Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development

A joint UNICEF and the University of the South Pacific Workshop

15 – 17 June, 2004
Suva, Fiji
Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development

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Acknowledgements

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## Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>African Caribbean and Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
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<td>EAPRO</td>
<td>East Asia and Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>EBF</td>
<td>Expressed Breast Milk</td>
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<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Funding</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>EAPRO</td>
<td>East Asia and Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>FBEAB</td>
<td>Forum Basic Education Action Plan</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDD</td>
<td>Iodine Deficiency Disorder</td>
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<td>IEC</td>
<td>Integrated Early Childhood Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOE</td>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBW</td>
<td>Low Birth Weight</td>
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<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>MoH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>NZAID</td>
<td>New Zealand Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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Little is currently known in the Pacific about present practices and services for Early Childhood Development (ECD) particularly for children aged 0-3 years. Traditionally Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific has focused on children of preschool age to prepare them for entry into the formal education system. Little attention has been paid to the particular needs of children under the age of three. It is now known that the first three years of life is the most critical period for brain development affecting progress in all aspects of a child’s development – in the development of cognitive, emotional, language, educational and social skills.

To meet this gap in awareness and service provision in ECD, a Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development was held on 15-17th June 2004; jointly organised by UNICEF Pacific and the University of the South Pacific. This Conference brought together over 30 key stakeholders from 14 Pacific Island Countries to raise the level of awareness of ECD, to take stock of current ECD programs, for the first time in the region and to assist countries develop 12 month National Action Plans addressing country specific ECD needs. Participants of this Conference included ECE teachers and carers, educationalists, representatives from Ministries of Health and Education, AusAID, NZAID, JICA, UN Agencies and other NGOs.

The Conference successfully raised the level of consciousness of all participants to the urgent need to attend to this often forgotten period of a child’s development. Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF Pacific Representative in her opening address noted that half of UNICEF’s budget was allocated to supporting this critical period in a young child’s life. UNICEF’s focus is to integrate all aspects of a child’s development rather than treating one problem in isolation – progress in one area of development contributes to progress in other areas.

Research presented at this Conference by Dr Cliff Meyers, UNICEF’s Regional Advisor on Education, highlighted the changes in present thinking about early development and in particular the causal relationship between early stimulation in the crucial 0-3 years age group and brain development or “wiring”. Cliff Meyers argued that greater public investment in prenatal, perinatal and infant care makes good economic sense, reducing the burden on health and social services in later years. Participants reflected that the challenge ahead was to translate this new knowledge into information that can be easily understood at all levels. Additional research presented by Dr T. Kyaw-Myint, Programme Officer UNICEF Pacific provided evidence that nutrition (exclusive breastfeeding, maternal nutrition during pregnancy, Vitamin A and Iodine supplementation) and nurturing during the first three years of life were crucial for lifelong health and well-being.

Participants were presented with the preliminary findings of qualitative research undertaken by the University of the South Pacific on Traditional Childcare Practices in four Pacific Island Countries. Practices explored included...
child rearing and socialization, feeding and weaning practices and traditional plants and medicines. It was noted that much of this knowledge remains undocumented and more needs to be known about those traditional practices that promote child health and development.

Each Pacific Island Country presented its own ECD Report to the plenary. Reports highlighted the current situation of ECD in respective countries noting strengths and gaps in public and political awareness about the value of ECD and service provision for children under the age of 8. Reports reflected partnerships with government, NGO, church and communities in developing ECD services. Only two countries noted policy guidelines and frameworks for ECD. The most significant gap for ECD noted in all reports was funding, isolation and limited resources.

Participants were briefed on the situation of young children and families in Asia and a selection of successful ECD projects in the East Asia and Pacific region by Junko Miyahara, Assistant Project Officer, ECD, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. Additional presentations included; Save the Children Fiji (Mobile Kindy), A’oga Fa’a Samoa (Samoan language immersion centre) in Auckland, New Zealand, Republic of Marshal Islands (Headstart Project), Fiji Pacific Children’s Program and the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) based in Fiji.

Through a series of group work activities that identified ECD priorities and barriers, capacity building plans (government, donors, University, NGO, church and communities), participants at the end of the three day workshop had developed country-specific activity-based action plans for their countries over the next 12 months. 1-2 key activities were prioritized as a significant step towards putting ECD firmly on the political agenda. These action plans are presented in the Appendix section.

At the end of the three day Workshop, UNICEF Pacific and EAPRO pledged their commitment to supporting the development of policy guidelines, technical support and information sharing on ECD. The University of the South Pacific is well placed to be a key regional player in ECD training, research and documentation of traditional childcare practices in the Pacific. Participants were in agreement that the challenge ahead was to convince policy and decision makers throughout the Pacific that investing in ECD makes sound economic sense and to identify existing services that can be used as entry points for ECD.
The importance of Early Childhood Development particularly during 0-3 years of age is now recognised. Studies show that 0-3 years are the most critical for rapid brain development where children need to be nurtured in a caring, safe and stimulating environment to ensure a good start in life. Early Childhood covers the prenatal stage up to 8 years of age. Early Childhood Development refers to developments in a child’s physical, mental, social and emotional state.

In the Pacific most ECD programmes focus on the 3-5 years (pre school years) and the 6-8 years (early primary school years), with little attention on the first stage of 0 – 3 years. While preschool programmes are popular and respected for the services they provide, the focus on 0 – 3 year olds is also crucial for development because it is when the foundation is laid for future physical and cognitive growth. Infants and young children need to be nurtured in a caring environment, to be physically healthy, mentally alert, socially stimulated and intellectually able to learn and develop to their full potential.

Traditional ECD programmes/projects focus on preschool children. However, the period before birth is also vital which makes maternal health also an ECD concern. Likewise, interventions in education are important in ECD programming since primary school age children fall under the ECD category.
ECD Issues

Changes in thinking about early development have resulted from recent brain research. Previously, it was thought that how a brain develops depends on the genes we are born with and what we experience and that a secure relationship with a primary caregiver creates a favourable context for early development and learning.

However, it is now known that how a brain develops depends on a complex interplay between the genes you are born with and the experiences you have and that early interactions do not just create a context; they directly affect the way a brain is “wired”.

Brain research tells us that:

- Basic health, nutrition and safety are important for young children’s development
- Caregivers’ play with children helps children to feel confident, secure and experience positive relationships later in life
- A child’s active safe exploration of the world around him/her encourages curiosity, problem solving and intelligence
- Talking with the child is essential for good language development

In view of this new understanding of how children’s brains develop, a high priority needs to be placed on interventions and services designed to reach children, and their caregivers from before birth through the first three years of life. Interventions and services must address the cognitive, social and emotional development of the child. Maximising the use of resources through multi-dimensional programmes that combine health, nutrition and attention to overall children’s development is recommended.

The global trend now is to mobilise support for interventions that reduce child morbidity (illnesses) and mortality (deaths), promotion of overall child development, as well as attempts to achieve better coordination and integration of interventions to improve child survival, growth and development. This approach addresses the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development needs of children in the early years of life, promoting a holistic approach to early childcare.
The basic needs of the young child during the first three years of life include:

- Protection from physical danger
- Adequate nutrition and health care
- Appropriate immunization
- An adult with whom to form an attachment
- An adult who can understand and respond to their signals
- Things to look at, touch, hear, smell and taste
- Opportunities to explore their world
- Appropriate language stimulation
- Support in acquiring new motor, language and thinking skills
- Opportunities to develop some independence
- Help in learning how to control their own behaviour
- Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves
- Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects

Involving both professionals and paraprofessionals, community care centres can play a major role in helping families provide optimal child care for their children.
Objectives

- To bring together people in the Pacific to raise awareness of the critical importance of the early childhood years, the first 8 years of life with emphasis on the care of children 0-3 years of age, the most critical period of brain development which affects progress in forming cognitive, language, social, motor and emotional skills.

- To share information on ECD and best practices, particularly in supporting the young child’s self-esteem and ability to learn.

- To highlight the importance of children’s health and nutritional status in providing them with increased energy and capacity for learning, so that they will fully benefit from learning opportunities.

- Updates on ECD trends with a focus on a holistic approach to the child’s physical and social development in the context of the life span cycle and based on human rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- To make recommendations for ECD action plans.

Expected Outcomes

- Raised awareness of the critical importance of the first 8 years of life with a focus on 0-3 years – the most critical period for brain development which affects progress in forming cognitive, language, social, motor and emotional skills

- Shared information on ECD best practices, particularly in supporting the young child’s self-esteem and ability to learn

- Enhanced understanding of the importance of the health and nutritional status of children in providing children with increased energy and capacity for learning, so that they will fully benefit from learning opportunities

- Updates on ECD trends with a focus on holistic approach to the child’s physical and social development in the context of the lifecycle and based on human rights

- Recommended national ECD plans of action
Research has shown that for every US$1 invested on early childhood programmes, countries enjoy cost savings of US$7 because thriving children use fewer remedial services and contribute more to their countries. Because it is so cost-effective, more than half UNICEF’s programme budget is devoted to this critical period in a child’s development yet tragically, the early childhood years tend to receive the least attention and the lowest involvement from governments.

Young children who receive good early care are less likely to die, get sick or fail their education. They will be able to support themselves and their families, push their societies forward and help to break cycles of illness, deprivation and discrimination. Investing in early childhood plays a direct role in sustainable poverty reduction.

Progress in one area of the child’s development contributes to progress in others. Services for children therefore need to be mutually reinforcing. Tackling deficiencies in iron and iodine will improve not just physical health but long-term brain development. The children of a healthy, educated, secure mother will thrive rather than simply survive. Enhancing the role of fathers pays equal dividends.

We need to focus most intensely on the under-threes, looking for ways to strengthen families’ ability to care for their children, increasing their access to good quality basic services, promoting gender equality and reinforcing national policies. It also requires us to look at the health of women, because a young child’s future is shaped by its mother’s well being before and during pregnancy.

Integrating all aspects of child development, rather than treating problems in isolation, reduces sickness and mortality rates and improves overall development. In the longer term, children enjoy better mental, social and emotional skills, greater self-esteem and better education, which prepares them to take a fruitful role in society and enhances a nation’s human capacity. The progress of nations is the progress of their people. That progress begins with our youngest children.
Dr Esther Williams, Acting Pro Vice Chancellor,
University of the South Pacific

“Why can’t more and effective progress be made in this area of early childhood development? I say we are running out of time and something must be done urgently for ECD”

Despite great progress in the last 10-20 years there is still much to be done in all our countries. Dr Williams shares with the participants her reflections of early childhood development in the region. Population growth in the 0-8 year age group is the highest, high school push-outs, unemployment, poverty, number of young children not attending pre-school characterise many countries. Education ministries have a non-urgent approach to pre-school choosing to invest in primary and other important areas. Level of awareness of the importance of ECD must increase at all levels.

Role of the Parent
Dr Williams recounts her own happy childhood experiences. She attended school with her mother, a primary teacher, from a very early age, her father shared traditional Fijian legends with her as a child, and she played on the streets with the boys. With her own children, Dr Williams admitted that she had little success with getting her children into formal pre-school, who chose to spend time with family instead. Despite a poor background, Dr Williams said that her childhood was happy and loving.

Role of the Community
What has changed in our communities? Demands on parents have increased, social and cultural obligations put pressures on parents today. Parents are asked to fund a range of church and social projects leaving little for their children. Social habits have changed. Men still believe that children’s education is the responsibility of women. Some communities however have established pre-schools. Dr Williams questions the regulations that exist to “establish” a pre-school in Fiji – “can’t teaching under a tree or in a person’s house or community hall be sufficient?”

Role of Teachers
Teachers together with parents are influential in developing a child’s cognitive, motor and mental skills. Few pre-school teachers are trained in the region. Teachers must be trained, there must be a formal salary scale and ECD must be recognised as a profession.

Role of Stakeholders
ECD involves all stakeholders – ministries, private sector, NGO, private individuals. Schools of Nine need support and resources. USP has had an Early Childhood programme for some years through its University Extension Centres. Under the European Union PRIDE Basic Education Project, Pacific Island Countries will be assisted in developing their early childhood development policies and training. Some governments provide scholarships for ECE teachers

Role of Governments
Many children do not attend pre-school, many schools do not have pre-school as a part of their education systems. This was a recommendation that was made as part of the Fiji Education Commission 2000. Early Childhood Education is not only for those who can afford it. It must be accessible to all children.
Governments need to be told a thing or two about early childhood.

Action areas could include:

- Encourage schools to include ECD classes as part of the whole school to link with the primary school. I know some schools in Fiji have done this and it is popular and working well.

- All stakeholders to cooperate and develop a strategic plan for developments in this area.
  Look at the current procedures for approval of ECD centres and streamline them, removing barriers.

- Assist those schools that currently exist with teaching and other resources.

- Look at new technologies to help develop ECD and children’s abilities.

- Look at new ways of getting ECD to all children – distance education would be one suggestion via radio, wireless technology or multimedia.

- Put together a plan for the training of teachers and to improve their status in their overall scheme of things.

- Monitor existing national ECD centres and make sure they are proactive and active, with strategic plans and annual work plans.

- Develop curriculum and ECD policies.

- And finally, get the ministries to accept that Schools of Nine and other operating ECD centres be part of the formal education system after evaluating and getting them up to a required standard.
The Global Perspective

Dr Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor on Education, UNICEF EAPRO

"ECD places families as the primary actors in child survival and development and promotes convergence, together with better coordination of health, nutrition, education and psychosocial interventions."

There are six reasons for promoting Early Childhood Development:

- Physical Development
- Mental Development
- Social Development
- Economic Development
- Social Mobilisation
- Most importantly, these 5 reasons are integrated and mutually reinforcing

Growth faltering (stunting / wasting) begins very early in life placing the child at great risk of death, disability and learning delays. Respiratory infections, intestinal parasites, diarrhoea and illnesses can all interfere with growth even if food intake is good. Growth and development are affected by quality of all-round ‘caring practices’ or ‘nurturing’: good sanitation, safe water, hygiene, food, health, stimulation, and affection. Children born to small, young, underweight mothers are at greater risk of being low-birth-weight babies. Special care for these mothers however, can ‘break the intergenerational cycle’ of compromised growth and development.

