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Policies on Early Childhood Care and Education: Their Evolution and Some Impacts

Emily Vargas-Barón

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Policies on Early Childhood Care and Education: Their Evolution and Some Impacts

Emily Vargas-Barón
The RISE Institute

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Abstract

This study presents some of the major drivers and challenges encountered in policy planning for early childhood care and education (ECCE), an analysis of the evolution of ECCE policy planning in all world regions from before 2000 to the present, and data regarding the current national and regional distribution of ECCE policies, strategic plans and laws.¹ As of July 2014, at least 68 countries had adopted one or more of these ECCE policy instruments. An additional 10 countries are reliably reported to have adopted policy instruments, and 23 countries are currently preparing them. Country case studies on policy development and initial implementation are provided, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Myanmar and Rwanda.² Finally, salient conclusions and recommendations are offered.

1. Introduction

This study reviews the evolution of policy planning for early childhood care and education (ECCE) in all world regions and discusses salient impacts resulting from conducting policy planning processes and implementing policy instruments. The policy instruments studied include national ECCE policies, strategic plans and laws.

National ECCE policies are multisectoral and they usually include the following sectors: education, health, nutrition, sanitation, and protection. They provide a general framework for operational planning, including the vision, mission, goal, core concepts, objectives and strategies for ECCE. A few ECCE policies are, in actuality, brief ‘policy statements’ that present the general intention of the country to focus investments on all aspects of young child development. Policy statements rarely provide sufficient guidance for expanding and improving comprehensive ECCE services and activities.

National ECCE strategic plans (often simply called national ECCE strategies) usually are operational plans, which are developed to guide the implementation of an

¹ The term ECCE is used in this study due to UNESCO’s decision to employ this term in English. ECCE is understood to stand for ECD, ECCD, ECEC, ECED, IECD, IECCD and other terms that nations use to refer to multisectoral and/or integrated approaches to early childhood systems and services. Of these English terms for ECCE, the ones most frequently used throughout the world are ECD and ECCD.

² I wish to express my deep gratitude to the following national specialists who responded to a survey questionnaire that I sent them: Ms. Selena Bajractarevic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Vital Didonet (Brazil), Ms. Carolina Cuevas (Colombia), Mr. Janvier Gasana and Ms. Venerande Kabarere (Rwanda), and Dr. Thein Lwin and Dr. Aye Aye Yee (Myanmar). In addition, Mr. Javier Saenz Core, Consultant (Argentina) was very helpful. These leaders are some of the unsung heroes of successful national ECCE movements. May their dedication inspire others to follow their lead!

ECCE policy. As will be shown in this study, several countries have prepared both ECCE policies and strategic plans. However, some national ECCE strategic plans have been developed without the guidance of an ECCE policy. When this occurs, strategic plans tend to assume many of the attributes of a national ECCE policy. ECCE strategic plans usually include a detailed action plan that specifies the activities and services that are to be developed under each strategic priority, including the tasks, steps or phases of activities and service implementation, responsible agencies involved, indicators and targets, and annual budgets per task.

National ECCE laws tend to focus on general guiding principles and regulations. Usually they are briefer than ECCE policies and strategic plans. As will be seen in this study, relatively few multisectoral ECCE laws exist. This may be due to the need to ensure multisectoral coordination within the executive branch of government; activities that are often best led and managed by the executive branch.

Bylaws, regulations, decrees, and standards for services, personnel and their performance have not been included in this review. Usually they are developed as a result of the adoption of ECCE policies, strategic plans or laws. It is fully recognised that they often play important roles in implementing policies.

Every effort has been made to identify and obtain copies of all of the multisectoral ECCE policy instruments that have been developed to date.³ For this study, no attempt was made to collect and analyse the many sectoral policies, plans and laws that exist in the five main ECCE sectors. This is due to their often transitory nature and because they rarely provide guidance for multisectoral coordination and cross-sectoral service integration unless a multisectoral ECCE policy already exists. There are exceptions to this, such as the early and preschool education strategies of Montenegro and Georgia, but they are few in number.

This study offers observations on the following topics:

- Main challenges facing governments as they develop and implement ECCE policies;
- A brief historical review of ECCE policy planning activities in several countries and the main world regions;
- Results from a desk study of policy instruments on early childhood care and education (ECCE) collected by the author;
- Results from a brief survey conducted in five countries of four regions: Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEE/CIS); Brazil and Colombia (Latin America); Myanmar (Southeast Asia); and Rwanda (Sub-Saharan Africa);⁴ and

³ Readers are encouraged to send copies of national ECCE/ECD policy instruments that have been officially adopted to the author: vargasbaron@hotmail.com

⁴ The author is currently conducting an in-depth study of these and other aspects of early childhood policy planning processes, instruments and their implementation and impacts in many nations.

- Major conclusions derived from these five case studies and a few recommendations regarding the expansion and improvement of ECCE policy planning and implementation.

Many national multisectoral ECCE policies have been developed in spite of various daunting challenges in regions and nations. The following section discusses some of the major challenges and barriers that have been encountered.

2. Main challenges facing governments that develop and implement ECCE policies

Abundant experience and various studies have revealed that governments face many challenges and barriers in developing and implementing multisectoral ECCE policy instruments that seek to ensure universal access to comprehensive early childhood care and education services, and especially those that target poor and marginalised families.

The following discussion presents selected policy challenges as well as observations regarding some of the ways that they have been overcome. Salient challenges have been disaggregated into external and internal contexts.

a. External challenges

Dictatorships and other authoritarian regimes

One of the most difficult challenges is conducting ECCE policy-planning processes in countries with dictatorships and other types of authoritarian regimes. Sometimes countries led by an authoritarian regime may seem easy to work in because a “leader” declares that everyone will support ECCE policy planning, and consequently relevant ministries appear to become actively engaged in policy planning processes. However, later they may not follow through on their promises. Sometimes such leaders mainly address children’s issues in order to meet the requirements of international conventions, and subsequently they may not follow through with policy adoption and/or implementation. The political will on the part of some ministers who personally profit from the regime may turn out to be quite low. It is important for ECCE policy planners to be aware of such potential challenges from the outset.

Options: *A high proportion of nations have authoritarian regimes. Some policy advisors refuse to work in these countries. However, if we were to wait for them to become more democratic, generations of children would not benefit from the ECCE services that they require. Therefore, it is essential to make every effort to take advantage of an authoritarian leader’s openness to ECCD policy planning and help ministries and civil society organisations in their efforts on behalf of young children. In such countries, it is very important to conduct a participatory planning process, so that many people in the country at central, regional and municipal levels will become seized with the potential of expanding and improving ECCE services. If this occurs, we find that ECCE*

leaders will begin to implement many aspects of an ECCE policy even without official policy adoption and strong central support for implementation. Abundant experience has demonstrated that non-participatory approaches to policy planning tend to result in policy documents that are never implemented (Crouch, L. and Healey, F. H. (1997).

However, should an authoritarian leader and a nation's key ministers express absolutely no interest in developing an ECCE policy instrument, there is little point in insisting on developing a policy in the face of overwhelmingly negative odds. Support for individual ECCE situation analyses, programmes, and training systems might be considered instead.

Lack of “political will”

Interestingly, a lack of “political will” at the highest levels is often more challenging than working with authoritarian regimes. Sometimes a lack of political will may be linked to perceived political interests, certain cultural, national or personal values, or simply to a lack of opportunities to learn about ECCE systems of services and their many short-, medium- and long-term benefits.

A lack of political will is not always clearly evidenced. A minister or deputy minister may mouth words of support; however, behind the scenes s/he may quietly torpedo participation in the ECCE policy planning process. In addition to a lack of political will at the central level, a similar lack of interest at regional and/or municipal levels can occur, and can substantially derail policy implementation.

Options: *Policy advocacy should begin upon the initiation of the policy planning process. The points of resistance and support should be clearly identified early on in the policy planning process. Policy advocacy should include presentations on the benefits and rates of return on investment of ECCE, the key service gaps and needs of the country, and the ways that increased investment in ECCE could benefit each sector and the country as a whole in the short-, medium-, and long-term.*

Policy leaders and key decision makers should be invited to engage in small group and private discussions (interviews) that permit them to air their doubts and concerns and share their ideas. Once decision makers realise that short- and medium-term benefits will accrue to them as political or policy leaders, they often become strong supporters of ECCE or at least they no longer stand in the way of policy development and implementation. In many instances these naysayers have subsequently given talks to their constituencies to present their ideas regarding the importance of ECCE services. By involving regional and municipal leaders in the ECCE policy planning process, they usually become strong supporters of an ECCE policy that includes some of the recommendations they gave during the development of the policy instrument.

Rapid turnover in government administrations resulting in little follow through

Rapid turnover in political leadership, including parliamentarians, ministers, deputy ministers, permanent or principal secretaries, and department heads, can be exceedingly detrimental to ECCE policy planning and implementation. This has occurred in various countries during and immediately after policy planning processes were conducted, and it has always been disruptive. On the average, one to two years may be lost in moving ECCE planning activities forward while new decision makers learn how to do their jobs and come to understand the benefits of investing in ECCE – a policy espoused by their predecessors. In a few countries, little could be done to resurrect or update draft ECCE policies.

Options: *Policy planners should try to anticipate such situations by ensuring all political parties and leaders from different groups are included in ECCE policy planning to the extent possible. At a minimum, the “opposition” should be informed that, should they gain governmental control, the policy planning process that is underway or recently concluded could benefit them as a “quick win” for their new administration – a term used increasingly in a wide variety of countries. In nations with recourse to democratic governance and the rule of law, the policies of prior administrations tend to be upheld.*

Over time, policy instruments are usually amended or replaced. This is often beneficial since national contexts evolve and new plans are needed. However, it is significantly harder to ensure policies will be maintained in countries with authoritarian regimes. For example, in a country with revolving dictatorships, it is very challenging to ensure that a new dictator and his followers will honour prior policy commitments. In a few countries, it has proven to be impossible to continue policy implementation.

