



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



WCECCE
World Conference
on Early Childhood Care and Education
Moscow, Russian Federation
27-29 September 2010

Building the Wealth of Nations

CONFERENCE CONCEPT PAPER





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Concept Paper

The World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education
(ECCE):

Building the Wealth of Nations

DIVISION OF BASIC EDUCATION
MARCH, 2010

**World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):
Building the Wealth of Nations**

- Dates: 27-29 September 2010 (3 days)
- Venue: Moscow, the Russian Federation
- Organized by: UNESCO and the Russian Federation
- Host Country: The Russian Federation
- Category: Category IV (UNESCO classification)
- Participants: 1000 participants from 193 UNESCO member states (policymakers, researchers, professionals, representatives of intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donor and United Nations agencies)
- Working languages: English, French, Russian (other United Nations official languages to be included as funding permits)
- Overall theme: ECCE as the first and foundational step for building the wealth of nations
- Overarching goals:
- (1) Global reaffirmation of ECCE as a right and its development relevance
 - (2) Stock-taking of the progress regarding the EFA Goal 1 on ECCE
 - (3) Identification of binding constraints in making further progress
 - (4) Establishment of benchmarks and targets to work toward
 - (5) Identification of key enablers for reaching the established targets
 - (6) Promotion of global exchange of good practices
- Expected outputs:
- (1) Conference programme and concept note
 - (2) Regional reports
 - (3) Background and thematic papers
 - (4) Conference communiqué
 - (5) Conference report
- Partners: United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, bi- and multilateral donor agencies, international and regional networks

BACKGROUND

Following extended consultations, the 35th Session of UNESCO's General Conference in October 2009 adopted Resolution 35 C/Resolution 15 to hold the first ever World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) in Moscow City, the Russian Federation, in the fall of 2010 (Annex). The WCECCE will be held as a joint collaboration between UNESCO and the Russian Federation.

The Resolution finds its roots in global normative and operational instruments relating to the holistic development of young children. Key among these are: (i) the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which obligates Member States to ensure to the fullest possible extent the survival and development of the child; (ii) the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (1990), which recognizes that learning begins at birth and as such, Member States should provide for early childhood care and education (ECCE); (iii) the Dakar Framework of Action (2000), which calls for the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE – particularly, though not exclusively, for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children – as the very first goal towards achieving EFA.

The partnership between UNESCO and the Russian Federation in holding the WCECCE proceeds from three premises. First, UNESCO has the mandate to lead the implementation and monitoring of global normative instruments regarding education, the achievement of EFA Goals, and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) pertaining to education. Second, the Russian Federation, and particularly the City of Moscow, hosts some of the ground-breaking theorists and scholars, such as most notably Lev Vygotsky and Boris Nikitin, who have shaped and guided the development of ECCE theory and innovative approaches worldwide. Thus, the Russian Federation and the City of Moscow offered to not only host and sponsor the WCECCE, but also to share lessons of good practice with other Member States. Third, despite the Member States' signing of the aforementioned normative and operational instruments, and despite the well-documented micro and macro development benefits of ECCE, many countries are still to give full effect to these instruments and to realize the development benefits.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WCECCE

The overarching goals of the WCECCE are to:

- (i) reaffirm ECCE as a right of all children and as the basis for development;
- (ii) take stock of the progress of Member States towards achieving the EFA Goal 1;
- (iii) identify binding constraints toward making the intended equitable expansion of access to quality ECCE services;
- (iv) establish, more concretely, benchmarks and targets for the EFA Goal 1 toward 2015 and beyond
- (v) identify key enablers that should facilitate Member States to reach the established targets; and
- (vi) promote global exchange of good practices.

The specific objectives are to:

- (i) heighten global awareness and policy dialogue on ECCE as a fundamental human right and its relevance to individual and national development and prosperity;
- (ii) share applicable lessons of good practice;

- (iii) discuss the progress in achieving the EFA Goal 1, identify binding constraints that limit the progress, agree on a set of benchmarks and targets for the Goal 1 that Member States should work toward and set up a mechanism for monitoring these benchmarks and targets;
- (iv) discuss critical requisite instruments for guiding the scaling up of equitable provision of quality and comprehensive ECCE services, including policy, strategic, institutional, financing, implementation frameworks;
- (v) discuss programmatic and operational elements of effective ECCE services, such as a conceptual and programme framework for holistic child development, important competencies of educators, caregivers and other ECCE (para)professionals, elements for assuring quality of services, including assessment and impact evaluation; and
- (vi) identify areas in which capacity building is required by Member States, subregions and regions, and discuss concrete ways of assisting the required capacity-building.

