

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT SERIALS: NO. 3**



**THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC**



**VOICES AND IMAGES OF HOPE. BUILDING  
PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECCD IN AZERBAIJAN**

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## **Voices and images of hope. Building partnerships for ECCD in Azerbaijan**

The following report refers to the findings of the Mission taken by Dr. Martha Llanos, Human Development Specialist in order to assess the current status of ECCD in Azerbaijan, provide technical support to capacity building efforts for the Early Childhood Care and Development programmes supported by UNICEF, and carry out consultations for the development of the communication strategies in this area.

Objectives :

- To review the current status of Pre-school education
- To assess current "innovations" in this area
- To conduct training for ECCD Core country team
- To conduct training for Media (journalists and TV personnel)
- To develop a communication strategy framework for ECCD

Methodology:

- Review of policy documents related to EFA and others
- Interviews with key persons from MOE and related ministries
- Interviews with NGO's
- Field observations
- Conduct ECCD Workshops

### RESULTS.

1. The current analysis will take into consideration the ongoing process of development of ECCD in Azerbaijan. The period of reference goes from 2000 to 2001. In order to clarify the current status the comparative review will refer to some findings and recommendations of the previous missions.
2. In relation to the **conceptual framework** guiding the ECCD vision, it was found that the MOE with UNICEF support have initiated some efforts following the main recommendation established last year that: "Early Childhood Care and Development needed to move from a Teacher Directed Centre, towards a Child-Centred strategy, with emphasis on Adults as Facilitators of Learning and Development; with great focus on values and with teachers/adults having a broader concept of education". There is also the intention for transitioning from a centralised republican planning towards a more local orientated effort.
3. There is a general consensus in Azerbaijan about the **importance of education, and it is an asset** to have a country such as **Azerbaijan with a high level of**

**literacy.** However, to move towards concepts of child centred policies, children's rights, active learning, learning spaces, nonformal educational approaches, and family as educational agents, is something that will require effort, commitment, and time. In the past "education" happened in institutions, and there had been a delegation from family to pre-schools and schools with very limited participation of the families. A total authority and trust was delegated to the teacher. Now the proposal moves toward shared action and more partnerships with the family, community, and others, for the development of the child.

1. The above points reflected that in 2000 the country was to **start developing a new framework** to guide their actions in this area. It is possible to see that in a year there are already some steps toward child centred actions with a proposal that is currently designed for working under those premises, and with the development of a more holistic intervention for the child. This is the current effort of the so-called pilot project that is taking place in 4 districts in Azerbaijan, and to which efforts we will refer later in the area of Innovations.
2. The interest and commitment from the MOE in the **ECCD area is reinforced by the world-wide movements**, such as Education For All in its plan of Action has already established the need to reinforce and expand the ECCD. The Summit for Children, in its special session to be held in May, has also provided an arena for rethinking children's problems. The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) has led Azerbaijan to seek better alternatives. In this case the role of UNICEF is crucial for this area of ECCD, as well as their partnerships with NGOs.
3. **The access to pre-school services is still very limited** and also facing difficulties. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), in 1999, the total number of children between 1 to 6 years of age served in 1814 pre-school centres was 112,280. This indicates only a 13.5% coverage of the overall population, (according to 1997 data) there were 825,000 children under 6 years old. However, in the analysis by age, it is obvious that the majority of children fall within the age brackets of three to six years (14,610 Vs 94,857). This indicates that only 1.8% of children served are under age three group.  
For the year 2001, the population data presented indicated 1,074,400 children under six, but the coverage was 111,020 (11.5%) and the number of pre-school centres was 1,790. Obviously there is a decrease in the service despite the fact that the pre-schools from the enterprises were transferred to the MOE.

7. The pre-school services continue to be **mainly for urban children**. In the year 2001 there were a total of 1010 pre-school centres in urban areas (55% of total) and 780 centres (45% of total) in rural areas. These figures are very interesting because they reflect the great number of pre-schools buildings underused in the rural areas, because in terms of centres and number of children served 72% of children are from urban areas, while only 28% of the total number of children come from rural areas. This represents that of the total number of children served that is 11.5% currently only about 3% are from rural areas this data coincides with the results on MICS
8. Looking at **gender issues** the current enrolment situation indicates that there is a **greater improvement for the year 2001** over previous years, with figures of 57,140 boys and 53,880 girls that is 51.5% to 48.5%. According to EFA report in 1998 there were 48,774 boys and 40,752 girls enrolled, whereas in 1996 the gap was even bigger, 53,399 boys and 42,919 girls attended the services.
9. In terms of **budget allocation** and according to the data presented by MOE for 2001, within the overall education budget **8.5% was assigned to pre-school** education. However, according to 1999 sources at that time the analysis showed that 9.5% was allocated for the same purpose. The explanation could be based in the fact that there are now a lower number of centres and children being served. However, it also reflects that there is still within the process the need for a more clear analysis of rules and regulations that will allow for a modernisation of the planning system.
10. According to a recent study (MOE report on ECCD indicators) it was indicated by the MOE that the **ratio of adults per children was 3.4**. This reinforces the initial observation made on the first mission, that there are too many adults in the pre-schools. With the best intentions not to create fear in people about losing their jobs, but as a way of understanding the functioning of the system, this aspect needs to be carefully documented.
11. There is a great need for a more **strategic planning in the use of the current services**. As indicator report stated, there are pre-schools in which the potential of services is large because of the premises and the "greater number of beds"; while in others the number of children is greater than the facilities for sleeping.

This reflects the old time priority concern of the children napping after lunch and that there is more interest on this indicator than on the presence of toys or educational materials.

12. It is very alarming that almost **70% of the current premises are in a poor state of maintainance** and safety, such that they need refurbishment. This requires more parental involvement, since the current budget allocation covers mainly salaries for the personnel included and food provision. Better information about location and situation of pre-schools needs to be analysed in order to plan a better use of current resources, buildings and personnel.
13. With **limitations in the budget** and the above restrictions, it is difficult to believe that the law was passed in 2000 taken out the pre-school from enterprises responsibilities. Currently, on the contrary the oil companies and those other private enterprises should come on support of ECCD. This indicates the need to carefully review cost and strategies for **activation of the potential private sector contribution**.
14. The points mentioned above, serve to indicate that in spite of the good intentions of the MOE and the expressed commitment towards ECCD, the reality of **budget and access of children** are determined by the existing **rules and regulations** established by Ministry of Education, Finance and Health. Under the current circumstances with new developments and vision for the ECCD area the financial and management aspect have to play a key role on favouring the maximum use of the current resources.
15. As a recommendation. **The need for clear and objective data is very important**. The more information is gathered and worked out collectively with participatory analysis, the better able to plan and programme ECCD. There is a step ahead in a sense that some issues such as budgets, costs, gender analysis, start to appear in reports but deeper analysis is needed. However, in general this is not only a problem for ECCD, but for the entire system; that Information for planning and Indicators is a weak area.
16. It should be remembered that Education for All ( UNESCO, EFA) requirements and compromises for 2015 start urging countries, because **by year 2002 basic information** should be gathered so that **plans of actions have a more solid**

**perspective.** It is strongly advised that the matter of key information and the agreements taken at the 2000 meeting with the Task Force remain valid.