Decentralisation without technical guidance for ECCE given to regional, district and municipal levels

The rapid decentralisation of ECCE services and budgets that had been centrally planned and managed to regional, district and/or municipal levels, often results in a non-compliance with ECCE policies and plans. This especially occurs in those countries where clear roles and responsibilities have not been delegated to each level, beginning with the central level. Regional and local levels often lack essential training, guidelines and well-designed systems for local management, equity, quality and accountability.

The results of rapid decentralisation have been catastrophic for ECCE services in several countries. Well-functioning ECCE programmes for vulnerable children have been terminated, systems for quality assurance and accountability have ended, and supervisory systems have disappeared -- if it there had been a supervisory system in the first place. In such situations, ECCE funds have been diverted to other uses, such as building municipal facilities, constructing roads – anything but services for young children.

Options: *ECCE policy planners should seek to learn about each nation’s plans for decentralisation and meet with relevant national planners. They should anticipate the usual challenges before they occur and work with national planners to ensure a full plan for decentralisation is included in the ECCE policy, strategic plan or law. These policy*

instruments can provide for the development of training packages for regional leaders, mayors and community councils, accompanied by guidelines for their roles and responsibilities, supervisory systems, and regulations for management, equity, quality assurance, and accountability. These activities should be called for in ECCE policy instruments, and to the extent possible, prepared and implemented before funds are decentralised. In several instances where decentralisation has already occurred and ECCE services have suffered from mismanagement or worse, ECCE policy instruments should address each issue related to building a strong national ECCE system of services at all levels.

Extreme sectorality

A sectoral approach to ECCE is always found in all countries. Nations will continue to work in a sector-by-sector manner if multisectoral ECCE policies, strategic plans and/or laws are not developed. By definition, ECCE policy instruments are multisectoral. They always include sectoral services plus multisectoral coordination and services. Some policy instruments also feature integrated services at local levels wherever they can be developed.

Because multisectoral planning and coordination can be more challenging than sectoral planning, some observers have asserted that sectorality precludes the development and implementation of multisectoral ECCE policy instruments. However, in most nations this has not been the case. In countries of some regions, such as several nations of the Caribbean and Eastern Europe, extreme sectorality has been found. In many cases this tendency has been overcome through using participatory policy planning methods.

Options: *In countries with extreme sectorality that lack a tradition of multisectoral coordination or even collaboration, new incentives have been established that reward sectoral leaders for their participation in multisectoral policy planning. For this to occur, it can be helpful to have the President, Prime Minister or even a First Lady support the formation and work of a multisectoral ECCE committee or council. Once they are formed, policy advocacy and the use of a highly participatory policy planning approach will usually overcome extreme sectorality. When leaders experience the rewards that result from multisectoral coordination and from integrating some services at regional or local levels, they often become willing to establish interagency agreements that will enable the development of multisectoral coordination and sustainable multisectoral ECCE service systems.*

b. Internal challenges

Key internal challenges

Extensive research has revealed that at least eight key elements are required to establish a comprehensive, strong and sustainable national system of ECCE services. They include:

1. Equity and child and parental rights;
2. Multisectoral coordination and local service integration, where possible;
3. A governance system that includes essential structures for policy development and implementation, such as a national ECCE council, an ECCE policy implementation institute or unit, and regional and municipal ECCE committees;
4. Standards and regulations for services, personnel and personnel performance;
5. Quality improvement and resource development, including improved curricula and methods, pre- and in-service training, certification and recertification systems, etc.;
6. Systems of accountability, including supervisory systems, monitoring, evaluation and reporting linked to annual planning systems;
7. Adequate investment in systems that will take key programmes to scale on a phased basis; and
8. Policy advocacy and social communications to promote policy implementation (Vargas-Barón, 2013).

These eight elements should be addressed effectively within ECCE policy instruments in order to help ensure that equity, quality and accountability will be achieved. If they are lacking – and in some policies one or more of these elements have been overlooked – then the implementation of policy instruments may be inadequate.

Options: *When one or more of these key elements is lacking in a national ECCE policy, additional policy instruments usually will be needed to supplement the policy. For some countries, a national law for ECCE may be an effective approach. In others, a policy amendment might be developed. In some nations, bylaws, guidelines and protocols have been developed to fill gaps in ECCE policies. In a few nations where a truly inadequate ECCE policy has been prepared, the country needed to start over again and conduct second, more complete, and participatory planning process.*

With respect to equity, nations must purposefully target specific children, families and communities in their ECCE policies, strategic plans and laws. Research has demonstrated that ECCE services provide the greatest help to marginalised groups and families living in difficult circumstances, including:

- *Children with developmental delays, fragile birth status, disabilities, atypical behaviours, malnutrition, and chronic illnesses;*
- *Families living in poverty and in rural and remote areas;*
- *Communities of ethnic and language minorities including Roma;*
- *Communities affected by violent conflicts;*
- *Refugee and internally displaced group; and*
- *Other children, families and communities in difficult circumstances.*

In their ECCE policy instruments, increasingly nations are stating that universal services will be provided over time on a phased basis, with initial priority given to serving those children, families and communities with the greatest needs for ECCE services. Some of the cases presented in this study demonstrate how this has been done.

Policy implementation

The main internal challenge is the implementation of ECCE policies. Many nations have been successful in implementing major portions of their ECCE policy instruments. However, in a few countries the ECCE policy instrument that was prepared did not provide an organisational roadmap for policy implementation. In others, the roadmap was there but it was not faithfully implemented due to a change in administration, a lack of advocacy with the ministry of finance or planning, or to the selection of a weak lead ministry that proved to be unable to advocate adequately for ECCE policy implementation. In a few countries, the structures and processes that nations had agreed to create were not established, and without adequate multisectoral coordination, the implementation of policy instruments was left to ECCE professionals who lacked decision-making authority.

Options: *From the outset of policy planning processes, open discussions about the challenges of policy adoption and implementation need to be conducted with all participating agencies. If possible, commitments to provide the budgets required for policy implementation should be developed during or immediately after the policy planning process. Often it is useful to have the continuing support of the international consultant and international development partners that assisted with the policy planning process in order to help ensure that the first year of policy implementation will be fully successful. A high-level call for accountability and reporting can also help, especially if reporting guidelines, input, output and outcome indicators, and timelines are included in the ECCE policy and its strategic plan.*

3. Evidence regarding ECCE policy approaches around 2000

At the World Forum on Education for All held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, the author found it to be impossible to secure agreement regarding quantifiable targets for EFA Goal One: *expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (UNESCO, 2000)*. After 14 years, we now have several baselines that could be used to measure a number of indicators over time. Other key baselines should be developed but to do so, additional work is needed to select appropriate measurements. The lack of agreement regarding indicators with measurable targets has resulted in diminishing several international efforts to expand and improve national systems of ECCE services.

In one area, a measurable target for Goal One was presented. Under EFA Goal One, Article 31 stated:

Governments, through relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education

of parents and other caregivers in better child care, building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators, are important elements in achieving this goal (UNESCO, 2000).

This focus on promoting the development of national ECCE policies was appropriate and it was measurable. To some degree, this target has been met. Close to one third of the countries of the world have adopted ECCE policy instruments and many others are currently developing them. For a wide variety of reasons, other nations have yet to prepare their multisectoral ECCE policy instruments.

At the outset, it must be emphasised that as of the year 2000, many relevant sectoral policy instruments existed for young children and they continue to be developed. These policies are usually referenced and reinforced in ECCE policy instruments. As noted before, ECCE policy instruments are avowedly multisectoral, and at a minimum, they serve as an “umbrella framework” for sectoral policies.

To measure our progress, it is important to review the situation in 2000. It is valuable to recall that due to its groundbreaking research on the impact of integrated health, nutrition and infant stimulation on improving child development, Colombia developed its first ECCE policy long before the year 2000 (Super, C., Herrera, M., & Mora, J., 1990 and 1991). Colombia adopted a number of policy instruments for multisectoral ECCE, beginning in 1968 with a national law that established the multisectoral Colombian Institute of Family Welfare. This ECCE institute continues to provide nationwide integrated ECCE services in Colombia (Vargas-Barón, 2006).

By 2000, although many nations had developed sectoral policies related to the education, health, nutrition, hygiene and protection of young children, only a few countries had developed multisectoral ECCE policies. In most nations, leaders had not yet considered the possibility of establishing a multisectoral ECCE policy. As noted in a presentation in The Hague, *“At the international level, IECD [integrated early childhood development] policy planning is still in its initial phases of conceptual and methodological development”* (Vargas-Barón, 2003).

A review of early childhood policies and programs in Sub-Saharan Africa was undertaken before 2000 (Colleta, N. J. and Reinhold, A.J., 1997). It revealed that little policy planning for ECCE had been conducted or was underway in the region, other than in Mauritius and Namibia. This exploratory document served to attract attention to the importance of developing ECCE policies in the region.

By 2000 in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), five countries had developed ECCE policies or plans: Ghana (prepared but not adopted until 2004), Mauritius (1999) and Namibia (1996) (Colleta, N. J. and Reinhold, A. J., 1997; Torkington, K., 2001; Namibia Inter-Ministerial Task Force on ECD, 1995). In addition, the Maldives had established an ECD Strategy Paper in 1999, and South Africa adopted an Interim ECD Policy in 1997.

With respect to Asia, The Philippines developed its national *Early Childhood Care and Education Act* in 2000.

4. The evolution of ECCE policies since 2000

a. The development and adoption of ECCE policy instruments since 2000

As of July 2014, a total of 68 countries had officially adopted ECCE policy instruments. The author has copies of most of these instruments.⁵ (See Annex I for a list of nations that have developed ECCE policy instruments.) For a few other countries, official government publications attest to the adoption of the policies but copies have not been obtained as yet. As noted above, before 2000, seven of these nations had already adopted policy instruments. Therefore, since 2000, 61 nations have adopted ECCE policy instruments for a total of 68 countries.

In addition, it is reliably reported in official publications that another 10 nations have adopted multisectoral ECCE policy instruments; however, as of this writing, no copies of these official documents could be obtained to verify these claims. If indeed they do exist, a total 78 countries have officially adopted ECCE policy instruments.

Another 23 countries are reliably reported to be in the process of preparing ECCE policy instruments. If all of these documents were to be completed and officially adopted, a total of 101 countries would have at least one multisectoral ECCE policy instrument. Potentially, over half of the world's nations will have multisectoral ECCE policy instruments in the near future.

