the government is responsive. But the challenge is huge as there are 160 million children under the age of six to be served. The attitude toward early childhood was helped as India journeyed from a welfare to a rights approach after the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989. Yet more is needed. For example, society needs to acknowledge a relationship between recognition of women as workers and a child's need when mothers go out to work. Making policy to support women as workers includes providing alternative care for children. It is important that maternity leave be seen not as a right but as an entitlement. Another area of concern is that although children age three to six have a right to education and ECD is recognized, the under threes are still neglected. There are a number of national policies and laws for children, but only recently has the family been considered as opposed to talking about the child in isolation. Recognition is needed for support of the family unit as integral in early childhood services. Many good things happening and now there is a focus emerging regarding quality and diversity for first time. Policies are in place, but now there is need for time and space for creating programmes that accommodate the needs of all children, providing flexibility and appropriate guidelines to respond to diversity of need and environments of all children and their families. Implementation of the recent National ECCE Policy is key to ensuring quality and equity for all children.

The moderator summed up that these are good reminders of equity—issues of gender, language,

residence. The ECCE policy approval is a landmark for this region and recognition that resolving equity issues is tied to policy as well as other dimensions.

Peer Review 1.2: Myanmar

Dr. Aye Aye Yee, Education Specialist, UNICEF Myanmar

Dr. Yee presented the Myanmar Policy and Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Care and Development. It is a policy that is being developed and is yet to be enacted. She gave a brief description of the situation in Myanmar. There are many changes because of the recent year's downturn in economy and social development. Myanmar is also very diverse. There are more than 135 ethnic groups, who speak more than 110 languages. Although the population numbers are small, diversity is a challenge.
Geographic variations play a significant role in negating equal access to services. Nevertheless, there are achievements. Dr. Yee presented the achievements within the context of past and present Myanmar rather than comparing Myanmar with other countries. For examples, preschool education has increased and we have done a lot in the developing of a network for advocacy and training, especially working with government. In fact, Myanmar was one of the countries with a study included in the regional review provided by Professor Rao in Plenary 4. ECD policy is on the government's radar but has yet to be adopted. The national environment is supportive of ECD. The statistics look good when looked at as a whole, but when disaggregated the statistics reveal limited progress in some areas. Therefore, there is greater need to understand regional disparities and social disparities. Further studies are needed to collect evidence and understand the local situations and provide for more informed policy. One other thing of note is that the international community can help push the national government to address ECD issues.

The Myanmar Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (ECCD) Policy is still in progress. Dr. Yee outlined how the policy was developed in participatory, consultative workshops and interviews. The ECCD policy is to be presented to the Cabinet soon, through the Social Welfare Ministry. The vision of the ECCD Policy includes ALL children.

Questions during the discussion time:
Q1: In terms of displacement and conflict, is this a part of the policy?
Q2: In birth to eight, there are in fact different stages birth to three, three to six, five to eight, etc. How are these covered in the national policy? ,
Q3 Governments are good at making policy, but not so good at implementing—diversity cannot be solved with one policy; NGOs have good results, but not sustainable without government support, but government doesn't trust the people—any success stories of replication to share?
Q4: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan have all had ECCD plans approved this year; so what are the action plans now that the policies are in place?

Dr. Bajaj response:
Displaced children are mentioned and age-segregation is acknowledged, not spelled out in detail in the national policy; ECCE already in place, and the civil society is pushing for ECCD. It is the civil society that feels the time was right to push for birth to six years to be included. Other issues can be addressed later; this is national policy, so each state now needs to develop own policy and action plans, so the diverse needs can be met, with their own budgets and provide oversight, in partnership possibly with civil society and/or private sector. But the primary responsibility, 90%

of it, rests with each individual state.

Dr. Yee response:
There are specific provisions based on age groups but early invention for children with special needs is still needed. As for implementation, the policy is not yet adopted, but still moving forward to integrate it in the multi-sectoral plans, to have a representative unit in each ministry, to remind them to put it in their 5, 10, 20 year plans.

The moderator summed up by stating that policy is being developed; the need now is for it to become more responsive to diversity within countries and to attend to disaggregated data (language, gender, ethnicity, geography). This kind of data is lacking or data is scattered and therefore there is a need to strengthen data collection. There is a need to find champions within government to help with policy as sectors are reviewing plans (education, health, protection etc.) and this provides an opportunity to insert a voice for ECD.

Peer Review Session 2: National ECD Policy Reviews from selected countries in the Asia-Pacific Region: How effective are our ECD policies in addressing equity issues?

Peer Review 2.1: **Philippines**

Dr. Teresita Inciong, Chairperson, Early Childhood Care and Development Council, Philippines

Dr. Inciong presented the recently approved Philippines Early Years Act (2013), which recognises the ages birth to eight years as the first crucial stage of educational development, stresses the need to strengthen the ECCD system, and allocates funds. The Act also strengthens the ECCD Council to ensure the State's focus on ECCD, especially from birth to four years: the focus on birth to four is because five year olds are already covered by the education system. The Act promotes a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable ECCD system. Dr. Inciong also presented the general situation of the country at present. Philippines is facing rapid population growth and 22 million out of 83.7 million people are between the ages of birth to eight years. There is concern about the low access of under three's to ECD programmes and as a result 58% are not ready to enter grade one or formal school. She also described the National System for ECCD which promotes multi-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration at the national and local levels; promotes inclusion of children with special needs by providing reasonable accommodation and accessible environment for children with disabilities; and advocates respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. The ECCD system focuses on the birth to age four group.

The ECCD System consists of: (a) ECCD management, (b) ECCD curriculum (c) parental education and involvement (d) human resource development programme. There is also a multi-sectoral ECCD Council Governing Board. There is expanding access; a scaling up of home-based programmes; a quality national early learning framework and national early learning curriculum and family support programmes; standards for service providers; a professionalization of day care workers; and a standardisation of the quality of ECCD throughout the country. Furthermore, the National Early Learning Curriculum for day cares is under development. Efficiency and

sustainability are addressed through creating champions at all levels, engaging and capacitating local government units, clarifying roles and responsibilities of local government units, supporting implementation of their ECCD programme, and organizing and supporting parent cooperatives to establish community-based ECCD programmes.

Future directions include:
- Universal access to quality ECCD programmes 100% of five years olds being ready for kindergarten
- Strengthening collaboration among national and local government agencies including NGOs
- Increasing awareness of communities and families
- Inclusion of children with special needs, at risk, vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Establishing mechanisms for systematic professional development

Questions and answers were as follows:
Q1: To what extent are you looking at DRR (disaster risk reduction) in ECCD given the recent devastating typhoon?
A1: Children are taken care of by the Department of Health and Department of Social Affairs and Development. Volunteers are going there for psychological care. We also collaborated on the development of the disaster management manual with ARNEC.

Peer Review 2.2: Vietnam

Dr. Ho Lam Hong, Director, UNESCO Advisory Centre for Development Education, Hanoi, Vietnam

Dr. Ho introduced the ECD system in Vietnam and compared three parts of the country: the cities, the rural areas, and the mountain, as well as border communes and island villages. Cities have high quality and enough classroom space and equipment and teachers are well trained and retrained; parents are well trained but the number of children in one class is high. In rural areas, many classrooms and schools have been rebuilt but equipment provided is limited. In the mountain and other areas, there are inadequate classrooms, equipment and learning materials; multi-age grouping is common; use of mother tongue is common but children have to learn Vietnamese before entrance to primary education; teachers are trained but retraining limited; parents well aware but cannot pay school fees or for meals, and don't want children to go to kindergarten; number of children in each classroom can be large.

The ECD management system is a cascading system, beginning with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), then the department of education and training at the provincial level, then the department of education and training at the district level, and final preschools and kindergartens.

Regarding policies, the Education Law 2005 recognises the importance of ECD and considers ECD as a national matter. It aims at universal preschool education for children aged five in the 2010-2015 period; it defines responsibilities of parents and families to send children aged five to school for full-day education (two sessions/day) in order to be prepared for primary school. It also aims at quality improvement, providing teacher standards and prioritising investment in materials.

Status of ECD in 2010-2012 indicates progress in these areas:
- school readiness and pre-primary education
- remote and disadvantaged areas: free tuition, lunch provided for full-day school; more financial support for disadvantaged children; inclusive class for children with special needs
- increased access, particularly in special areas
- 7,300 new classrooms for five year old children in difficult communes
- basic teaching materials and equipment
- two teachers for 20-30 children per class
- in-service training and retraining, including ethnic minority teachers (including multi-grade teaching)
- parental awareness-raising and encouraging children's attendance to pre-schools.