17. In the mission II (November 2000) the ECCD Workshop sponsored by MOE-UNICEF, gathered all sectors together for a collective thinking about ECCD; this was a very successful initial action geared towards building up partnership for future actions. The multisectoral ECCD Task Force was created with mutual responsibilities for the development of ECCD in Azerbaijan. Four main lines of actions were agreed upon:

- A. Basic information for planning ECCD (review proposed indicators)
- B. Research and Specific studies to strengthen ECCD (cost analysis and family child values and rearing patterns)
- C. Pre-school components (analysis of curriculum, training, materials)
- D. Communication Strategy, strengthening ECCD in all sectors. Mobilisation at Local levels.

#### 18. **ECCD Components**

Objectives. Analysis of pre-school components with the perspective of a broader ECCD vision.

- a) Review of current curriculum
- b) Analysis of human resources for ECCD
- c) Review of training component
- d) Review of inservice training
- e) Establishment of new proposals for this area

This is an area that urgent information is needed. As the current workshop with the Core Team took place it has reiterated the need to analyse the points a to d. There are current proposals initiated with the ECCD pilots, this was the most important action in ECCD the efforts towards a Better Parenting Initiative, that as shared in the current mission could go further to include Parents and Family ECCD alternatives. However compromises have been taken in this mission so as to carry out a deeper analysis of the human resources and their training needs, this will provide solid reality basis for the development of proposals.

#### 19. **Communication Strategy**

Objectives: To advocate ECCD in the country

- a) To study the strengths and limitations and the information needs of different related sectors, agencies, and groups for ECCD.
- b) Have a vision of the network that can be created for ECCD at central and local level
- c) Develop recommendations, suggest materials, training contents and other for a broader dissemination of ECCD in Azerbaijan .

This is the objective of the current mission, however many of the developments for communications has its basis on the actions of the previous groups.

**20. The composition of the Task Force has to be reviewed** and more clear action about their responsibilities has to be drawn. For ECCD to grasp clearly its multisectoral, multidimensional approach this is an area that requires further permanent work. This is also an action of much interest within the **UNICEF office**, that is ready for a **convergence of programmes** that will focus on the "whole child" approach, maximising the strengths and responsibilities of the different sectors.

**21.** Currently in a **strategy for strengthening MOE** capacity to take more active leadership, a **Core Team for ECCD was created** , whose main function will be to guide theoretically and operationally the efforts in ECCD. This provides the opportunity to support a small group of people from NGO, University and MOE for the capacity building to be created and then disseminated. This is a good idea since it will concentrate forces, however, clear consensus is needed about the main responsibilities. An asset of Mission II was to convey the message that ECCD is multisectoral and partnership is needed for its success. Responsibilities between Core Team and Task Force has to be clearly defined. For the Advocacy and Communication the task Force could provide a wider scope.

**22.** The newly formed **Core Team** contributed to the **analysis of the ECCD** current situation, pointing out the following issues:

- Children without attention Child problems are not giving any priority
- Limited social psychological environment for children
- Less attention to children development
- Limited play
- Potential of the child as a human resource
- Main worry feeding the child
- Limited nutritional status

- Lack of vitamins affects the condition for physical development
- Financial issues limited
- Limited production of materials
- Limited environment
- Need of indicators for quality
- There is no statistical information
- There is no network for ECCD
- Basic information needed for communication
- Realistic poverty versus other interests\*
- Need for targeting the problem is mainly for vulnerable groups
- Prioritise "" middle class"situation \*
- Peoples own personal problems interfere with looking at the problems of others.
- More focus on adults dealing with children
- Caregivers and Methodologists are reluctant to go further into their roles and responsibilities

**23.** As presented in point 24, the group emphasised the most difficult issues, and they covered a wide range of elements, therefore the **"whole child approach"** is clear. Emphasis on discussions is placed in the psychosocial development of the child, to the interactions, the overall well being of the child; this can represent a gradual movement towards the socio emotional development of the child and the adult. The new ECCD framework has solid basis, its vision could guide the development of the ECCD in Azerbaijan.

**24.** The presence of an **energetic good leadership for ECCD** is currently exercised with the newly appointed Director of Pre-school. She brings the experience given by her work in different roles throughout the education system. Her vision and very humanistic approach provides the good strength that could assure a successful guidance of ECCD area.

**25.** Pre-school education has also started efforts for **solid linkages with the first grades of Primary Education**. This is a very positive asset that will be reflected on the children achievement. In most places and also in the old tradition each system remains separated. Now each one provides a more harmonious approach towards child development and learning and their partnership will impact both the child and the education system.

**26.** Based on the above, it is strongly recommended that a more **solid foundation should be given to training and exchange of experiences between the teachers** and schools that are already members of the active learning network. In

the year 2000, there was the intention to establish this methodology as part of the overall training efforts under the educational reform. This will create a very important basis for a strong development of a holistic approach to education.

**27.** In the different interviews and training's undertaken by the Consultant it was obvious that the focus is on concrete units of kindergarten or pre-school centres. The wider vision for provision of services is not clearly grasped. It was the intention in this mission to guide the group towards a more strategic thinking and planning. The basic premise is that MOE is serving a very minimum percentage of children, less than 15%, mainly in Baku and urban areas. **What is the situation of the 85% children between 0 to 6 in Azerbaijan, how about 900,000 children below 6 years of age?**

**28. Access with Quality is a theme proposed as a strategy.** This will be achieved in two main lines: first, improvement of the current provision of ECCD by analysing and proposing an appropriate curriculum and training of the personnel and second looking at more open flexible alternatives for a wider coverage. As an initial step, the inclusion of parents as partners is being thought of as a strategy that will help to achieve a wider support for child development. It is hoped that the general population will become more aware of the importance of the early years of life and how to promote the best practices for the development of children. For this the communication strategy will provide elements for action.

**29.** In relation to the **current personnel working in ECCD** there are a great number of teachers, methodologists, assistants, however it is necessary to analyse their **current responsibilities and see them in their new roles.** This will require a clear identification and consensus about the role of the Pre-school Teacher, of the Methodologists, and of all personnel involved in this effort. This will give better possibilities for designing new ad-hoc training. One member of the core team indicated that pre-school personnel enjoy the training's, however they would not like to have more work. Therefore this area requires further deep analysis.

**30.** The Consultant appreciates that the **personnel of ECCD are a very committed group of human beings,** who guided with much care and knowledge, will **rediscover their enormous potential.** Then their roles and their interaction with children will exceed current norms, policies and ways of caring for children to

roles that will represent a growing possibility for both adults and children, and will add the perspective of being mobilisers for parent and community participation.

33. The current personnel have very **limited experience in working with parents**; this area requires special skills and understanding about parents' expectations, and patterns of rearing, basically getting closer to the family worlds in order to put these two big socialisation institutions to the better service of the children.
34. In order to have successful parent or family programmes the first step to take into consideration is the knowledge about the family, the concept that families have about their children, the practices that they have for developing the child's personal, intellectual and social skills, the values and belief system that guides them. The school and the family are the main socialisation forces for the child development, however in the Azeri system the two have not come into close connection. The current framework of ECCD indicates the strong connection that should be between the two-socialisation forces, in order to actively share values, norms and knowledge so that harmony is promoted for the best upbringing of the young children.