Eighty percent of brain growth occurs in the first three years of life - about half of that before birth. Early stimulation programmes can increase IQ by up to 10 IQ points, and reduce school drop-out and repetition rates. Malnutrition and anemia reduce learning ability; this period is when children fail to develop their full learning potential.

"20 in 100 children in East Asia has a learning deficiency or developmental delay as a result of malnutrition in their early years"
The number and connectivity (‘wiring’) of brain cells suggests that all-round care and stimulation are most critical during the very early years of life. There are ‘critical periods’ of learning (e.g. vision, motor, emotion, language, attachment) and the quality of early experiences affect neurological development. Impediments to adequate health, care, nutrition, affection and stimulation are most serious prenatally and in infancy, reflecting the ‘critical periods’.

A secure, safe, nurturing environment encourages a child to play, explore, solve problems, talk, listen, develop skills and learn to trust, all building a strong psychosocial and biological basis for growing up as a healthy, curious, caring child.

Children exposed to fear, trauma or neglect in infancy react with elevated levels of stress hormones that inhibit brain development in specific regions. Similar stressful situations trigger stress reactions in adolescents and adults who were traumatised in childhood. The violent adolescent was very likely to be a victim of trauma, abuse or neglect in infancy and early childhood. Children in anti-social and traumatic homes show less curiosity, avoid eye contact and have less stimulation than children in less stressful homes. Ensuring that young children are well cared for, with appropriate stimulation in a safe and secure environment is the best antidote for anti-social behaviour later in life.

Children who enrol in pre-school and organised early learning groups perform far better in school – with lower repetition and drop out rates. Early childhood interventions play a major role in poverty alleviation. Research encourages renewed focus and greater public investment in prenatal, perinatal and infant care. The most important opportunities to influence brain development are during the prenatal and infancy periods of life, when public spending on health, education and welfare for infants and expectant mothers is very low. With increasing age, health and welfare spending tends to increase (Mustard, 1997).

**Investment in maternal and child nutrition - 9 months to 3 years makes good economic sense.**
Countries were required to prepare their own country reports on the current situation of ECD. Presentations reflected a number of common features. Enthusiasm for and commitment of those providing ECE and ECD services were evident throughout. The majority of the reports focused on ECE service provision or preschool preparation for the 4-5 year age group. Few countries specifically reported on ECD activities for the 0-3 year age group. Reference was made to capacity building in the region provided through ECCE certificate courses at the University of the South Pacific and the upgrading of training provided by the Lautoka Teacher Training College.

Reports reflected some good examples of collaboration between government, NGO, churches and communities in developing ECE services. There were few reports of collaboration between Ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare, however. Some reports indicated that service provision was better in urban centres, while others reported better in the rural areas. Some reports noted difficulties in providing in-service follow up training and professional development for ECE teachers. Few countries reported policy guidelines and frameworks for ECE apart from PNG and Cook Islands.

All reports identified funding, isolation, limited resources as significant challenges to ECD. There was limited political commitment and awareness of the value of ECD and all noted funding constraints apart from the Solomon Islands where the concern is what will happen in terms of ECE when the donors leave. Reports asked for further training and development of human resources. Reports noted the need for widespread community empowerment and awareness raising. Kiribati recommended parenting programmes for parents who bring their children to playgroup centres. Niue suggested that a Pacific definition and "standard" for ECCE be developed for the Pacific.
Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

**Early Childhood Education:**

- All pre-schools, except Black Rock, are attached to a primary school and each one feeds into that school. Black Rock feeds into Avatea School (English speaking).
- Three categories of pre-schools exist: government, church, and private.
- Medium of instruction: Cook Islands Maori, English, Bilingual
- Primary teachers trained, no tertiary qualifications. Some centres run by teacher aide and mother helpers.

**Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)**

- **Curriculum:** review of current status of ECE to begin in July 2004 with appointment of ECE curriculum developer. The curriculum will be aligned to the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework.
- **Teacher Education:** Current preschool teachers are primary trained. Potential for raising standard of training and qualifications through links with other institutions. MoU signed with NZ Open Poly-tech, and negotiations underway with Auckland College of Education. Support provided by ECE adviser from the Curriculum Advisory Unit. New initiative 87 teachers enrolled in BEd programme (USP).
- **Budget:** Included in the primary school operating budget. Parents often involved in fund raising activities to meet some of the costs for resources (better management of funds generated from these activities is essential).
- **Facilities/resources:** classroom is often another room in the primary school. Resources determined by funds available. Local resources are under utilized.
- **Community Education:** limited, need to use media to promote ECE awareness.
- **Networking links:** formalize links with Ministry of Health through MoU - two ministries to work together in raising community awareness of importance of ECE.

**Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:**

- Finance – rethinking required in terms of allocating of funds
- Teacher education
- Facilities and Resources
- Geographic spread – economics of some preschools. Number of students range from 3-69
- People’s perception and mindsets
- Migration

**Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:**

- Policy guidelines – to guide the development of programmes
- Training opportunities for existing teachers: by distance, in-service training
- Community ECE awareness programmes
- Appropriated budget for ECE development: teacher training, facilities, resources, community programmes
Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- Children attending Kindergartens/Preschools from ages 3 years – 5 and a half years
- Child care day centres
- Playgroups
- Mobile playgroup currently being piloted

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- An ECE Policy to streamline administrative and professional practices
- A national ECE curriculum guideline
- Capacity building – training of people in the field, teachers, managements and communities
- Ensure district staffing for ECE at district level
- Resources – equipping and resourcing ECE communities

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Lack of ECE human resources
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of ECE policy

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Funds
- Human resources
- Training
- Community awareness programmes
Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- Kiribati National Health Services – Early Childhood Heath Care involves referral cases from 79 Health Centres
- Early Childhood Education is run by church groups, private teachers, and those trained by the Kiribati Teachers Training Program. Most centres on Tarawa (main urban centre) are run in teacher’s homes. Church pre-school groups are conducted in “mwaneaba” or traditional church meeting halls. Outer island centres operate under the primary schools – the island is fully responsible for paying teacher’s salaries, maintaining the classrooms.
- No formal training in ECCE currently provided by the Kiribati Teachers College. Bahai Church offers a one-year Certificate in Early Childhood 0-6 years.
- Kiribati Early Childhood Association (KECEA) established by ECE teachers. Meets monthly.
- In May of 2004 Early Childhood Workshop conducted at the Kiribati Teachers College, funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Members affiliated to other NGOs.
- ECE supported by AMAK a NGO women’s network, Foundation of the People’s of the South Pacific (FSP), Kiribati Drama Group, and UNICEF.
- Mothers, grandmothers, few grandfathers and fathers accompany children to EC centres. Parent’s main role is to fundraise. More could be done with parents to raise awareness of the importance of ECD while they are at the centre.

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- ECCE Curriculum Guidelines produced 2000. Training has been provided in the use of these Guidelines by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.
- Need to translate these guidelines into I-Kiribati.
- Need to elicit views from teachers and communities on these Guidelines.

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Need for ECE training to again be offered at the Teachers College; there is need for human and material resources.
- Parents value trained teachers teaching at the centres, unqualified helpers or teaches are not well accepted.
- ECE need their own classroom space to operate – cannot flourish when run in church meeting halls.
- Teachers running ECE classes from their homes often do not have outdoor areas to play. Availability of space and land is an issue.
- Ministry of Education Youth and Sports wants to initiate Pre Primary classes for 5-6 year olds in the Primary schools. Needs further research.

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- To re-start training for ECE teachers
- Support EC Resource Centre
- Support denominational ECE to build their own classrooms
- Provide for ECE officials from Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to observe programs for pre-primary classes in countries where this has been practiced.
Nauru

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- 4 Infant Schools, government support. 1 semi-government.
- Children of 3-6 years attend. 6 is the compulsory age for children to attend school.
- Have to report to Ministry of Education on monthly basis
- ECE Training only through U.S.P. Centre in ECE and DIP.ECE.

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- Advisory services – health/education, on women’s health and children’s development.
- Better information can be provided on infant deaths/causes.
- Need for childcare centres growing due to increasing numbers of working mothers.
- In-service training for updating staff skills and programmes.
- Resources
- Training to increase expertise in the area of ECE and other areas in Education Department.

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Resources
- Maintainance of buildings, new centres
- Growing population, demands are higher
- Knowledge to make use of environmental materials, to be able to improvise on resources
- Funds

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Funding
- Parental and community awareness on the importance for ECE development
- Supporting the family will in turn benefit the child
Niue

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD):

- Establishing a crèche or daycare centre recently approved by Government. Still in the early stages of planning and negotiations.
- Five playgroups established in the village organized by voluntary, interested parents/grandparents/retired teachers and government employees for children of varying ages from <3 months to 3 years old.
- Each centre opens one day/week (except for one opening twice a week) for a maximum of two hours.
- Each centre ensures they open on a different day to avoid clashes and to allow the preschooler and the mum to attend other centers.
- A non-governmental organization. Families donate a small amount to purchase basic materials for example toilet paper, papers, pens etc.
- ECD village centers are located in the old village school buildings or the village community halls.
- Each of the five ECD centres, visit the Niue Early Childhood Centre throughout the year. Return visits are made to their centers by ECE.

Current practices in the country on Early Childhood Education:

- ECE Centre situated adjacent to the National Niue Primary School and sharing all facilities.
- Amalgamated with the Niue National Primary School under the leadership and management of the principal.
- ECE coordinator is part of the Extended Management Team, with a Teacher-in-charge (TIC) being responsible for the daily operation of the center. The TIC is rotational ensuring capacity building in management and supervision.
- The center is Government funded through attachment to primary administration.
- All children from 3+ years to 5 years (school entry) enrol at the centre at the beginning of each new term for four terms in a year.
- All children are transported to and from on a school bus. Others by parents and either/or walk or cycle.
- School opens for 5 days per week form 9 am to 1.45 pm.
- ECE has the same school year as the primary school.
- There are 6 teachers to 32+ children. A ratio of 1 adult per 5 or 6 children.
- Teachers start at 8:00 am (1 hour early) and finishes at 3pm (1 hour after work) to plan and prepare activities, set up the rooms or work on their University South Pacific Qualifications.
- Teachers are paid a salary reflecting their qualification, experience and designation.
- Implementing NZ Early Childhood Curriculum Te Whariki and contextualising to suit the Niue situation.
- Policies and Operational Guidelines are implemented, agreed to and documented.
- Teachers continue on-going pre-service and in-service training and professional development with and sometimes without primary.
- Students’ development and learning is monitored and recorded using learning stories. These are documented in ‘Individual Profiles’ which are updated termly. Used for parent/teacher conferencing and tracking child’s progress.
- Transition Systems are in place from Home to Centre or from centre to primary.
- Student Health are monitored by Health Department. And an allowance per capita head is paid out to the school committee by the Department of Commuity Affairs.
**Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)**

- Increasing public awareness of the importance of ECD has resulted in the growing numbers of centers in the village, increase paternal or both parents at the meetings and interested parents enrolling in the pre-school certificated course at USP.
- Government’s increasing awareness and is providing support in funds, technical assistance and approval of ECE/ECD initiatives.
- ECE centre is used as a pilot school for ECD visits and professional developments.
- Pre-transition programs provided to ease moving from one level of schooling to the next is in place, agreed to, monitored and documented.
- One week orientation program for all students moving from one level to another i.e ECE - primary or Home to ECE to assist with transition and settling.
- ‘One-day information on sharing’ with parents before any transition takes place promotes understanding and increase awareness. Again increasing number of paternal and maternal attending these sessions.
- Students developmental and learning profiles include formative assessments through learning stories; samples of work across the curriculum, checklist on physical/social/emotional/cognitive, literacy and numeracy development.
- All ECE teachers are pursuing their diploma through USP and mentored by principal.
- ECE participates in school wide activities such as Athletic Sports, weekly school assemblies, National and International days and events, End of Year Prize Giving etc.
- ECE staff attends all meetings and professional developments with primary staff ensuring linking and promoting seamless education.

**Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:**

- Natural disasters
- Time factor
- Lack of knowledge on the importance of ECD and ECE stages.
- Lack of any one system to coordinate and establish Early Childhood Development in Niue concerned solely with the welfare of all young children of Niue form birth to 3+ years (ECE entry)
- Making hasty and un-informed decisions.

**Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:**

- Require a list of professional development providers for ECD or ECE, so that we could request for technical assistance, capacity building and or funding.
- Require resources or learning materials to support curriculum development and implementation, for young children, ‘professional support materials’ for early childhood teachers/managers, and for information for parents and communities.
- Need CD or report on the ECD workshop held in Fiji 2004
Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- Head Start Policy
- Goal 2000 Education Master Plan
- Special Education Early Childhood Program for Children with Special Needs.

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- Formulation of a National Framework for Early Childhood Development
- Development of Educational Materials for Early Childhood Programs and Families.

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Technical Experts in the area of Early Childhood Development.

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Funding of Technical Expert
Papua New Guinea

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- **Traditional ECD Practices** - Pregnancies were spaced and family size limited. Woman rarely became pregnant within three years of a live birth. Family size rarely exceeded four live children. Breastfeeding until the child is 3 years old. In some places, complementary feeding is introduced too early or too late. Quality of infant food was generally poor and frequently not given to the child. Mother’s protein intake restricted in some societies. Fathers’ not allowed to change diapers and wash nappies. Fathers’ not allowed to carry new born babies until the child is 4-6 months old. Mother’s parents responsible for a mother and child after birth. Not husband’s parents. Siblings and Grandparents assist in the care & development of the young child. Extended family and community assist in caring for the child. A child’s place was always at the mother’s side.