Questions included:
Q1: Teacher-child ration: high = how many children?
A1: 1 teacher to 20-25 children normal; high= as many as 70 children / class

Q2: How is the Vietnamese language introduced?
A2: Children are encouraged to go to school at age three to learn the language

Q3: What are the challenges in implementing inclusive preschools?
A3: Children who are integrated do not have severe disabilities. Children with severe disabilities are sent to special schools, and these are available only in cities.

The moderator summed up with the statement that equity is broad: children must have quality ECD environment that represents who they are. Early childhood caregivers and teachers must address equity as children have different needs and diversity. How fair and inclusive are our policies for the benefits of the children of tomorrow?

Concurrent Session 4: Localising ECD Programmes

4.1 **Collaboration work for integration and holistic ECCD in Nepal**
Narmaya Thapa, Education Programme Coordinator, Save the Children, Nepal

The speaker introduced the ECD context in Nepal and explained the joint collaboration work for ECCD, which is a government group. She shared the rationale and objectives for an integrated ECD along with expected outcomes. She outlined the key achievements and lessons learned from several pilot projects of district integrated holistic ECCD programmes. One of the main challenges was the high turnover in government staff. Recommendations included better compensation, as well as increasing efforts at the national and local levels.

Q&A:
The discussion afterward focused on understanding how the programme was implemented over the course of a year. The presenter explained the components, which include mother training; home visits; each centre develops their own one year plan; a training module for mothers and fathers; and leaflets for mothers and fathers.

4.2 **Using play to learn in early childhood development**

Amrita Goswami, Programme Coordinator, Save the Children, India

The speaker began with the overall project objective and then went on to explain key project activities. The objective was to promote the use of play to help each child learn, develop and establish strong foundations for future success in school and beyond. Key project activities included strengthening the capacity of ICDS staff on ECD; strengthening the capacity of mothers/parents in their understanding of the value of play; equipping centres; holding orientation sessions for fathers; conducting project approach and evaluation; assessing project impact on ICDS workers and centres; and assessing project impact on caregivers' knowledge and practices. Conclusions and recommendations were to involve fathers, strengthen capacities, establish partnerships with government systems and find ways to promote the scaling up of the project.

Q&A:
The discussion afterward focused on how the initiative was to be sustained. It was explained that there were different implementation models based on context because the desire was to be sensitive to culture and make appropriate adaptations. The centres provided important guidance and worked in partnership to implement the project.

4.3 A Gross National Happiness (GNH) inspired early childhood care and education programme: A dialogue on harmonizing western theories and Bhutanese funds of knowledge

Ms. Karma Pedey, M Ed (Hons) Candidate, University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia

The speaker introduced the background of ECCD in Bhutan and presented the research. The Royal Government of Bhutan recognises early childhood care and education as important and ECCD is becoming popular among parents with young children. The key question that was being explored was: "How can western theories and local funds of knowledge be harmonized for the Bhutanese children to receive holistic and appropriate ECCD programmes for their growth and development?" The main findings included understanding the parents' perceptions of ECCD and discovery that the guiding ECCD documents are highly influenced by western theories and

values—the ECCD programmes and services have not harnessed the local funds of knowledge. Since the ultimate goal is education through the Gross National Happiness (GNH) lens, the study recommended advocating the benefits of infusing Bhutanese culture within the ECCD programmes; initiating documentation of local funds of knowledge; and building capacity of culturally competent facilitators.

Q&A

Q1: What are the values in your research?

A1: We have strongly Buddhist culture and in the research we focus on the situation in Bhutan

Q2: Which approach do you use in your research?

A1: We use the learning practical approach—we teach children to see in the environment and in their family and we use stories. Parents know their children best and know which stories children like best. Parents take care children and use stories for teaching their children.

Q3: How did you determine the values for children?

A1: We used domains and indicators to determine the values for children.

Q&A and discussion for all three presenters:

Q1: If Western themes dominate (such as images in early childhood settings like Mickey Mouse and given that the world is increasingly globalized) can we blame parents for wanting their children to be exposed to such values?

A1: Maybe it is acceptable for children to be exposed to a wide range of imagery, but not at the expense of being unaware of the imagery, characters and stories from their own backgrounds.

Q2: How are parents convinced of the value of play?

A1: Through workshops and explanations of why play is important and how it promotes the underpinning skills necessary for later literacy and numeracy.

Q3: What strategies did the intervention from India use to promote breastfeeding?

A1: There was consistent messaging and communication that also involved discussion with parents as well as training programmes for parents, especially father training.

The moderator summarised the presentations by noting they provided diverse perspectives on localising ECD programmes. In the first session we heard about effective collaboration between national and local government and also a wide range of agencies for a highly effective and wide-scale national programme. In the second presentation we heard about effective communication and engagement with parents to implement an innovative programme that incorporates play as the main vehicle for children's learning and exploration. In the third presentation we heard a plea for recognition of national values and imagery in a blended form of ECD that incorporates what is known about best practice with a full focus on reinforcing children's identities.

Concurrent Session 5: Programme Evaluation

5.1 **Role of start-up planning in the implementation of high-quality comprehensive early childhood development programmes**

Sukhdeep Gill, PhD, Pennsylvania State University, USA

The speaker shared lessons learned from programme evaluations of Early Head Start (EHS) in the USA. High quality programme implementation depends on strong and continued leadership, an adequate start-up period and a cohesive start-up team with expertise, vision and capacity. Additionally, expert consultation helps steer the planning process as well as being responsive to the community needs and involving community partners in the planning process to enhance buy-in, collaboration and visibility. New partnerships are critical in successful programme implementation and start-up planning is the key to staff training, retention, morale and buy-in.

5.2 Using ITERS in assessing quality environment: A case study at two selected childcare centres in Kuala Lumpur

Mastura Badzis, EdD Assistant Professor, International Islamic University, Malaysia
Nun Amirah Adnan, Med, Institute of Education, International Islamic University, Malaysia

The speaker made a good case on the effectiveness of Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scales (ITERS) for research and programme evaluation. Results and scores gained through ITERS can be used by programme directors to administer improvement of programmes and is also useful for self- assessment, monitoring quality as well as being used for giving feedback for training.

5.3 Quality versus quantity early childhood development services: A centre-based ECD case study

Prem Krishna Aryal, Learning Programme Coordinator, Plan International Nepal
Tilak Bahadur Rai, Learning Programme Coordinator, Plan International Nepal

The study had three primary findings:
- there is a need of more investment for enhancing knowledge and skills to parents and caregivers at family level the impact of political influence is often not positive
- the rapid increase of ECD centres with inadequate awareness and management capacity can have a negative effect
- district early childhood development boards and National Planning Commission (NPC) (with inter-ministerial co-ordination among MoE, MoH, MoWCSW, MoLD) at the national level should take the lead for better integration among stakeholders

Concurrent Session 6: **Special Needs**

6.1 Children with special needs in Pakistan—Role of Human Development Programme of Aga Khan University (AKU-HDP), Pakistan

Seema Lasi, Aga Khan University-Human Development Programme (AKU-HDP), Pakistan
Zia Sultana, Aga Khan University-Human Development Programme (AKU-HDP), Pakistan

Objectives of the study were to assess the prevalence of disabilities amongst children in Pakistan; to explore the perceptions, knowledge and attitude of caregivers, Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and teachers regarding children with disabilities in the community; and consider ways to adapt and evaluate strategies for the implementation of the WHO training manual for disabled people.

Conclusions and recommendations were as follows:
6. the training was found to significantly increase the participants knowledge on disability
7. they were better able to counsel mothers than before
8. WHO manual was found to be useful resource for child with disabilities (CWD) to be used in communities at Primary Health Care level
9. messages and activities from the training manual are user-friendly and doable in community setting
10. the mother's knowledge, attitude and practices were found significantly improved
11. the performance of the CWDs was found to be significantly improved
12. there is a need for welcoming schools—healthcare facilities need to provide therapy support and network with the communities and to change the attitude towards CWDs.

Lessons learned from the study included the realisation that working with special needs is a cross cutting theme and should be an integral part of ECD programmes and projects; the sustainability of the interventions is an important issue for these programmes and projects; and government, teachers and community workers need to promote and sustain the knowledge and skills for mothers of the CWDs in the community.

During the question and answer time, the following were discussed:
What tool did you use to identify the different disabilities?
A 10 question tool is used for screening the children.

How did you go about the screening if this tool could not be used for certain screening?
We would enlist the help of the teachers and also intervene at the family level through home visits and counselling for mothers.

What are your next steps?
There are challenges to be faced in working with LHWs to ensure a continuity of services, these things must be addressed next.