#### **INNOVATIONS. ECCD PILOT PROJECT**

35. **A pilot effort was initiated last year** to create the basis for a child-centred programme and address training for interacting with parents and caregivers. The **model currently developed is established in the framework of a total child** conceptual framework and has 10 areas of work. The pilots are taking place in 4 pre-school centres in Baku and outside Baku district. **The main objective of the pilot is to provide a model for caregivers and parents.** The development of the model and the training are under the responsibility of the Development Centre, a local NGO, that was also responsible for the training of Active Learning methodologies.
36. The **methodological principles** of the Early Childhood development model are based "on the psychological aspects of the child's natural development", prioritising the following elements, as stated in their draft documents:
- The **children's natural development comes first**, the adults' goals and problems stand in second place. In this approach the child is always right

and the adult has to be able to organise interesting and appropriate activities or programmes.

- The **child's social and cultural development** takes place in contact with the **environment, through independent exploration**. The adults and the children together explore this environment in which they are also another element.
- The main scope in the work for children is the development of their **individual qualities, the discovery of their creative potential**.

37. The **methodological goals and tasks** of the EC developmental model are described in the following table.

Goals	Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain the child's natural development mechanism, to follow it, to teach, to prevent possible errors in the child's development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn the child's natural development</li> <li>• To identify the child's individual peculiarities</li> <li>• To develop a program based on the child's natural peculiarities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop dynamic development programs taking into consideration the diversity of the internal and external factors of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop programs for children with new materials, time, space, instructions based on the child's psychological demands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote and support the child independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to regulate the child</li> <li>• Don't exert pressure upon the child</li> <li>• Don't limit the child's imagination</li> </ul>

It is very positive to see that the current model rescue the individuality and **uniqueness of the child, trying to bring the best of their potential** and by cooperating with all sources in the environment to be ready for the best development of their children.

38. The theoretical background of the programme, as indicated in their draft manual, is based on the following:

- The **child's ability for psychological self-regulation and self-control**. The authors indicated that to follow the prohibitions resulting from fear is not self-control, it is a self-defence that the child uses to cope with adults' aggression.
- **Parents vision about the children's age peculiarities**.
- The possibility and necessity that the **parents should support the children in the development** of their psychological self-regulation.

- The intentional regulation in human beings can be realised on the level of words, concepts, intentional imperatives, and internal plans, the final outcomes of one's actions – conditional replacements or images of the real perceptions and feelings. Therefore the development of self-realisation, mind and perception is the first stage of training the psychological premeditation. The second stage is teaching how to change one's life in the desired direction.
- The present method relies on the visions about the mechanisms of intentional psychophysical regulation, the laws of its formation in ontogenesis - in different spheres of the state of mind, mutual conditions and internal relations.
- The main mechanisms of the psychological regulation of the human beings as a whole appear in the activities of the functional psychophysical unity of the body.
- The child directs his attention to bright, clear, noisy, eloquent, new or unusual things. He is able to put together the things he likes and desires in an efficient and productive way, rather than the things the people around him desire. With the **growth of the cerebral structures and nervous mechanisms, the child is able to regulate his attention.**
- **The adults can help the child by creating conditions** for the activity and training of the child's developing and improving psychological function.

39. It is important to point out that **the theoretical model has to be clearly stated**, it is recommended to have a deep review by judges from different disciplines that are related to the topic of child development. This is suggested in view of the so called "new model", that if treated as such will require to have a strong validation, both from their theoretical construction as well as their current use and impact. It is crucial to **remember that the audience** to whom this new model is directed is for **caregivers and parents** and the content, language use of the draft manuals are very difficult to understand (The Consultant follows them through an English translation). One of the key elements of the current parenting programme has to be "simplicity"; the more able one is to convey messages in a natural, appropriate level the more effectiveness is able to be assured.

40. In relation to the **Principles of work with children**, the pilot programme has a list of guidelines for the adult-child interaction

- **Do not impose your will power on anyone**, including the children. If the child is reluctant to prepare his lessons for some reason, postpone it and try to clarify the situation.

- **If you do not know how you are influencing your child – stop!** If a complicated situation is created when you are busy with your child, continue the activities as if nothing had happened, stop having an impact on the child, try to calm down. Later either alone or with the help of someone else try to understand the complicated situation.
- **While interacting with the children, do not use any methods and means, which can provoke a negative reaction.**
- **Do not exert a pressure against the child, do not ignore them, and do not treat them as grown-ups.** Take into consideration the fact that their behaviour and reactions are peculiar to children. Aggressive methods may only increase the shortcomings in children and have a negative impact on their behaviour.
- **Avoid your negative feelings** and do not be malevolent. We cannot hide our negative emotions – fear, panics, anger, and apathy - from children, which results in similar emotions in children.
- **Follow the principles of equity** during the interaction with children. Adult's actions are examples of independent and creative behaviour. The children try to imitate adults. Therefore prepare yourself before your interaction with the children; give them happiness, warmth, light.
- **Do not demonstrate failures**, do not make remarks, your negative evaluation may have a bad impact on the emotional state of the child.
- **The positive vision of the child about himself is very important.** Do not give neither negative nor positive marks to children. If you want to give a mark to the child, this must be from the point of the positive quality. Let them demonstrate their abilities without fear of being punished.
- **Do not compare the child with the others in unfavourable situation;** do not show others as an example to him, it is most important his inner freedom, emotional well being rather the result he has achieved. The children themselves will choose models.
- **Do not show your attention and sympathy for the child in an extreme form.** The child used to it will be concerned if deprived. Use other methods of motivation or punishment – smile, shaking hands, and friendly patting on the shoulder.

41. The involvement of parents in the children's upbringing is a very central theme in the new model and the main premises are:

- **Parents are the most important people in real time and space for the children** in their Early Childhood years.
- **All parents wish only the best for their children.**
- **Parents do not want to be instructed.**

- In **Azerbaijan parents are not so much interested in their children's independence.**(basis for this crucial statement)
42. In relation to the **suggestions for parents and caregivers**, the draft manual content different suggestions of activities as well as recommendations related to the following aspects:
- Development of actions
  - Physical development
  - The role of the learning environment in the child's development
  - Emotional-social development
  - Development of speech
  - Sensor development
  - Parents' role in EC
  - Development of everyday skills
  - Game and development of creativity
  - Cognitive development
43. Although the manuals developed for the **new ECCD model are still in a draft form, a very preliminary review was done** in order to provide more elements for a solid validation. It is necessary to organise the validation of the pilot programme as the intention is to go to scale. Since it is considered that a new model is created, the theoretical basis as well as the implementation procedure, the monitoring, evaluation has to be clear components of the validation process.
44. At the present time the Consultant considers **this a very valuable effort, it has very sound elements** and the methodological aspects, principles and premises for work are more concrete. However, detail rationale and basis to sustain the proposals has to be given. It is recommended that more time and follow up be given to this effort that needs to have the strong involvement of the MOE. The principles for interaction have very relevant elements for the adult-child behavioural management, and although of good nature and clear on their intentions are in general repetitive and have the risk of being taken as recipe type formula for the interactions. Most of the proposed actions start with a Don't. From the Communications perspective, it is suggested to address recommended behaviours in a positive way, then the effect is stronger. It is therefore recommended to review the current draft materials and also have a system with external reviewers.
45. One aspect of **praise for the pilot effort** has been **the demonstration of the training session** that was performed with the entire group of participants of the pilot programmes. The theme was perhaps not a typical training session since

refers mainly to evaluation of the training component. However it was very useful and gave many important insights for reflection. The Facilitator group showed a very good management of resources like games, materials and others that reflect the concrete use of the active learning methodologies.