- **Contemporary ECD Practices** - Parents, Siblings & Grandparents are responsible for the child’s care and development. Extended family & community care is minimal. Untrained Baby Sitters are paid by working mothers to care for the child. Breastfeeding is almost 100%. Complimentary Feeding is still a problem. Infant feeding with complimentary foods is still inconsistent and lacking in variety. Children are placed in Child Care Centers (ages ranging from 2 – 5 years). Family Planning is still a big problem. Results are unnecessary deaths and poor health among mothers, their already born children & the child in the womb.

- **Current Situation** - Policies in place: Education Policy; Health Policy; Nutrition Policy; Health Promotion Policy; Child Welfare Act; Administered by Department of Community Development. PNG is in the process of developing an Early Child Care and Development Policy. The Government through the Department of Community Development is in the driving seat of this policy initiative. An ECD Workshop was recently conducted for stakeholders. Regional Workshops have also been planned for the 4 regions of the country. Awareness planned for all sectors of the community. Emphasis is being placed on promoting Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development. An Integrated Approach within a Rights Perspective is the way to go.

- **The Way Forward** - Parents, communities and government will be empowered to understand the importance of a child’s development, especially from 0 – 3 years. Interventions will be geared towards helping the community understand the importance of ECD. The ECCD Policy is the framework for PNG to be able to implement the best childcare practices. It shall look at the child from a holistic and integrated perspective with a view to giving the child a best early start. UNICEF will support the Go PNG and all stakeholders in these important processes.
Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- One year training for ECE teachers (certificate)
- In-service training/workshops for current working staff
- Preschools
- Diploma and certificate in USP Alafua

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- To make pamphlets/leaflets and posters for parents and community to understand;
- The importance of child development
- The importance of play
- The importance of reading to children
- How to use natural materials and junk for child’s play
- Healthy food for a healthy mind and body
- To have a Strategic Plan

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Not enough information about the importance of early childhood development
- Not enough resource people in Early Childhood field – tutors /lecturers
- Staff issues
- Teacher qualifications
- Training options for staff
- Materials and resources
- Suitable resources/materials for children and staff to use
- The availability of resources/materials
- The skills to make toys
- Lack of funds

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Funds, Resource people
- Materials/resources
- Support from Government, Community
Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- CRC reviewed and tabled in Parliament
- Field Based Training Package administered by 11 Provincial ECE Coordinators seconded by the Ministry of Education
- Field based ECE and Care targeted kindy population increased enrolment – 12,872 (2003)
- Certificate in Teaching (ECE), a two-year programme, offered at the School of Education (SICHE). Pre-service Training (SICHE) in ECE developed in 1997. Eighty-four qualified teachers have completed the pre-service training to date and are now on the Teaching Service Payroll.
- Field Based Training kindies have improved in quality
- Local toys and tools encouraged
- Community ECEC awareness programmes
- Six model kindies established
- ECE qualified teachers now being paid by government
- Survey of disabilities will be conducted

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Disruption by the ethnic conflict has caused delay in providing pre-service training for ECE teachers
- High demand for qualified ECE teachers in community-based kindergartens but decreased number of ECE enrolments in the pre-service training
- Lack of qualified ECE personnel to take up key positions in the ECE establishment
- Very little funding support from the government
- Population growth of 2.8% translates into a high demand for more kindergarten centres to be established

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Incorporation of ECE programme into Education Sector Investment and Reform Programme (ESIRP) funded by EU Stabex and New Zealand 2002-6
- Developing ECE policy
- Documenting code of conduct for ECE teachers
- Assessing probationers
- Training of trainers
- Expanding community based ECE programme – formal review
Tokelau

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- Special Programme for the Pre-Schoolers eg 2 ½ yrs – 3 ½ yrs they have songs, poems, and games. Apart from those, they have different corners of where the activities include family, blocks, and puzzles etc.

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- Environment
- Activities/Equipment for their development
- Refresher courses for teachers required

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Misunderstanding between the Mother and caregivers about the early childhood development.

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Encourage parents to understand the development of the child
- Encourage workshops about the importance of early childhood education
Tonga

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- There are currently 47 pre-schools throughout the islands of Tonga
- The Ministry of Education is trying to include all pre-schools in its 15 year Education Plan – to include teacher training, curriculum development and Tongan materials reflecting Tongan custom
- Annual conference for all teachers, mini conference on Tongatapu and Vava'u

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- Teacher training
- Child development
- Classroom management
- Techniques for being an effective teacher
- Positive discipline
- Enhancement of children’s creativity
- Importance of English language into Tongan schools

Major barriers/constraints in early childhood development/education issues:

- Lack of funds
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of materials
- No nationwide curriculum
- No set standard of teaching (no mandatory certificate/diploma)

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Money
- Teacher training courses
- More classroom materials
Vanuatu

Current Practices in the country on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Education:

- Where there has been training provided by the MOE and the Pri-skul Asosiesen Blong Vanuatu (PSABV), there is a child-centred, activity-based, programme for children aged 4 & 5, for the 2 pre-primary school years. This involves the use of the vernacular as the medium of learning and communication and lots of choices for the children.
- These pre-schools are community based/supported.
- Where there has been no training, pre-schools are teacher-directed and there is rote-learning – often in poor French or English. Buildings are very small and there is no outdoor play.

Area of Interest with regard to ECD/ECE (Issues/Needs)

- Sources of funding for ECE activities
- Parent awareness
- Funding: Government only funds salaries (1 national Coordinator & 1 Coordinator for each province). More trainers in the provinces and one each for the 2 main urban areas would be ideal
- There is a constant struggle to fund activities and transport
- Lack of community support in some places
- Misplaced expectations of year 1 teachers
- Lack of political will to recognize and support ECE

Support required to start ECD/Education activities in the country:

- Funding for urban areas – current programme operates in rural areas
- Government enforcement of existing Recommendations & Guidelines
Malnutrition has been a persistent problem in many countries for both young children and many young pregnant women. There is stunting and low birth weight, in some countries, and obesity has become a growing concern. Infectious diseases (i.e. diarrhea, intestinal parasite) are common due to the intake of contaminated water and poor hygiene practices. Malnutrition leads to impairment in physical and cognitive development of children.

Net Primary Enrolment rate is high (97% regionally) for both boys and girls but there is high drop-out and repetition rates especially in the early grades. Gender inequality is evident (girl children and women) in areas such as quality of care, health and nutrition, violence against women, and little involvement of mothers in decision-making processes.

Family structures are changing in the region as a whole, (less extended families, both parents working outside, migration). Special attention and support has been targeted to vulnerable groups such as those affected by conflict, disaster, HIV/AIDS, abuse/neglect, and children with special needs.

**Early Childhood Development depends on three main factors**

- The quality of care at home and community
- Effective access by families to quality basic services and to adequate livelihoods
- Favorable policy environment and resources which support the above

**ECD trends in the EAP Region**

There is recognition of lack of attention, support to parents and caregivers with 0-3 children in terms of psychosocial care/early learning. Emphasis is now focused on parenting education, home/community based ECCD services.

Various services may be available but they are not reaching the young children of families in most need. Emphasis is now on geographical convergence of services and/or integrated services delivery to reach out to the same child and family.
Innovative ECD initiatives in Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Fiji

Tanjungsari Model Integrated ECCD, Indonesia
The main objective of this project is to empower families and communities to care for their own health and their children and provide a stimulating environment for young children.

Activities include:
- Early education to 3-5 years children through Taman Posyandu (TP) 2-4 times a week neighborhood playgroup by trained community volunteers/cadres;
- Family guidance and education tool “Nine messages” given to parents and followed-up by cadres;
- Early detection of developmental delays;
- Follow-up home visits by cadres to at risk children;
- Improved maternal health services through TBA/midwives during pregnancy and birth.

Evaluation of this programme after two years showed an increased understanding within villages and families on the importance of child development, a 4% increase in enrolment in TP, parents felt that their children became better communicators, more confident, and more independent and TP children were better prepared for schooling and performed better in Grade 1.

ECCD Network Project, Myanmar
The main objectives of this project is to provide basic integrated ECD services to disadvantaged children (under 5) in 51 selected communities of the peri-urban areas of Yangon in Myanmar, to establish childcare networks at the community level including school-based pre-kindergartens and to raise public awareness of the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to ECCD through advocacy and social mobilisation.

Activities include:
- 2,550 3-5 aged children and 6,000 under 3 children benefitting from integrated ECD services, development of a community out-reach programme for under 3 children from poor families through establishment of community-based Caregiver Circles.
- Enhanced community awareness of the importance of early childhood development and increased participation in organized child care-related activities.

As a result of this project, children became more assertive, brighter and active, many children gained weight, within at least 3 months of coming to caregivers circle, children were able to make strong health and developmental gains and began to catch up to normal developmental expectations for their age and parents became more patient and paid more attention to their care of children.

Parent Effective Services, Philippines
The main objective of this project is to improve knowledge, attitudes and skills of parents and other caregivers through a nine module training programme.

Activities include:
- Neighbourhood parent effectiveness assembly
- Day care service parents group
- Individual home training – training of volunteers for parent effectiveness service
- ECCD on the air (radio cassette tapes)
- Empowerment and reaffirmation of parent abilities training

The project includes a radio program that reaches out to and supports parents and caregivers by providing information on care-giving practices and child growth and development.
Capacity building activities for childcare providers in Thailand

For childcare of the 0-3 age group there is:

- A standard training course (210 hours / 6 weeks) *minimum requirement
- A certificate & occupational certificate courses for further training (480 - 840 hours)
- Higher and continued education available in some universities / institutes

The Office of the National Education Commission, Ministry of Education and other agencies handle national childcare standards, guideline and licensing development. There are academic and professional networks and a specialised national agency for ECD, the National Institute for Family and Child Development.

Capacity building activities at EAP regional level

Regional seminars, workshops and training courses on offer include: ASEAN Project on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD Experts’ Seminar series), Singapore – UNICEF Joint Training Programme on Early Childhood Care and Education “Train the Trainers”, RTRC Asia (Singapore), customized training courses, certificate/diploma courses, Master’s degree course in ECE (Wheelock college, USA), National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University (Thailand), Master’s degree course in Human Development, Aga Khan University (Pakistan), Short-term seminar course on ECD, Master’s degree course in Human Development.

UNICEF EAP Regional level

Regional IECD Forum, IECD Training (IECD prototype training package developed by UNICEF HQ), Operational research on integrated ECD, case studies documentation, Communication/network channel development.

Fiji Mobile Playgroup – Save the Children Fund

“Everyday we hear from stockbrokers when it is the right time to invest and where to invest our savings. At Save the Children Fiji we also believe in investment, a very special kind of investment i.e. our children – our future and the future of our nation.”

This three-year-old project is currently in a pilot phase, funded by the NZAID in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Fiji Pre-school Association and administered by Save the Children Fiji. The project targets nine squatter settlements and low cost housing settlements in two sites in Fiji – Suva and Labasa. The Mobile Kindy operates from a truck that opens up as a classroom that is taken to the community where the community is invited to attend. A pre-school teacher works with the children on ECE while a field worker works with the families and community. The project consists of a management committee and programme manager who works with an ECE teacher and field officer with the community education committee. The work of the Mobile Kindy works through a “Play & Learn” approach, including play activities, parental counseling, and referral and monitoring.
Communities themselves suggested the setting up of “community education committees” to run the program and resource the “teacher aides” who are taken from the community. Communities feel ownership of the project and are seeing the benefit of the project on children and families. The project hopes to expand to rural community training and become self-supporting. Indications of the success of the project are reflected in community’s sense of empowerment and hope and improved child performance, health, increased parental responsibility, improved attitudes, opportunities, reconciliation among parents, families and communities and improved communication in communities – listening, sharing and supporting. Parents are actively involved in toy making workshops, awareness raising of the importance of play and ECE and ECD and show greater involvement in their children’s development.

“Now we know what our children need and we understand our neighbours better. We are able to work together and learn from each other. Making toys and working at the centre is fun. We watch our children grow and learn.”

From a parent

“The government and people from other agencies are now helping us. We can feel the change and most of all we have a voice.”

“The training workshops help us to develop skills, use materials that we throw away and create something for children to play and learn.”

Teacher’s Aide

New Zealand - Action Research at the A’oga Fa’a Samoa

A’oga Fa’a Samoa, a Samoan language immersion Early Childcare Centre located in Auckland, is one of six “Early Childhood Centres of Innovation” recognised by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. Special features of this Centre are both its Samoan immersion programme and its “community of learners” collaborative approach. The A’oga Fa’a Samoa Centre emphasises family, language and culture. The centre cares for 50 children (over 2’s and under 2’s) with a team of ten trained staff. Infants, toddlers and young children attend for up to 9 hours daily, up to 5 days a week, and learn in the Samoan language. The Centre allows for easy transition for children to the primary school and language continuity. Innovative teaching at the Centre includes small groups of children staying with the same teachers from the point of entry through each development stage to 5 years old. An array of approaches is used to promote Samoan language and culture and the children’s cultural identity.

Funding from the Ministry of Education has enabled the A’oga Fa’a Samoa to implement participant research within an “Early Childhood Centre of Innovation” to investigate the relationship between learning and language continuity as children and educators at the A’oga Fa’a Samoa make transitions from the point of entry through to beginning school. A related intention of the research is to document aspects of the identity, strength, and confidence of the children. Research for
this 3-year project focuses on two key research questions:

- What helps learning and language continuity as children make transitions within and from the A’oga Fa’a Samoa?
- How can the key approaches that help learning and language continuity be implemented in practice?

Research methods included in-depth focus group discussions with parents, staff and management; observing, reflecting, planning and acting; practitioner participation and collaboration. Data is collected using observation, daily diaries and survey/self-report techniques.

Recorded observations illustrate that, by having a staff member making the transition within the centre with the children, the interpretation of the children’s actions during the transition was facilitated.