6.3 Age appropriate inclusive preschool programme: Tales of feat and wonder
Frank S. Emboltura, RN, M Ed-SPED, University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, Philippines
Nilda B. Delgado, RSW, MindHaven School, Roxas City, Philippines

The speakers presented three rationales regarding inclusive educational practices and the need for examining the situation in a local preschool setting in the Philippines:

Rationale 1: Inclusive education in the Philippines is emerging – EFA 1990
Rationale 2: Extent and strategies of inclusive education practices
Rationale 3: Involvement of stakeholders and parents of inclusive education practices

This study was based on the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model (1979).

The speakers outlined the data collection procedures and analysis in depth then presented five primary findings. First, the extent of awareness among all stakeholders regarding age-

appropriate inclusive education programme was documented and there was a well-placed inclusive education programme. Second, it was found that there was multi-strategic delivery of instruction as there were strategies, interventions and programmes the school used to implement and create meaningful age-appropriate inclusive education. Third, parents of children with and without disabilities perceive their child's classroom environment to be an inclusive milieu which indicates a culture of diversity, equity and acceptance. Fourth, parents of children with and without disabilities indicate that age-appropriate inclusion to be a crucial goal in their child's development. Fifth, parents and professionals involved in the process of the inclusive education programme define and support age-appropriate inclusion, which indicates that inclusive education is a part of school culture and an advocacy. In conclusion, the importance of planning, actions, practices and human connections was highlighted with simple formula:

Experiences + Role of School =JOURNEY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Questions included:
Q1: What were your strategies for children without disabilities?
A1: Orient them, address the culture and diversity in the school, and teachers have an important role as they need to exude the qualities of inclusiveness. Also, educating parents before enrolment is compulsory as parents need to attend Parents as Education Partners (PEP) and they need to commit to it. If they fail to attend more than three sessions, they will be excluded from the programme. Other members of the family are also involved

Q2: At what stage of the IEP is the participation of parents important?
A2: Parents will discuss the priority of the IEP with other stakeholders and highlight the skills required with a multi-disciplinary group. Each goal will be measured in 3-6 months depending on the priority and severity of the child's special needs.

Q3: What is the ration of teacher to child?
A3: 1:11

Q4: What are critical changes you adopted or use in the classroom? How do you include it into or link it to the regular curriculum?
A4:
- it is theme based
- assessment is carried out before entering school as a basis for IEP
- there may be a need for accommodating with minor adjustments to meet the children's needs
- it will might adhere to the rigours of the regular curriculum
- teachers are trained to assess the unique needs of the child base on the IEP
- teacher training is an important issue in this programme
- staff development is important
- teachers are reminded to be sensitive to the child's needs

The programme may focus on functional skills or they may be in a regular class for socialisation as a need to develop skills in inter-personality.

In summary of the two presentations, it was noted that both programmes are at an early stage of development in terms of establishing new grounds. It is important to make early beginnings so

that we can be more aware and meet the needs of children. A small beginning within our current capacity is all we need. Then the more we succeed, the movement will become more formal and the programme will become stronger as we continue to move forward.

Concurrent Session 7 Mother Tongue Workshop: Heritage Language Playschools for non-dominant language communities in Asia

Liz Foerster, Literacy and Education Consultant, SIL International, Thailand
Dr. Karla J. Smith, Senior Literacy and Education Consultant, SIL International
Wilailuck Dechsri (Por), Literacy and Education Specialist, Foundation for Applied Linguistics, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Dr. Catherine Young, Director, LEAD Asia, SIL International

The presenters outlined the general rationale for why mother tongue-based multilingual education is important both in later mastering the national and international languages and in reinforcing or revitalising non-dominant (and often endangered) languages and culture. They outlined what is needed in the classroom to promote mother tongue (a suitable curriculum, mother tongue materials and teachers, etc.) and promote "heritage language" preschools. Using an example from Thailand and guidelines developed for such a process, they led the participants through the steps needed to develop an orthography (if one is needed); identify, with local residents and cultural experts, the major events and activities in the community's yearly calendar from which themes and lesson plans can be derived; and create the songs, poems, "big pictures", stories, and books needed to stimulate children in learning to read in—and be confident and proud about—their own language.

Concurrent Session 8: **Literacy**

8.1 **Enriching children's literacy and social cognition via shared book reading in varied cultural settings**

Margalit Ziv, Dorit Aram, Yaara Fine and Areeej Massarwe, Al Qasemi Academic College of Education, Tel Aviv University, Oranim Teachers' College, Israel

The speaker shared two studies, one in which Hebrew-speaking Israeli mothers were guided on how to read books with children and the other one in which Arabic-speaking preschool teachers and mothers were guided on how to read books with children. The studies examined the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote adult-child discourse (in reference to language and social issues) during shared reading. The principles used to guide the reading including repeated reading; books with a structured yet flexible model regarding plot, vocabulary, characters' mental states, social interactions and connection with child's experiences; ongoing guidance for the mothers and teachers; and engaging children in conversation as the story was told. The children and mothers and/or teachers were videotaped before and after the intervention and while reading the books. It was found that intervention mothers referred more to books' plot and social-emotional themes than control group mothers; both teachers and mothers were motivated to engage in shared book reading with children; children engaged more in conversations, and enjoyed the stories; and children enjoyed the interactions and experienced meaningful learning.

Question and answer time:
Q1. How did you involve the mothers?
A1: Mothers were briefed on what was required and were videoed in action

Q2: Were the children taught how to decode the text?
A2: The focus was on active engagement and children enjoying the stories and to be able to retell stories in their own words.

8.2 Evaluating the impact of early childhood development and family literacy in Afghanistan

Shekufeh Zonji, Noorullah Nabizai Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan

The study explored the differential effects to determine which children and families benefit the most from the early childhood development programme, the medium-term effects of the programme on children's reading and math achievement in the first grade of primary school and the programme's impact on parental involvement and specific home literacy practices like shared book reading frequency, maternal book reading strategies, and availability of literacy materials during the preschool years. Evidence was collected from a randomised group in three environments, namely community-based preschools, parenting programmes and mothers' literacy classes. Challenges encountered in the study included security issues, students absenteeism rate in remote regions, challenge to get local qualified data collectors and the fact that the data is inconclusive due to sample size. Yet preliminary findings suggest that ECD programme is having a positive and transformative impact on children and communities. Perceived findings included that: children were well mannered and could say "salaam"; children were more cultured and socialized with other children and adults; children exhibit less deviant behaviour and parents need not resort to disciplining them; less conflicts in families when children attended ECD programmes; and increased interest and awareness and participation in ECD. Parents themselves could tell from behaviours of children as to who participated in ECD programmes because children appeared clean, were independent, respectful and more academically successful. Likewise, parents who attended the classes ensured their children were clean and placed more emphasis on hygiene at home, involved them educationally, talked and made toys with them. The literacy programme for mother's had low positive outcomes. Some could read and write but many had forgotten as they did not attend classes due to work load or illness

The noted cultural barriers to the study included nomadic lifestyle, sustainability, six-month long winter, teachers' salary and quality, mothers' workloads and families with multiple children.

Questions were as follows:
Q1: Who trains the teachers?
A1: The Aga Khan Foundation does the training.

Q1: Why are the children referred to as animals?
A1: Children are always playing outside, do not know how to speak properly, do not listen to their parents and need constant disciplining and hence are referred to as animals.

Q1: With 9 months of classes why are the retention rates low?

A1: This is because mother's drop out and attendance rate is very low. They cite reasons such as workload, illness and winter.

8.3 Literacy and school readiness of Kalagan pre-schoolers

Mae Theresa Vilma D. Andoy, RN MAEd, ECE, Part-time Teacher, University of Southeastern Philippines, Obrero, Davao City, Philippines

This study delved into the socioeconomic status, literacy and school readiness of the Kalagan pre-schoolers while also taking note of the literacy practices of the Kalagan parents.

It was found that a pre-schooler's immersion in the environment like the home and the community counts in the development of their emergent skills. With the influx of other tribes, pre-schoolers were acculturated to the various dialects putting aside their mother tongue. The Kalagans believe that poverty is not a hindrance to being educated. Thus they use their initiative backed up with resources to develop and enhance their children's emergent skills. During the study participants were observed in their homes especially during their night time activities. The level of literacy results showed high for reading, writing and numeracy. The level of school readiness showed very high results gross motor skills, fine motor skills, receptive/expressive skills and cognitive skills. The key literacy practice found in Kalagan homes was exposure to literacy materials like old books, alphabet and number posters. Parents, especially the mothers, also teach their children how to read and write letters and expose their children to social gatherings and storytelling. Children are able to acquire age appropriate skills when exposed to literacy materials and when they are exposed in various forms of social gatherings. Government intervention is sought to improve the status of Kalagans through projects, programmes and advocacies.