In this training the reaction of the audience was of a very attentive nature and was also able to promote interaction and active participation. As a result the caregivers, methodologists and participants of the pilots expressed their opinions about strenghts, weaknesses and future requirements.

46. **Main achievements and impact of the training** as stated by participants were:

- Development of logical thinking
- Creative activity through the toys
- Children's imagination and curiosity
- Independence, better socialisation express an independent opinion
- Development of aesthetic taste.
- Continuous attention to children. Imitation of adults roles
- Everyday skills
- Parents' attitude towards the children
- Cooperation and responsibility
- Children' friendly relations has increased

47. In relation **to achievements** that they have been able to directly observe **in their children and parents**:

- Children's independence has increased. They are more active and know more.
- Cooperation with the parents has increased
- We have individual approach to each child and see him/ her as a personality.
- We have done more with less expenses
- We have learnt the children's inclinations and interests and build our work on their basis
- The quality of the education and development has increased and the decision-making, problem-solving skills are developing.
- The relation between the adults and children has changed positively.

48. The aspects of the **programme that offer still limitations** and so efforts have to be geared towards a better improvement of this area:

- The development of the children's logical thinking
- The involvement of parents in this work
- The children's free expression of their opinions, to feel and appreciate beauty
- The problem of accomplishing the started work
- To eliminate the errors in speech
- The development of children cultural identity and personal uniqueness

- To develop the children's creative skills, individual approach
- Children's independence and the development of their speech
- Children's attitude to each other and to the adults, relationship with the environment and social life.

49. As **potential aspects to be develop in the future** the group suggested creative actions to enhance the development of children and adults

#### Material environment

Real	Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural possibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive farm</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of the area in the neighbourhood of the kindergarten for growing plants or domestic animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop for the children to learn different crafts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music hall</li> </ul>	

#### Social-psychological environment

Real	Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal relation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach as a subject</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal and non-verbal communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The solution of the problems jointly with parents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to take into consideration the child's interests and opinion</li> </ul>

#### Communication-Information environment

Real	Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooperation with psychologists</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means for doctor's consultation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pictures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open doors to involve the parents, activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual aids</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newspapers and magazines</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radio and television</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conversations, discussions</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excursions</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	

50. As the group states it **there are many positive ideas about how to expand and improve the quality of the current services**. A key element seems to be placed around the interactions that take place with the children, their parents and among caregivers. It was very important that the entire group is very much aware of the importance and existence of the wide range of media and communications options. The partnerships with parents has a clearer emphasis.

51. As an ending to the training session the group stated their future vision for the current pilot programme, as follows:

- Increase of the pilot kindergartens in number
- Training should be held often
- Seminars should be conducted more frequently
- Psychologists should often visit the kindergartens
- Development of a Methodological manual for caregivers
- Increase of material availability and adjustment of the program to the real conditions of the centres.
- The experience should be disseminated throughout the Republic.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

52. **Towards a communication strategy for ECCD** to be widely spread in Azerbaijan it is needed to plan the use of different communication tools for the advocacy and social mobilisation towards actions related to the better development of children. **The main goal of the communication is to empower a new generation of children in relation to their rights, and for their quality of life.** A proposal was made towards speaking with one voice addressing the whole child, each sector complementing each other for the overall development of the child.

53. **The Communication Strategy Vision is to insure that decision makers, government officials, members of political parties, religious, opinion, special interest groups leaders, ngo's, private sector, international organisations, are in agreement and or are committed to the interventions that are focus on a better development of children and the fulfilment of their rights.** The communication activities will focus on the initial messages.

- ✓ · The value of the early years of life.
- ✓ · The concept of "whole child" approach
- ✓ · The realisation that the current services for pre-school are very limited
- ✓ · Support the development of new alternative ways for dealing with services for ECCD
- ✓ · The multisectoral approach for dealing with child development actions
- ✓ · To understand the difference between child rights and needs approach.
- ✓ · To support mobilisation of resources for effective ECCD

- ✓ · To promote active Local authorities involvement
- ✓ · To value parents as the prime source of children socialisation
- ✓ · To promote partnership between families, schools and communities.  
Develop a substantial networking for the child.

54. In order to make ECCD a concern of different sectors of the society and promote a healthy child development, Communication has to play a very important role, in this report and as an initial step in this area, elements for action and reflection are given in order to use **communication as a tool for ECCD success**. Two main strategies have been prioritised advocacy and social mobilisation.

55. **Advocacy** Is a continuous and adaptive process of gathering, organising and formulating information into argument, to be communicated through various media and interpersonal channels, It is to address political and social leaders for gaining their commitment to an active support in a development programme, thereby preparing a society for its acceptance.

56. **As a communication strategy**, Advocacy has to be systematic, using clear and logical steps to design, implement and monitor activities. This has to be multi-disciplinary, using update knowledge and experience from different disciplines, professions, theories, and partners including a behaviour-orientation for the improvement of practices and skills, in this case related to early childhood care and development, has to be flexible since the advocacy objectives should reflect the country's priorities, resources and capacity in keeping with national and global initiatives.

57. **Advocacy has been suggested** because, in order to achieve ECCD development goals and objectives it is desirable to:

- ✓ · Bring issues into the public domain for discussion and action,
- ✓ · Change the policies, positions or programmes and standards and regulations.
- ✓ · Direct decision-makers to find, support and/or implement alternative approaches
- ✓ · Build broad-based, reliable and long-term support for implementing a solution among decision-makers, institutions and/or communities.

58. **The process of construction of the Communication Strategy** action, will require an objective analysis of the Problem or Situation, of Participants behaviour, both at the organisational and individual level, and the Channel

analysis that will serve to identify appropriate communication means These are the first steps in planning for advocacy. The basic information serves to:

- ✓ identify issues for policy action,
- ✓ · widen the range of possible solutions to a problem,
- ✓ · describe the policy making process,
- ✓ · identify key advocacy participants and partners,

59. It is important to **remember that in Transitional societies** like the case of Azerbaijan, that are undergoing the transition from an authoritarian regime to a more pluralistic, democratic one, by economic transformation from a centralised to market economy, **there is limited experience and expertise** to carry out social action effectively. In these instances, it is necessary to focus on solid information for planning and strategic capacity building.

60. In the field of **ECCD the new emphasis is in interactions**, therefore adults and children will be in constant exchange, in a permanent sharing and learning of different dimensions. If it is possible to reach new-born babies their lives can be different, what if we motivate a critical mass of community agents, of people whose role is already in some kind of interaction with children?

The key word in human development is "interaction", for a very long time science put a priority into biological, physical issues of survival. Now scientific research is providing a wealth of updated knowledge about brain development and about the crucial role of the experiences among people.