Annex I ECCE Policy Instruments presents the countries that: 1) have adopted one or more policy instruments; 2) have been reliably reported to have adopted a policy instrument, or 3) are in the process of developing one or more ECCE policy instruments.

Most of the ECCE policy instruments are designated as ECCE policies or they have the attributes of policies. A few of them could be characterised as 'policy statements' because they are very general in character and they lack the specificity usually required for effective policy implementation.

A total of 61 ECCE policies exist, and when multiples for a few countries are added, a total of 68 policies have been adopted. However, only 28 strategic plans have been adopted, which means that the detailed planning required for effective policy implementation has not been conducted or at least that an ECCE strategic plan has not adopted (Vargas-Barón, E. and Schipper, E., 2012).

Strategic plans with two- to five-year action plans are required in order to outline activities and services with their tasks, steps and phases. For each activity and service, responsible agencies, indicators, deadlines and budgets need to be specified. Several countries have yet to prepare strategic plans with action plans. In some countries, strategic plans have been prepared but they have not been adopted as yet. For a few

⁵ The RISE Institute will provide an online repository of ECCE policy instruments in the near future.

countries, an ECCE policy appears to be sufficient for providing a framework with actual initiatives carefully detailed in sectoral strategic plans. However, this approach runs the risk of nullifying attempts to develop important synergies through multisectoral coordination and integrated programming. In other countries, at the time of the development of the ECCE policy, the political will or the institutional culture was lacking to develop an ECCE strategic plan.

In six countries, only an ECCE strategic plan was developed. However, it is very challenging to develop an ECCE strategic plan without an ECCE policy because a policy framework is needed to guide the drafting of a strategic plan and its action plan. As a result, basically both policy instruments need to be prepared at the same time even though the document is called a strategic plan. While it is not impossible to do this, it is advisable to first build strong support through a participatory policy planning process while developing a multisectoral ECCE policy, and then prepare an ECCE strategic plan that includes a detailed action plan for a specific number of years.

Although there are many sectoral laws related to ECCE topic areas, only two countries, The Philippines and Argentina, have developed truly multisectoral ECCE laws. ECCE laws tend to be so general that they do not provide sufficient guidance for continuous, comprehensive, multisectoral and/or integrated services for children from preconception to six or eight years of age. The Philippines and Argentina have used legislation to spur ECCE expansion and improvement. They have successfully used ECCE laws to rally sectors around a series of concrete multisectoral initiatives for ECCE.

After passing a national ECCE Act in 2000, the Philippines subsequently developed an ECCE strategy in 2009. Argentina adopted an ECCE policy in 2005 before passing a national ECCE law in 2007. In addition, Argentina is developing strong support for ECCE programmes especially at the municipal level as a result of the formation of a network of parliamentarians. Parliamentarians of many nations are increasingly playing leadership roles for ECCE, and most especially throughout the Latin American region.

This variety of approaches simply serves to underline the fact that each country presents a separate and unique situation with different institutional cultures, which often demand the use of certain types of policy initiatives over others.

Cuba, for example, has adopted many laws, decrees and bylaws that over time have formed a type of ‘policy umbrella’ for integrated ECCE services from pregnancy to six years of age. Although these policy instruments do not constitute a national policy *per se*, they function as one, and through using them, Cuban ECCE leaders have achieved close to 100% voluntary ECCE service coverage of all pregnant women, parents and children in the country (Tinajero, 2012). Cuba is not counted in our list simply because no one leading policy instrument has been developed as yet. The evolutionary policy process of Cuba deserves to be studied closely for its many lessons learned.

It is important to note the critical roles of parliaments and congresses in promoting, supporting and overseeing ECCE policies and policy implementation in

addition to drafting and passing ECCE legislation. An essay on experiences in ECCE parliamentary leadership revealed that parliaments hold a great potential for improving and expanding ECCE services in nations (Vargas-Barón, E., 2011).

When ECCE policy instruments are arrayed by the years of official adoption, the following results are found:

Years when nations adopted ECCE policy instruments

Years	Number of Nations
1999 & before	5
2000	1
2001	2
2002	--
2003	1
2004	7
2005	3
2006	6
2007	7
2008	7
2009	6
2010	7
2011	11
2012	3
2013	1
2014	1
Total	68

When using a participatory approach to policy planning, it takes from 12 to 18 months to develop a comprehensive and culturally appropriate multisectoral ECCE policy instrument. For a variety of complex reasons, it often takes from four months to two years to secure the official adoption of the instrument and to produce the final formatted version, complete with signatures if wished.

Although the pace of policy development appears to have slowed, in actuality there are many policy instruments that are about to be adopted or that are in the pipeline, and yet more countries are planning to begin their ECCE policy instruments. It is expected that several policy instruments will be adopted in 2014 as well as in future years.

b. What types of international-level drivers and challenges have influenced the preparation of ECCE policy instruments?

International drivers

Unquestionably, the prime driver of ECCE policy planning was the adoption of Goal One of Education for All. It promoted the development of ECCE policy planning in many countries in virtually all world areas through the development of ECCE sections in National EFA Plans, and even more, through the drafting of ECCE policy instruments. Without EFA Goal One, it highly likely that far more time would have been required to convince nations of the importance of ECCE policy development and implementation.

Given the likelihood of the disappearance of EFA Goal One in 2015 due to the formulation of a single EFA Goal for lifelong education that will be oriented mainly toward youth and adult education, plus the provision of a weak and conceptually limited ECCE ‘target’ that makes no reference to ECCE policy planning, other forces will be needed to continue to propel ECCE policy work forward at national and regional levels.

UNESCO

After 2000, UNESCO initially provided helpful technical assistance for policy development to nations, with a special focus on Kenya. UNESCO produced many valuable ECCE Country Profiles, Policy Briefs, Country Policy Reviews and Monographs (UNESCO, 2001+). The 2007 *EFA Global Monitoring Report on ECCE* further encouraged many nations to focus more on ECCE policy planning (UNESCO, 2007).

In 2010, UNESCO held the World Conference on ECCE in Moscow that featured ECCE policy planning (UNESCO, 2010).⁶ In addition, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics remains the main source of international data on early education and pre-primary education (See UNESCO Institute of Statistics website). UNESCO has been encouraged by many agencies, including the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, to continue and expand its leadership for ECCE.

UNICEF

Since 2002, UNICEF has given substantial technical and financial support to most of the nations that have developed their ECCE policy instruments. In addition, UNICEF has convened many global and regional workshops and roundtables on ECCE policy planning and implementation. UNICEF has produced innumerable national and regional documents on ECCE planning and programmes in most countries of the world (See UNICEF website).

In addition, UNICEF developed an ECCE module for their national *Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys* (MICS) that has been used as an important source of data for many ECCE policies and strategies (See UNICEF MICS website). Continued UNICEF leadership for ECCE policy planning is expected during coming years.

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

⁶ The volume of essays resulting from this conference will be issued soon.

The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CG/ECCD) prepared Coordinators' Notebooks up until 2008, some of which included articles of use for nations as they developed and implemented their ECCE policies. Lately, the CG has mainly focused on advocacy for ECCE targets for Sustainable Development Goals and Education for All. The Consultative Group includes many international NGOs whose staff members have contributed studies and participated in policy planning exercises in several countries, including CARE, Child Fund, Plan International and Save the Children among others. These international NGOs have been able to develop new large-scale ECCE service programmes due to the preparation and implementation of ECCE policy instruments in countries where they work.

World Bank

During the first decade after 2000, under the enlightened leadership of Mary Young the World Bank contributed leading documents on ECCE and held groundbreaking conferences to discuss the social and economic benefits of investing in ECCE. Several World Bank documents focused on salient aspects of ECCE policy planning (Young, M., 2007; See World Bank website). In 2011, the World Bank provided additional input for ECCE policy planning (Nadeau, S. et al, 2011; World Bank website). The Bank also initiated a project entitled System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER) that lists a wide range of policy documents related to ECCE and provides selected country overviews (World Bank, 2011+). SABER identifies documents that may assist policy advisors and national decision makers to prepare policies and strategies. Country pages of the World Bank website provide some data on ECCE, using educational data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics combined with data from other sources.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

WHO championed the initiative entitled *Social Determinants of Health* that included health, nutrition, sanitation/hygiene, and to some extent, child protection. This initiative helped with the development of aspects of ECCE policies and also complemented international ECCE work conducted by UNICEF and UNESCO (See WHO website). In addition, WHO contributed to the development of several outstanding Lancet series of articles on ECCE, which have been used in many nations to promote ECCE policies and to expand investment in ECCE (Lancet, 2007 and 2011).

Foundations, NGOs and research leadership

Relatively few international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have provided advisory services for ECCE policy planning, quite likely in part because they often work parallel to rather than fully with national governments. Also most international NGOs lack personnel trained and skilled in providing advisory services for national policy planning processes. Furthermore, international NGOs have been unable to attract large contracts or grants for policy planning exercises that must be led by government agencies. Some representatives of NGOs have stated their concern that policy initiatives might reduce funding for their programmes. On the whole, the reverse has occurred

because in several countries ECCE policy implementation has led to expanded programme development for both national and international NGOs.

Open Society Foundations' Early Childhood Programme

In addition to developing the Step by Step early childhood programmes of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the International Step by Step Association, the Open Society Foundations' Early Childhood Programme (OSF/ECP) has established several initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South Asia and Southeast Asia. In some of the countries, OSF has supported or participated in policy dialogue and policy development, such as in Bhutan, Georgia, Haiti and Liberia. In addition, the OSF/ECP has launched an initiative for assisting countries to develop national early childhood intervention (ECI) strategies and systems of services, for example in Georgia and Bulgaria (See the Open Society Foundation website).

The Aga Khan Foundation

The Aga Khan Foundation has enabled policy dialogue and supported ECCE policy planning in several countries where they work (See Aga Khan Foundation website). The Aga Khan University also supports training in ECCE, and it is hoped that this will lead to the preparation and adoption of more ECCE policies in the near future in countries that the Foundation serves.