Republic of Marshall Islands - Headstart Project

Headstart and Early Headstart are comprehensive child development programs for children from birth to 5 years, pregnant women and their families. The Headstart program in RMI receives a budget of US$2.5 million from the US Government. The goal is to increase the social competence of children from low-income families. Social competence refers to the child’s everyday effectiveness in dealing with the present environment as well as later responsibilities in school and life, taking into account the inter-relation of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of a child. Programs are family-centred with parents as primary educators and nurturers of their children. Headstart program performance standards include: Information, Rationale, Related Information and Guidance. A government body (the Ministry of Education) has the legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Program. A Policy Council manages the day to day running of the Program. Fifty-one percent of the Policy Council are parents of children enrolled in the Program.

Only 14% of children of pre school age are enrolled in a pre school program in RMI and 70% of them are enrolled in the Headstart Program. There are 1,200 pre school children enrolled in the Program in 2000-2001 covering all atolls of the country. A curriculum was developed with the technical assistance of the University of the South Pacific in 2000, this is currently being used in the urban centres and is soon to be expanded to all atolls.

Fiji - Pacific Children’s Program (PCP)

The Pacific Children’s Program, funded by AusAID, aims to reduce child abuse and neglect and works with a range of government agencies (particularly the Department of Social Welfare) and other organizations involved with child protection in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa.

A community-level training module, the “Child Protection Facilitation Package” forms the basis of the PCP work with communities. The Package is a non-confronting approach that builds on existing strengths for child protection in communities. Translated into
Fijian, Bislama, and Samoan, government and NGO staff have been trained and are using the Package in communities.

In partnership with the Department of Social Welfare in Fiji, the PCP has developed an initial series of leaflets on basic parenting topics. There are 5 leaflets at the moment that cover: Encouraging Good Behaviour, Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse, Doing Well at School, Neglect of Children, and Talking to Children. The leaflets are produced in English, Hindi and Fijian language. Several government departments and NGOs have already expressed interest to distribute the leaflets to parents around Fiji as a part of their own child protection programs. Additional information and communication materials have been developed to further support the work of the PCP in communities.

Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE)

The acronym PRIDE indicates a key focus. Each country will be encouraged to build its education plans on a strong foundation of local cultures and languages, thus enabling students to develop a deep pride in their own values, tradition and wisdoms, and a clear sense of their own cultural identity, as well as their identity as citizens of the nation.

The Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of the South Pacific implements the project (2004-9). Funding for the project includes EU – 8 million Euro funded by the 9th EDF Pacific Regional Indicative Program and NZAID – NZ$5 million. The overall objective of PRIDE is to expand opportunities for children and youth to acquire the values, knowledge and skills that will enable them to actively participate in the social, spiritual, economic and cultural development of their communities and to contribute positively to creating sustainable futures. The purpose of the Project is to enhance the capacity of Pacific education agencies to effectively plan and deliver quality basic education through formal and non-formal means, and to improve the coordination of donor inputs to assist countries implement their plans. Beneficiaries will include parents, teachers, pupils and communities of 15 ACP member states of the Pacific. Funding will be administered through Ministries of Education. The focus of the Project aims to:

- Implement the Pacific Vision for Education as outlined in the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP);
- Reaffirm commitment to the Dakar 2000 Education for All (EFA) goals;
- FBEAP Goal: To achieve universal and equitable educational participation and achievement and to ensure access and equity and improve quality and outcome;
- Focus on vulnerable students, including those from low socio-economic urban groups, those in remote and isolated areas, those with disabilities, female students, and school push-outs and dropouts.

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2 Definition of Basic Education in the context of PRIDE includes all education provision for children and youth except higher education. It includes early childhood, elementary, primary and secondary education, together with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and covers both formal and informal sectors.
Importance of Nutrition in Early Child Development

Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Programme Officer, UNICEF Pacific

“Nutrition and nurturing during the first three years are both crucial for lifelong health and well being”

Malnutrition in early childhood carries a higher mortality than any other childhood illness\(^1\) - 100% of all children were dead within five years of onset of severe malnutrition in this study. A long-term follow-up\(^4\) of 200 children treated for severe malnutrition under two years of age was started in 1958. Funding was provided to meet all the needs of the family including employment, education, food and social welfare. After 20 years, 75% of the children (150 children) survived. However, all surviving children were found to have sociopath behaviours (delinquency, crime) and all surviving children never finished their primary education.

In infancy, no gift is more precious than breastfeeding; yet barely one in three infants is exclusively breastfed during the first four months of life

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is when the infant only receives breastmilk without any additional food or drink, not even water. It has been demonstrated that there is an increase of IQ if EBF is dose related, that is the longer the child is exclusively BF, the higher the score. The quality of care is enhanced by breastfeeding with enhanced bonding. EBF prevents otitis media, results in better myelination of neurones and enhanced “wiring” of the brain. Breastfeeding also has a “calming effect” on the baby. A study on juvenile delinquency in the UK showed that the increase of juvenile delinquency coincided with increase in bottle feeding after Second World War. “Humanised” cow’s milk can never be equal to breast milk; there are differences in amino acid contents and fatty acids.

Maternal nutrition & child development

There is a higher prevalence of low birth weight (LBW) in teenage pregnancies, anaemic mothers, mothers with iodine deficiency and mothers with zinc deficiency. Women who are given supplements during their labour show a small increase in birth weight but the cognitive development is better in babies born of supplemented mothers as compared to non-supplemented mothers.

In Costa Rica, young adolescents who were formerly anaemic as children fared worse in arithmetic skills, writing skills, attention, school performance, anxiety/depression, and social problems. By giving iron in early pregnancy, the behaviour rating scale improves and

\(^1\) Smythe & Hansen: Cape Town, South Africa
\(^4\) Smythe & Hansen: Medical Research Council Longitudinal study
development indicators at 12 months and up to 12 years. The impact of the mothers’ anaemia has a long-term effect for their children.

Vitamin A enhances the body’s immunity. Vitamin A deficiency increases attack rates by common childhood illnesses, and Vitamin A deficiency decreases iron absorption.

Iodine Deficiency (IDD) is the world’s most prevalent – yet easily preventable – cause of brain damage in children. IDD affects over 740 million people, 13% of the world’s population and 30% of the remainder are at risk. IDD preys upon poor, pregnant women and preschool children, posing serious public health problems in 130 developing countries. Iodine-deficient people may forfeit 15 IQ points. Nearly 50 million people suffer from some degree of IDD-related brain damage. There is improved iodine status and mental performance when lipiodol is given.

Van den Briel et al IAC (2000)
ECD Needs Assessment

ECD Priorities

ECD Capacity Building Plans (NGO/Church/Communities, Government, University, Donors)

A series of group work activities were undertaken at the Conference as part of an exercise to enable countries to develop their own national ECD action plans. For the first exercise, participants were divided into three groups to consider collective ECD priorities by identifying the ECD issue or need, present barriers or constraints to ECD and support required to move the ECD agenda forward. Results of this exercise are presented in the Appendix section.

The second exercise asked participants to consider ECD capacity building from the perspective of four “providers” namely: that of the NGO/Church/Community; Government; Donor and University. Participants were asked to prepare “VIP” cards for this clustering exercise to identify 3-4 main clusters or themes. Results of this exercise are presented overleaf.

The final exercise required participants to reflect on their new learning and develop a national action plan for the next 12 months prioritising 1-2 key activities that would significantly move the ECD agenda forward in their respective country. Participants were asked to consider those activities that were manageable, achievable and realistic. Results of this exercise are presented in the Appendix section.
Government

- Funds – allocation of more resources for: salaries, resource persons, research, facilities, posts on ECD and advisers
- Policies – guidelines and standards for ECD, national policies in place
- Training – raise awareness of government leaders and parliamentarians
- Parenting - Provide support to parenting programmes, coordinate between ministries and stakeholders
- Curriculum – revise and update curricula, include nutrition and health in ECE/ECD
- Consult with stakeholders when planning for ECD and preparing budget or guidelines

University

- Network & resource centre – coordinate and share information, data base of research, collecting and sharing materials on parenting, website maintaining & updating
- Capacity Building – more courses and modules on 0-3 years, more access to continuing education, update curricula to make more relevant to needs
- Research – spearhead further research into traditional practices, develop USP’s own research capacity into ECD
- Human resources - More local tutors and support for students, technical assistance to countries on ECD activities

NGO/Church/Community

- Networking – link communities and resource persons and resources, identify mentors and key persons, establish partnerships
- Awareness – keep community informed, establish volunteer groups to use awareness packages, share important information
- Research – identify local persons who can research practices and identify needs
- Implement activities – partnering programmes for families, establish ECE centers

Donors

- Funding for programmes – especially for parenting, health education,
- Funding for research on ECD, on tradition practice, on existing practices and needs
- Funding for monitoring – for transport, for supervision
- Funding for capacity building – training, conferences, awareness raising workshops, regional ECD conferences, ECE teacher training
- Funding for in-service training – for ECD professionals, for pre-school teachers
- Funding for attachments, exchange programmes between pacific, study visits, advocate to governments on importance of ECD
- Collaboration between donors to support ECD – UNICEF to work with other donors
- Consult with stakeholders when planning for ECD and preparing budget or guidelines with government
Expressions of Commitment

UNICEF Pacific

- Advocate on your part
- “clearing house” of information
- Technical cooperation among Pacific Island countries – sharing of expertise and skills
- Host another ECD meeting in two years
- Provide technical assistance to develop ECD policies, guidelines and standards
- Support USP research in ECD
- Lifeskills Education programme to include a module on “Parents To Be”
- Work with SPC on developing communication materials for critical areas of development
- Support communities in setting up playgroups etc.

UNICEF EAPRO

- Information sharing, case studies
- Share national policies, guidelines and standards
- Consider a regional ECD proposal
- Technical support upon request
- An advocate for the Pacific region

University of the South Pacific

- Dissemination of information through USP centres throughout the region
- Follow up on initial research
- Documentation on “How to Conduct Research”
- Make use of USP centres as part of USP
- Continuing Education Program – they can support with research, training, resources.
Appendices

Agenda

Participant List

Group work to Identify ECD Priorities

National ECD Action Plans for the next 12 months

Full presentations from key speakers

Forum Secretariat Basic Education Plan 2001

Agenda

Day One (15 June, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPENING:</th>
<th>8:00 – 10:30am</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration of participants</td>
<td>8:00 – 8:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome Garlanding</td>
<td>Anare Tuitoga, Acting Co-ordinator of Continuing Education, Distance &amp; Flexible Learning Studies Centre, USP</td>
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<td>Devotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>Gillian Mellsop, Representative, UNICEF Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Address</td>
<td>Dr Esther Williams, Acting Pro Vice Chancellor, University of the South Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspective of ECD</td>
<td>Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor on Education, UNICEF East Asia &amp; Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)</td>
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</table>

Morning Tea 10:30 – 11:00 am

SESSION 1: Objectives of the Conference

Expected Outputs

Outcomes of the Conference

Objective of session:
- Overview of Conference aims and objectives
- Expectations, questions and comments
- House keeping issues
- Participant introductions

Process / Activity:
Presentations, questions & comments and introductions

Presenter: Davila Toganivalu

Resources/Materials
- Multimedia

Facilitator: Anare Tuitoga

Resource person: Dr Kamrul Islam

Rapporteur: Karen Chamberlain
### SESSION 2: Case Study Presentation on Pacific Childcare Practices 11:30am – 12:30pm

**Objective of session:**
- Sharing of Pacific case studies on child care practices

**Process / Activity:**
Presentation followed by discussion

**Presenters:**
- Anare Tuitoga, Kelera Nawele

**Facilitator:**
- Vasu Tuivaga

**Resource persons:**
- Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint
- Dr Kamrul Islam

**Rapporteur:**
- Karen Chamberlain

**Lunch**
12:30 – 1:30pm

### SESSION 3: Presentation on country reports 1:30 – 4:30pm

**Objective of session:**
- Sharing current early childhood development practices in each represented PICs

**Process / Activity:**
Individual Country Presentations

**Presenters:**
- Country Representatives

**Facilitator:**
- Cliff Meyers

**Resource persons:**
- Davila Toganivalu / Vasu Tuivaga

**Rapporteur:**
- Karen Chamberlain

**Afternoon Tea**
(to be served during Session 3 from 3:00 - 3:30pm)

---

### Day Two (16 June, 2004)

**Report on Day One**
8:00 – 8:30am

### SESSION 4: Regional Update and approaches to capacity building on ECD 8:30 – 9:30am

**Objective of session:**
- To share key ECD activities/interventions and lessons learned from countries in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) Region
- EAP regional capacity building initiatives on ECD and Partnerships

**Process / Activity:**
Presentation followed by discussion

**Presenter:**
- Junko Miyahara

**Facilitator:**
- Dr. Kamrul Islam

**Resource person:**
- Cliff Meyers

**Rapporteur:**
- Karen Chamberlain

**Resources/Materials**
- Screen
- Multi-media
- Handouts

### SESSION 5: Presentations on Innovative Pacific Early Child Development approaches 9:30 – 10:30am

**Objective of session:**
- To share innovative Pacific ECD approaches that focus on 0-3 year olds

**Process / Activity:**
Presentation followed by discussion

**Presenters:**
- Irshad Ali, Save the Children Fiji
- Eneleata Tapusoa, Aoga Fa’a Samoa Early Childhood Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