61. It is a **communication responsibility to reach many human beings with messages that will relate to their raising of consciousness about their mission in life**, about their own value, about their important role as adults in contact with children. We should continue and improved our efforts to reach adults in order to improve the lives of children. Reaching the children today and educating the adults we have the opportunity to set up long term objectives, to lay the foundation, to prevent disabilities, social stigma and fulfil children rights.

The main goal is to empower children as well as adults by giving them an active part in improving their physical, social, emotional and spiritual lives. Recognising the early formative years lay the foundation for their development, attitudes and practices, regarding gender, health, nutrition, education, economics, and others.

62. **Communication is needed to listen to and learn from, the target participatory groups**, as they are the prime source and resource for possible solutions regarding both change and sustainability. Advocacy will help to create a national movement toward the total development of the child, and to value the interactions with children. These efforts will go along to the different target groups that will include all actors in different capacities in the big national scenario.
63. **Target participants**, commonly referred to as the primary audience, are decision-makers with the authority to affect the outcome of the advocacy objective directly. These persons must actively approve the policy change and are the primary “targets” of the advocacy programme. Examples are the Ministers of Education, Health, Finance, the President or members of Parliament.
64. **Influential participants**, also known as the secondary audience, they are individuals and groups that can influence the key decision-maker (target participant). Influential participants would support or oppose the decision-maker’s action. Examples are special interest groups, unions, religious organisations, members of parliament, voters, media.
65. An **advocacy organisation is any civil society organisation (CSO)** whose primary function is advocacy. Local CSO’s often can be effective influential participants in the advocacy programme. Although many have neither the resources or staff time to conduct research, they usually have developed effective ways of reaching key decision-makers. This makes them valuable influential participants. For them is important to have:
- ✓ Meetings with organisation’s leaders and staff
  - ✓ Ready-to-use fact sheets
  - ✓ Graphics or illustrations
  - ✓ Short computer-modelling presentations
  - ✓ Briefing meetings for advocacy organisations
  - ✓ Seminars to update research findings and experiences
66. **Broadcast media and the press**. The media can be effective conveyors of information to all sectors of society and support long term advocacy goals. The information they report, and the way they do it can influence current advocacy issues and events. The press generally likes to know how a situation affects individuals—reporting “human interest” stories is an asset. Therefore, is essential to provide the media messages about: what the advocacy programme wants to

achieve, **why** it should be achieved (positive results and negative consequences)  
**how** it can be achieved, and **what action** this particular audience should take.

67. **The general public.** Is an increasingly relevant and forceful constituency for policy development. In addition, the public is the end-user of services and feels the effects of policy changes. As with any other participant group; “the general public” should receive simple, clear, concise and persuasive messages with a call to action. If research has shown that the public is not yet adequately aware of the problem, the message should *combine* public awareness and solutions.

68. When dealing with overall policy making process, It is very important to bear in mind the following key questions:

- ✓ What organisation or policy-making body will make the decision the advocacy programme is trying to influence?
- ✓ What is the formal decision-making process for this institution? What are the steps in the formal process? When will each step take place?
- ✓ What are the informal “behind the scenes” decision-making actions?
- ✓ Who is/are the key decision-makers at each stage?
- ✓ Which steps are open to outside input? Which stages are crucial for advocacy programme influence? How can it influence these stages?

69. Some examples to illustrate the participants category.

**Who Are Your Target Advocacy Participants?**

<b>Advocacy Objective:</b> To Pass a law to mandate development community ECCD services	
<b>Target Participant</b>	<b>Secondary Participants (Influential Participants)</b>
President or Prime Minister	Minister's staff person for educational issues Religious leaders with whom the PM consults regularly (could be opposition) Ministers of Education and Finance International donors National newspapers Women's groups/NGOs
Minister of Education	President/Prime Minister Minister of Finance Speech writers National and local parent organisations (could be opposition) Teachers union National newspapers
Minister of Finance	President or Prime Minister

	International donors More research needed
Chair of Parliamentary Council on Education	Minister of Education Teachers union
All members of Parliament	President or Prime Minister Ministers of Education and Finance Teachers union National newspapers and radio programs Voters

70. The **communication process**, points out that through research and analysis is possible to review the status of the problem or situation, basic theme and centre of communication. Then with the Core Team and Task Force develop or focus on more specific advocacy objectives such as ECCD or Children Rights, then identified who the key decision-makers are (*target participants*), and identified those who can influence the action of selected decision-makers (*influential participants*). Have a consensus about desired concrete actions (national consultations) and identified what arguments would influence participants to take desired action. Lastly identified channels of communication that fit the message, and has maximum reach and credibility for each participant group.

71. **To know about Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of families and community workers in relation to their children are crucial.** This will be the basis for a realistic programming that could help to improve adults or parents skills in rearing children. There will be change or reinforcement of good practices. Potentially good media assistance can help easily to go to scale. And if we take the goal of building national capacity, the communications will play a key role.

KAP studies are therefore a priority, a source and resource of a communication strategy; it is also possible to innovate the traditional way of doing a situation analysis including this approach. We can look for routines in everyday life, by entertainment families like, anecdotes, stories, and children's preferences. Search for every learning space for children and adults that will go any traditional approach. Find where the gossips happen, who is the most believed person around your village on what area and others, encourage local solutions.

72. In designing an advocacy strategy, communicators will attempt to **present information** in a way to motivate decision makers to take action, and to mobilise

influential participants, to support or put pressure on targeted decision makers. The advocacy programme should use messages that suit the desired action and put emphasis on their advantages. Thus, what and how information is presented are critical to the advocacy success. It is suggested to use different interpersonal communication tools:

- ✓ Formal or informal face-to-face meetings
- ✓ Informal conversations at social, religious, political or business gatherings
- ✓ Letters at the personal, organisational or coalition level
- ✓ Briefing meetings\*
- ✓ Programme site visits
- ✓ Fact sheets\*
- ✓ Pamphlets or brochures\*
- ✓ Graphics or illustrations\*
- ✓ Video, Computer ,Overhead and Slide presentations and Interactive computer modelling programmes\*
- ✓ Newspaper articles or advertisements
- ✓ Broadcast commentary or coverage.
- ✓ Seminars. Workshops.
- ✓ \*These channels are well suited for presenting data and other technical information.

73. **Capacity building both in the area of ECCD and social communications** are very much needed. This aspect is a real challenge since ECCD is on a process of being activated with a more holistic approach. Parental education and family and community education stands as a new concept for a country in transition. The aim will be to make every person in society an advocator of children rights.

74. **Capacity building** is a strong strategy and cuts across all actors of the communication efforts. Short term and long-term training and orientation is used for participants to learn how to implement programmes and communication activities. The Long-term training is used when assessment showed skills deficits that would limit the behaviour change process, and the service delivery, when there is a potential difficulty to answer to demand. Designing this type of training programme is an important part of communication

75. For example, pre-school staff would learn new alternative approaches and especially Parental education; supervisors would practice using new methodologies to evaluate Staff performance; volunteers would learn when, where and how to report their Communication activities; district directors would learn how to collect and compile Monitoring data; and radio personnel would learn how to convey messages that support communication objectives.