The International Society on Early Intervention

In 1996, the International Society on Early Intervention (ISEI) was established to expand knowledge on early childhood intervention (ECI) for researchers, clinicians, program developers, and policy-makers in countries throughout the world. ISEI has produced numerous publications that help to guide policy work in early childhood intervention, including the excellent journal, *Infants and Young Children* (See International Society on Early Intervention website). In addition, ISEI offers international conferences each three years that are attended by specialists in ECI and inclusive education from over 100 countries.

International ECD Task Force on Children with Disability (ECDtf)

It is expected that the newly-formed ECDtf will play an important role in conducting active policy advocacy for multisectoral ECI services for young children with fragile birth status, developmental delays, disabilities, atypical behaviours, malnutrition and chronic illnesses. The ECDtf will also focus on helping nations achieve inclusive early and preschool education.

Bernard van Leer Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has distributed various publications on issues related to ECCE policies. Recently, a roundtable was held in Leiden to help develop a policy framework for ECCE quality in Europe (See Bernard van Leer Foundation website).

The RISE Institute

Since 2002, The RISE Institute has provided technical support in over 20 nations for ECCE policy planning, analysis, implementation and research. One publication prepared by RISE presents participatory approaches to multisectoral ECCE policy planning: *Planning Policies for Early Childhood Development: Guidelines for Action*. This document is available in English, French, Spanish and Russian and has been used by many countries (Vargas-Barón, E. 2005).⁷ In addition, other publications of The RISE Institute on ECCE policy planning have supported the global movement for ECCE policy planning, and they reflect its evolution since 2000 (Vargas-Barón, E. and Williams, S., 2008; Vargas-Barón, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014; Vargas-Barón, E. and Schipper, J., 2012; RISE website).

Contributions of researchers and academic institutions

Many researchers have helped to build the evidence base for international and national policy advocacy. It is impossible to mention all of the outstanding researchers on ECCE topics but major contributions to policy advocacy have been made by the following researchers: Jack Shonkoff and his colleagues at Harvard; Arthur Rolnick; James Heckman and his colleagues; Rebecca Kilburn and Lynn Karoly at Rand; and Jessica Ball of the University of Victoria in Canada on the importance of using of the mother tongue in ECCE programmes (Shonkoff, J. and Phillips, D., 2000; Rolnick, A. J. and Grunewald, R., 2006; Heckman, J. J., 2006; Heckman, J. J. and Masterov, D. V., 2006; Kilburn, M. R. and Karoly, L. A., 2008; Ball, J., 2011).

Challenges at the international level

Lack of coherent leadership for ECCE

There has been a lack of coherent international leadership for ECCE policy planning among multilateral, bilateral and United Nations agencies, to say nothing of non-governmental organisations. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO have played leading roles at various points over the past 14 years, with UNESCO focusing on ECCE mainly from the vantage point of the education sector, WHO addressing the social determinants of health, and UNICEF taking a more multisectoral and sometimes an integrated approach. Given the learning process of the past 14 years, these experimental approaches have been helpful; however, it may be time for this field to enunciate some shared core principles for ECCE policy planning based on the primacy of national leadership and full participation in decision-making for the development of ECCE systems.

Confusion regarding multisectoral and integrated approaches

⁷ This publication will be revised and updated during 2005.

At an early point, some ECCE specialists and agencies briefly advocated for the development of “integrated” ECCE policies. However, once national systems of governance were studied and experienced policy planners explained the imperative of addressing national ECCE policy planning as a multisectoral activity with varying combinations of sectoral, multisectoral and integrated services, where possible, most people understood that it is neither advisable nor possible to create fully integrated ECCE policies. A more sophisticated understanding has emerged as various nations have developed councils, committees, agencies and/or departments that play essential roles in expanding sectoral plans, enabling effective multisectoral coordination, and promoting specific services best delivered in an integrated manner in order to ensure the integrated development of each child within family and community settings. These confusions will undoubtedly continue for some time due to differing experience bases and approaches in diverse countries.

Desk studies and central planning versus participatory planning approaches

Eager to support nations through providing the latest research results and using graduate students and others to develop country overviews, various ECCE policy-planning initiatives have been attempted mainly by means of conducting desk studies. Some of these efforts failed and others had limited impact. Some desk study approaches to policy development have been combined with central planning methods wherein international policy advisors basically wrote policy documents without the full participation at all levels of national public sector leaders, national ECCE specialists, parents, communities and representatives of the civil society, private sector and religious communities.

Many years ago, planners in the fields of education and health learned that participatory policy planning methods are much more effective in ensuring the development of a policy document that will be representative of current needs and objectives and will have a better chance of becoming well implemented. Of course, participatory approaches to planning must be evidence-based; however, research results and specific service models should not be imposed on countries. Rather, policy priorities should be derived from participants during policy planning activities that are conducted at community, regional and central levels.

Lack of adequate attention to in-depth policy analysis

In-depth and timely policy analysis is always required, including: assessment of the degree of policy implementation and barriers to implementation; identification of needs for harmonising policies; elicitation of decisions needed for policy priorities and transition articles; identification of major policy gaps; and provision of recommendations regarding key points of the ECCE policy and/or strategic plan. Rather than using previously conducted policy reviews, in-depth policy analyses should be conducted in countries when policy-planning processes are initiated because policy contexts are always evolving, often quite rapidly.

National ECCE policies should include the salient findings of comprehensive and timely policy analyses. All existing and draft sectoral and multisectoral policy instruments related to ECCE should be assessed, and interviews should be conducted with policy makers.

c. What regional drivers and challenges have influenced the development of ECCE policy instruments?

Many regional differences in ECCE policy planning exist due to diverse factors, such as: varying types of initiatives or regional networks for ECCE; differing external guidance offered or even imposed by major regional organisations, associations, networks and/or technical agencies; shared organisational cultures in certain regions; and some continuing impacts of ex-colonial and other major world powers.

The regions differ greatly with respect to the:

- Numbers and proportions of countries conducting multisectoral ECCE policy planning activities;
- Predominance of sectoral versus multisectoral and/or integrated approaches;
- Levels of concern regarding comprehensive ECCE policy issues and services;
- Degree of national focus on the attainment of human rights and economic productivity through expanding and improving ECCE systems of services; and the
- Manifest desire of some regions to improve their general standing through demonstrating leadership in ECCE policy planning.

Following are some observations with respect to the major drivers and challenges in each region.

Caribbean Region

Drivers

Building on regional interest in promoting ECCE in the Caribbean from 1997 forward, the CARICOM Secretariat prepared *Regional Guidelines for Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services* (CARICOM Secretariat, 2008). This groundbreaking document focused mainly on the education sector. Little attention was given to services for child health, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene and protection. It was reported to the author that this was due to major challenges encountered in trying to take a multisectoral approach in the region. Nonetheless, the Regional Guidelines and the participatory methods that were used to develop them led to several Caribbean countries preparing ECCE policies and/or standards, with strong emphases on the education sector.

Since the 1980s, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, UNICEF, UNESCO, Inter-American Development Bank, and other organisations have encouraged Caribbean countries to develop and implement ECCE policy instruments. More recently, a

Jamaican-based international organisation called the Global Child Development Group has provided research studies and documentary support especially for Caribbean countries developing their ECCE systems (See Global Child Development Group's website).

Challenges

Of the 28 countries in the Caribbean, only 5 (18%) have adopted ECCE policy instruments. An additional 3 (11%) countries are reliably reported to have adopted policies, and 4 (14%) are currently developing them. In all, 12 (43%) nations have undertaken ECCE policy work. It may be that more Caribbean countries have progressed in this area; however, much policy work remains to be done in this region.

Renewed efforts should be made in the Caribbean to ensure the full participation of the health, nutrition, sanitation and protection sectors in ECCE policy planning in order to provide a multisectoral policy framework for early child development in each country. The Global Child Development Group might be helpful in this regard because it has championed a multisectoral approach to ECCE.

Given the number of challenges facing impoverished and vulnerable children and parents in the Caribbean, increased policy advocacy is needed to improve the 'political will' of national leaders and to ensure consistent, long-term ECCE policy development and implementation.

Central and East Asia Regions

Drivers

The Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and national leaders have been the main drivers of ECCE-related policy work in these regions. However, only Mongolia has successfully developed a national ECCE policy.

Challenges

Central Asia includes 6 countries, and 8 countries are in East Asia. The lack of multisectoral ECCE policies in countries of these two regions appears to be due to limited regional and national political will and leadership to develop such policies. Several East Asian countries have achieved high levels of policy development for children using only sectoral policies. Their ECCE leaders appear to feel that the sectoral approach is adequate for their countries even though gaps in key ECCE services exist. ECCE leaders in several Central Asian countries have expressed interest in developing multisectoral policies as a way to stimulate the expansion and improvement of their ECCE services.

Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus Regions

Drivers

The main drivers of ECCE policy work in these regions have been: the Open Society Foundation's Early Childhood Programme; the International Step by Step Association; the European Commission; the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA); EuroChild; the European Association on Early Intervention; Eurlayid (EAECI); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) programme for early childhood education and care; UNICEF regional office in Geneva; and UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre located in Florence (See relevant websites in bibliography).

Requirements for accession to the European Union have impelled ECCE policy changes in these regions, especially with respect to systems for social protection and inclusion (SPIS). The European Union has mainly but not solely encouraged the development of mainly sectoral policies in these regions. Some multisectoral policies, including ECCE, have been prepared for education, health and nutrition and protection in countries seeking accession to the EU, such as Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine and Georgia, among others.

Challenges

Not counting 5 (and now perhaps 6) disputed States; there are a total of 29 countries in these regions. Only 3 (10%) of the nations in these regions have adopted multisectoral ECCE policies and another 3 (10%) countries report that they have adopted them. Currently, 4 (14%) countries are reported to be developing ECCE policy instruments. Therefore, before long a total of at least 10 (34%) countries in these regions will have developed ECCE policy instruments.

In spite of major efforts on the part of European and international organisations and agencies to promote ECCE services in Western and Eastern Europe and the need for many of them to join the European Union, until about 2010 attention had not been given to developing multisectoral ECCE policy instruments. Rather, sectoral policies in ECCE fields have been prepared, as has been the case in much of Western Europe.