WHAT IS ECCE?

Formal definitions of ECCE vary. This paper adopts a holistic approach. ECCE services and programmes support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development – from birth to entry into primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings. They take diverse forms, ranging from parenting programmes to community-based and home-based childcare, centre-based provision and pre-primary education, often in schools (UNESCO, 2006). ECCE includes comprehensive measures to support families, such as maternal and child health, micronutrient supplementation, psychosocial support to families, programmes to promote household food security, parental leave and childcare allowance.

Early childhood is a sensitive period marked by rapid transformations in physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. Significant and critical brain development occurs before age 7, especially the first three years of life, when important neuronal connections take place (or not take place). What happens in the early years sets trajectories in health, learning and behaviour that can last throughout life (Martin et al 2000; Malenka et al., 1999; Hensch, 2005; Mustard, 2002). Development in early childhood is very robust. With positive experience, an empowering basis for successful development and learning is laid in the child. However, young children are highly vulnerable: exposure to poor care, deprivation, under-nutrition, neglect and violence impact negatively on and damage the child, often irreparably (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000; Mustard, 2002; Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007).

DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF ECCE

As noted, one important thrust of the WCECCE is to facilitate Member States to achieve an equitable, inclusive and broad-based development by increasing their attention to the benefits of investing in ECCE. Key benefits of ECCE are summarized as below.

Early childhood and maternal health and nutrition reinforces educational prospects

The growing body of evidence on the negative impact of hunger, stunting, wasting and anaemia – resulting from malnutrition and ill-health – on educational prospects and performance is striking. It shows that early childhood care needs to be considered as a serious education and human capital development issue. Children with experience of early malnutrition were likely to have lower scores in tests assessing cognitive function, psychomotor development, fine motor skills, activity levels and attention span (Alderman et al., 2006; Behrman, 1996; Maluccio et al., 2009, cited in UNESCO, 2010). Also, best results are obtained from programmes that combine nutrition and stimulation components, as shown in the 1991 Jamaica study that investigates the effects of

intervention integrating nutritional supplementation with stimulation for stunted children from a poor population group (Young, 2002; 2007).

ECCE improves attendance and performance at primary and beyond

The positive impact of ECCE on participation and achievement in primary school and beyond is well documented (Arnold, 2004; Mustard, 2005; Young, 2002, 2007). Attendance in an ECCE programme can enhance social and emotional development and well-being, language and basic cognitive skills development, and physical and motor development. ECCE can improve school readiness, and nurture positive self-image and learning dispositions (e.g. motivation to learn and discover). It makes enrolment in the first grade of primary education more likely, and increases retention, completion and achievement.

Strong evidence of the above is found in both developed and developing countries. Experience of preschool participation in the United Kingdom was shown to be responsible for improved intellectual development, independence, concentration and sociability in the initial three years of primary school (Sylva et al, 2004, cited in UNESCO, 2006). The gains were higher when children participated longer in preschool education. The pioneering Andersson study in Sweden (1992) investigating long-term effects on education concluded that “early entrance into day care tends to predict a creative, socially confident, popular, open and independent adolescent” (pp. 32-33, cited in OECD 2006, p. 253). The 33-African-country-research showed that the absence of preschool experience correlated with a repetition rate of 25% and a completion rate of 50% or less in primary school (Mignat and Jamarillo, 2003). Children participated in the Turkish Early Enrichment Project, which combined parental skills improvement and pre-schooling, in low-income and low-education areas of Istanbul demonstrated better school achievement, higher university attendance and more elevated occupational status compared to non-participating children (Kagitcibasi et al, 2001).