**76. Social communication inside the Azerbaijan UNICEF office is perceived as an effective way to receive and deliver information to the population.**

This framework can be built on democratic participation and mechanisms that are just being learned. The success and momentum gained by the global movement for children and the "Say Yes" campaign in Azerbaijan should be maximised, and since the time is going over it is important to sustain the results and reinforce the impact already created. The office and ECCD could be a catalyst, advocator, trainer and resource for programmes towards the well being of children.

**77. Social mobilisation:** is a process of bringing together all feasible intersectoral partners and allies to determine felt needs, and raise awareness and demand for a development objective. It involves the support of all actors, including institutions, groups and communities in identifying, raising and managing human and material resources, thereby strengthening participation for self-reliance and sustainability of achievements.

78. The major challenge social mobilisation presents is that there is a shift from analysis of individuals and their behaviours to the analysis of groups and their actions, of formal organisations and networks, institutions, NGOs, and CSOs (Civil society Organisation). To analyse the problem and define the best actions is crucial. One has to relate the action from partners and allies in the private sector or a public/private. Possibilities are:

- ✓ Limited access to ECCD services (ideal action: raise demand, open new pre-schools, provides affordable alternatives, etc.)
- ✓ Poor quality of service delivery (ideal action: improve communication and technical skills of staff, )
- ✓ Lack of demand for service (find causes, cost, quality, location)
- ✓ Poor product availability (work on quality)
- ✓ Lack of enabling environment for parental involvement (ideal action: provide appropriate information about development of children, motivate health and education workers to teach child survival and development skills to mothers)

79. After identifying **strengths and opportunities** which have impact in the chain of events associated with the problem, one could promote communication and capacity building. A priority will be to review existing information regarding current policies and practices and other conditions associated with the problem and

solutions. Specifically: What conditions seem to maintain the problem? What solutions have been tried and to what effect? Who *benefits* from the status quo (even though considered a problem)?

80. The ACTION phase has the following components:

- Carry out training and capacity building
- Carry out communication activities
- Carry out supportive supervision
- Monitor communication activities and behaviour change
- Make mid-course corrections and reinforce participation
- Evaluate communication programme during follow-up period

81. It is relevant that some of the suggested questions be taken into account in the action analysis:

- ✓ *What resources and other inputs are necessary to take this action?* Look at motivation as well as physical, financial and human resources needed. After selection of partners, evaluate their strengths and capacity for action and the need for capacity building.
- ✓ *What must be done so that partners can sustain the priority action(s)?* Create a mutually beneficial relationship between the partner(s) and the government, community and/or parent organisation. If the social mobilisation partner is involved in actual service delivery, it is important to know if it receives some form of social/political/professional/financial reinforcement.
- ✓ *What are the consequences to the priority action(s)?* they will affect the partner's performance and should be considered within the social mobilisation strategies. Some positive are the increment recognition and credibility, new resources, staff training, trips, seminars and other.

82. **Partner analysis:** It is crucial to have a proper identification of the partners and allies, analyse their capacity to take priority action, and identify what costs and benefits they will experience from participation. As part of the Core Team workshop the participants were guided towards the identification of different key partners for ECCD, have to reflect about their roles and find out arguments for ECCD current or potential actions. This was a very thoughtful exercise that gave the participants of the training the opportunity to be "in someone else shoes" as one participant mention.

The results indicated that mainly educational arguments were used, some economic, moral but the entire process of reaching consensus was very rich for the realisation that there is a long way in the process of advocacy for ECCD.

### 83. Whom to mobilise?

It is suggested to look beyond the specialty area (e.g., health, education)--to enlist partners from multiple sectors in society.

- ✓ **Service providers and programme managers:** education authorities, health workers, doctors and nurses; university, school administrators; extension workers; cooperative agents; police, army; factory owners and private-sector commercial groups.
- ✓ **Partners in service delivery:** NGOs and voluntary organisations; media producers; advertisers and marketers; literacy workers, curriculum developers and teachers; media and sports personalities.
- ✓ **Partners in the community:** local political, religious and traditional leaders; administrative authorities; women's organisations; economic organisations; teachers; youth organisations.

84. Mobilising through entertainment: Entertainment can arouse emotions and stir people to action. Because entertainment is pervasive, popular, persuasive and profitable, it is a good accompaniment to other, more instructive channels. Entertaining media can include television, radio, magazine or newspaper spots, serials and stories, street or community theatre or drama. Examples are:

- **Radio:** serialised radio drama with characters that listeners can identify with and messages which raise awareness, emotion, encourage alternative attitudes and behaviours; radio spots, popular songs with specific messages.
- **Television and movies:** soap opera and serialised drama are ideal for these media because they can convey complex situations, emotions and information; dramatic spots are also effective for the same reason.
- **Print media:** serialised dramas in magazines, including cartoons.
- **Community theatre:** engage communities in dialogue about critical issues, raise difficult or sensitive topics, model new behaviours and challenge attitudes; stage theatre can build on local legends and stories, street theatre can be interactive and reach a wide variety of people.
- **Traditional media:** can be used to compliment mass media. It is more interactive, can be more personal, as it builds on familiar themes, stories, characters to get messages across. It also reaches audiences different from television and print media. Songs based on traditional rhythms, instruments or local themes, story telling is powerful especially where oral tradition is strong; riddles can convey messages especially to youth; poems can encapsulate messages and make them easy to remember; and murals can be participatory, fun and convey messages with familiar symbols.

85. Mobilising through events:

- **Public meetings** draw people together with a common concern

- **rallies and marches** can build solidarity, make statements on an issue, especially if there is media coverage
- **holiday-related events** can offer a forum, theme and free time for people to engage in mobilisation activities.

86. Mobilising through dialogue:

- **radio and television talk shows, panel discussions** and interviews with experts, give listeners the opportunity to interact with experts and have their views taken into account, with different audiences.
- **print media with letters to the editor**, allow readers to express and exchange opinions.
- **workshops** provide opportunities to exchange ideas, plan, reflect on an issue
- **community workers** in many fields are in a good position to provide information, motivate, train, organise..

87. Mobilising through information dissemination:

- **radio and television spots** can provide basic information, statistics, call to action, advertise upcoming events
- **magazine programmes and documentaries** can provide facts, depth and an historical perspective
- print media with **informative stories, press releases.**
- **institution-based dissemination** through schools, workplaces, mosques, churches, temples and synagogues, can reach varied audiences credibly.

88. There is currently a golden opportunity to use media TV for children. According to the interviews and workshop with communication personnel, there is current interest in this type of production. Therefore training the media, journalists and other people also for a more effective use of communications skills is a priority. In order to develop clear messages in a way that will assure impact on the selected audience. Bringing to life Human interest stories.

89. In the meeting and workshop with the media the following questions related to channel analysis were guiding the interactions;

About programme participants:

- For ECCD, what are programme participants' most credible information sources?
- What communication channel(s) are best suited to reach participants?
- What are participants' media usage habits?
- What is their level of literacy and in what language?
- What traditional media are available and what is their popularity with programme participants?

- What is interpersonal communication practices in the programme participants' community?

About local communication capacity:

- What communication channel(s) are best suited to the messages selected to achieve communication objectives?
- What are the major mass media in this country, their coverage, cost and control?
- What media organisations are, and how effective are they?
- What organisations have research and training capacity in mass media or interpersonal communication?
- What skills exist locally in audio-visual production, graphic art, and design, print?
- What messages, materials and channels have been used in the past and what was their effectiveness?