Questions following the presentation included:

Q1: What initiatives were taken to involve the children?
A1: Parents took the initiative to teach their children. They introduced them to words and spelling. One tool used was old calendars.

In summary of the three presentations, these small scale studies show the positive impact of early childhood education. Hence there is a strong need to invest in early childhood services and to highlight the social and economic cost of not providing them. There must be advocacy to implement programmes on a larger scale by governments, UNESCO and UNICEF to reap the benefits of early childhood education. Research findings must influence stakeholders and findings must be translated into policies to better the lives of local communities.

Concurrent Session 9 **Gender and Peacebuilding**

9.1 Giving children equal opportunities for lifelong learning, health and success, children of the Middle East, a long way to go

Ali Nashat Shaar, MD, MSc, UNFPA Palestine, International Network on Peace Building

The main objective of this presentation was to share the impact of violence on children from Iraq, Syria and Palestine. These countries are under the influence of occupation, unrest, war and

terrorism. The impact of violent conflicts on children in these countries ranges from physical, psychological as well as social harm.

The methodology adopted for this study was a desk based in depth review, and the study design was case study. In Palestine, there is mass violation of human rights with a 30% increase in children detainees in prison. In Syria, among victims of war, 30% are children and 1 million children are displaced due to war. Four million children are affected by being direct victims, witnessing violence, displacement, recruitment to war and abuse. In Iraq, among the dead, 26% are children. Toxic environments are causing a rise in illnesses and congenital malformations. Deaths of children due to land mines comprises of 24% of the total. One in six children are orphaned. Recommendations for interventions include providing coping mechanisms and institutional help to children. Considering the social ecological framework, psychosocial programming is a key intervention. While these short term interventions are critical, long term investments are also recommended, and among them is the creation of an International Network on Peace Building. This network aims to develop institutional and individual capacity to respond to the needs of children affected by violent conflicts.

9.2 Gender in early childhood care and development—Challenges and opportunities for gender responsive and gender transformative ECCD programming

Anna Trembath, Independent Consultant
Di Kilsby, Independent Consultant
Nicole Rodger, Programme Manager, Early Childhood Care and Development, Plan International Australia

The main objective of this research was to undertake a study on gender in an Early Childhood Development Project in Uganda. The research approach was qualitative and designed to stimulate dialogue, exploring beliefs and understanding around gender with men and women, and boys and girls. The aim was to identify opportunities for responsive and transformative ECD programming. The study was conducted in three communities of two post-conflict districts in Uganda. Key informants were parents, children, teachers and SMCs.

It was found that moms wanted a better future for their children, particularly girl children. Also, gender neutral or gender blind programmes are much more likely to reinforce gender inequity and gender imbalance. The study highly recommended active participation of fathers in parenting programmes.

9.3 Gender equality in ECD: Crucial linkages to ensure holistic child development

Jessica Aumann, Communications Consultant, United National Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), UNICEF-EAPRO Education Unit, Bangkok, Thailand

The presentation started with an introduction to UNGEI. The presenter also emphasized that ECD and gender has been identified by a number of organizations as a critical issue in their work. Gender recognition in children starts around age two and is rigidly defined between the ages of five and seven. Sibling care is one reason why girls do not access or participate in schooling. Boys are also affected because of underperformance or they are stigmatised for crossing gender lines. Promotion of gender equality during early years can help prevent adolescent pregnancies, violence against young children and unbalanced policies for education and employment among

females. Priorities for the region include gender analysis in all ECD research; a focus on policies and planning; providing gender responsive and safe spaces in emergencies and conflict settings; and empowering children to be resilient in the face of negative stereotypes.

The question and answer session was at the end of the final presentation and participants commented that differences in childrearing and disciplining should be analysed on the basis of gender. They also commented that a lifelong approach is required. A multi-sectoral involvement with various stakeholders across sectors can create greater impact.

Moderator Ms. Chemba Raghavan shared the ABC framework for gender: affect, behaviour and cognition. She also shared the significance of gender dimensions of positive discipline practices in Papua Guinea in a gender-based behaviour management of ECD. She emphasised that gender is not about girls, it is about unequal relations and should be dealt with as a crosscutting theme in all ECD programmes and projects. Particular risk of gender inequity is during conflicts and disasters. Sex desegregation of data does not equate to gender analysis. And the best way to work on it is by doing it, not just mentioning it.

Concurrent Session 10: **Fathers**

10.1 A community-based health promotion intervention to improve psychosocial status of children under five years through improving fathers involvement in rural community in Sri Lanka

D.S.D. Heiyanthuduwage, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

The study looked at quantitative and qualitative data to understand the impact of fathers' involvement with young children in Sri Lanka. It was found that 90% of fathers with young children who had working spouses felt that their children were neglected and not well looked after. This indicates a gap in understanding fathering—these fathers understand their role to one of providing material goods and not one of spending quality time with young children. It was concluded that the fathers' capacities for interacting with young children should be strengthened and help them take a more active role in child rearing. The primary limitation of the study was that the mother's views on fathering were not taken into account. One participant questioned whether there were any differences between raising boys and girls. The presenter responded that boys received better attention from fathers as the boys were perceived to be future providers. Another question centred around fathers' interactions as the children grow older. The response was that fathers primarily see their role as decision makers for older children. In closing, it was suggested that the study might have implications for future cross-cultural comparisons of fathering.

10.2 Perceptions and practices of fatherhood among urban fathers in Bangladesh

Shantimoy Chakma, Programme and Research Director, Sesame Workshop Bangladesh

The objective of the study was to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices of urban middle income fathers of young children. It was found that all fathers felt that their main role was to support the basic needs of their children. Barriers that exist in supporting fathers include economic and social insecurities, as well as cultural barriers. For example, there are different perceptions of mothers and fathers roles. Mothers are seen as providing care within the home—feeding, nursing, etc. Fathers were seen to provide financial security and discipline and as well as

relating to things outside the home, and providing things from outside, such as toys. An interesting finding was that 93% of the fathers felt there were better fathers than their own fathers had been. As a result of the study, it was undertaken to improve enthusiasm for fatherhood. To this end, determinants related to fathers' involvement were identified and a simple community tool was designed to measure mothers and fathers involvement. There was an intervention group and a control group and the tool did generate interest and involvement of fathers. One participant asked about specific interventions and it was shared that intervention only occurred with the mother, but that this was enough to create a momentum with the home atmosphere. Another questioned whether the change in fathers' involvement was related to the fact that they were under observation.

10.3 Enhancing early childhood development through father engagement: Evaluation of a father support and education programme in rural Bangladesh

Roxana Khanom, Manager, Early Years Development, Shishuder Jonno, Save the Children, Bangladesh

The study aimed to enhance child development by identifying components of father involvement and providing interventions to strengthen those components. The components to be enhanced were:
1. accessibility—ensuring fathers presence and availability
2. engagement—encouraging direct contact through play, reading, outings and care-giving
3. responsibility—provide opportunities for fathers to participate in discussions on child care, health visits, choosing clothes, sleeping arrangements, etc.

The interventions consisted of a series of seven sessions over seven months. Topics included love and care, health and hygiene, food and nutrition, communication and discipline and a summary session. The outcomes of the intervention noted improved child development indicator, improved mother/father relationship and a decrease in maternal depression. It was noted that use of mobile phones and SMS increased the efficacy of session-based interventions.

10. 4 Role of fathers' involvement to foster child development from infancy through early childhood

Musharraf Hossain Tansen, Education Researcher and Practitioner, Bangladesh

The final presentation also noted that fathers' involvement changed based on gender and age of child. It was highlighted that this impact of fathers' involvement should not be underestimated. Discussion focused on several campaigns to enhance fathers' engagement with young children, namely PROMUNDO.

There was lots of interest in this topic as indicated by all seats being filled in the room. Further research could look at the unintended consequences of increased father involvement with children, such as improved family relationships in general. The participants were encouraged that despite traditional cultural barriers, it is possible to promote sensitisation and enlarge the landscape of fathers' involvement with their young children.