Partially because of this situation, many serious gaps and relatively low coverage exist in ECCE services in countries of these regions. Furthermore, investment in ECCE services has tended to be exceedingly low in all sectors. Key countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Estonia have successfully used a multisectoral approach to build renewed interest in overcoming sectoral isolation and to expand investments in services for young children in all sectors. Other countries, such as Montenegro, have included selected health, nutrition, sanitation and protection elements in their sectoral policies. However, this approach does not adequately address large ECCE service gaps that exist in these regions.

Middle East and North Africa Regions

Drivers

The Arab Resource Collective (ARC), the regional and country offices of UNESCO and UNICEF, and the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU) have made valiant efforts to promote ECCE policy dialogue and development in this region (See relevant websites in the bibliography).

Challenges

A total of 19 countries are usually listed for the Middle East and Northern Africa region. Of these, only one has an ECCE policy (Jordan). Palestine is reported to have an ECCE policy but was impossible to secure a copy. Algeria is currently developing its ECD policy. Thus, in the near future only 3 (16%) of these countries will have developed multisectoral ECCE policies.

Political realities, rapid changes in national leadership, and general unrest appear to have precluded conducting processes for participatory policy development and for achieving national consensus regarding multisectoral ECCE policy development. Even sectoral policies in ECCE areas have tended to be quite weak.

It appears that the lack of effective regional leadership for ECCE, current regional unrest, and national and regional political challenges must be overcome in order to make substantial progress in countries of the Middle East and North Africa. However, regional and national leaders could place greater emphasis on developing national ECCE service systems and training programmes in order to expand and improve services and pave the way to conducting national ECCE policy planning in the future.

North America Region

Drivers

The North American region, composed of Canada, Mexico and the United States of America, has a multitude of laws relating to many sectoral aspects of ECCE. Various sectoral policy guidelines or special programmes for child development have been developed. The drivers are many; including government at all levels as well as civil society and increasingly, private sector organisations.

Challenges

Although a plethora of single-focus laws and federal programmes exist at central levels, no national multisectoral ECCE policies exist in these countries. In Mexico, many leaders decry this situation, and they have publicly advocated for developing a multisectoral ECCE policy in order to fill yawning gaps in services, especially for vulnerable populations (Yanes, P., 2014).

In the United States and Canada, ECCE policy instruments and programmes have been largely decentralised to States/Provinces and to local counties, parishes, cities and

towns. The result is a complex patchwork quilt of services, which are poorly articulated and result in many gaps in ECCE provision, especially for impoverished populations.

The establishment of national ECCE policies and the expansion of investment in early childhood services would help to guide these nations and ensure that continuous, comprehensive and culturally appropriate ECCE services would be provided from preconception to transition to primary school.

Once again, the issue of political will is critical. In the United States, the following groups are leading advocacy movements for ECCE policy and services: Ready Nation; Zero to Three; National Centre for Children in Poverty; the Clinton Foundation's *Too Small to Fail*; National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); National Governor's Association's *Building Ready States*, and many others (See websites in bibliography). Recent political leadership in the United States has been heartening; however, expanded national political leadership for ECCE is needed for developing a comprehensive national ECCE policy framework and coherent state ECCE policies.

Pacific Islands and Australia-New Zealand Region

Drivers

UNICEF and the Australian AID programme have been the principle drivers of ECCE policy planning in this region, with added support more recently from the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) (See websites in bibliography).

Challenges

At present six nations, including Australia, have developed multisectoral ECCE policy instruments.⁸ No additional countries are reported to be currently developing them. Many of these nations are small island states, and given their limited national resources, it is challenging for them to develop sectoral and multisectoral policy instruments. Many national leaders have expressed their interest in preparing such policies because they have witnessed the accomplishments of Australia, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. However, incremental international support would need to be provided to help them develop and implement their policies.

South and Central American Region

Drivers

Several but not all South and Central American countries have a long history of investment in ECCE systems of services (Vargas-Barón, 2009). A regional network, the *Red Primera Infancia* guided by CINDE, has encouraged Latin American countries to

⁸ Because of several different counts regarding the number of countries in this region, it was decided not to provide a percentage for this section.

develop national ECCE policies. CINDE itself provides graduate studies at the masters, doctoral and post-doctoral levels in ECCE and includes classes on ECCE policies.

In Argentina, a Facebook webpage initiated by Javier Sáenz Coré has gained a large regional following because it provides easy access to ECCE information and documents in Spanish regarding ECCE events and policy planning at regional, national and municipal levels.

Regional and country offices of UNICEF have provided technical assistance to several nations for the development of their ECCE policy instruments. UNESCO has supported country and regional efforts regarding policy issues. The World Bank, in collaboration with Shakira's Alas Foundation, has encouraged Latin American countries to develop ECCE policies. The *Red Hemisférica de Parlamentarios y ex-Parlamentarios para la Primera Infancia*, promoted by the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, has encouraged parliamentarians to advocate for ECCE policy planning in their countries at all levels (See website in bibliography). The Inter-America Development Bank (IADB) has focused on regional and national-level ECCE indicators as a service to the countries in its region. In addition, the IADB has funded some policy-related endeavours.

Challenges

Of the 20 countries in Central and South America (not counting islands), 9 (45%) have ECCE policies and strategic plans or laws. An additional 4 (20%) countries are reliably reported to be preparing ECCE policies. Soon a total of at least 60% will have multisectoral ECCE policies, and it is expected that other countries of this region will join them soon.

Colombia began a multisectoral approach to ECCE policy planning in 1968, and from 1972 to 1976 hosted a pioneering research project on health, nutrition and infant stimulation (Super, C., Herrera, M., & Mora, J., 1990 and 1991; Vargas-Barón, 2006). Based on research results, Colombia developed policies for multisectoral ECCE services from 1976 onward. In some other countries of the region, policy planners and programme directors continue to consider multisectoral coordination and integrated services to be essential to national ECCE development.

Major challenges in the region have included: rapid decentralisation without a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for ECCE policy planning and services; frequent turnover of administrations and the ending of ECCE initiatives begun by previous political leaders; a lack of high-level political will and support for ECCE in some nations; and difficulties in getting some sectors to work together due to long-standing inter-institutional competition. Several countries in the region have successfully overcome these challenges and have developed not only multisectoral ECCE policies but also sustainable national systems of ECCE services (Vargas-Barón, 2009). Other countries of the region have yet to learn from these achievements.

South Asian Region

Drivers

UNESCO, UNICEF, ARNEC, The Aga Khan Foundation, various international and national NGOs, and the Asian Development Bank have all supported the development of ECCE policies and services in the South Asian region. In addition, the demonstration effect of India's extensive Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), begun in 1975, appears to have encouraged most countries in this region to adopt ECCE policy instruments.

Challenges

A total of 5 (83%) of the 6 countries in South Asia have adopted multisectoral ECCE policy instruments, and the remaining country (Pakistan) is reported to have developed an ECCE policy although no copy could be obtained before the preparation of this paper.

The region's challenges lie mainly in the realm of policy implementation. India has been adjusting its policies in this regard, and strong follow-up for policy implementation is needed in each country of the region.

Southeast Asia Region

Drivers

The region of Southeast Asia has a plethora of high-quality policy drivers, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), and ARNEC.

Early on, Feny de los Angeles of The Philippines promoted ECCE policy planning in the region (De los Angeles, F., 2004). ASEAN has developed a number of documents for ECCE policy guidance and promoted ECCE policy planning through its annual meetings of ministers. ASEAN has encouraged that national ECCE leadership be placed in the region's social welfare ministries (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007 and 2011; ASEAN website). SEAMEO's Innotech Regional Education Program developed quality guidelines for the region (SEAMEO, 2013; SEAMEO website). ARNEC has provided a newsletter, an active website, webinars, documents, meetings and conferences to support ECCE policy planning in the regions (See ARNEC website).

Challenges

Of the 11 countries in the Southeast Asian region, 7 (64%) have ECCE policy instruments, and one more country, Lao PDR, has been preparing its ECCE policy for several years. If Lao PDR completes and adopts its ECCE policy, then 8 (73%) countries will have adopted ECCE policy instruments. Of the remaining countries (Brunei, Viet

Nam and Singapore), Singapore has a plethora of sectoral policies and is a regional leader in training for early and preschool education.

Similar to South Asia, this region should focus most especially on policy implementation. Their policy roadmaps are largely in place but expanded ECCE investment and consistent implementation efforts are needed.

Sub-Saharan Africa Region

Drivers

The early work from 2002 to 2009 of the Early Childhood Development Working Group (ECD/WG) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) was instrumental in promoting ECCE policy planning in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). A partnership among the ADEA ECD/WG, UNICEF and UNESCO led to development of the first fully multisectoral policies in SSA (Vargas-Barón, E., 2003). From 2002 onward, policy planning activities were conducted either country-by-country or in clusters to promote inter-country learning. These activities were conducted first as a cluster in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Senegal (2002-2003), and subsequently together in Cameroon and the Central African Republic (2006-2007), followed by separate country by country work, for example in Kenya (2006), Rwanda (2011), and Lesotho (2013).

In addition, the ADEA ECD/WG held International African ECD Conferences in Uganda (1999), Eritrea (2002), Ghana (2005), and Senegal (2009), which increasingly brought attention to ECCE policy planning throughout the region (ADEA ECD/WG, 2002; Vargas-Barón, E., 2008; ADEA ECD/WG, 2009; Pence, A., 2008; Aidoo, A. A., 2008). These conferences have been discontinued even though they were highly successful in inspiring ECCE leaders throughout the region to develop and implement ECCE policies and share their innovative ECCE experiences. It is hoped that emerging and complementary civil society initiatives for ECCE development and research will help to promote both policy development and implementation.

UNESCO provided technical support to Kenya for the development of its ECCE policy and national standards (Republic of Kenya, 2006) but then generally ceased to provide this service. The World Bank supported various nations in SSA, such as Eritrea and Tanzania (yet to be adopted), to develop their national ECCE systems and policies (Pence, A., 2004; Garcia, M., Evans, J. E. and Pence, A., 2008). To expand the pool of professionals in ECCE programme development, with the support principally of the World Bank, the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU) developed multiple-year distance learning programmes for African specialists in core concepts regarding ECCE programming, evaluation and policies (See ECDVU website). Subsequently, ECDVU and The Aga Khan Foundation have encouraged several African universities to take leadership in ECCE pre- and in-service training and research. Much remains to be done in this area.