90. The workshop with journalists and TV personnel was very successful. The techniques used in the day session included new communication approaches via visualisation, meditation and appreciative enquiry. As a result, a very interested group of 12 persons representing 6 newspapers, a TV channel, and a university teacher of communications indicated their great interest for working in this area. Their own values presented reflected search for innovations, trust, identification with child issues, taking risk and potential networking.

91. In the media workshop it was obvious that the majority of journalists are not doing articles for or about children and even less by children. The topic of what is to be a child in Azerbaijan was widely discuss, and although all adults declare a great interest for children in reality there is a limited space in relation to news related to or programmes specially designed for children.

92. A very illustrative case was presented among the audience of a young enthusiastic journalist who for the last 4 year has had a page for children and currently there will be a cancellation of that page. However analysing the case, it was interesting to see that the page for children was on a political journal. Strategically it was suggested that this journalist should be writing articles about children rights, and issues related to the audience of the newspaper. This stirs the attention, because an interesting effort is totally misplaced, and rather than causing sorrow should be conditioned strategic thinking for solutions. An immediate answer came from the TV producer and it is possible that we can see how the strengths of the journalist could be appreciated and serve better purposes on a TV programme for,with and about children.

93. All journalists express their concern about children situation but have no experience how to go about in a more mobilising way. To write for and about children requires fundamental strategic thinking and planning. Some comments were: "...At present there are no concrete ideas and thoughts" "We need another more concrete vision for the future "...I would like to see a special column "Children are our joy", "...To have a range of articles elucidating the application of psychological methods in the development of pre-school age children"(See annex for detailed comments)
94. The representatives of TV presented to us a very inspiring analysis of the situation with lots of package programmes and no space or special programme for and about children. This moment is very crucial because there is interest on the TV to produce such a kind of programmes to illustrate parents and directly to address children. They will be interested to have an appropriate team to produce this kind of programmes. Lots of enthusiasm was expressed.
95. As a result of the meeting it was agreed upon a follow up and to initiate periodical meetings to share information and to plan together some initiatives and allow space for children news. The radio was missing from our meeting. Bearing in mind that journals are having specific audiences, that TV in spite of its wider reception might have a limited presence in most rural or vulnerable areas, radio could be another communication tool to start analysing.
96. **In order to create a culture of media for /with by and about children on issues related to the overall development of children**, it is urgent to have a deep assessment of the knowledge, attitudes and practices in the overall ECCD area. To have sound research data and basic indicators that will help on the assessment of the communication needs and resources along with the plans for EFA and Summit for children. Therefore, it is crucial to:
- ✓ To find out arguments that best can address and promote the "child case" in different actors and sectors of society
  - ✓ To have active reflections about the ECCD vision, new profiles, future roles and responsibilities to be taken by the ECCD service providers.
  - ✓ To identify current existing venues and spaces for reinforcing awareness into the ECCD area .

- ✓ To upgrade skills and awareness of all the different partners already involved in the ECCD process and coordinate multisectoral approach
  - ✓ To network and include communications skills on all future trainings.
  - ✓ To develop low cost, national and regional relevant materials and use of all possible communications techniques
  - ✓ To serve as an advocate, catalyst and public educator
97. The strategy deploys multimedia to reach the family centring with messages develop for, by and with children. The following key suggestions are vital:
- ✓ Use of campaign identity with institutional logo to create visual link.
  - ✓ Primary school package with songs and others
  - ✓ Child to child activities to carry messages to home and school
  - ✓ A media package with spots and others
  - ✓ Information package for interpersonal communication for those closer to the family ,community workers, health etc
  - ✓ Advocacy material for local government and decision makers
  - ✓ Create and Profit from the benefits of social marketing, mobilisation and others. Use the private sector to test and evaluate the campaign strategy.
  - ✓ Build communications capacity with the government and intersectoral links.
  - ✓ Community education, training and participation are key success elements.
  - ✓ Use participatory methodology and achieve integration.
  - ✓ Using the knowledge of the community as basis for planning
  - ✓ Impact is greater when the communities evaluate their own health and education practices
  - ✓ Highly committed and well placed politically individuals can make a tremendous advanced road
  - ✓ President support is crucial solid motivation and credibility for Innovations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is crucial to have **reliable data for planning**. There are initial efforts into this area but in the specific case of ECCD there is a strong urge for having clearer idea about the functioning of the overall system. In Mission II indicators of different sources were presented to the Task Force and it is important that they review them. For country and local planning, the current data is minimum and there are differences according to the sources. The

construction of basic information for planning will give the Task Force, new elements for discussion. It is recommended that under a leadership of a person with experience in situation analysis this area of information for planning will be improved.

2. In relation to basic information and also planning for **empowering of decentralisation** process, it is a priority to know about local resources and the situation of ECCD within the different regions or districts. This analysis could also use participatory techniques that will allow for more Interaction and active sharing of ideas in the field of ECCD.
3. **Definitions of membership and responsibilities for the Task Force and the Core Team have** to be reviewed. It would be very important to create a system by which at the Local level we have a Core Team integrated by multisectoral representatives.
4. In order to expand vision and contribute to a sound focus on a "whole child" approach, and bearing in mind the characteristics of the country in transition it is urgently required a **Communication Specialist** within the UNICEF team
5. A **national Consultation about ECCD** is recommended in order to have inputs from the situations of all the country and also contribute to a very democratic approach towards children's' rights and creating a basis for policy in the ECCD area.
6. The first step for the Communication strategy is to have a clear **analysis of the different actors**, those currently involved and others with potential participation in the ECCD scenario. It is recommended that Task Force, Core team and Media group get together to establish the profile of each participant, in order to come to consensus about their roles and responsibilities and the needs of information. This will give solid basis for the advocacy and mobilisation activities.
7. **Advocacy at all levels** is needed to create a space for the Azeri children, this is to include the perspective of children's rights, the prevention of disabilities, the reinforcement of gender equality, the redimension of the family roles, the

role of men in the lives of children, and the partnerships that at all levels of society has to be created for the development of children.

8. It is recommended Advocacy and Social Mobilisation as main strategies to **empower those who are interacting with and care for young children**, including decision makers, families, teachers, health professionals, siblings and parents with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to enhance the development of children from birth through the first six years of life, in order to enhance child development. The ECCD Programme requires a multi-sectoral, multi-staged, multi-channelled alternative approach. Four main areas are basic for this advocacy effort
  - ✓ Community-based family/.parent education activities.
  - ✓ Strengthening existing formal preschools.
  - ✓ Enhancing child development through mass media efforts.
  - ✓ Integrating child development issues into existing health and nutrition services.
9. It is important that the MOE realises that the **current formal pre-school service has to be improved**, and at the same time **is not the only alternative** that parents should have for the development of their children. It is essential to develop a programme that will be geared towards adults to improve their interaction with children and have some community centres in which through flexible timetables and curriculum for children this can be achieved.
10. A Community-Based Family/Parent Education Programme is recommended as a long-term approach, the objective will be to work with existing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other community groups in the design, implementation and evaluation of a parenting education programme. Groups of parents and other caregivers, trained community facilitators will discuss issues related to the developmental needs of young children from birth through the first six years of life, and organise non-formal programmes.
11. **ECCD on the formal setting of Pre-school Education**, the objective will be to strengthen existing pre-school education facilities and programmes. A package of training activities and workshops are currently designed and being pilot. Preschool education teachers will be exposed to different approaches to

early child education. In addition these activities will improve the ability of pre-school educators to work with and understand the needs of families and parents of young children.