Early intervention can reduce social inequalities

Research firmly supports that ECCE can compensate for disadvantage and vulnerability, regardless of underlying factors such as poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, caste or religion (UNESCO, 2006, p. 113). ECCE helps level the playing field for disadvantaged children as they enter primary school, empowering them to be confident and successful in later education and employment. The North Carolina Abecedarian study in the United States (2003) showed that at-risk children having poor parents with low IQ levels were able to do as well as their more affluent peers after having participated in an intensive ECCE programme. The same research generated a projection that participants would earn about USD 143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who did not take part in the programme (OECD, 2006).

Participation in an intensive early learning programme enabled poor children to obtain equal test scores as middle-class children attending a traditional preschool programme (Short, 1985, cited in Arnold, 2004). ECCE has also been shown to enhance gender equality among young children as well as between women and men. The proportion of Nepalese girls and boys with preschool experience enrolling in the first grade of primary education was equal, compared to 39% of girls and 61% boys among the non-participants group (Arnold and Panday, 2003). The Zurich study (Müller and Kucera-Bauer, 2001) found that, when affordable childcare was available, the rate of hours worked by mothers almost doubled, especially for single-headed households with one or more children, and that publicly funded childcare resulted in higher productivity and earnings and less dependence on social assistance during the productive and retirement ages (cited in OECD, 2006).

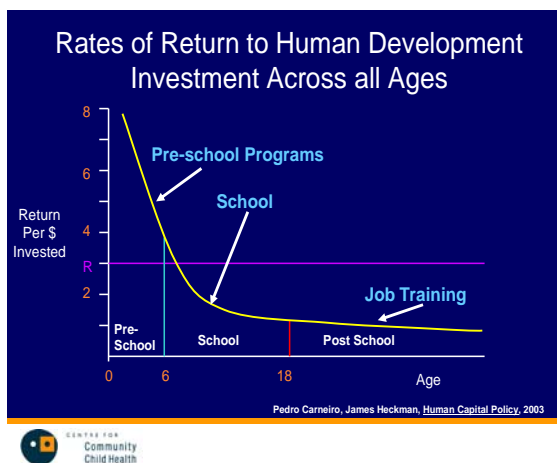
Investing in ECCE pays off

Investment in ECCE programmes have high rates of return. Rigorous evaluations of early childhood programmes are found mainly in North America and Western Europe, particularly in the United States, but comparable research is being done in a growing number of developing

countries. Cost-benefit research has shown that savings are made by reducing dropout, repetition and special education placements for both governments and families. It has also demonstrated that children with quality ECCE experience tend to advance to higher education, obtain employment, have higher earnings as well as savings, provide higher contributions to social security, and are less likely to be on public assistance and commit crimes. Participation in the Chicago Child-Parent Centres – which offers early education and family support for low-income population – was associated with better school achievement and completion, and significantly lower rates of remedial education, juvenile delinquency and child maltreatment (Reynolds et al., 2002). The Perry Preschool study analysing a sample of Afro-American children, estimated the cost/benefit ratio of 1:7 at age 27 (OECD, 2006) or 1:16 through age 40 (Schweinhart 2005). In Bolivia, the Proyecto Integral de Desarrollo Infantil, a home-based early development and nutrition programme, showed cost/benefit ratios between 1:2.4 and 1:3.1 (Van der Gaag and Tan, 1998); and, in an Egyptian study, the ratio was estimated to be as high as 1:5.8 for the most at-risk children (Arnold, 2004).

The Nobel-winning economist James Heckman demonstrated that investment returns in ECCE are greater than those of other areas of education (Figure 1). At a meeting of the Inter-American Bank in Costa Rica in 2007, attended by 30 prominent economists, there was a consensus that early childhood development is the most effective programme out of 29 options to improve public spending and policies.¹

Figure 1



James Heckman and Dimitriy Masterov, (2004). *Early Childhood Education for All – A Wise Investment*, recommendations from the Conference “The Economic Impacts of Child Care and Early Education: Financing Solutions for the Future” conference, Dec. Massachusetts, USA.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Recognizing the above outlined benefits, the past three decades have registered increased global and national efforts to equitably expand quality ECCE services. Worldwide, the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education has almost tripled during this time (UNESCO, 2006).