Challenges

Of the 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 29 (59%) have adopted ECCE policy instruments. An additional 2 (4%) nations are reliably reported to have adopted them and 7 (14%) countries are in the process of drafting their documents. If all countries were to complete their current policies, then 38 (77%) countries would have ECCE policy instruments. This would be a major achievement for Sub-Saharan Africa, especially given the many challenges that governments face in developing ECCE services.

Although the region should continue to promote ECCE policy planning in countries that have not begun to develop their policies, major attention should also be given to policy implementation. Nations require substantial follow up support to encourage them to fully implement their ECCE policies (Neuman, M. J. and Devercelli, A. E., 2012). International multilateral and bilateral agencies, United Nations agencies, and international NGOs should redouble their efforts to assist SSA nations to fully implement their policies, and where they are lacking, help them to develop ECCE strategic plans with feasible action plans.

Unfortunately, the ADEA WG/ECD has not continued to focus on ECCE policy planning even though the remaining countries without policy instruments require substantial support. The challenges of inadequate national leadership for ECCE plus the continuation or outbreak of major regional, religious, tribal and community conflicts plus inadequate systems of governance in several countries have curtailed both the development and implementation of ECCE policy instruments. These are also the countries with the highest rates of developmental delays, malnutrition and chronic illnesses in young children.

New initiatives are required to address needs for policy planning and/or implementation in these nations. For example, the Central African Republic developed a comprehensive and culturally appropriate ECCE policy and strategic plan in 2009. However, due to a subsequent total absence of international support for ECCE programme implementation, considerable community and tribal violence, and the decline and now the absence of a functioning government, it became impossible to continue implementing the policy. Once a modicum of stability has been restored in the Central African Republic, their ECCE policy documents could provide a useful roadmap for the reconstruction and revitalisation of all ECCE sectors in order to serve hundreds of thousands of traumatised children who are living in severe poverty.

Western Europe Region

Drivers

As was mentioned in the section on Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe, and the Caucasus, many major European-based organisations have promoted state-of-the-art national systems of ECCE services in each of the relevant sectors in Europe and elsewhere. This steadfast focus has led to a high level of attainment on the part of most

Western European countries with respect to policies for young children, as reported in *Starting Strong I and II* (Bennett, J. and Tayler, C.P. (2006).

Challenges

However, of the 23 countries of Western Europe, only Malta has developed a fully multisectoral ECCE policy, and France, a nation with virtually nationwide coverage of *école maternelle* services, is currently preparing an ECCE policy. In spite of all of the groups promoting ECCE in Western Europe, developing multisectoral ECCE policies has not been a focus in the region. It is unlikely that many nations will develop multisectoral ECCE policies in the foreseeable future because of their sectoral traditions. However, several of these countries have not developed fully continuous and comprehensive ECCE systems. Policy analyses and multisectoral ECCE policies or strategies might help them to focus more on the needs of vulnerable populations within their borders. Given the general excellence of several sectoral ECCE systems in Western Europe, these nations will continue to inspire other countries throughout the world.

This general overview of the evolution of global ECCE policy planning is complemented below by country analyses regarding policy development and implementation.

5. Five country case studies

With the goal of providing some insight into varied experiences in ECCE policy development and implementation, country case studies on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Myanmar and Rwanda are presented below.

These five case studies are neither representative of their regions nor of the full panorama of countries involved in ECCE policy planning. They were chosen largely because the author knows key members of national ECCE teams who have participated in policy development and implementation. A survey was designed and sent to each country team. Salient results are presented below. Future research on this topic, including in-depth field interviews and observations, is currently underway.

With the exception of Colombia that has a long tradition of ECCE policy planning, these countries adopted their ECCE policy instruments fairly recently. Therefore, it is too soon to measure progress using national indicators related to child status and service outcomes. Nonetheless, key approaches to policy planning and some initial implementation inputs and outputs have been identified.

a. Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska

The complex State of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has two main entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS).

The entities have very different systems of governance, including cantonal governments that are only found in FBiH. This situation would appear to present insurmountable challenges for conducting effective and participatory processes for national ECCE policy planning. However, this proved not to be the case.

By beginning ECCE programme initiatives while conducting policy-planning processes in each entity, ECCE specialists and many people from all levels of the nation became involved in ECCE policy issues. Through sharing programme development activities and participating in interactive training workshops, they developed collegial relationships, many friendships, and a notable level of mutual trust regarding ECCE issues. After establishing similar community-level ECCE programmes and conducting situation analyses in each entity, the entities continued to collaborate while working independently to develop entity ECCE policies, and subsequently a State-level umbrella ECCE policy that was based on the entity policies.

In October 2009, each entity established its own Working Group for Early Childhood Development representing government and civil society to develop both ECCE programmes and policy instruments for children from preconception to age 10. The age of 10 was selected because it marks the beginning age of national youth policies. They prepared situation analyses, conducted participatory consultation workshops at all levels, and interviewed key decision makers. They also conducted public discussions and presentations, media events and a variety of consultative meetings at every level for securing local policy input, conducting policy advocacy, and raising general awareness of the needs and status of young children. In addition, State and entity ministries, national NGOs, and local communities reviewed various drafts of the ECCE policies. Many comments were made, and they led to major revisions in the documents. One commentator observed, *“The Working Groups believe they [these reviews] were very effective given the very complicated administrative structure of BiH and shared responsibilities of stakeholders and given that these Policies are the very first multi-sectoral documents in the country.”*

The ministries that led ECCE policy planning processes were the following: Ministry of Civil Affairs for the Framework Policy in BiH, Federal Ministry of Education and Science for FBiH, and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for RS. Strong participants in ECCE policy planning included: Federal Ministry of Health; Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; RS Ministry of Education and Culture; FBiH and RS Public Health Institutes; several national NGOs; cantons in FBiH; and local communities.

The *Policy for Early Childhood Development* in the Republika Srpska, 2011-2016 was adopted on 24 March 2011. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted its *Policy for Early Childhood Development* in 11 May 2011. These two entity-level policies were very similar in content, reflecting the degree of consensus achieved in each entity. In addition, the Federation also adopted a *Strategic Plan for improving Early Childhood Development* in 2012 but Republika Srpska has not prepared a strategic plan as yet

because at the time they faced an economic situation that precluded assuming additional financial obligations in the entity. It is hoped that RS will adopt a strategic plan soon.

Subsequently, the Federation developed a State-level *Framework Policy for Early Childhood Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina* that was adopted on 7 March 2012. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also progressively developing ECCE agreements at the Cantonal level in order to ensure sustainable cantonal support and funding will be available for ECCE services throughout the Federation.

UNICEF was instrumental in promoting the participatory development of these policy instruments. In collaboration with its national and international partners, UNICEF has continued to be highly active in policy implementation.

It is important to note that the implementation of the policies and FBiH strategic plan began well before the adoption of the policy instruments. In a way, the policies and strategic plan codified what was already ongoing, and the participatory approach was reported to be essential to building increased support for policy implementation.

Since the passage of these four national ECCE policy instruments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the following activities have been implemented:

- Both entities have continued to establish and expand community-level Integrated ECD (IECD) Centres, including comprehensive services for children and parents from preconception to primary school entry. As of July 2014, IECD Centres have been established in 15 municipalities.
- A National Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) System has been designed to serve children with fragile birth status, developmental delays, disabilities and atypical behaviours and their parents, including the provision of many training workshops, development of pilot projects, designing of a graduate-level pre-service training system, and fulfilment of preconditions for establishing professional education.
- A bylaw for ECI was adopted in order to ensure the National ECI System would become sustainable and would be able to establish the pre- and in-service training programme for early intervention specialists.
- Planning for expanding and improving preschool education has progressed, and results in terms of expansion and quality improvement are expected to be notable in the near future.
- Inclusive education has been addressed very seriously for the first time due in part to the establishment of the National ECI System for children from birth to 5 years of age and the development of renewed interest in inclusive preschool education and transition to primary school.
- Home visiting services have been reintroduced by reinvigorating the patronage nurse home visiting service and by adding developmentally appropriate child development activities to health care visits in the homes of newborns and toddlers.

- Service gaps that had occurred during the health system reform and the transformation of the primary health care system, along with the introduction of the family doctor concept, are being overcome with the placement of new IECD services into health centres at the primary health care level.
- Awareness has increased in the health sector regarding the need to introduce developmental paediatrics, early health surveillance and developmental screening to identify children with developmental delays and disabilities. As a result of these initiatives, interest has grown in introducing training for new specialities at the university level.
- The categorisation of children with developmental delays and disabilities, which had been relegated solely to the social protection sector, is undergoing considerable positive changes.
- Baby-Friendly Hospitals have been further promoted and recertified.
- A “Nutrition Friendly” School Initiative has been designed and is being implemented.
- Many community-level projects are being implemented in accordance with the ECD policies and strategy.
- Considerable national, regional and local policy advocacy activities have resulted in strong support for ECD initiatives, including the IECD Centres, ECI system of services, expanded and improved preschool education, maternal-child health services.
- A comprehensive evaluation of the ECCE systems of services is planned for 2014-2015.

It is reported that education, health and nutrition budgets for children have been increased, more from a reallocation of existing sectoral funds than from the growth of overall sectoral budgets. This is a reflection of the considerable economic depression that has beset BiH since independence in 1992, its war from 1992 to 1995, and the regional impact of the world economic crisis of 2008. However, budgets for sanitation and child protection for young children appear not to have been increased. No multisectoral budgets have been developed and none were expected because policy instruments did not call for them.

Among international development partners, the UNICEF Country Office continues to lead support for ECCE activities in BiH. It has proven challenging to attract other donors to invest in social development sectors of BiH since they have preferred to address economic and political issues. It appears that they are unaware that depressed social development, especially with regard to children and families, is likely to lead to further social strife and continued poor economic growth. Recently, however, ECI services have become more attractive to donors, and due to the presence of the policy instruments, some donors are finally becoming more interested in supporting ECCE. To date the private sector has provided some support for specific IECD Centres.