**Facilitator:**
- Dr Rosalina Sa’a’aga-Banuve

**Resource persons**
- Cliff Meyers, Irshad AliEneleata Tapusoa

**Rapporteur:**
- Karen Chamberlain

**Resources/Materials**
- Screen
- Multi-media
- Handouts

**Morning Tea**
10:30 – 11:00am
### Day Two (16 June, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION 6: Video Presentation on &quot;Responsive Care: Helping your child grow &amp; develop&quot;</th>
<th>11:00am – 11:30am</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective of session:</strong></td>
<td>· To inform participants of current ECD trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process / Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Video screening followed by discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Presenters:** | Cliff Meyers  
Junko Miyahara |
| **Facilitator:** | Davila Toganivalu |
| **Resource persons:** | Cliff Meyers  
Junko Miyahara |
| **Rapporteur:** | Karen Chamberlain |
| **Resources/Materials:** | · VCR/TV/Deck  
· DVD |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SESSION 7: Role of Nutrition in Early Childhood Development</th>
<th>11:30am – 12:15pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective of session:</strong></td>
<td>· To update participants on the role of micronutrients and breastfeeding in ECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process/Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Presentations followed by discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenter:</strong></td>
<td>Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitator:</strong></td>
<td>Davila Toganivalu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Resource persons:** | Dr Kamrul Islam  
Dr Rosalina Sa’aga-Banuve |
| **Rapporteur:** | Karen Chamberlain |
| **Resources/Materials:** | · Screen  
· Multi-media |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SESSION 8: Plenary Session on Needs Assessment Format</th>
<th>12:15 – 12:30pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective of session:</strong></td>
<td>Participants to identify national ECD needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process / Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Presentations followed by group formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenter:</strong></td>
<td>Dr Kamrul Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitator:</strong></td>
<td>Vasu Tuivaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource person:</strong></td>
<td>Cliff Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapporteur:</strong></td>
<td>Karen Chamberlain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch:</strong></td>
<td>12:30 – 1:30pm</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION 9: Group work on Identifying ECD Needs/Priorities</th>
<th>1:30 – 3:00pm</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective of session:</strong></td>
<td>Participants to identify ECD priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process / Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Group work and prepare presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenters:</strong></td>
<td>All Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitators:</strong></td>
<td>Anare Tuitoga, Kelera Navele, Dr Rosalina Sa’aga, Dr Kamrul Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource persons:</strong></td>
<td>Davila Toganivalu, Vasu Tuivaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapporteur:</strong></td>
<td>Karen Chamberlain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Resources/Materials:** | · Marker Pens  
· Transparency paper |

| Afternoon Tea | 3:00 – 3:30pm |
**Session 10:** Plenary Session on group work  
**Objective of session:** Reporting on group ECD priorities  
**Process / Activity:** Presentation followed by discussion  
**Presenters:** Group Reporter  
**Facilitator:** Dr Rosalina Sa’a’ga  
**Resource persons:** Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Dr Kamrul Islam  
**Rapporteur:** Karen Chamberlain  
**Resources/Materials:** Flipcharts, Permanent Markers

---

**Day Three (17 June, 2004)**

**Session 11:** Developing PIC ECD Capacity building plans  
**Objective of session:** Develop PIC ECD Capacity Building Plans  
**Process / Activity:** Group work using Visualisation in Participatory Planning (VIPP) methodology  
**Presenters:** All Country participants  
**Facilitator:** Davila Toganivalu  
**Resource persons:** Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Cliff Meyers, Junko Miyahara  
**Rapporteur:** Karen Chamberlain  
**Resources/Materials:** Flipcharts, VIPP Cards, Pins / Blutac

**Morning Tea**  
10:30 – 11:00am

---

**Session 12:** Reporting on Recommendations for ECD Action Plans  
**Objective of session:** Participants to review recommendations for national ECD action plans  
**Process / Activity:** Plenary for final comment/feedback  
**Presenter:** Dr. Rosalina Sa’aga-Banuve  
**Facilitator:** Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint  
**Resource persons:** Davila Toganivalu, Dr Rosalina Sa’aga-Banuve  
**Rapporteur:** Karen Chamberlain  
**Resources/Materials:** Multimedia, Screen, Handouts

---

**Session 13:** Conclusion and Recommendation (Next Steps)  
**Objective of session:** Where to from here?  
**Process / Activity:** Plenary session  
**Presenter:** Davila Toganivalu  
**Facilitators:** Dr Rosalina Sa’aga-Banuve, Vasu Tuivaga  
**Resource persons:** Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Cliff Meyers  
**Rapporteur:** Karen Chamberlain  
**Discussion documents:**

---

**Closing**  
**Closing Address:** Gillian Mellsop, Representative, UNICEF Pacific  
**Lunch hosted by the UNICEF Representative, Ms Gillian Mellsop:** 12:40 – 2:00pm
Participant List

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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Fiji Preschool Association</strong></th>
<th><strong>Kalabo Child Minding Centre</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ufemia Camaitoga</td>
<td>Mrs Reshmi Rekha Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka Teachers College</td>
<td>Kalabo Child Minding Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka, FIJI</td>
<td>Kalabo Tax Free Zone - Valelevu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: (679) 6662833</td>
<td>NASINU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facsimile: (679) 6666937</td>
<td>Telephone: (679) 3304353</td>
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<th><strong>Etina Havea Child Care Centre</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Biu Cava</td>
<td>Ms Roiva Kuricava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Early Childhood</td>
<td>Etina Havea Child Care Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>P O Box 5529</td>
<td>Pacific Theological College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka, FIJI</td>
<td>SUVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: (679) 6662833</td>
<td>Telephone: (679) 3305364</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Nursing Mother Association</strong></th>
<th><strong>A’oga Fa’aSamoa Early Childhood</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Michele Fong</td>
<td>Ms Eneleata Tapusoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President - Nursing Mothers’ Association</td>
<td>Senior Educaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 2482, Government Buildings</td>
<td>A’oga Fa’aSamoa Early Childhood Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suva, FIJI</td>
<td>Telephone: (679) 3385553</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Observers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fiji School of Medicine</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Children’s Programme</td>
<td>Dr Elizabeth Rodgers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Malinda Tugaga</td>
<td>Associate Professor in Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Program Officer for the</td>
<td>Fiji School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South/Centre-Eastern Division</td>
<td>Private Mail Bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Children’s Program</td>
<td>Suva, FIJI</td>
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<td>Suva, FIJI</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Save the Children Fiji</strong></th>
<th><strong>United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Meresiana Krishna</td>
<td>Ms Andrea Pickering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Save the Children Fiji</td>
<td>Programme Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facsimile: (679) 3308078</td>
<td>Facsimile: (679) 3312785</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Forum Secretariat</strong></th>
<th><strong>World Health Organisation (WHO)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Helen Tavola</td>
<td>Ms Lorraine Kerse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy Adviser</td>
<td>Regional Adviser, Human Resources Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Mail Bag</td>
<td>PO Box 113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suva, FIJI</td>
<td>Suva, FIJI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: (679) 3312600</td>
<td>Telephone: (679) 3304600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facsimile: (679) 3305573</td>
<td>Facsimile: (679) 330462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

27. Ms Arieta Moceica
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UNIFEM
c/o UNDP Private Mail Bag
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28. Ms Anna Pasikale
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29. Mr Matshuoro Ono
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30. Mr Alex Konrote
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UNICEF Pacific Office
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32. Anare Tuitoga
Acting Coordinator Continuing Education
33. Vasu Tuivaga
Coordinator Certificate in Early Childhood Education
34. Kelera Naweleva
Research Assistant
35. Liku Matalevu
Coordinator Certificate in Disability Studies
36. Evonne Inia
Secretarial Assistant

37. Cliff Meyers
Regional Adviser – Education, EAPRO
38. Junko Miyahara
Assistant Project Officer – ECD, EAPRO

39. Gillian Mellsop
Representative, UNICEF Pacific
40. Dr T Kya-W-Miint
Programme Officer
41. Dr Kamrul Islam
Project Officer – Health/ECD
42. Davila Togaihulu
Project Officer – ECD
43. Dr Rosalina Sa’aga
Assistant Health & Nutrition Officer
44. Dorothy McGoon
Secretarial Assistant
GROUP WORK – to identify ECD priorities

### GROUP ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES/NEEDS</th>
<th>PRESENT BARRIERS/CONSTRAINT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Clear cut national policy for ECD in the pacific</td>
<td>· Lack of knowledge (0-3)</td>
<td>· High level advocacy and intervention of national level – govt/NGOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Readable, simple, and workable document in mother tongue</td>
<td>· No policy or guidelines</td>
<td>· Agent partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· National guideline</td>
<td>· Documentation is in place but no action</td>
<td>· Regional networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· National coordinating working committee with all stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td>· Regional and in-country workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Capacity building – in HR</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Teachers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Caregivers / parents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>· Family / community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Resource / equipment</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

### GROUP TWO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES/NEEDS</th>
<th>PRESENT BARRIERS/CONSTRAINT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· ECD policy</td>
<td>· Lack of capacity</td>
<td>· Advocacy and awareness on ECD at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Unavailability of information</td>
<td>· Government support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Training</td>
<td>· Lack of finance</td>
<td>· Donor funding / assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers parents / communities</td>
<td>· Training facilities not available in country</td>
<td>· Government commitment and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Administrator / manager</td>
<td>· Pre-service and in-service</td>
<td>· Community ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Target teachers in child care centers / parents can caregivers</td>
<td>· Resource persons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Lack of finance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>· Resources</td>
<td>· Internal training facilities not available</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>· HR</td>
<td>· Pre-service and in-service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Material / equipment</td>
<td>· Resource persons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Infrastructure</td>
<td>· Land disputes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Funding / budget</td>
<td>· Limited qualified teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Health care</td>
<td>· Awareness programme for young teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Donor funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Govt support and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Community ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Support from Ministry of Health</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### GROUP THREE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES/NEEDS</th>
<th>PRESENT BARRIERS/CONSTRAINT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Breastfeeding · Pre-school teachers special needs · Regional policy committee · Regional curriculum · Awareness on ECD workers legal/ seminars/ definition · Established school · Accredit to ECD and all existing training · Research on ECD in the Pacific</td>
<td>· Lack of knowledge and lack of mother helper · Lack of collaboration · Ignorance · Lack of training · No fund · No fund · Trained personnel · Funding · Lack of monitoring · No fund · No personnel in the region</td>
<td>· Government and regional stakeholder · Incentives – day care in workplace · Maintain the “VIP of ECD” · Partner agencies · Superiors to be pro · Further training for special children · Fund from UNICEF further training for all · Use local resources on-going · Ministry of Education · Create a degree at USP</td>
</tr>
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### GROUP FOUR

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES/NEEDS</th>
<th>PRESENT BARRIERS/CONSTRAINT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· National Policies and Guidelines on ECD/E · Training – ECE personnel – 0-8 years · Policy committee (planning) · Funding/sustainability · Resources · Key people · Policy · Trainers · Materials · Prototype/Module · Locally or culturally sensitive · Language · Sustainability · Integration (Poseanda) · MOE · Social Welfare · MOH · Research in ECD/E in the Pacific</td>
<td>· Lack of knowledge of ECD/E · No form of structure · No political agenda or goodwill · Ignorance of the politicians · Ignorance of funding resources · Is not considered as a priority · Same as above · Lack of continuity of funding · Integration · Lack of qualified personnel to conduct research</td>
<td>· Parent education programmers – national level · Community awareness programmes (ongoing) · Have a legislative act (Child’s Right) · Awareness – at all levels · Advocacy Human (resource) · Funding sources · Funding &amp; technical assistance · P/C Exchange programme · Prototype/modules · Commitment to funding by local government · Empowering/strengthening community support · Qualified/trained personnel’s to conduct research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource Pack modules can be shared?
Singapore Train the Trainers
Community facilitator / mobiliser (frontline worker) details
# National Action Plans for ECD (0–3 years)

## COOK ISLANDS

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
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</table>
| Confirm status of ECD - government endorsement | Submit report to Secretary for Education  
Meeting with CAU advisers on ECD  
Prepare proposal, submit to Secretary  
Meeting with Secretary confirm proposal | June/July 04 | Ministry of Education  
CAU  
CITTC  
In partnership with Ministry of Health, Internal Affairs |
| Consultation Process for ECD framework/ guidelines or inclusion with ECE framework | | 2005/6  
May change depending on outcome of above. | Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Community Groups |

## FIJI

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To formulate a National working Committee on ECD</td>
<td>Write reports to various organisations with recommendations</td>
<td>End of next week</td>
<td>Fiji group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Meet regularly until the National body is formed  
Develop and maintain Fiji ECD webpage | August | Self funded |

## NAURU

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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</table>
| Improve training  
Seek programmes for younger persons as ECE educators | Assess the programs  
Which programs are necessary for upgrade of training programs  
Work with Youth Affairs, ministry of Education. Develop steps for donor funding to assist training | ASAP | Ministry of Education  
Donors  
USP Centre  
Work with Youth Affairs Department |
| Develop method to educate parents/ community on importance of ECE ECD | Work with parent groups  
Provide parent centres | ASP | Other teachers or educators  
Trained and belief in the values of ECE. NGOs,  
Health Department, Nauru Early Childhood Association |
### Niu E

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Policy for ECD ECE</td>
<td>Creating initial awareness of this workshop and content and recommendations Establish National Working Committee and Terms of Reference Consult ALL Stakeholders Draw up National Policy document on ECD ECE services and draw on existing and include new initiatives Review and include new initiatives ECE ECD curriculum guidelines Government response and endorsement Include country PRIDE strategic Plan</td>
<td>June 2004 Report on conference</td>
<td>Education Department and representatives of key stakeholders at all levelsGovernment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of policy and curriculum guidelinesRegional Generic Name for ECD (0-3) and ECE (4-8)?</td>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>Promotional materials support from ECD conferenceTeachers of ECD as mentors to ECDTeachers of both ECE and ECD as mentors to parenting education</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Samoa

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make the Ministry of Education aware of the importance of ECD (MESC) CEO Minister of Education National Council</td>
<td>Write report on ECD Conference with recommendations. See the Strategic Plan (MESC) PRIDE Write letter to assistant CEO, cc. CEO and Minister of Education and the National Council of ECE in Samoa</td>
<td>As soon as possible (2 months)</td>
<td>Notes from the conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness programme for ECE staff Teacher Training</td>
<td>Sept 04 Beginning of Teachers training in 2005</td>
<td>Ministry of Education for materials and resources</td>
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### Solomon Islands