Concurrent Session 11: **Differentiated Teaching Workshop**

Ms. Sara Dang, Senior Specialist, Early Childhood Care and Development, Save the Children, USA

This workshop was designed to address a specific request from the Bhutan office of Save the Children about how to differentiate teaching. Activity card for ECCD centres were developed that focused on the following five areas: language and literacy, math, science, arts and movement, and pretend play. The workshop leaders introduced an activity to illustrate the process of differentiating teaching and then asked small groups to think about the experience. The activity involved learning a simple clap rhythm and then proceeding to a more complex clap. The participants were asked to reflect about how it felt as the movement was increasing in complexity, as well as to consider the goal, the learning method, how the process is monitored, how to increase the complexity and what adjustments could be made to allow students with different abilities to work towards the goal of the more complex clap (that is, how to scaffold an activity). Further discussion centred on why differentiated teaching was important—when a task is too difficult, children become frustrated; and when it is too easy, they become bored. Therefore there is a need to pitch the activity at just the right level, in what is known as the "zone of proximal development". In conclusion, the participants felt they learned:
- teachers need to use more creativity with advanced learners
- language is an important factor
- care should be given about what assumptions are made about children
- the progression of the activities must be carefully considered
- to be conscious of how the zone of proximal development works with less-abled children and the teaching aspect
- it is critical to identify goals/objectives clearly

Parenting Workshop facilitated by ICS Asia, Cambodia

Day 3: Wednesday, 20 November 2013

Concurrent Session 12: **Health and Nutrition**

12.1 **Promoting responsive and sensitive care in child's first 2001 days—Introduction of WHO-UNICEF Care for Child Development Package and re-visiting WHO-SEARO-UNICEF Asian regional commitments**

Dr. Nurper Ulkuer, International Expert for Early Childhood Policies and Programmes

The speaker highlighted the importance of bonding and attachment as imperative for responsive and sensitive care from infancy to early childhood, which is 2001 days. Bonding refers to the "process of mother forming a relationship with her child/infant" and attachment is "the process of infant forming a relationship with its mother". Without these, a child's development is stunted and has a negative outlook. Risk factors identified as detrimental to a child's responsive and sensitive care are:

- Caesarian birth—particularly when an infant is separated from its mother to allow recuperation for both
- poor mental health of the mother
- low birth weight, disability and poor bonding associated with abuse
- failure to attach due to poor mental health and separation may result in disability, confusion, low birth weight and stunted growth

Interventions that facilitate help and support:

- WHO-UNICEF provided quality care courses to train health workers who worked amongst communities in the region
- Health workers work with the parents with infants through to early childhood showing them how to interact with their child or how to bond or form an attachment with their child

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- Research carried out with 1489 families showed that supporting mother-child interaction with enhanced nutrition and improved home environment and care resulted in improved early childhood development
- Stimulation and improved maternal care enhanced early childhood development

It was noted that the work continues with support from WHO-UNICEF in partnership with Aga Khan Foundation & World Bank.

Q&A:
Q: Could you tell us about the combination packages.
A: The Participant Manual provides guidance and help for parents. The trained health workers work with parent and child giving practical help and support.

12.2 **Beliefs and practices about child rearing and development in Cambodia: A preliminary study**

Dr. Angela Simcox, University College London, UK, Indigo International

The aim of the study was to explore cultural beliefs and the resulting practices about child rearing. Emerging issues identified in the study include rapid economic development; a sudden influx of international influence; the presence of large NGO and private sector organisations with western models; working across cultures; and the lack of trained professionals. The speaker briefly explained the Cambodian context which consists primarily of extended families living together and sharing parenting responsibilities and the fact that infant and under five mortality is still high. Traditional beliefs include that traits are determined by timing of birth. Social context also includes the continuing influence of the Khmer Rouge idea that "children provide the basis of a new society without memory" and the loss of tradition is destructive of family. More recent influences have emerged since the country has been relatively stable since 1992. There has been a rapid development of media and technology, including mobiles phones and an emphasis on individual identity.

The research addressed three questions: How do children grow up and change? How are parents and family involved in child rearing? What can children do for themselves and families? There were a range of findings regarding physical and psychosocial development, education and work, parenting styles, and children's understanding. The study concluded that there are changes in urban areas which can lead to difficulties; there is conflict between the generations; there is lack of consistent clear information; and there is difficulty integrating with traditional culture.

Q&A:
Q: Who in the families is responsible for the child?
A: This is a combined effort by the extended family. There are no fixed rules. Grandmothers or elder parents have a strong influence in the upbringing of the child.

Further comment included that the presentation was most interesting and enlightening as a study of the history and culture of the people of Cambodia. The legacy from conflicts of the past is seen in the challenges faced by today's parents as they endeavour to overcome past practices and beliefs in order to build new and better lives for their families and their country.

Concurrent Session 13: **Costing and Financing ECD**

13.1 Modelling the costs and benefits of early childhood systems: Making the economic case for ECD investment

Dr. Andrew Brodsky, President, Brodsky Research and Consulting, Longmont, CO, USA

Dr. Brodsky began by outlining the three kinds of analyses that could be conducted: a simple cost analysis, a cost-effective analysis, or a cost-benefit analysis. He referenced Britto et al 2013 in conceptualising ECD as intrinsic and instrumental for child and for society. And according to Heckman economics, the returns are greatest when targeting the earliest years. He enumerated the long-term benefits of ECD. Dr. Brodsky then focused on the cost-benefit model and how to undertake this method to make a case for an ECD project. Particular issues or challenges to consider:
1. time required to break even for preschool investment
2. ECD in LAMI countries has goals similar to Head Start in the USA
3. more appropriate to decentralise the determination of quality parameters
4. the challenges of getting data from LAMI countries
5. using holistic system approach for monetary evaluation
6. adjusting parameters to fit local context
7. outcome metrics should be universal and content-specific

Questions during the discussion time:
Q1: The UK is questioning investments in ECD because there has been no reduction in poverty.
A1: The effects are not immediate—it is a long-term investment. Additionally, must consider the quality of services and local context to understand the lack of results.

Q2: In LAMI countries where it is not possible to provide an institutional programme, can the model be replicated for home-based or parent interventions?
A2: It is possible and depends on what costing is taken into account.

13.2 ECCD budget for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2014-2018) under Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan

Karma Choden, Dy. Chief Programme Officer, ECCD & SEN Division, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Bhutan

Bhutan is known for its "Cross National Happiness Index" and is also called "The Country of Happiness". The budget is approved by the Gross National Happiness Commission and there is policy in place to provide age appropriate programmes and interventions. The interventions are linked to National Key Result Areas, namely full employment, food security and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. The ECCD programmes are jointly funded by government and international donor agencies, and there is wide scope for internal capacity building and cross country learnings. About 80-90% is public funds and 5-8% is through Department of International Development (DFID). Discussion centred on the difference between ECE and ECD, as right now there is a ECE policy but not really and ECD policy in place. There is no separate cadre of ECCD teachers and ECE is primarily a part of the provincial educational plans.

Concurrent Session 14: **Executive Function Skills**

14.1 **Parent-child relationship and children's executive function skills**

Siriphan Ruangkhruawang**, National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand**

The study looked at the impact of the parent-child relationship on children's executive function skills. Discussion centred on how brain function controls our emotional and social competencies and that a child's independence can be fostered through certain parenting skills. Emergent metacognition is also impacted. And the impulsiveness of permissive parents plays a role as well.

14.2 **A preliminary research in an intervention programme for promoting executive function: The effects of yoga and 101s storybook integration programme in preschool in Thailand**

Nutsuda Panprasitwaj, National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand

The study focused on creating specific interventions to fill in the gaps of previous research. The intervention programme is called Yosponga and integrates the skills taught in *101s: A guide to positive discipline* and storybook reading. Significant achievements were noted as the children in Yosponga had lower mean scores in EF (executive function) behaviour disorder evaluations and higher 101s skills. In particular, the role of storybooks played a positive role and an increase in self-respect and respect for others was noted.

14.3 **The 101s positive discipline training-intervention programmes: The new trend of positive practices in Thailand for enhancing parenting and teaching skills and promoting children's mental health and school readiness and success**

Prawpat Jirapatpuvadol, National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand

The presentation began with a review of brain development, brain structure and executive function. In particular, 15 techniques from 101s were the focus of the intervention study. Positive results from behaviour rating inventories were noted for those receiving the intervention as compared to the group that did not receive the intervention. In addition, the presenter gave a background of the 101s technique, which was developed to as a parent training programme and to help foster self-regulation in children. The 15 techniques that were the focus of the study included such things as eye-level contact, talking about emotions with children, etc. There are plans to introduce this programme in another area of Thailand. One other thing of note was that mothers were easier to invite to training sessions. Fathers seldom participated.

Plenary 5: **Concluding Session**

5.1: **Consolidation of One Voice!—From the region towards global ECD advocacy**

The Plenary opened with recognition that The Convention of the Rights of the Child ratified on this day (20 November) in 1989 and so is particularly appropriate to be engaged in this discussion today, Universal Children's Day.