12. **Mass Media Activities** is recommended for population education towards ECCD issues. The objective will be to work with representatives from the mass media to develop a series of television, radio and print materials on themes related to child development and family, parent education. These programmes will be targeted to audiences of parents and other caregivers.

13. **Promoting Integration of Child Development with Health and Nutrition.** Appreciating the actions and based on the success of survival efforts, the main objective will be to increase the knowledge, attitudes and skills of paediatricians, nurses and other health care providers regarding the developmental needs of young children.

Understanding the relationship between psychosocial, nutrition and health needs of the young child will result in the delivery of a comprehensive approach to child health. Thus, young children as well as parents will benefit from the activities. Currently there are excellent possibilities to implement this area with the programmes for newborn babies, with promotion of breastfeeding, and IMCI.

14. The success of the proposed Strategy is dependent upon the close **collaboration of each of the four approaches.** No one approach is sufficient. The skills, expertise and commitment of educators, community workers, media, and health professionals must work together with families and parents to enable the children to reach their full potential. To promote and facilitate this collaboration, between each of these initiatives it is recommended that the Core team has defined responsibilities and expertise and be integrated by representatives from each of the four lines established.

15. It is recommended that **Local Government be actively involved** for the success of the Community-Based Parent/Family Education approach, and collaborate with NGOs and other existing community services, to provide parents and families with information and skills about the importance of the early child development period (birth - 6 years). Through their participation, parents and families will gain knowledge and skills enabling them to enhance

their child's cognitive, emotional, and social development as well as to foster their learning skills.

16. **The area of research as a basic foundation** for getting to know the different key participants of the programmes is basic. Methodologies use can vary according to scope and objectives, experience and resources. This studies will provided information about knowledge, attitudes and practices of decision-makers, parents, teachers and related sector workers. This is urgent priority
17. A very important study is recommended about **the situation of the Pre-school personnel**. As it was proposed in the workshop for the Core Team, it is necessary to have an update information and understanding of their situation, their strengths, their training, their expectations and others. This study will be basis for proposals in the area of training, for defining new profiles and maximise de use of the human resources in this area. Special emphasis on the role of the Methodologist and reinforcement of them as a national team of trainers.
18. **Knowing and Appreciating the parents** is the first step in the development of the work with parents and communities. The identification of existing patterns and practices, problems and concerns regarding early child development have to be very well documented and analysed. It is therefore strongly recommended to carry out **research,surveys, focus groups,KAP and others** in order to make sure we know the population with whom we are working rather than building up recommendations and recipes from a theoretical perspective only.
19. The **knowledge gained from the research about patterns of rearing** will be used to guide the development of the content of the parent education curriculum and training. A joint working group, in this case the Core team, consisting of members of NGOs, community representatives and technical experts in the field of early child development, will work collaboratively to **design and pre-test the programme content**.
20. Bearing in mind the situation of Azerbaijan as a country in transition and their past experience of a very patriarchal, centralised system, it is strongly recommended to include **institutional transformation and capacity**

**building as key strategies.** Therefore it is a priority to include in all training's a basic structure of strategic planning, decision-making tools, time management, planning for success, leadership and management, communication tools, analytical thinking and learning and facilitation methodologies. It has been observed a tendency to think only on a micro situation i.e called pre-schools or kindergarten and it is necessary to share a vision for more children who are deprived of their right to have the best elements for their overall development.

21. It is recommended that the **training approach will include elements of planning and management, area communications, self-development and updated knowledge about child development and family interactions.** This in view of a proposal that the early childhood worker can be provided with tools that will make her or his work more complete including other actors within the ECCD scenario. The current active learning methodologies should be reinforced and the identification of future trainers started in order to create a long run vision of a district trainer team.
22. The Local Heads of Education, Methodologists and Principles are crucial figures within the MOE for dissemination and support of ECCD approaches. It is strongly recommended that they received specific **training for planning and advocacy of ECCD.** It is important to analyse with them the situation of ECCD and look for local ideas in order to expand the services and outreach information about the development of small children.
23. The strong **linkage pre-school and primary education** should be assured. The **primary school teachers** should be involved in some **training with ECCD personnel**; the main task here will be to communicate the effects of transitioning from pre-school to primary school when both systems seem to have a different focus in their methodologies. In the case of Azerbaijan it is an asset that there are some efforts in using active learning methodologies, and therefore the interaction between the two systems can be smooth.
24. **Capacity building** is the central strategy. This is recommended for a long-term perspective, making use of all communication and learning tools. The most immediate audience is the MOE and the MOH since they are the closer responsible parties for the period of age from 0 to 6. However, the interaction

between these two ministries needs to be advocated as part of the communication strategy. There are many interlinked actions, for instance activities from ages 0 to 3, that currently are very limited can be improved. A collective **training for health personnel** and other community workers and service providers for this age group could improve the services.

25. The content of **materials and methods** developed to accomplish the objectives of each suggested approach, should recognise, and **build upon the values and strengths of parents, teachers and other community workers** in their positive rearing practices combined with new information that are important to them. This is strongly recommended, as a strategic planning's that information presented is relevant to the **needs of the families and other caregivers**.

26. It is necessary to identify the most appropriate methods to be used in working in the area of family and parental education, as well as community mobilisation. Various formats could be explored for transferring information including manuals, posters, videos, cartoons, flash cards, and storybooks. The methodology for working with parents and families needs to be developed such as small groups, homes visiting and linkages to existing programmes. This is an area that requires further technical support.

27. It is crucial to set up a **Validation system** for the current pilot proposal of the "new ECCD model" and their draft manuals. It is strongly recommended that a sound and clear theoretical framework, with field knowledge that relates to feasibility for implementation and with affordable cost guide this effort. It is recommended that draft materials be analysed, this is the right time, since these are in the first stages of the process of design and is most appropriate to make adjustments.

28. It is recommended to **monitor the process of the pilot programme**, efforts have to include the evaluation of the ability of ECCD approach to improve the parents' knowledge and beliefs, as well as increase their parenting and child rearing skills. It is expected that children will also benefit from their parents' participation in the programmes. Thus, changes in the child's development will also be evaluated.

29. Based on the results of the evaluation combined with the acceptance of the programme at the community level, issues of programme expansion have to be discussed. Factors relevant to **expansion and sustainability include**, for example, financing, training facilities, availability of personnel, materials development, monitoring and supervision. Of critical importance will be how to maintain quality as the programme seeks to go to scale and reach bigger numbers of families in need of the services
30. It is recommended to have the **cost analysis information** to document the current expense distribution and cost of the current programmes as well as means of comparisons for the alternative approaches. It is also suggested that contacts with Ministry of Finance and Local Power Authorities be activated within the advocacy programme in order to continue networking efforts for the future work for small children. The issue of health standards and regulations remains as an urgent pending review.