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents education on ECD (awareness)</td>
<td>Plans for workshopContact all ECE coordinator/ stakeholdersWorkshop -Awareness at national level with stakeholders -Produce resources for awareness-Compile report</td>
<td>July 2004</td>
<td>EU Stabex 99 NZAid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study visit to Myanmar (joint visit with Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati)</td>
<td>Compile proposal with 2 neighbouring countries for the study visit</td>
<td>March-April 2005</td>
<td>Donor funding</td>
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## Marshall Islands

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<th>ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Education awareness on ECD</td>
<td>Meeting with parents Report on ECD Conference Provide workshops for parents/ECD Form a working committee on ECD including parents</td>
<td>July 04</td>
<td>Moe ECE trained personnel MOH NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating on the working committee on ECD</td>
<td>Meeting regularly on what needs to be done Networking Invite resourceful person to evaluate Ongoing monitoring / workshops on parenting education on ECD</td>
<td>Every month after July 04</td>
<td>Working committee ECE personnel MOENGOs Community members</td>
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## Tokelau

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have workshops about the ECD through the three atolls</td>
<td>Prepare a proposal about this workshop Inform the Head of Department Application for Donors to be approved Process action</td>
<td>In 6 months time</td>
<td>Donors UNICEF, NZAid, AusAID Ministry of Education Tokelau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further studies for EC educators for higher level of education Diploma in ECE Certificate in ECE</td>
<td>Consult with the Director of Education Recommendations Applications for Sponsorship</td>
<td>As soon as they received and respond Availability</td>
<td>Donors UNICEF, NZAid, AusAID</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### TONGA

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
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</table>
| Develop storybooks | Introduce as a course work project for Tonga Institute of Education in Year 2 students (primary)  
Set objectives, tasks, marking criteria.  
E.g. form = big books, folded books  
Use Tongan language side by side, laminated to ensure long lasting quality  
Chose an executive committee  
Chose a key person from each district  
Train with knowledge  
Go back to each district, village and become an ECD .... | Start semester 1 2005  
Feb-May  
Jan 2005 | UNICEF, AusAID, NZaid agencies to cover the cost of publication  
Initiate from the primary Department in MOE  
Give moral support |
| Workshops village mothers / fathers / grandparents | Work with parent groups  
Provide parent centres in the centres  
Provide workshops invite experts | ASP | Collaboration – Health Department, Education Primary Section, Donor agent to pay for expenses  
Stakeholders involved, religious leaders, follow up |

### VANUATU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>HOW/STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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</table>
| Development of resource materials for ECD awarenessParental awareness and teachers | Discuss with MOE, MOH, posters pamphlets Wan Smol Bag TheatreWorkshop to develop awareness materials with teachers and health workersNetworking with other Pacific countries on sharing of resources  
ECE workshop with stakeholders in Vila  
ECD Provincial coordinators PSABV – teachers and communities/parents (in Vila and Tanna)  
Other Provinces (6) after the December conference | July-Oct 04  
Nov 04 (in connect with Annual Review in Dec 04)  
2005- | Funding for materials and Wan Smol Bag play  
UNICEF funds available  
Funding for travelling and workshop for Key Teachers and community workers |
| ECD study tour to Myanmar (with Kiribati and Solomon Islands) | Contact Myanmar and Regional office and Suva for preparations and funding | March-April 05 | Support and funding |
Full Presentations of Key Speakers

ECD in EAP Update
Presented by Junko Miyahara, Assistant Project Officer - ECD, UNICEF EAPRO
ECD trend in EAP Region
1. Recognition of the lack of attention/support to parents/caregivers with 0-3 children in terms of psychosocial care/early learning
   ➔ Parenting education, home/community based ECD services

ECD trend in EAP Region
2. Various services may be available but not reaching the young children / families in most need
   ➔ Geographical convergence of services and/or integrated services delivery to reach out to the same child and family

ECD trend in EAP Region
3. Increased attention/interests in national policy (framework) development for young children and families
   ➔ National level inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms set up (Education, Health, Community Development, Social Welfare etc.)

I Innovative ECD initiatives in Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines

Tanjungsari Model Integrated ECCD (Indonesia)

Tanjungsari Model IEC – Objectives
• To empower families and communities to care for their own health and their children and provide a stimulating environment for young children
• To integrate existing health programmes into easy-to-do packages for families as well as communities
• To revitalise Posyandu as a place for integrated family programmes
• To provide psychosocial stimulation and early education for preschoolers and young children
• To conduct early detection and early intervention for children at risk of developmental delays
• To promote better services by community midwives, health cadres, and health personnel to become proactive through home visits

Tanjungsari Model IEC – Activities
1. Early education to 3-5 years children through Taman Posyandu (2-4 times a week neighborhood playgroup) by trained community volunteers/cadres
2. Family guidance and education tool “Nine messages” given to parents & followed-up by cadres
3. Early detection of developmental delays and early stimulation to mitigate its negative impact – tracking of milestones ‘Early Detection Road-to-Health Card’
4. Follow-up home visits by cadres for at risk children
5. Improved maternal health services through TBA/midwives through pregnancy and birth

Tanjungsari Model IEC – assessment after 2 years
• Increased understanding within villages and families on the importance of child development
• 4% increase in enrolment in Taman Posyandu
• Parents felt that their children became better communicators, more confident, and more independent
• TP children are better prepared to schooling and perform better in Grade 1
ECCD Network Project (Myanmar)

- 2,550 3-5 aged children and 6,000 under 3 children benefiting from integrated ECD services
- Development of a community out-reach programme for under 3 children from poor families through establishment of community-based Caregiver Circles
- Enhanced community awareness on importance of early childhood development and increased participation in organizing child care-related activities

ECCD network - Objectives

- To provide basic integrated ECD services to disadvantaged under 5 children in 51 selected communities of the peri-urban areas of Yangon, Myanmar
- To establish childcare networks at the community level including school-based pre-kindergartens
- To raise public awareness of the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to ECD through advocacy and social mobilisation

ECCD network - Activities

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- Development of a community out-reach programme for under 3 children from poor families through establishment of community-based Caregiver Circles
- Enhanced community awareness on importance of early childhood development and increased participation in organizing child care-related activities

ECCD network

- Community out-reach ECD Services (for under 5)
  - Feeding/donating/multi-vitamin supplementation
  - Growth monitoring and promotion
  - Stimulate and play
- Parenting Education

Pre-KG class (for 3-5 age group)

Caregiver circle (for 0-3 age group)

ECCD network – outcomes

- Children became more assertive, brighter and active
- Many children gained weight
- Within at least 3 months of coming to caregivers circle, children were able to make strong health and developmental gains and began to catch up to normal developmental expectations for their age
- Parents became more patient and paid more attention to their care of children

Parent Effective Services (Philippines)
Parent Effective Services - Objectives
To improve knowledge, attitudes and skills of parents and other caregivers in:
- child rearing
- early childhood development and psychosocial stimulation
- health care
- behavior management of younger and older children
- husband-wife relationship
- prevention of child abuse, and
- parenting rights and duties.

Parent Effective Services - Activities
1. Neighborhood Parent Effectiveness Assembly
2. Day Care Service Parents’ Group
3. Individual Home training
4. Training of Volunteers for Parent Effectiveness Service
5. ECCD on the Air (Radio/cassette tapes)
6. Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities Training

PES training modules
Module 1: Myself as a person and as a parent
Module 2: The Filipino Family
Module 3: Challenges of Parenting
Module 4: Child Development
Module 5: Keeping your child safe from abuse
Module 6: Building children’s positive behaviour
Module 7: Health and nutrition
Module 8: Home management
Module 9: Keeping a healthy environment for your children

ECCD School-on-the Air
- A radio program that reaches out to and supports parents and caregivers by providing information on care-giving practices and child growth and development
- 24 30-minute episodes
  - 15 minute mini-drama
  - 15 minute Question and Answer

Capacity building activities for childcare providers in Thailand

Training and higher/continuous education (public/private)
For Childcare for 0-3 age group
- Standard training course (210 hours / 6 weeks)
- Minimum requirement
- Certificate & occupational certificate courses for further training (480 - 540 hours)

Higher and continued education available in some universities / institutes

National childcare standard / guideline/ licencing development
Office of the National Education Commission, MoE
Office of the Private Education Commission, MoE
Department of Health, MoPH
Department of Community Development, MoSWHS
Naval Welfare Department
Department of Public Welfare
Department of Local Administration, Min. of Interior
Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
Department of Corrections
Ministry of University Affairs, and NGOs and Foundations on young children

Academic and professional networks
Public agencies
- Ministry of Interior, Dept. of Community Development, Dept. of Local Administration;
- Ministry of Public Health Dept. of Health, Dept. of Mental Health;
- Ministry of University Affairs National Institute of Family and Child Development, Mahidol University, Royal Thai Navy, etc.
Academic and professional networks (cont’d)

NGOs, Associations and Foundations

Capacity Building activities at EAP regional level

Regional Seminars / workshops
Training courses
1. ASEAN Project on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD Experts’ Seminar series)
2. Singapore – UNICEF Joint Training Programmes on Early Childhood Care and Education “Train the Trainers”

UNICEF EAP Regional
1. Regional ECD Forum
2. IEC Training (ECD prototype training package developed by UNICEF HQ)
3. Operational research on integrated ECD
4. Case studies documentation
5. Communication/network channel development

UNICEF’s Major Partnerships in EAP Region
- At country level, Ministry of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Family/Women Affairs, etc. and national agencies (e.g., Women’s Union, Workers Union) that represent the national ECD coordination group, UN (e.g., UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, WB, ADB), INGOs (e.g., Oxfam International, World Vision) and local NGOs, religious institutions, and donor governments.
- At regional level, ASEAN, RTG Asia (Singapore), Aga Khan University (Pakistan), National Institute for Child and Family Development, Mahidol University (Thailand), Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries (currently with Singapore)

Thank you
ECD Keynote
Presented by Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor on Education, UNICEF EAPRO
**Brain Development:**

- 80% of brain growth occurs in the first three years of life - about half of that before birth
- Early stimulation programmes can increase IQ by up to 10 IQ points, and reduce school drop-out and repetition rates.
- Malnutrition and anemia reduce learning ability
- This period is when children fail to develop their full learning potential
  - 20 in 100 children in East Asia has a learning deficiency or developmental delay as a result of early years

**Brain Development:**

- The number and connectivity (‘wiring’) of brain cells, and evidence of ‘pruning’ suggests that all-round care and stimulation are most critical during the very early years of life
- There are ‘critical periods’ or ‘windows of opportunity’ for various forms of learning (e.g. vision, motor, emotion, language, attachment) and the quality of early experiences affect neurological development
- Impediments to adequate health, care, nutrition, affection and stimulation are most serious prenatally and in infancy, reflecting the critical periods

**Social Development**

- Children exposed to fear, trauma or neglect in infancy react with elevated levels of stress hormones (e.g. cortisol) that inhibit brain development in specific regions (e.g. the limbic system)
- Through conditioned responses (learned behaviour), similar stressful situations or associations trigger similar stress reactions (e.g. hyperactive, anxious or impulsive behaviour) in adolescents and adults who were traumatised in childhood
- The violent adolescent was very likely to be a victim of trauma, abuse or neglect in infancy and EC

**Social Development**

- Programmes for adolescents with behavioural problems and violent tendencies are expensive and usually have little impact.
- Ensuring that young children are well cared for, with appropriate stimulation in a safe and secure environment is the best antidote for anti-social behaviour later in life.
- Organized early child care groups can be ideal places to gain socialization skills, provided they are of high quality and not too crowded.
- Children in anti-social and traumatic homes show less curiosity, avoid eye contact and have less stimulation than children in less stressful homes.
**Economic Benefits**

- Increased productivity in the schools and workplace. Children who enroll in pre-school and organized early learning groups perform far better in school — with lower repetition and drop out rates.
- Early Childhood interventions play a major role in Poverty Alleviation, especially with urbanization and globalization.
- Prevention, through ECD interventions, is far less expensive than treatment.

**Projected Cost Effectiveness**

- What is Unit cost of Grade 1 of primary?
- How many children repeat or drop to Grade 1 — this equals wastage.
- What is Unit cost of pre-school?
- What do you estimate would be the reduction in repetition/drop out as a result of pre-school. Calculate the cost of pre-school minus projected savings.
- We can't afford not to have pre-school.
- What projected cost and impact of interventions for 0-3 year olds? What cost of doing nothing?

**Economic Benefits**

- Research encourages renewed focus and greater public investment in prenatal, perinatal and infant care:
  - The most important opportunities to influence brain development are during the prenatal and infancy periods of life, when public spending on health, education and welfare for infants and expectant mothers is very low. With increasing age, health and welfare spending tends to increase (Mustard, 1997)
  - Investment in maternal and child nutrition — months to 3 years makes good economic sense

**A Vehicle for Social Mobilization**

- Communities organize around the needs of young children
- Parenting education programmes usually have very low drop out. Parents care most about their children. Projects can build upon ECD and parenting projects
- Early childhood programmes are a great entry point into a generating community processes
- Children are the future - change them and the world changes.

Globally, UNICEF is supporting an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development?

- Early childhood development is viewed from a holistic perspective.
- Requires efforts of several sectors:
  - Education, Health, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Child Protection - also local governance, Social Welfare, Gender, etc.
- Life-cycle approach - support for adolescents, pregnant women and extended family members
- Strategies:
  - Support for families and caregivers - Parenting
  - Improve services and commodities
  - Enhance national policies

**Strategies for an integrated approach to ECD**

- Promoting Key Household Practices - Parenting Education:
  - Growth Promotion and Development - Stimulation & feeding
  - Disease and abuse prevention
  - Home Management of disease and care seeking when needed
  - Women's Health
- Access to an essential package of health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation services
- Enabling environment for:
  - Promoting access of households to commodities and services
  - Improving quality of and access to care and services
  - Addressing the underlying causes
Key Household Practices

- **Growth Promotion and Development:**
  - Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, then complementary feeding, but continuing BF to 2 y
  - Micronutrient supplements (Vit. A, Iron and Zinc) and iodized salt
  - Stimulation by talking, playing, and interactions
- **Disease and abuse prevention**
  - Full immunization before their first birthday
  - Hygiene and waste disposal
  - Prevent child abuse/neglect and prevent and provide appropriate treatment for child injuries.