Globally there is an increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood. This recognition is evident in the first goal of the EFA which is *to expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*, and in five of the MDG goals which relate to the health, nutrition and education of children.

¹ Other high-ranked solutions were: number 2. fiscal rules and intervention, 3. increase investment in infrastructure including maintenance, 4. create a policy and programme evaluation agency, 5. provide conditional cash transfers, and 6. universal health insurance- basic package. See www.copenhagencensus.com

There has also been a notable increase in early childhood provisions globally and more and more governments are developing policies and building systems to provide services for early childhood (UNESCO 2006; 2008).

The global pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased 7% from 33 to 40% between 1999 and 2005. In total numbers, children enrolled in pre-primary schools worldwide increased by 20 million between 1999 and 2005, to nearly 132 million, mostly because of gains in South and West Asia (76%), sub-Saharan Africa (61%) and, to a lesser extent, Latin America and the Caribbean. (UNESCO GMR 2008) (figure 2). However, GER's in Arab States and Sub-Saharan Africa remain below 20%, despite a 43% rise in the latter. The two regions account for almost three-quarters of the fifty countries with GERs below 30%.

Gender disparities in pre-primary education are less marked than at other levels of education. High disparities against girls (gender parity index below 0.90) are found in a few countries such as Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Yemen, and two Caribbean island states, and especially Chad (GPI of 0.48) and Morocco (0.65).

Even if progress has been made as indicated above, to date, **national governments** have accorded little attention to ECCE relative to universal primary education and gender parity.

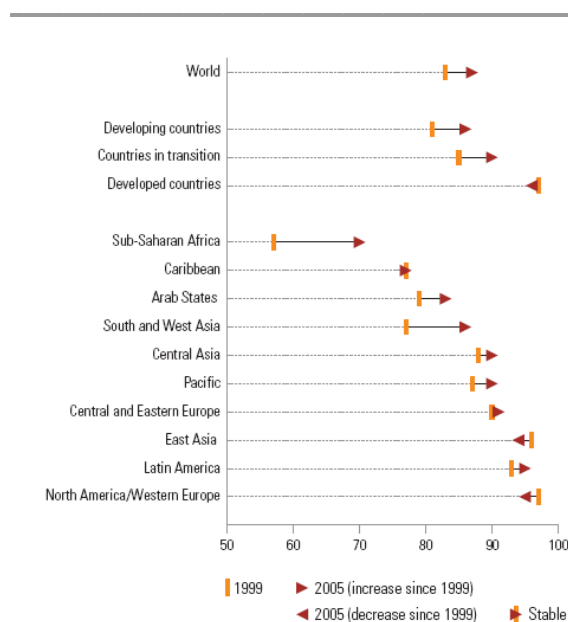
PERSISTING CHALLENGES

The progress on ECCE provisions notwithstanding, critical challenges still persist:

The policy framework is still weak. Currently, at least eighty countries have legislation relating to some aspects of ECCE as the first stage of the education system, thus recognizing, at least rhetorically, its place within broader education policy (UNESCO-IBE, 2006). Thirty countries have at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education – in two-thirds of these the legislation was enacted since 1990. However, even where legislation confers entitlement to several years of ECCE, enrolments tend to concentrate on the year or two prior to primary education (UNESCO-OREALC, 2007). Enrolment of younger children remains very low.

Many countries are not taking the necessary policy measures to provide care and education to children below age three. Few countries have established national frameworks for the financing, coordination and supervision of ECCE programmes for children aged 0-3. While ministries in charge of health or child welfare see basic health services within their purview, the organization of broader care and education for under-threes is often considered the responsibility of families or private providers, the latter meeting the needs of more affluent middle class and urban families. Vargas-Baron (2005) notes that many of the existing policies and supporting legislation are more declarations of intent than realities. National legislation enshrining provisions of international law on children is too seldom backed by strong enforcement. Similarly, non-formal commitments, made through declarations or policies, are often not matched by detailed strategies and adequate public funding.