Then the Global Goal for ECD that was consolidated from three working groups over lunch was presented and a large group consensus making discussion ensued.

There were numerous discussion points around the three targets and the numerous indicators. (The final text of the discussion is presented below, with a number of areas still to work out.)

The first discussion point centred on the term "children" versus "boys and girls" in the statement of the **GOAL:** *All children get the best start in life and learning.* The original wording was boys and girls and it was changed to children to keep language brief. It was felt that the goal should be large and inclusive. The indicators can be disaggregated.

Next, why include "learning"? Because best start in life references more the early years, and learning would more effectively include children age six to eight. The foundations for learning are laid in the early years, in order for children to be prepared for formal learning as they transition to primary education.

TARGET 1:
All children will be physically, emotionally and mentally healthy, socially and culturally competent, respecting diversity and learning successfully.

For Target 1, need to include cultural competence not just social competence—social denotes relationships with peers, family, etc. Cultural competence denotes within one's own culture.

Proposed indicators were for the most part accepted as they had appropriate measures attached to each. The one exception was the indicator for decreasing prejudice and increasing respect for difference. There is not currently a measure for that. It was decided the peacebuilding group can work with this.

TARGET 2:
Increase the number of children experiencing positive, responsive and sensitive child-rearing practices in safe, supportive and peaceful environments.

For Target 2, once more the need to disaggregate boys and girls for gender parity was noted. Later it was noted that rural/urban and other areas of inequity should be included. It was decided that a footnote indicating the need to disaggregate should be move to a more prominent place, perhaps at the top.

Eleven indicators are too many—need to consolidate. Much discussion ensued about how to do this.

There was also a suggestion regarding this use of the word "toys". There was concern that commercial toys versus indigenous/local/homemade toys might be preferred to the detriment of the children and local culture. Perhaps use the phrase "play materials" would be better.

Another suggestion to use "environments" rather than "home" because parenting or child care can happen anywhere—homes, institutions, camps, etc. Or maybe use the phrase "home or other settings"?

In the indicator about leaving children alone, need to include words "home alone without adult supervision" to make it more specific—some children may be left in the care of older children.

Another suggestion to include the word "neglect", but discussion centred on the difficulty of measuring neglect whereas "home alone" can be measured.

Some felt there was a need to keep a specific indicator for family supportive policies.

Some felt that "increase life satisfaction of parents" was not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound), but others suggested there are MICS in process so can keep; there are also other measures for "hope" that can be used. Also suggested was that pre/post-natal depression could be used as life satisfaction indicators.

There was a question about where to include an indicator about violence and abuse—could it be pooled with other indicators?

In discussion about quality books, toys, etc. preferred with "developmentally appropriate" rather than "age appropriate".

There was some discussion about moving pre/post-natal depression to Target 3. There was concern about mixing Target 2 and 3—some felt that Target 2 should be focused specifically on equity indicators for home/other settings that are child-focused, while Target 3 would reference equity of programmes and services.

One suggested the word "nurturing" instead of sensitive, because losing out on the bonding element. Other discussion felt that sensitive indicated sensitivity to keeping equity and diversity highlighted. Sensitive can be "sensitive to needs of children" to make it specific, so need to keep sensitive, just make it read "responsive, sensitive and nurturing child-rearing practices".

A concern indicated for children in trouble with law—6 year old bullying for example—does this fall under child protection?

A suggestion was made to include intimate violence in the parent satisfaction indicator.

TARGET 3:
Ensure equitable access to quality, inclusive, and sustainable early childhood programmes and services.

At this point, a suggestion to focus on the three targets was made so that we can speak with One Voice. The indicators can be worked out later.

Someone suggested an indicator for number of countries with policies be increased; it is needed because programmes can only emerge from policies. Therefore just add "national" for "national

policies" and "national investments"

There was concern about a specific target for the under threes, and it was suggested that Tina Hyder could do this.

There was a reiteration for Target 3 to only focus on equity of services and all others to go under Target 2.

For FINAL TEXT OF CONSOLIDATED GOAL please see:

http://www.arnec.net/ntuc/slot/u2323/conference/images/ARNEC%20consolidated%20goal_final3.pdf

Divya Lata, Early Learning & Education Advisor, Plan Asia Regional Office

Ms. Lata remarked on the wonderful three days spent together. There was a very invigorating start to the conference when we were encouraged to dream about the world we want to envision for our children. In particularly, the idea that a person when combined with environment can unleash great human potential left a particularly deep impression. We were urged to continue our efforts to turn the political will toward ECD and to come together with One Voice. She posed the question: have we done this? Yes, we have! Congratulations! Ms. Lata continued on enumerating a number of things that happened during the three days. There was rich sharing of experiences, a celebration of countries with new national ECD policies, and other countries moving toward them. The concurrent sessions focused on specific issues and talked about tools to help us achieve the costing and financing of ECD services. She made a comparison between children and programmes—children have what is called "evolving capacities". Ms. Lata suggested that programmes also have evolving capacities—we are starting with where we are and moving forward, slowly and imperfectly at time, but still moving forward. The Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) is an important part of this evolving capacity. It was remarked in the opening plenary that ARNEC has emerged as an important catalyst for bringing people active in the early childhood community together to share knowledge and resources. She encouraged us to continue to work together in ways that are not only purposeful but also fun.

Ms. Sara Dang, Senior Specialist, Early Childhood Care and Development, Save the Children USA

Ms. Dang closed with the statement that she was honoured and thankful to have been a part of the conference. It is exciting to see all the work going on the region. It was also timely as it was University Children's Day and she encouraged us to pause and reflect on this. She thanked ARNEC for their hard work, the presenters for being professional and the participants who travelled to be present for the conference. We know what ECD is about and we have heard about programmes in action. ECD is not just about physical inputs; it is about caring for and helping our children thrive from a young age. It may start with a centre or a parent programme, but it doesn't end there. It goes on and contributes to the economic success of a community and country. It is not for just for one sector to handle. Ms. Dang reminded us that we need to reach high-level policy-makers before 6 February. We need to establish partnerships with other sectors, so that they can include their ECD indicators in their targets. We need to speak with a unified voice and with conviction. So that

ECD can gain the prominence it deserves.

Ms. Junko Miyahara, Coordinator, ARNEC

Ms. Miyahara remarked that this was the end of the three day conference, but it is not the end of our work. She referenced the popular quote, "If you don't use it, you lose it," and encouraged all to stay in touch and connected under the platform of ARNEC and work to get the children's voices more visible each day.

Conference Photo Gallery

Conference guests meeting at the Opening Ceremony

GoH Dr. Lee Tung Jean, ECDA during her Opening Address

Dr Lee receiving her token of appreciation

MC and Steering Committee member Mrs Mahmuda Akther introducing the DAM Bangladesh Video

Audience members at the Opening ceremony

Participant addressing the panel

Mrs Mridula Bajaj, Steering Committee member in the Peer Review Session

Dr Christine Chen, AECES presenting during Concurrent Session 2 Children's Voices

Cocktail Reception at the Pod, National Library

Skilful Parenting Workshop

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME*

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development:
'Early Childhood Development on the Global Agenda –
Giving all children equal opportunities to lifelong learning, health and success"

Monday 18 November 2013
Most updated programme at time of printing/subject to change

Location	Time/Programme
Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium, SMU	**08:00-09:00** Registration
Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium, SMU	**09:00-10:45** Plenary 1 – Opening Programme MC of the Day: - Ms. Silke Friesendorf, Communications Officer, ARNEC - Mrs. Mahmuda Ahkter, Executive Director and CEO, Institute of Child and Human Development, Bangladesh (09:00 – 09:10) Welcome Address: - Mr. Chan Tee Seng, Director, ARNEC (09:10 – 09:20) Opening Remarks: - Ms. Tina Hyder, Deputy Director, Early Childhood Program, Open Society Foundation, ARNEC Core Team and Executive Committee (09:20 – 09:30) Opening Speech by Guest of Honour (GoH): - Dr. Lee Tung Jean, CEO, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), Singapore (9.30 – 09.40) - ARNEC Web Portal Launch (09:40 – 10:40) Keynote Address: - Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF NY HQ 'Early Childhood Development: the indispensable foundation for a secure and sustainable world' (10:40-10:45) Photo session
	10:45– 11:15 Tea/Coffee break
Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium, SMU	**11:15-12:30**