Key Household Practices

- **Home Management of disease and Care seeking**
  - Continue to feed and give more fluids, especially for diarrhea
  - Give sick children appropriate home treatment of infections, including appropriate traditional medicines
  - Recognize danger signs and take them to health center
  - Follow recommendations of health workers
  - **Women’s health**
    - Every woman needs 4 antenatal visits, tetanus toxoid vaccination, skilled attendance at birth and follow-up
    - Ensure that every pregnant and lactating woman gets time to rest, appropriate food and reduced workload.
    - Ensure that men actively participate in provision of child care, and are involved in reproductive health initiatives

Jamaica: Roving Care Givers

- Home visiting program to support high-risk parents of infants with information on psychosocial care (stimulation), environmental issues, personal development, health and nutrition and referral information.
- Significant effects on children’s cognitive and physical development
- Still small-scale; difficult to bring to scale; working toward sustainability

Interventions with stunted children in Jamaica

![Graph showing the impact of interventions on children's growth](image)

Cuba: “Education your Child” programme

- 600,000 children reached
- Direction by health sector, family pediatricians
- Parents informed on pregnancy and development by trained extension staff who visit families
- Home visiting for children under 2
- Informal child care centers for children 3-5, supported by education and health ministries
- Results appear to be significant

Cuba’s Educa tu Hijo: Percent of children above developmental mean

![Graph showing the percentage of children above developmental mean](image)
**IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION ON EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

Regional Conference on Early Child Development
15 – 17 June 2004
Suva Fiji

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**South African Studies**

Smythe & Hansen: Cape Town, South Africa

- Malnutrition in early childhood carried a higher mortality than any other childhood illness
- 100% of all children were dead within five years of onset of severe malnutrition

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**Long term impact of early childhood malnutrition**

Smythe & Hansen: Medical Research Council Longitudinal study:
- Started in 1958
- Long term follow up of 200 children treated for severe malnutrition under two years of age
- Funding to meet all the needs of the family including employment, education, food and social welfare

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**Outcome after twenty years**

In 1978:
- 75% of the children i.e. 150 children survived
- All surviving children found to have sociopathic behaviors (delinquency, crime)
- All surviving children never finished their primary education

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**Other findings**

- From Xrays, the total capacity of the cranium is smaller by 5 to 10 cc.
- On postmortem of the children who died, there were less number of sulci and gyro (convolutions)
- Later
PREAMBLE


2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Young Vivian, Minister of Education for Niue. Ministers from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon islands and Tonga attended the meeting, with Australia, Nauru, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu also represented. Observers from the ADB, DFID (UK), UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, SPC, SPREP and the USP were present.

3. Ministers deliberated on issues concerning the delivery of basic education to the peoples of the Pacific. Education Ministers noted that Leaders, in calling for this meeting, had asked them to consider the work of the Forum Economic Ministers in the area of human resources development, whose deliberations are set out in Annex 1.

Pacific Vision for Education

4. Ministers recognised that basic education is the fundamental building block for society. If this foundation is weak, then livelihoods are more difficult to pursue or students struggle in the higher reaches of education. Furthermore, through the teaching of health, culture, governance and other subjects basic education can engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and which, when combined with an enhancing of employment opportunities, creates a higher level of personal and societal security.

5. As a first step Ministers agreed on the following as the vision and goals for Forum members:

**Vision**

Basic education as the fundamental building block for society should engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and provide the foundations for vocational callings, higher education and life long learning. These when combined with enhanced employment opportunities create a higher level of personal and societal security and development.

Forum members recognised that development of basic education takes place in the context of commitments to the world community and meeting the new demands of the global economy, which should be balanced with the enhancement of their own distinctive Pacific values, morals, social, political, economic and cultural heritages, and reflect the Pacific’s unique geographical context.

**Goal**

To achieve universal and equitable educational participation and achievement. To ensure access and equity and improve quality and outcomes.

6. In adopting this Vision Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Dakar 2000 Education for All Framework for Action goals and noted the actions being taken at the national level for the development of strategic plans. These goals are:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls and children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

7. In addition Ministers committed themselves to the following specific strategies:

- The promotion of different forms of secondary and vocational education.
- To review the curricula of training centres and non-formal education programmes to match skills taught (outcomes) with the
requirements for employment and livelihood in the traditional subsistence economy.
· Develop non-formal education and work-based programmes in cooperation with civil society and the private sector.
· Promote the role of civil society in providing non-formal skills training.

Where to Now?

8. Ministers noted that while basic education has been a priority in the region, this has not been turned fully into effective action. While recognising that some countries have made progress, and that the severity of problems with basic education varies significantly between countries, it appears that significant gains could be made through Forum members sharing their experiences - both successes and failures - in basic education. Ministers also noted the potential for sharing resources - particularly for inputs into basic education systems - across the region.

National and Regional Development Context

9. Ministers recognised that basic education has, by its nature, very broad and strong impacts on the potential for private sector development and for the success of students pursuing higher education. But it should also be acknowledged that it is a very intensive user of manpower and financial resources. The goals set for basic education and the strategies to be followed therefore need to be well integrated with national planning policies and planning frameworks.

10. Ministers therefore agreed that there is an urgent need for each country, in line with national development goals and commitments, to improve basic educational planning, through clearly identifying desired basic educational outcomes and the learning needs of individuals and groups in that society. To this end it was further agreed that:

(a) national planning for universal and equitable educational participation must take into account:
   (i) the cultural, moral social, political and economic contexts of education;
   (ii) the inter-relationships of the various levels of educational provisions and institutions.

(b) in order to develop sound policy and planning frameworks it is essential to improve:
   (i) data and information collection and retrieval systems to provide accurate, timely, and relevant data for informed policy decisions;
   (ii) the capacity of national systems to develop coherent national educational plans through high level training of key personnel and strengthening of the human and material resources of planning units.

(c) that Ministers of Education consider the setting up of a regional qualifications framework, covering basic, primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary education, benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications.

Delivery and Resourcing of Basic Education

11. Ministers acknowledged that there are weaknesses in education systems as indicated by drop-out and repeater figures and in terms of basic literacy and numeracy achievements. The school curricula, despite attempts at redirecting these to vocational needs, remain largely academic and do not fully meet needs of all Pacific students. The identified weaknesses in education systems can be summarised as:

· alienation and poor performance of students, the result of:
  · the quality and number (relative to student numbers) of teachers;
  · the relevance and lack of Pacific foundation of the curriculum; and
  · poor or unresponsive departmental and school managements;
· poor resourcing of basic education, which could be overcome through:
  · re-prioritise education and national government spending;
  · improving the effectiveness of education spending; and
  · developing partnerships with CSO, NGOs and the private sector.

12. Ministers identified an urgent need to address the provision of education to deliver better quality development and education outcomes, which has implications for the whole process of education, and requires policy, planning, and resources to achieve improvements in:

· the competence and confidence of teachers with relevant skills and knowledge;
· curriculum programmes;
· the quality and relevance of teaching materials;
· teaching methods and learning styles;
· school management and culture;
· the relationships with communities and stakeholders;
· the quality of school buildings;
· assessment procedures, which should be valid and reliable;
· the participation of all stakeholders in the planning and delivery of education.
13. In reviewing the elements affecting the quality of education, ministers further agreed on the following measures:

(a) Early Childhood Education (ECE)
That while continuing with collaborative efforts with NGOs, church and community organisations in providing ECE to pre-school age children, governments should address resource requirements for ECE teacher training and assess how ECE teachers can obtain appropriate status and conditions of employment.

(b) Pre-Service Teacher Education
(i) That upgrading of pre-service training programmes, staffing and resources at the training institutions that is either in process or is being anticipated in most training institutions, be fully addressed as a matter of priority.
(ii) That induction for beginning teachers is formalised involving teacher training institutions, CDUs, field staff and schools.
(iii) That small island states that do not have their own training institutions consider establishing teachers’ centres to be used for complementary training of local trainees who are undertaking USP and other institutions’ extension courses in Education as a route to a teacher qualification. A substantive position of a co-ordinator of the teachers’ centre be established and filled by a qualified teacher educator who would also supervise school-based training of trainees.

(c) In-Service Teacher Education
(i) That existing data bases be further utilised to generate teacher supply projections where necessary and plans be implemented to train all untrained teachers as soon as practicable.
(ii) That upgrading programmes be considered for serving teachers who are found to be partially trained as assessed against the level of pre-service training currently being offered in most FIC primary training institutions.
(iii) That intensive in-service courses targeting specific needs of teachers such as proficiency in English and skills in multi-class teaching be mounted in countries where teachers need such courses.

(d) Classroom Teaching
In accordance with the local database on the conditions that exist in schools in terms of the quality of classrooms and physical facilities, attention be paid to upgrading those classrooms which are currently impoverished and provide a sub-standard educational environment for teaching and learning.

(e) Community Support
That the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school be strengthened in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.

(f) Towards Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching
That enhancing professionalism in teaching, whereby the profession is guided by the ethos, standards and ethics of the profession itself, be promoted as a long-term goal for enhancing teachers’ capacity for managing changes and their identity as teachers.

14. Ministers acknowledged the value of using the indigenous language as the language of instruction in the early years of education.

15. Ministers noted that the development of information technology had greatly advanced the infrastructure available for the delivery of all education services, including in-service training of teachers, and urged that institutions involved in education services make greater use of this technology. However, Ministers noted that the cost of accessing this infrastructure is a serious impediment to widening its use and requested that their governments urgently implement the measures recommended by Forum Economic Ministers and Communication Ministers to address this issue.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

16. Ministers noted that a high proportion of students in the education system do not, or are unable to, aspire to carrying on their education through to formal tertiary education, and that the needs of these students were not yet adequately catered for. Having noted the Report of the Technical/Vocational Taskforce on Education and Training in the Pacific Region, Ministers agreed:

(a) that, in accordance with existing national provisions for TVET, governments should endeavour to raise the status of TVET in national education policies;
(b) that governments should endeavour to include TVET as a priority in their national plans;
(c) that any work on financing of education include studies on how best to finance TVET, including through partnerships with the private sector, and associated requirements for the setting of a qualifications system; and;
(d) that UNESCO be invited to organise a Pacific Conference on the delivery of TVET skills development programmes and the provision of new programmes, with special consideration of standards and comparability of qualifications within and between Pacific countries.

Financing Education

17. The key issue in improving the quality of basic education is its financing, an area that needs significantly more work. Ministers noted that governments have come under increasing community pressure to allocate greater public resource to improving the overall
quality of basic education, and to bridge the yawning gaps between rural and urban education resources and outcomes.

18. Ministers acknowledged that with communities having to take on the bulk of the financial responsibility for preschools, this significantly disadvantages children from poorer families, despite evidence that “preschoolers” subsequently perform better academically, relative to those who did not attend pre-school. In this context Ministers also acknowledged that the current financing of education in the Pacific tends to emphasize secondary and post-secondary education at the expense of basic education.

19. These issues remain to be addressed and there is an urgent need for strong empirical research to identify the factors that are leading to good academic outcomes, and to reallocate financial resources to boost the efficiency and productivity of these factors throughout the education system. In this context the Ministers directed that the Forum Secretariat work with multilateral development institutions and other development partners to:

(a) provide a synthesis of existing studies of financing education and analysis of other financing situations
(b) further examine issues in regard to recurrent cost funding, including consideration of the concept that at least 10% of education budgets should be devoted to non-salary expenses such as books and in-service training and mechanisms through which to achieve this
(c) analyze the implications of current and future funding capabilities and needs in education and exploring effective option for achieving effective delivery of and improved outcomes from education in the Pacific.

20. Ministers noted that a number of problems faced by Forum Island countries could be addressed through:

(a) improved co-ordination among donors and between donors and stakeholders, including Forum island governments; and
(b) finding ways to better merge and share work on the development of basic education within developed countries.

21. Ministers welcomed the focus on human resource development in the regional strategy being developed for Economic Development Funding (EDF) under the Cotonou Agreement. For programmes at the regional level Ministers requested that the Pacific ACP National Authorising Officers and the Regional Authorising Officer take into account this Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

Developing Partnerships

22. Ministers recognised that although governments will continue as the major funder of basic education in order to protect access and equity, government funding alone will be insufficient to provide basic education for all. Greater participation by non-government partners can increase the level of resources available, and increase the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process.

23. Recognising that non-formal education (NFE) is an important strategy for development, Ministers agreed to address immediate NFE needs including budgetary needs, by undertaking the following actions:

(a) provide effective communications linkages between NFE, micro-enterprise and micro-financing initiatives.
(b) establish a focal point (within the appropriate Ministry or department within a ministry) which has close partnerships with NFE providers.
(c) provide an enabling environment by actively co-ordinating NFE initiatives.
(d) develop clear and robust national policy on NFE.
(e) support training at national and regional levels for NFE key personnel.
(f) ensure effective evaluation and monitoring of NFE programmes.

24. In recognition of the partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector already in place in all Forum Island Countries in the provision and delivery of basic education, and to enhance the achievement of national, regional and international commitments, Ministers directed the Forum Secretariat, in association with other regional organisations and UN agencies, to document and quantify the contribution of civil society in the provision and delivery of basic education with the view to developing model enabling government/CSO partnership policies.