Figure 2: GERs in pre-primary education weighted average, 1999 and 2005



UNESCO 2007. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008. Paris: UNESCO. Summary Report p.13

Policies may fall short in ensuring the child’s holistic development as well as coherent services from birth to primary education. A UNESCO-IIEP study (2001) reveals that although all education plans give some attention to early childhood, most do not take the holistic approach to ECCE which integrates care, health, education and nutrition. Some Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) may cover a range of ECCE components, such as immunization, maternal health and preschool education; yet, they present the components in a fragmented way (Aidoo, 2005). In many countries, there is no curricular and pedagogical continuity between childcare services and pre-primary education programmes as they are constructed on distinct aims, purposes and contents and delivered by differently trained personnel (UNESCO, 2006; OECD, 2001, 2006).

Related to the weak policy framework, ECCE remains at the periphery of the sector and national development dialogue. ECCE is often excluded from the sector policies, strategies, and financing frameworks. It is often not integrated in national development instruments such as national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers. Many governments may not accord any major role for ECCE programme development and may lack policies and legal “umbrellas” that protect, sustain, and guide programme development in either sectoral or multi-sectoral policies (Vargas-Baron & Shaeffer, 2009). Especially for countries in conflict, fragile states, and those in severe poverty, the lack of comprehensive systematic ECCE policies and sustainable, stable programmes means that many children, especially the most vulnerable, do not receive essential ECCE services. This marginalization often means that ECCE does not receive adequate recognition and investment and remains at the bottom of national priorities for development (Arnold, 2004).

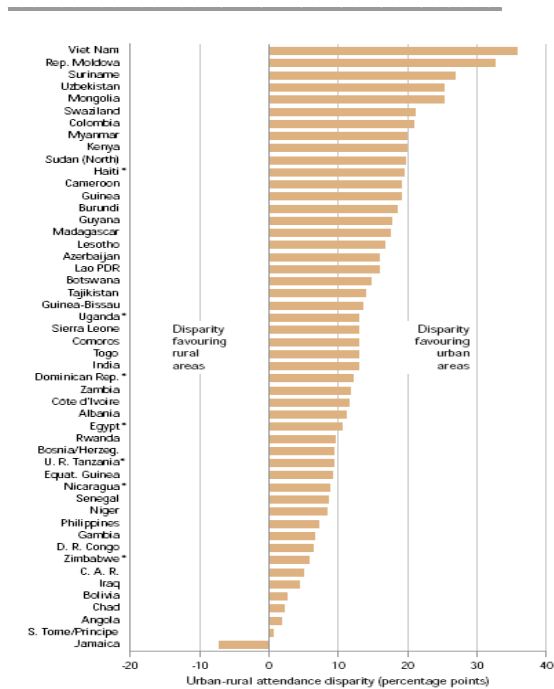
The low priority given to early childhood is reflected in the low gross enrolment gains made (1.4%) over the whole decade ending in 2000 (Myers 2002). This has led to dire projections: “Even if enrolments everywhere increased by 2% a year from now until 2015, in the poorest countries more than 60% of children would have no opportunity to participate in an ECCD programme.” (Arnold, 2004).

Institutional delivery is weak. Despite considerable progress in many countries on defining and articulating policy frameworks for ECCE, many countries lack well articulated institutional frameworks. This is in part due to the multi-sectoral nature of ECCE which necessitates policy decisions spanning multiple ministries (eg. health, education, nutrition, welfare). While the multidisciplinary distribution of responsibility is positive in that it can bring together agencies with different areas of expertise and help to pool resources, in other ways, this form of organization is problematic without well articulated planning and delivery frameworks. Additionally, where no one administrative body has principle responsibility, government may neglect ECCE, and fragmented responsibility may lead to disparities in access and quality. The problem is most acute for the care and education of children under three. The absence of well developed national policy with goals, regulations, quality standards and funding commitments, means that ECCE programmes for very young children are correspondingly sparse (UNESCO, 2006a in GMR 2008).