National ECCE specialists believe that stronger advocacy for ECCE is needed at the global level as well as the national level, and they are calling for more scientific evidence regarding results from investing in ECCE. Major continuing ECCD needs in

Bosnia and Herzegovina include the establishment of comprehensive quality assurance systems and expanding and improving the pre- and in-service training of professionals and others.

b. Federal Republic of Brazil

The *Plano Nacional pela Primeira Infância* (PNPI) (National Plan for Early Childhood) was approved in December 2010 by the National Council on the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent (CONANDA), and was officially adopted by the Secretariat of Human Rights of the Presidency of Brazil (SDH) in February 2011. The PNPI was the result of extensive work in ECCE on the part of the education, health and social development sectors from 2001 onward. Until the adoption of the PNPI, each sector had its separate ECCE plan. PNPI presents the overall framework for multisectoral ECCE planning, coordination and service provision.

The *Rede Nacional Primeira Infância* (National Early Childhood Network) created the PNPI. The *Rede* has over 147 associate members, including the ministries of health, education, social development, the Secretariat of Human Rights, the Secretariat of Human Affairs, and representatives of State and Municipal governments, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector, institutes, foundations, 5 universities, professional councils, practitioners and others.

A high level of participation in ECCE policy planning was achieved through broad outreach to civil society and government at all levels, including participatory consultation workshops and high-level interviews. In addition, by using active listening skills, research on children's needs and opinions was conducted in 5 States with 15 groups of children from 3 to 6 years of age. The resulting drafts of the PNPI were widely reviewed by government at all levels and civil society representatives, and as a result, many sectoral leaders and other participants feel a strong sense of ownership in the Plan.

The SDH has the status of a ministry and is responsible for coordinating and implementing the PNPI. The PNPI addresses child rights and children's services from conception to six years of age that are provided by relevant governmental agencies and NGOs. The duration of the PNPI is 12 years.

In addition to the PNPI, the following ECCE sectoral policy instruments have been adopted:

- The *Politica Nacional de Educação Infantil pelo direito das crianças de zero a seis anos* (National Policy of Early Childhood Education for the Rights of Children from Zero to Six Years of Age) of the Ministry of Education that was adopted in 2006. The PNPI is linked to this education policy that in turn is aligned with the Municipalities, which have the responsibility for early childhood education in Brazil.
- The *Programa Nacional de Infraestrutura para a educação infantil* (PROINFANTIL) (National Programme for Infrastructure for Early Childhood

Education) was adopted in 2007. It provided plans and activities for ECCE construction and equipment.

- In 2009, the Ministry of Social Development adopted the *Serviço de Proteção Integral a Família* (PAIF) (Service for the Integrated Protection of the Family) for integrated family protection, including young children.
- The *Serviço de Proteção e Atendimento Especializado às Famílias e Indivíduos* (PAEFI) (Service for the Protection and Specialised Care of Families and Individuals) was also prepared by the Ministry of Social Development to focus on child and family rights, especially for fragile children living in high-risk situations.

Because Brazil is a Federation with States, ECCE and other services are decentralised to the Municipalities. The Federal Government establishes normative instruments, general roles and responsibilities, and provides extensive guidance and financial assistance to the States that in turn, somewhat unevenly, provide technical and financial support to Municipalities for the provision of ECCE services. It is widely recognised that more work needs to be done with respect to quality assurance, equity and accountability at the Municipal and State levels; however, considerable progress has been made. With respect to the PNPI, sectoral and other leaders reached a strong consensus regarding organisational and coordination mechanisms for the national ECCE system. This achievement was due to extensive policy advocacy that began before 2000, previous activities conducted for inter-institutional coordination, and prior work to define the roles and responsibilities of ministries in ECCE fields.

Subsequent to the adoption of the PNPI, the following major programmes have been adopted:

- The *Rede Cegonha* (Stork Network), adopted by the Ministry of Health in 2011, provides prenatal education and care, deliveries and post-natal health care up to 2 years of age.
- The *Programa Brasil Carinhoso* (Affectionate Brazil Programme) was created in May 2012 by the President of Brazil for children from the poorest families mainly from 0 to 3 years of age and up to 6 years of age. This programme was linked to the *Plano Brasil sem Miséria* (Brazil without Poverty) and included three sectors: health, education and social development that are managed by three ministries.

Since the passage of the PNPI in 2010-2011, a major effort has been made to develop State and Municipal ECCE Plans. These Municipal Plans have the goal of applying the principles and guidelines of the national PNPI at the local level while also defining objectives to meet the special needs of urban and rural areas.

The PNPI has also led to the following impressive results among many that could be listed:

Education

- Over 8,000 new ECCE centres (PROINFANTIL) are to be built and equipped by 2014. As of December 2013, 5,600 new entities had been opened.
- Programmes for school feeding have been developed for these centres.
- Educational materials have been developed, published and distributed along with the provision of libraries for teachers.
- In 2012, the Inter-American Development Bank made a \$3 million loan for ECCE educational materials and technical support that is expected to benefit as many as 224,000 low-income preschool children.
- Learning toys have been provided for the ECCE centres.
- Support has been given for increased school transportation.
- Federal universities in 17 States have developed new national pre-service training programmes for teachers who are required for the recently constructed ECCE centres.
- Using guidelines from the Ministry of Education, special attention has been given to transition from home or preschool to primary school.
- The Council of Education, States and Municipalities and the Secretariats of Education of Municipalities all participate in promoting expanded transition services.

Integrated ECD Centres (0 to 3 years)

- Municipalities, Secretariats of Education, the private sector and NGOs are developing more IECD Centres.

Child and family health

- The Federal Government has provided additional guidelines and support to States and Municipalities.
- The *Sistema Único de Saúde* (Unified Health Care System) provides health services with the support of the Ministry of Health that has initiated or expanded programmes for family health, maternal-child health, immunisations, reduction of child mortality, using especially the new *Programa Cegonha*.
- The school health programme has been expanded.

Parent education and support

- The States and Municipalities work with the Secretariats of Health and/or Social Services, and NGOs. In some cases, the Secretariats of Education also participate in parent education for the parents of children from 0 to 36 months of age.
- For children from 37 months to 6 years of age, some Municipal or State programmes for parent education have been developed.

Improved equity

- Collaboration to improve service equity has been established among the Secretariat for Promotion of Racial Equity (SEPPIR), Ministry of Education and State and Municipal Secretariats of Education for indigenous education, and the National Foundation of the Indian (FUNAI).
- The Law on Education provides regulations for the use of the mother tongue in all ECCE services.
- The inclusion of children with developmental delays or disabilities is being increasingly instituted in the formal education system.
- Attention to children living in poverty is being increased through the Ministry of Social Development's programmes for *Bolsa Familia* (a conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme promoted by the World Bank). It has achieved extensive coverage of families living in poverty and *Brasil Carinhoso* provides ECCE services, school feeding and micronutrients to over 500,000 children whose families receive support from *Bolsa Familia*.
- It is believed in Brazil that this linkage of CCT support with ECCE services can be more effective in improving child status than the provision of cash transfers alone.
- Greater attention is also being given to children affected or infected with HIV and AIDS, as well as children living in poverty and/or in remote rural areas.

Sanitation and hygiene

- States and Municipalities plus the Secretariats of Health participate in providing sanitation and hygiene services.

Child and social protection services

- The Secretariat of Human Rights that is implementing the PNPI also implements expanded activities for child and social protection.

Financial investments in ECCE

- All sectoral ECCE budgets have increased notably since the passage of the PNPI, and data on these increases should be provided by 2015.
- Sectoral budgets for ECCE have expanded not only at the ministerial level but also at State and Municipal levels.
- However, new multisectoral budgets have not been created. Multisectoral coordination is used but budgets remain sectoral.
- With the exception of large loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, financial support from other international or regional multilateral, bilateral and INGO donors appears to have remained generally at previous levels. This is the case because Brazil usually does not request large-scale international or regional support.
- Private sector businesses have expressed greater interest in investing in ECCE services through their foundations and various funds.

- Some businesspersons belong to the *Rede* and a few have attended the ECCE course of Harvard's *Center on the Developing Child* that is held annually for Brazilian parliamentarians and leaders of municipalities and businesses.

ECCE Law

- In addition, an ECCE Law is now under consideration that would strengthen child rights, child protection and establish an even stronger framework for ECCE policy implementation and accountability.

Although it is clear that a considerable amount of impact has occurred within specific sectoral and some multisectoral or integrated programmes, a full study of policy impact in Brazil is recommended, not only to assist Brazil with its annual action plans but also to give creative guidance to other nations facing similar challenges.

After the preparation and adoption of the PNPI, the national coordinator has continued to work on the implementation of the Plan, which has helped to ensure its long-term implementation. He works closely with ECCE coordinators in each of the contributing sectors. He has also inspired extensive Municipal-level planning and service expansion and improvement. The *Rede* is working to improve its systematic monitoring of the implementation of the PNPI, and plans to develop an instrument to conduct comprehensive monitoring.

One of the major challenges in implementing the PNPI has been the difficulty of articulating coherent programme development from the Federal to the State and Municipal levels. This challenge is found in many countries. It is felt that in Brazil, the Presidency, State governors and Municipal mayors all need to work together in order to implement and coordinate ECCE initiatives well. At the municipal level, it is particularly important to conduct advocacy campaigns to expand interest in ECCE and to promote good policy implementation and accountability. Municipal ECCE plans that are developed in concert with the PNPI are urgently needed, and a major effort is underway to prepare these plans. Currently, of the 5,570 Municipalities in Brazil, ECCE plans have been developed in 600 (11%) Municipalities. To achieve the goal of developing ECCE plans in all Municipalities and to improve coordination, accountability, equity and quality at the Municipal level, the SDH requires more personnel and financial resources.