Other Issues

Gender and Equity Issues

25. Ministers noted that a key issue is equitable participation and achievement, including for both girls and boys, those from rural and urban areas and other who are disadvantaged in current system delivery. The commitments made under the Dakar 2001 Education for All Framework for Action were also noted and to further these Ministers agreed:

(a) Recognising and building on existing initiatives, and in fulfilment of existing commitments to the Pacific Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Education for All (EFA) and the World Social Summit, to encourage their governments to undertake the following actions:
(i) at the national level undertake gender analysis of education access and quality and use the findings to support education
policy revision and to ensure allocation of resources in support of gender equal education;
(ii) collaborate with Ministers for Finance and Economics to support gender analysis of budget processes in order to
highlight ways in which government budgets can more effectively support sustainable and equitable education and HRD;
(iii) encourage teacher training institutions to utilise existing regional and national services that are providing gender
awareness training and data collection training;
(iv) direct vocational and technical training institutions to provide data on enrolment and completion rates for men and
women to government on an annual basis and encourage them to develop institutional gender policies in line with existing
constitutional mandates and government commitments to gender equality; and
(v) review rules and regulations about treatment of students who become pregnant while in school and those with children
to ensure they are not discriminated against under existing law.

(b) Governments should consider other issues of equity, for example, access, socio-economic and variability as between rural
and urban areas.

(c) Direct the Forum Secretariat to undertake the following actions in promoting equitable education policies:
(i) work with other regional and international agencies to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators and data categories
to monitor equality in education.
(ii) devise strategies to include these indicators and categories in existing and new program activities such as household
surveys and censuses across the region.

Teaching of Governance and Civics

26. Ministers emphasised the importance of encouraging children – as future adults – to participate fully in their societies, to which
end basic education should address human rights, governance, the enhancement of Pacific heritages and participation in the
global community. The curriculum should also encompass safety and wellbeing, including drug use and STD.

27. While recognising that concepts of governance can be reinforced in formal basic education through traditional curricula, such as
history and social studies, Ministers agreed that ensuring that curricula, teacher training and resources cover the relevant material
would be a valuable adjunct to the work already undertaken by civil society. In this regard Ministers agreed that:

(a) Education for governance needs widespread support to be effective and for the formal sector requires explicit government
recognition. In this respect it is suggested that education for governance be incorporated into national educational development
plans as a key policy for HRD and that the component activities be catered for and supported in the national education
budget.

(b) National efforts in education for governance be extended to the wider community, through non formal education, and to
assist in this:
(i) That a first phase of advocacy and awareness programs be undertaken with key stakeholders in education to build
partnerships, networking and linkages aimed at promoting basic education for good governance.
(ii) That formal and non formal providers of basic education be represented on national curriculum advisory bodies to
provide advice on social science and the means for incorporating a governance focus in the content and delivery processes.

(c) The lack of information on which to build good curricula and resource materials has been noted and suggests:
(i) That agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and USP be encouraged to set up web pages containing basic source
material on education for governance.
(ii) That the Forum Secretariat or the USP establish a collection of printed source material on educating for good governance.
(iii) That a training component on case writing be integrated into CSO capacity building programs so as to encourage the
documentation of field experiences and practices relating to education for good governance.
(iv) That a directory of expertise on basic education for good governance be compiled for purposes of strengthening networks
and collaboration.

Conclusions

28. Ministers agreed that education is the foundation for the process of economic and social development, and that a mechanism is
required to ensure that the Pacific Vision and Strategies for Basic Education are actively pursued. Consequently Ministers recommend
to Leaders that they meet on a regular basis.

29. Ministers requested that the Secretariat be mandated to facilitate the arrangements to bring about the implementation of the
Forum Basic Education Action Plan.
FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS
Apia, Samoa
July 1999

Decision on Human Resource Development

26. In our first two meetings, Economic Ministers focussed on the urgent need to improve governance, rebalance the public sector and attract investment. Nonetheless, we have recognised that there is a need to ensure that priorities are set such that economic and social development and our other strategic objectives will be effectively targeted. One such universal objective is the development of human resources in support of sustainable economic development. This requires, in turn, a refocusing of formal and informal education activities to better support the private sectors’ needs through widening employment opportunities.

27. Accordingly, we have reviewed the current status and situation of both formal and informal education throughout the region and have considered priorities for human resource development that best meet the regions’ strategic development objectives. We agree that:
   (i) high priority be given to education in national development planning and budgeting;
   (ii) increased emphasis is required on the foundation of training and education at the level of basic formal education.

28. We also consider that continuing efforts are required to bolster human resource development efforts and to this end direct the Secretariat to identify and to work with Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) and other relevant agencies:
   (i) to undertake further research in the delivery of basic level education in Forum countries and define the scope for involving the private sector (including civil society and non-government organisations) in the delivery of formal and non-formal education;
   (ii) to assist with the development of national human resource development and education strategic planning.

29. We recommend that Leaders consider the convening of an ad hoc meeting of Forum Ministers of Education and that this meeting consider the results of the work that we have directed to be undertaken in the area of human resource development.
PREAMBLE


2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, Minister of Education for Fiji. Ministers from Cook Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu attended the meeting, with Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and Palau also represented. Observers from New Caledonia, the Commonwealth of Learning, UN ESCAP-EPOC, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the USP were present.

3. Ministers welcomed this opportunity to review implementation of the Forum Basic Education Plan, and to consider the conclusions of a number of papers prepared in the process of its implementation.

Review of Implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan

4. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and noted the steps taken for its implementation and the importance in this respect of the proposed programme for funding under the European Union’s 9th EDF Pacific Regional Indicative Programme.

5. In respect of the Human Resource Development Programme for funding under the 9th EDF Ministers agreed that:
   (a) further work to revise and finalise the proposed programme, including optimisation of benefits to, and control by, member countries, be undertaken by the CROP Human Resource Development Working Group, including within this process:
      (i) an opportunity for member country education officials to comment on the programme design, by the end of January 2003;
      (ii) the CROP HRD Working Group to revise the programme design, taking into account country comments, for submission by the end of February 2003 to education Ministers and officials for their clearance;
      (iii) the programme design to be finalised for submission to the European Union by the end of March 2003;
   (b) that a sub-committee comprising the Ministers of Education of Fiji (Chair), Samoa, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea review country priorities and then the revised programme design prior to its submission to member countries in February 2003; and
   (c) that UNESCO, UNICEF and PATVET should be more fully involved in the design and implementation of the Programme given their experience and expertise.

Education for All

6. Ministers welcomed the report by UNESCO on progress in implementing Education for All in the Pacific, noting that all Forum island countries had completed their EFA Plans at the end of 2001, and requesting that development partners give greater emphasis to supporting implementation.

Basic Education Finance in Pacific Forum Island Countries

7. Ministers recalled from their first meeting the importance placed on addressing issues concerning the financing of education. They welcomed the paper on this topic and noted the strategies presented for their consideration, especially in the context of external economic pressures on countries and the rationalising of the size of the public sector and political instability, which have reduced some national education budgets.

8. Ministers agreed that they direct their officials to use the paper’s ‘funding framework and guidelines to review finance issues for purposes of annual budgeting and medium term and long term education sector planning. In addition they agreed that:
   (a) development partners be requested to support regional workshops and training to assist with financial reviews
   (b) the Forum Secretariat be directed to use national reviews for further regional assessments and upgrade of the regional review paper on financing education.
Early Childhood Care and Education in Forum Island Countries

9. Ministers recognised that high quality ECCE programmes can benefit countries by promoting intelligence of young children, increasing the efficiency of primary and secondary education, contributing to future productivity and income; reducing costs of health and other public services, reducing gender inequities and increasing female participation in the labour force.

10. Acknowledging that integrated ECCE programmes may be the single most effective intervention for helping children, families, communities, and nations break the cycle of poverty. Ministers agreed that they will undertake country reviews of national policies on early childhood care and education using the guidelines set out in Annex 1.

Basic Education for Children and Youth With Disabilities

11. Ministers recognised that the education of children and youth with disabilities remains one of the most serious challenges facing Governments in the Pacific region. Noting that education is a basic human right and that all children, including children with disabilities, have a right to education, and that the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons has been extended for another decade (2003-2012), Ministers:

(a) agreed to address the issue of access to education for children with disabilities, with a view to increasing the number of such children attending school and, within the context of each countries' situation and capacity and finance available, aim for a target of 75% of children with disabilities able to complete a full course of primary school by 2010;

(b) to assist in, and as part of, addressing this, agreed that national legislation, strategies, policies and plans for education should include specific targeting of those with disabilities, in the ways suggested in the issues paper (paragraph 44);

(c) directed the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with other regional organisations though the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific, to initiate and review regional training and curriculum development for the training of Special Needs teachers with the view to making recommendations on strengthening regional teacher training opportunities;

(d) directed the Forum Secretariat in collaboration with other regional organisations, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Japan and other donors, to explore the possibility of a regional programme to develop capacity that will provide inclusive education for children with disabilities in Pacific countries, the sharing of regional expertise, and provide examples of good practice.

Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Training (PATVET)

12. Ministers welcomed the formation of a regional association of service suppliers for technical and vocational training, and agreed:

(a) to recognise the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) as having a key contribution to make in reducing poverty in our countries;

(b) to the establishment of a working committee to set up policy and procedures leading toward regional acceptance of qualifications and academic awards throughout the Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand; and

(c) that PATVET be invited to participate in the CROP Human Resources Development Working Group.

Next Meeting

13. Ministers recommend to Forum that it agree that Education Ministers convene their third meeting in May 2004.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

(a) Clarifying government roles and responsibilities for ECCE programmes

(b) Undertaking a leading role in the coordination of development partnership assistance in order to create sustainable support and ensure follow-through of development plans.

(c) Developing national plans of action on ECCE that identify the priorities and specific areas of development to include the following:

- Appointing a national ECCE Coordinator and Area Advisors to provide advisory services, monitor development of ECCE programmes, and liaise between communities, PSAs, and governments
- Prioritise curriculum development and implementation in their national education development plans
- Undertake an analysis of teacher remuneration costs in order to inform governments’ future discussions for the financial assistance of teachers’ salaries
- Prioritise the clarification of roles and responsibilities of providing teacher education and training in ECCE policy guidelines
- Conduct an analysis of trained and untrained teacher needs in order to inform teacher education plans
- Develop a consistent, ongoing programme of professional education utilizing national and/or regional tertiary institutions
- Initiate the collection of data in order to monitor ECCE programme operations and inform future plans for upgrading of ECCE services
- Develop policies on facilities, toilets, safe drinking water and educational material and resources for licensing and monitoring.
PREAMBLE


2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Fiame Naomi Mata’afa, Minister of Education for Samoa, with the Honourable Marian Hobbs, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs (ODA) and Education for New Zealand, serving as Vice-Chair. Also in attendance were Ministers from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, together with representatives of Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands. Observers comprised representatives of New Caledonia, Tokelau, UNESCO, the World Bank, the Commonwealth of Learning, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, the University of the South Pacific and the European Union.

3. Ministers thanked UNESCO for its role in convening and supporting the meeting. They welcomed this opportunity to review the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and to consider the conclusions of a number of papers with a bearing on various facets of its implementation.


4. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and noted the steps taken for its implementation. In particular, they noted progress made with the Human Resource Development Programme, through the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Development of (basic) Education (PRIDE) funded by the European Union under its 9th EDF and by NZAID. In considering a proposal for a biennial stocktake, Ministers noted that this should not in itself detract from implementation, and that work on qualifications should not disrupt the delivery of education.

5. Ministers agreed to:
   (a) note progress on implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan, especially through the inception of the PRIDE project;
   (b) initiate a biennial stocktake of progress in implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan at the national and regional levels; and
   (c) approve the further development of a register of qualifications, to be managed and coordinated by the Forum Secretariat.

The Role of Assessment in Improving Quality in Education

6. Ministers noted that standards based assessment founded on defined learning outcomes needs to be introduced at the school level as well as nationally and that each country should develop an assessment framework, in line with its curriculum framework. Such a strategy should emphasise the role of assessment as one of enhancing teaching and learning.

7. Ministers agreed to consider developing national assessment frameworks in line with the national curriculum frameworks.

Review of Pre-University Courses in the Pacific

8. Ministers recalled previous discussion on the issue of pre-university courses at the December 2003 USP Council Meeting and the 2003 SPBEA annual meeting. They noted, further, that the USP Foundation courses were subject to a review, the outcomes of which were to be reported to the May 2004 meeting of the USP Council, and that the USP had accepted the South Pacific 7th Form Certificate, subject to setting specific course requirements.
Language and Cultures in the Pacific Region: Issues, Practices and Alternatives

9. Ministers recalled from their first meeting the importance placed on addressing issues concerning language and culture in the Pacific region. They:

(a) noted the contents of and suggestions in the paper provided by the USP concerning the inclusion of indigenous language and culture in Pacific education;
(b) agreed to consider adopting national language policies as part of the education planning process; and

(c) requested PRIDE to hold a follow-up regional meeting on language policy and practice for senior education officials.

Case study on ICT: People Friendly Network in Solomon Islands

10. Ministers heard of the People First Network, an innovative approach to connectivity for remote, rural and underprivileged communities in Solomon Islands and how it has been applied to deliver education to remote island communities. They noted the utility of the technology and the immediate benefits to students and facilitators. Ministers called on their governments to more actively implement the Pacific Regional ICT Policy and Plan.

Other Issues

11. The World Bank announced that it will be funding and running research for a review of human development in health, education, and social protection. There will be formal presentations at ministerial meetings and workshops to discuss outcomes.

Next Meeting

12. Ministers agreed to reactivate the sub-committee established in Suva in 2002, with the inclusion of FSM, to monitor regional activities, including PRIDE, on their behalf.

13. Ministers recommend to Forum that it agree that Education Ministers convene their fourth meeting in May 2005.

PIFS
Apia, Samoa
29 January 2004
Early Childhood Development

A good start to life within a nurturing family environment is the basic foundation for the child's future growth and development.