Access is still inadequate. As noted above, despite overall government progress in playing a more active role in the provision and supervision of children age three or older, their role in programmes for the under threes has been more limited. In general, few countries have established national frameworks to finance, coordinate and supervise ECCE programmes for infants and toddlers. National profiles indicate that in just more than half (53%) of the world’s countries, there is at least one formal programme before pre-primary education. These are located mostly in North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

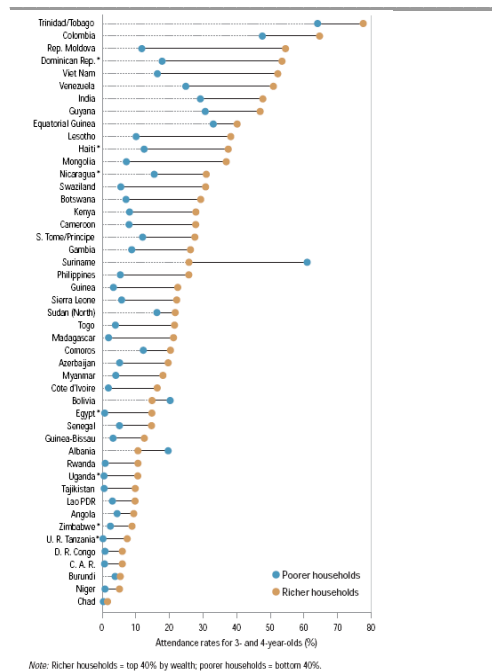
Access remains inequitable. Figures 3 and 4 show that children from poorer and rural households have less access to ECCE programmes than those from richer and urban ones, despite evidence of the considerable benefits accruing from their participation (UNESCO, 2006).

Figure 3: Urban Rural attendance disparities for ages 3 and 4 in care and learning programmes (1999 - 2003)



UNESCO 2006. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations. UNESCO: Paris. p. 142

Figure 4: Household wealth disparities in attendance rates for ages 3 and 4 in care and learning programmes (1999-2003)



UNESCO 2006. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations. UNESCO: Paris. p. 142

Access remains inequitable especially for Least Developed Countries and for marginalized groups. Millions of children from disadvantaged groups continue to have poor access to ECCE services. *Today the challenge is to provide good beginnings for the 559 million children under age five who live in developing countries* (Grantham-McGregor, 2007). Of those, 22% live in absolute poverty and 28% are stunted, resulting in high rates of developmental delays, chronic illnesses, disability, and poor cognitive development (UNICEF 2008; Grantham McGregor et al 2007). In some regions the problems are particularly acute. Ten countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa account for 66% of the 219 million disadvantaged children under five in the developing world.

These regions, amongst others, are also overwhelmed by the rising number of orphans – now totalling 15 million (UNICEF, 2007) – from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and chronic conflicts that affect young children and mothers the most. In addition to these monolithic challenges, the well being of the youngest children is further threatened by the impacts of climate change which are causing environmental devastation and natural disasters with increasing ferocity, and a global economic crisis which is severely limiting

Figure 5: Preschool attendance by human poverty index

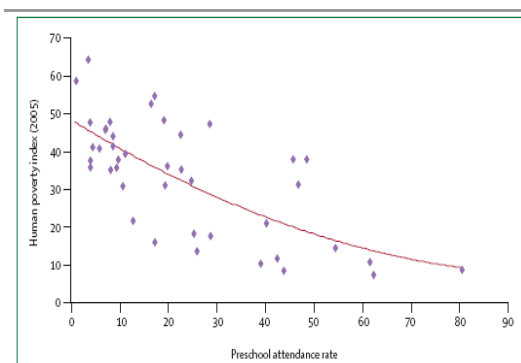


Figure 5: Preschool attendance by human poverty index for 40 developing countries
Data for preschool attendance from the Global Monitoring Report.¹ Poverty levels (human poverty index) are from UNDP's Human Development Report. Human poverty index is a composite index measuring deprivations in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. UNDP, Human Development Report 2005, New York 2005.
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/>.

national capabilities in the fields of education, health, nutrition and social protection, with dire consequences for poor and vulnerable children and their families.

It is telling that **ECCE Programme coverage is negatively associated with countries' general poverty index** (Figure 5), meaning that the poorest countries who need it most to fuel human and economic development have almost no investment in ECCE (Engle et al. 2007; Heaver, 2005; Doryan et al., 2002). While financing and investment may not be the sole drivers of successful ECCE delivery, the lack of resources for ECCE provisions remains a major impediment to scaling up ECCE programmes in poor countries.