	Plenary 2: Panel Session **Positioning ECD on the global agenda: Insights and actions for the future** Moderators: - Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Consultant - Ms. Junko Miyahara, Coordinator ARNEC Panellists: - Dr. Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor – Education, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) - Prof. Dr. Lydia Freyani Hawadi, Director General of Early Childhood Education, Non-formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia - Dr. Maggie Koong, World President-Elect of OMEP (Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire) - Dr. Mami Umayahara, Programme Cycle Management Specialist, Education Sector, UNESCO Bangkok - Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Chair, Bangladesh ECD Network
Transit from Auditorium to National Library **Lunch @ Drama Centre Foyer, National Library (Level 3)**	**12:30 - 14:00** Lunch break
	14:00 - 15:30
National Library, Possibility Room (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 1 *Topic: National Networks and Policies* Moderator: Mrs. Bernadine Ha'amori, Director ECD, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Solomon Islands Rapporteur: Dr. Kishor Shrestha, Professor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal **S1.1: Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy in Bangladesh: How it evolves with GO-NGO Collaboration** Presenter – Iqbal Hossain, Advisor, Quality Primary Education Program, Plan International Bangladesh

	S1.2: Preliminary Strategy Paper for the proposed National ECD Network of Pakistan Presenter – Siraj Narsi, Rupani Foundation **S1.3: Enabling Policy Environment for Holistic ECD: a case of Fiji** Presenter – Lavinia Tiko, Lecturer & Coordinator EC – University of the South Pacific, PhD Candidate – University of New England
National Library, Drama Centre F1, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 2 *Topic: Child Voice* Moderator: Dr. Mariko Ichimi Abumiya, Senior Researcher, National Institute of Educational Policy Research, Tokyo, Japan Rapporteur: Dr. Soo Boon Ng, Senior Assistant Director, Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia **S2.1: Voices of Children: Childhood and Early Education in Singapore** Presenter – Dr. Christine Chen, President, AECES, Singapore **S2.2: Sustainable future with children: children's voices to be heard** Presenter – Professor Eunhye Park, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea; OMEP World Vice President of Asia Pacific
National Library, Drama Centre F2, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 3 - Workshop *Topic: Parenting Workshop* MC: Ms. Shirley Soh, Lecturer, SEED Institute **S3-W1: Skilful Parenting: From Awareness to Empowered Change in Parenting** Workshop Facilitators: Ms. Pia van den Boom, Child Protection Officer, Investing in Children and Societies (ICS), Cambodia Mr. Ros Pheak, Skilful Parenting Trainer, Investing in Children and Societies (ICS), Cambodia.
	15:30–16:00 Tea/Coffee break
	16:00-18:00
National Library, Drama Centre F2, (Level 3)	**(16:00-17:00)** Poster presentation session **(17:00 onwards)** free viewing in Drama Centre Foyer
National Library, Drama Centre F1, (Level 3)	(17:00–18:00) **Briefing Session: How to engage in ARNEC activities** Facilitator: ARNEC Secretariat
National Library,	Special Session: Early Childhood Development and Peace Building

Location	Time/Programme
Possibility Room, (Level 5)	Facilitator: Dr. Chemba Raghavan, Education Specialist, UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office
The Pod, National Library	**18:30–20:30** **Evening Programme:** **Partnership building and networking for the post 2015 ECD (cocktail reception)**

Tuesday 19 November 2013

Location	Time/Programme
	09:00-10:00
National Library, Imagination and Possibility Room, (Level 5)	MC of the Day: - Ms. Debbie Fang, Programme Support Officer, ARNEC - Mr. Nugroho Indera Warman, Relief Grant Manager, Dompet Dhuafa Moderator: Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Interim Director, Human Development Programme, Aga Khan University Plenary 3 Regional keynote address: **ECD in the Asia-Pacific region: influencing Policy through Impact Evaluations** - Professor Nirmala Rao, Faculty of Education and Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Studies at The Graduate School, The University of Hong Kong.
National Library, Imagination and Possibility Room, (Level 5)	**10:00-11:00** Plenary 4: **Noteworthy Practices from Singapore** Moderator: Dr. Khoo Kim Choo, Founder/Director, Preschool for Multiple Intelligence, Singapore **Development Framework (SPARK) and Implementation of Singapore Preschool Accreditation** - Mrs. Fong Chin Yoo Fah, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) Singapore **A step towards a more inclusive preschool landscape: The Science**

	and Art of implementation - Mr. Tang Hui Nee, Educational Psychologist, Department of Child Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore - Ms. Noradlin Mohamed Yusof, Senior Psychologist, Department of Child Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore
National Library, Drama Centre Foyer (Level 3)	**11:00-11:30 Tea/Coffee Break**
	11:30-12:30
National Library, Imagination Room, (Level 5)	Peer review session 1: **National ECD Policy Reviews from selected countries in the Asia-Pacific Region: How effective are our ECD policies in addressing equity issues?** Moderators: Dr. Chemba Raghavan, Education Specialist, UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office Mr. Nugroho Indera Warman, Relief Grant Manager, Dompet Dhuafa, Indonesia **Country 1: India** Presenter – Dr. Mridula Bajaj, Executive Director, Mobile Crèche, New Delhi, India **Country 2: Myanmar** Presenter – Dr. Aye Yee, Education Specialist, UNICEF Myanmar
National Library, Possibility Room, (Level 5)	Peer review session 2: Moderators: Dr. Mami Umayahara, Programme Cycle Management Specialist, Education Sector, UNESCO Bangkok Mrs. Bernadine Ha'amori, Director ECD, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Solomon Islands National ECD Policy Reviews from selected countries in the Asia-Pacific Region: How effective are our ECD policies in addressing equity issues? Country 1: Philippines Presenter – Dr. Teresita Inciong, Chairperson, Early Childhood Care and Development Council, Philippines Country 2:tbc

National Library, Drama Centre Foyer, (Level 3)	12:30-13:30 Lunch break
	13:30-15:00
National Library, Imagination Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 4 *Topic: Localising ECD Programmes* Moderator: Ms. Tina Hyder, Deputy Director, Early Childhood Program, Open Society Foundation, ARNEC Core Team and Executive Committee Rapporteur: Dr. Ho Lam Hong, Director, UNESCO Advisory Centre for Development Education, Hanoi, Vietnam **S4.1: Collaboration work for Integration and Holistic ECCD in Nepal** Presenter: Narmaya Thapa, Education Program Coordinator, Save the Children Nepal **S4.2: Using Play to Learn in Early Childhood Development** Presenter: Amrita Goswami, Programme Coordinator, Save the Children, India **S4.3: A Gross National Happiness (GNH) inspired Early Childhood Care and Education programme: a dialogue on harmonizing western theories and Bhutanese funds of knowledge** Presenter – Ms. Karma Pedey, M Ed (Hons) candidate, University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia
National Library, Possibility Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 5 *Topic: Programme Evaluation* Moderator: Dr. Lily Wong, Director, Advent Links – Centre for Children and Family Studies, Singapore Rapporteur: Dr. Kok Siat Yeow, Deputy Director, Programmes , Office of Academic Affairs, SEED Institute, Singapore; Chairperson, ARNEC **S5.1: Role of Start-up Planning in the Implementation of High-quality Comprehensive Early Child Development Programs** Presenters: Sukhdeep Gill, Ph.D., Amber Seidel, Ph.D., Mark Greenberg, Ph.D., & Anne Doerr, M.S. **S5.2: Using ITER-S in Assessing Quality Environment: A Case Study at two selected child care centres in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia** Presenters: Mastura Badzis, Ed.D; Nun Amirah Adnan, M. Ed – Institute of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia **S5.3: Quantity versus quality early childhood development services: centre based ECD a case** Presenters: Prem Krisna Aryal and Tilak Bahadur Rai, Learning

	Programme Coordinator, Plan International Nepal
National Library, Drama Centre F1, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 6 *Topic: Special needs* Moderator: Ms. Divya Lata, Early Learning & Education Advisor, Plan International Rapporteur: Ms. Mona Tan, Senior Lecturer, SEED Institute, Singapore **S6.1: Children with Special Needs in Pakistan – Role of Human Development Programme of Aga Khan University** Presenters – Seema Lasi & Zia Sultana, Aga Khan University - Human Development Program (AKU-HDP), Pakistan **S6.2: Supporting Children's Holistic Development** Presenters: Yasmeen Mehboob, Training Coordinator, Aga Khan University – Human Development Program (AKU-HDP) Saima Khalid, Chairperson, Early Years Learning Association – Professional teachers Association Network at Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development **S6.3: Age Appropriate Inclusive Preschool Program: Tales of Feat and Wonder** Presenters: Frank S. Emboltura, R.N., M. Ed-SPED, University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, Philippines & Nilda B. Delgado, RSW, MindHaven School, Roxas City, Philippines
National Library, Drama Centre F2, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 7 Workshop *Topic: Mother Tongue Workshop* MC: Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Consultant **S7-W1: Heritage Language Playschools for non-dominant language communities in Asia** Facilitators: Liz Foerster, Literacy and Education Consultant, SIL International, Thailand; Dr. Karla J. Smith, Senior Literacy and Education Consultant, SIL International Wilailuck Dechsri (Por), Literacy and Education Specialist, Foundation for Applied Linguistics, Chiang Mai, Thailand; Dr. Catherine Young, Director, LEAD Asia, SIL International
National Library, Drama Centre Foyer, (Level 3)	**15:00-15:30 Tea/Coffee Break**