Fragile states and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations pose a particular challenge. More than half a billion people live in these states, with the youngest children being disproportionate victims. These countries are farthest from reaching EFA as a whole. They suffer from very low levels of education development and have the worst child-well being indicators.

Although there is no global data regarding access for children with disabilities, **children with disabilities are least likely to be included in early intervention programmes**. Out of 100 million children with disabilities – age five and under – worldwide, 80% live in developing countries where the provision of early education and other basic services tends to be insufficient (Betts and Lata, 2009). This is despite evidence which suggests that one in three infants and toddlers who receive early intervention services do not require special education.

Quality is uneven and mainly to the disfavour of the poor. Quality depends on a number of factors including age appropriate curricula, play facilities, books and other educational materials, social stimulation, health, nutrition and sanitation facilities, and parental involvement. Quality is uneven for a number of reasons:

- (a) Wide disparities exist within and between countries and are poorly addressed due to the lack of consistently available indicators on many of the above dimensions.
- (b) Although not the sole determinant, ECCE staff shortages contribute to poor quality ECCE services. The broader picture reveals that the availability of trained teachers has changed little between 1999 and 2005.
- (c) The shortages of ECCE professionals observed in many countries are compounded by low percentages of *trained* ECCE staff. Analysing 50 countries with available data, the GMR (2008) notes wide fluctuations, from less than 25% (Cape Verde, Ghana, Lebanon, and the United Republic of Tanzania), to more than 95% in 18 countries, most of them Arab States or Caribbean island states. The lack of training on early childhood pedagogy often results in ECCE staff using a didactic, teacher-centred approach which is not suitable for younger children. It may also lead pre-primary teachers to over-emphasize the acquisition of academic skills and give less consideration to promoting social, emotional and physical development. ECCE staff working for children ages 0-3 tend to have less opportunity for professional development, as the pre- and in-service training system tends to be less developed compared to the early education sector. Efforts are also required to make programmes more inclusive for disadvantaged children – such as children of social and linguistic minorities – so that they can learn at par with children from more advantaged families. Such efforts include working with and supporting parents, teaching in child's mother tongue, building on local and indigenous child care practices, and providing specialized support available for children with disabilities (UNESCO 2006).
- (d) **Quality also favours the rich**. There are wide discrepancies in Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs) between private and public institutions. For example, in Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Peru, and the United Republic of Tanzania, PTRs in public schools are more than double those in private schools. This suggests that children in public institutions

have access to fewer teachers, receive poorer quality ECCE services, and can expect worse teaching and learning conditions and outcomes.

- (e) Finally, the lack of a common definition for ECCE or indicators is a serious limitation for effective monitoring and evaluation and reduces the ability of countries to impose quality standards to improve child development services. Data availability remains poor in many countries, and mitigates against efforts to create appropriate targeted ECCE programmes. In particular, there is clear need to build a stronger research and evidence base for different delivery strategies and models including integration with other development challenges such as poverty reduction and supporting children affected by HIV and AIDS.

Financing is inadequate relative to other sub-sectors

In most developing countries less than 1% of the total education budget is allocated to early childhood programmes and even when health expenditures are included, the allocation remains small compared to other education sub-sectors (Figure 7). In most African countries, the allocation for ECCE is even lower, less than 0.1% of the education budget (Karibu and Hyde 2003, p.2).

Development aid also favours higher levels of education and other sectors. The 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report notes that nineteen of the twenty two donors with data have allocated to pre-primary education less than 10% of what they make available at primary level - a majority allocation of less than 2%. As a share of total aid to education, the majority allocate less than 0.5%.

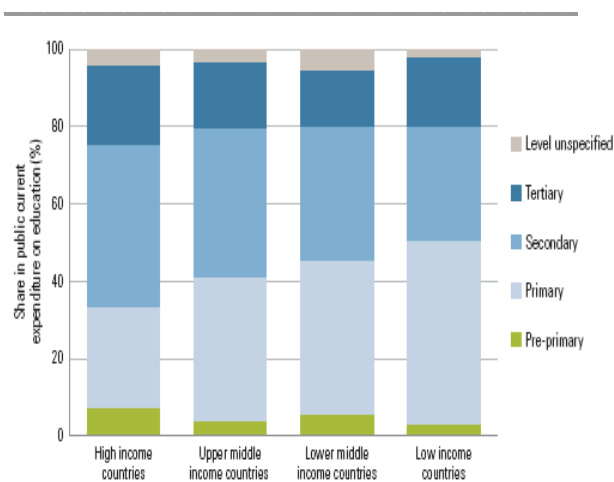
At national levels, the lack of financing is exacerbated by weak or absent financial investment strategies and financing mechanisms. In particular, the current economic and financial crisis is putting enormous pressure on government budgets to reduce social spending with dire consequences for the most vulnerable populations. Safety nets in the field of education, health, nutrition and social protection need to be put into place rapidly to avoid the disproportionate suffering of poor children. Clear financial strategies are urgently needed to ensure that ECCE expansion is inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

URGENT CALL FOR RENEWED GLOBAL EFFORT

Without political will and decisive intervention, the above outlined challenges will continue to deny large proportions of the world's children the benefits of ECCE outlined above. They will equally deny countries and regions the same benefits. The reverse means that the children of the world, countries and regions will actually inherit the adverse effects of not having quality ECCE services for all. Early childhood is an unrepeatable process (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 2003). The risk is too high to contemplate.

In the 21st century, countries' wealth is not defined in terms of material wealth. It depends on the extent to which countries are able to nurture their human capital, with values important in a globalized world, such as equality, justice, and respect for diversity and for the environment. It is in our best interest to enable all children to benefit from the equalizing and enabling power of ECCE, right from the start of their life. As the international lead agency for education, and fully exploiting its role and functions of being a standard-setter, a clearing house, a capacity builder, and a catalyst

Figure 7: Average shares of public current expenditure on education by level, by income group, 2005



for international cooperation, UNESCO calls on the world's global leadership (public, parastatal, private sectors, civil society, and diverse partners) to take decisive action.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR THE WEALTH OF NATIONS!

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Annex

Records of the General Conference

35th session

Paris, 6–23 October 2009

Volume 1

Resolutions

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

15 World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education¹

The General Conference,

Recalling the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states in Article 6, paragraphs 1 and 2, that “every child has the inherent right to life” and that “States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child”; the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), which states in Article 5 that “learning begins at birth”, and that “this calls for early childhood care and initial education”; and the Dakar Framework for Action, which urges, in paragraph 7, as the first EFA goal, “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”,

Aware of the crucial role of EFA Goal 1 in creating the foundation for lifelong learning and development, in achieving the other EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals, and in promoting equity, inclusion and sustainable development,

Welcoming the initiative of the Russian Federation to collaborate with UNESCO in organizing a world conference in the Moscow, Russian Federation, to encourage governments to pay renewed attention to ECCE and to accelerate their efforts to attain the first EFA goal,

Recognizing that UNESCO has a mandate to support Member States in achieving all the EFA goals and to lead and coordinate the EFA movement,

1. *Requests* the Director-General to convene the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education from 22 to 24 September 2010 in Moscow, Russian Federation, in order to reaffirm the importance of EFA goal 1 in the EFA and other development agendas, to identify policy gaps in early childhood care and education (ECCE) and develop concrete strategies for addressing them in the run-up to 2015 and beyond, to provide a global platform for policy dialogue, and to promote exchange of good practices in ECCE policy development and implementation;
2. *Calls upon* the Member States and UNESCO partners, intergovernmental organizations, other United Nations bodies and the private sector, to provide financial support, including extrabudgetary resources, for the World Conference and the regional preparatory processes;
3. *Invites* UNESCO Member States and partners, intergovernmental organizations, other United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society to cooperate in the preparation of the World Conference at both the regional and international levels, and to engage in follow-up actions.

¹ Resolution adopted on the report of the ED Commission at the 16th plenary meeting, on 22 October 2009.

TO KNOW MORE:

For updated news of the Conference, please visit the Website at www.unesco.org/new/en/world-conference-on-ecce/

Or contact us by e-mail at wcec@unesco.org
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WCECCE
World Conference
on Early Childhood Care and Education
Moscow, Russian Federation
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