	15:30-17:00
National Library, Imagination Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 8 *Topic: Literacy* Moderator: Dr. George Jacobs, Learning Advisor, James Cook University, Singapore Rapporteur: Ms. R. Vathsala Naidu, Lecturer, SEED Institute **S8.1: Enriching children's literacy and social cognition via shared book reading in varied cultural settings** Presenters: Margalit Ziv; Dorit Aram; Yaara Fine and Areej Massarwe; AlQasemi Academic College of Education, Tel Aviv University, Oranim Teachers' College **S8.2: Evaluating the impact of Early Childhood development and family literacy in Afghanistan** Kerrie Proulx, University of Toronto; Noorullah Nabizai, Shekufeh Zonji - Aga Khan Foundation - Afghanistan **S8.3: Literacy and School Readiness of Kalangan Preschoolers** Presenter: Mae Theresa Vilma D. Andoy. R.N., MAEd, ECE, Part-time Teacher, University of Southeastern Philippines, Obrero, Davao City, Philippines
National Library, Possibility Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 9 *Topic: Gender and Peace building* Moderator: Dr. Chemba Raghavan, Education Specialist, UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office Rapporteur: Ms. Seema Lasi, Senior Instructor, Aga Khan University **S9.1: Giving children equal opportunities for lifelong learning, health and success, children of the Middle East, a long way to go.** Presenter: Ali Nashat Shaar, MD., MSc., UNFPA Palestine **S9.2: Gender in Early Childhood Care and Development – Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Responsive and Gender Transformative ECCD programming** Presenters: Anna Trembath, Independent Consultant; Di Kilsby, Independent Consultant & Nicole Rodger, Program Manager, Early Childhood Care and Development, Plan International, Australia **S9.3: UNGEI Presentation** Presenter: Jessica Aumann, Communications Consultant, UNGEI, UNICEF EAPRO Education Unit

National Library, Drama Centre F1 (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 10 *Topic: Fathers* Moderator: Dr. Jessica Ball, Professor of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, Canada Rapporteur: Dr. Mridula Bajaj, Executive Director, Mobile Crèche, New Delhi, India **S10.1: A community based health promotion intervention to improve psychosocial status of children under five years through improving fathers involvement in rural community in Sri Lanka** Presenters: H.D.S. Dilrukshi; G.N.D Gruruge; W.M.S. Fernando; P.N. Lakmini; R.M.D.I.N Karunayake; D.M.Y.T. Dasanayaka; M. Thinesh; S. Begam, Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka **S10.2: Perceptions and Practices of Fatherhood among Urban Fathers in Bangladesh** Presenter: Shantimoy Chakma, Programme and Research Director, Sesame Workshop Bangladesh **S10.3: Enhancing early childhood development and education through father engagement: Evaluation of a father support and education program in rural Bangladesh** Presenter: Roxana Khanom – Manager, Early Years Development, Shishuder Jonno, Save the Children, Bangladesh **S10.4: Role of fathers' involvement to foster child development from infancy through early childhood** Presenter: Musharraf Hossain Tansen: Education Researcher & Practitioner, Bangladesh
National Library, Drama Centre F2, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 11 *Topic: Differentiated Teaching Workshop* Rapporteur: Ms. Wong Lee Lan, Senior Lecturer, SEED Institute, Singapore **S11-W1: Differentiated Teaching Workshop** Facilitator: Ms. Sara Dang, Senior Specialist, Early Childhood Care and Development, Save the Children, USA
National Library, Possibility Room, (Level 5)	**17:00-18:00** **Friends of ARNEC Meeting:** **Joint Programming and Collaborative Approaches** Facilitators: Mrs. Mahmuda Akhter, Executive Director, Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD), Bangladesh Dr. Mridula Bajaj, Executive Director, Mobile Crèche, New Delhi, India

Wednesday 20 November 2013

Location	Time/Programme
	09:00-10:30
National Library, Imagination Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 12 *Topic: Health and Nutrition* Moderator: Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Interim Director – Human Development Programme, Pakistan Rapporteur: Ms. Ina Tamarua, ECE Advisor, Ministry of Education, Cook Islands **S12.1*: Promoting Responsive and Sensitive Care in child's first 2001 days – Introduction of WHO-UNICEF Care for Child Development Package and re-visiting WHO-SEARO-UNICEF Asian Regional commitments** Presenter – Dr. Nurper Ulkuer, International Expert for Early Childhood Policies and Programmes **S12.2: Perceptions on Infant Feeding Practices of Women Living in Balochistan-Pakistan** Presenters: Ayesha Zahid Khan; Syeda Amber Syed, Human Development Programme – Aga Khan University (HDP-AKU) **S12.3: Effectiveness of Food chart for improving weight under five year old children in Kunchikulama village of Mihintale MOH area** Presenter: Isanka Jayathilaka Health Promotion Undergraduate, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajatara University of Sri Lanka.
National Library, Possibility Room, (Level 5)	Concurrent Session 13 *Topic: Costing and Financing ECD* Moderator: Dr. Venita Kaul, Director, Center for Early Childhood Education and Development, Ambedkar University, Delhi, India Rapporteur: Dr. Mami Umayahara, Programme Cycle Management Specialist, Education Sector, UNESCO Bangkok **S13.1: Modelling the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Systems: Making The Economic Case For ECD Investment** Presenter: Dr. Andrew Brodsky, President, Brodsky Research and Consulting, Longmont, CO, USA **S13.2: ECCD Budget for the Eleventh Five year Plan (2014-2018) under Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan.** Presenter: Karma Choden, Dy. Chief Program Officer, ECCD& SEN Division, DSE, Ministry of Education

National Library, Drama Centre F2, (Level 3)	Concurrent Session 14 *Topic: Executive Function Skills* Moderator: Dr. Mugyeong Moon, Director of Trend Analysis and International Cooperation, Team Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, Republic of Korea Rapporteur: Mrs. Mahmuda Akhter, Executive Director, Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD), Bangladesh **S14.1: Parent-child relationship and children's executive functions skills** Presenters: Ruangkhruawong, S., Chutapakdeegul, N., Chumchua, V., Lertawasathakul, O. and Thanasetkorn, P., National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand. **S14.2: A preliminary research in an intervention program for promoting executive function: the effects of yoga and 101s storybook integration program in preschool in Thailand** Presenters: Panprasitwaj, N., Chutapakdeegul, N., Chumchua, V., Lertawasadathakul, O., Thanasetkorn, P., National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand. **S14.3: The 101s positive discipline training-intervention programs: The new trend of positive practices in Thailand for enhancing parenting and teaching skills and promoting children's mental health and school readiness and success** Presenters: Thanasetkorn, P., Chutapakdeegul, N., Chumchua, V., Lertawasadatkul, O., Sutho, J., Jiratpatpuvadol, P., Ruangkhruawong, S., Panprasitwaj, N., National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University; Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University, Thailand.
National Library, Drama Centre Foyer, (Level 3)	**10:30-11:00** **Tea/Coffee break**
National Library, Level 3 and 5 (Imagination and Possibility Rooms; Drama Centre F1 and F2)	**11:00-12:00** **Group discussion for making One Voice! – *recommending a Global Goal and targets for ECD***
National Library, Drama Centre Foyer, Level 3	**12:00-13:00 Lunch break**
National Library, Level 5 (Imagination and Possibility	**13:00-15:00** Plenary 5: Concluding Session

Rooms)	Consolidation of One Voice! – From the region towards global ECD advocacy Moderators: - Dr. Nurper Ulkuer, International Expert for Early Childhood Policies and Programmes - Dr. Venita Kaul, Director, Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development, Ambedkar University, Delhi, India **Country Commitments and Actions** Closing remarks - Ms. Divya Lata, Early Learning & Education Advisor, Plan Asia Regional Office - Ms. Sara Dang, Senior Specialist, Early Childhood Care and Development, Save the Children USA - Ms. Junko Miyahara, Coordinator, ARNEC
Farewell Coffee @ Café Makarios, Drama Centre Foyer, Level 3	**15:00 – 15:30**
National Library Children's library	**15:30 – 16:00** **Guided tour of Children's Library @ National Library**

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