It is reported that advocacy continues to be needed at all levels, especially with respect to research results from neuroscience and studies on child development, cost-benefit analyses, and return on investment studies. In addition, indicators regarding child development, health, nutrition, education, sanitation, protection and poverty reduction need to be reviewed in light of the current implementation of many sectoral and multisectoral activities included in the PNPI.

c. Republic of Colombia

Colombia has a long and complex history of ECCE policy planning that began in 1968 and has continued in various multisectoral and sectoral forms during each succeeding decade. ECCE has been a traditional interest of many Colombian Presidents, First Ladies and other national leaders. In December 2006, the *Política Pública Nacional de Primera Infancia: Colombia por la Primera Infancia* (Public Policy on Early Childhood: Colombia for Early Childhood) was adopted under the previous President. It was complemented by the sectoral *Política Educativa para la Primera Infancia* (Educational Policy for Early Childhood) that was adopted in 2010. Upon the election of the current President, the ECCE policy of 2006 was superseded by the *Estrategia de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia: Fundamentos Políticos, Técnicos y de Gestión: De Cero a Siempre* (Strategy for an Integrated Approach to Early Childhood: Policy, Technical and Management Foundations: From Zero to Always) that was developed from 2011 to 2013, and adopted in 2013.

The Strategy addresses the development of children from preconception to 5 years of age, and it provides for a continuous, comprehensive and culturally appropriate national ECCE system of services with a strong emphasis upon improving the quality, equity, and accountability of services as well as expanding and improving integrated service implementation at the Municipal level. In comparison to earlier ECCE policies, the Strategy places a higher priority upon ensuring the continuity, quality and integration of ECCE services in Colombia. In addition, the *Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social* (CONPES) (National Council on Economic and Social Policy) has prepared several useful technical planning papers on ECCE from 2006 to 2013, which complement the Strategy in various ways.

Colombia has one the largest investment budgets in ECCE in Latin America, and in spite of many years of community unrest, child development has continued to be emphasised. Although early childhood policies have changed often through the years, ECCE has benefitted from considerable political support, and overall investment in integrated, multisectoral and sectoral ECCE programmes has been greatly expanded.

The 2013 Strategy *De Cero a Siempre* established the *Comisión Intersectorial de Primera Infancia* (CIPI) (Intersectoral Commission for Early Childhood) that is located in the Executive Offices of the President. This decision has been beneficial in virtually ensuring strong presidential support through the years for ECCE; however, it also brings with it tensions related to multisectoral coordination, service integration, relationships with various sectoral services, and management issues at Central, Departmental (Provincial) and Municipal levels. In addition, given its location in the Executive Offices of the President, it is challenging for the CIPI to address programme equity, expansion, quality assurance, management, coordination and full accountability at Departmental and especially Municipal levels.

All relevant Governmental entities were involved in preparing the Strategy including: the Presidency; the ministries of social protection, education, health and culture; Department for Social Prosperity; National Agency for Poverty Eradication, Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (the integrated national ECCE programme that

was created in 1968); National Planning Department; and the Administrative Department of Sport, Recreation, Physical Activity and the Use of Free Time (Coldeportes).

It has been reported that due to the press of time, many representatives of civil society organisations were not included in the working group that developed the Strategy. However, a Situation Analysis was prepared and various consultation workshops were held at that time. Reportedly high-level interviews were not conducted; however, many national leaders were directly involved in developing the Strategy. Again, due to time constraints it appears that policy drafts were not widely distributed for review by civil society organisations, Departments and Municipalities.

Due to its long history of providing ECCE services, Colombia had thousands of ECCE programmes underway during the development of its latest Strategy. Examples of some new initiatives that began during the preparation of the Strategy include: assessment of knowledge and skills and needs for training at community levels; improved pre-service training for ECCE professionals and non-professionals; community and policy advocacy regarding the *De Cero a Siempre* programme; preparation of technical and operational guidelines for new initiatives; strengthening of Municipal-level programmes; identification of local innovations, experiences and lessons learned; and other activities.

Results from the Strategy adopted in 2013 are only beginning to be measured; however, the following initial achievements may be mentioned:

Structural and programmatic advancements

- The CIPI has been established in the Executive Office of the President, with public sector members who represent the national directorate level.
- The technical and conceptual foundations of a comprehensive and continuous national ECCE system have been greatly strengthened, and discussions regarding these foundations are continuing with representatives of civil society.
- Although an Action Plan has not been prepared as yet, a series of inter-agency agreements (*convenios*) and timelines have been drawn up rapidly between the Presidency and specific institutions in order to meet sectoral and intersectoral objectives of the Strategy.
- Work is underway to identify and link the main ECCE programmes in Colombia at all levels and in all regions.

Quality assurance elements

- Technical guidelines have been developed for most of the services included in the *De Cero a Siempre* programme.
- Attention is being given to a variety of personnel issues with the goal of upgrading both professional and non-professional ECCE personnel.
- Standards and other quality criteria are being established.

Accountability planning

- The design of an ECCE management information system focusing on the integrated development of the child is reported to be in preparation.
- Efforts to ensure the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of policy impacts are underway.

Equity initiatives launched

- The Strategy presents an “integrated roadmap of services” that seeks to ensure equity with respect to the rights of children from all population groups and conditions in Colombia.
- A major effort is being made to include minority ethnic and language groups, children from remote rural areas, families affected by conflict, and children with developmental delays and disabilities in all ECCE services.
- A process for the training of educational facilitators (*agentes educativos*) from minority ethnic and language groups has been developed.
- Child rights are emphasised especially with respect to social inclusion and inclusive education.

Financial investment increased

- It is reliably reported that central budgets for ECCE activities and services have been increased in all sectors: education; health and nutrition; sanitation; and child protection. Budget figures should be made available by the end of 2014.
- Multisectoral budgets for Strategy coordination and joint projects at the central level have been increased.
- As a result of establishing the Strategy, it is reported that international and regional development partners have increased their support for Colombian ECCE activities and services. However, several donors are awaiting the measurement of policy indicators to assess the effectiveness of their ECCE investments.
- The private sector and foundations of Colombia are also reported to be expanding their support for ECCE services as a result of the adoption of the new Strategy.

As with all reform efforts, many challenges exist. Continuing issues to be addressed include:

Structural and programmatic issues

- A fully developed Action Plan does not exist for the Strategy due to the Presidency’s preference for establishing one-by-one interagency agreements with contractors in order to ensure the rapid implementation of the new comprehensive ECCE program from preconception to age 5. This is wise in the short-term because less time is required to establish interagency agreements.
- However, concern has been expressed that a general, well-coordinated plan does not exist to guide all parties, not only in the short-term but also in the medium- to

- longer-term, thereby potentially enhancing the sustainability of continuous and comprehensive ECCE services for all populations.
- Further work is needed to strengthen coordination for the implementation of the Strategy, including the CIPI, Congress, Judiciary, Attorney General and Comptroller.
 - The full participation of governmental leaders at Departmental and Municipal levels and representatives of civil society organisations will be required to ensure that the initiatives of *De Cero a Siempre* will be faithfully implemented throughout the nation and will become fully sustainable.
 - A better and more comprehensive system and structure for the management and coordination of ECCE services provided by all participating sectors and governmental as well as civil society entities, is needed at Departmental and especially Municipal levels.
 - The development of the National System of Family Welfare requires further strengthening.
 - Increased policy advocacy is required, especially at Departmental and Municipal levels to encourage communities to support and fully use local ECCE services. It must be recognised that the decentralisation of advocacy, coordination, management and service provision is always a special challenge in Colombia, given its complex geography, history and great cultural variations.

Quality assurance elements

- A comprehensive system of career ladders, requirements for professional certification and recertification, personnel and performance standards, and salary scales has not been designed as yet.
- A national system for the pre- and in-service training of all ECCE professionals and non-professionals still needs to be fully designed.
- To improve service quality at the Municipal level, mobile teams for decentralised pre- and in-service training; an articulated supervisory system; improved management guidelines; initiatives for vertical and horizontal coordination; and monitoring and evaluation are needed.
- Expanded pre- and in-service training should be regularly provided for Municipal mayors and other decision makers as well as for local ECCE service providers.

Accountability linked to planning processes

- A national programme for the monitoring and evaluation of the ECCE system is needed. The programme should measure effectiveness and efficiency as well as a full range of service results and impacts in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- Improved ECCE budget and programme planning methods are needed at all levels, linked to a comprehensive system of accountability that is reported to be in the design stage.

Equity issues

- Although social inclusion and child rights are strongly emphasised in *De Cero a Siempre*, the programme still has not designed a national system for intensive and individualised early childhood intervention (ECI) services that are essential for infants and children with development delays, disabilities and atypical behaviours.
- Children living in remote rural areas require special attention and new delivery mechanisms that will provide them quality ECCE services.
- The full inclusion and participation of ethnic and language minority groups, children and persons with disabilities, and families living in poverty or affected by unrest need to be ensured regarding all processes related to programme planning, implementation and oversight.
- A policy for the deinstitutionalisation of children under 5 years of age is urgently needed, along with services required for deinstitutionalised children and the families receiving them.

Financial investment

- It is reported that funding has increased at central levels but as yet not at Departmental and Municipal levels. Expanded budgets are needed for ECCE programme services, management and coordination at Departmental and Municipal levels.
- Special attention must be given to challenges in the areas of procurement and fiscal management as well as in annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes at all levels.

In general, it may be said that Colombia has been highly successful in developing a comprehensive and continuous Strategy and in drafting many technical guidelines for implementing the Strategy. Now, rapid and sustainable development at Departmental and Municipal levels needs to be emphasised, along with initiatives related to national and local ECCE quality, equity, management, coordination and accountability.

d. Republic of the Union of Myanmar

The *Myanmar Policy for Early Childhood Care and Development* was officially adopted in November 2013 and publicly launched on 8 July 2014, with strong support from the President of Myanmar and all participating sectors. The detailed *Five-Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Care and Development* has been drafted and validated. It is to be adopted in 2014 by the *National ECCD Committee* that will be established soon.

Myanmar is composed of several ancient cultures; however, it is a relatively new nation state. Military generals have ruled Myanmar since it gained independence from Great Britain in 1948, and its reform process for the development of a democratic form of government officially began in 2010.

The adoption of the multisectoral *ECCD Policy* attracted strong support from all participating sectors, including the public sector, civil society organisations, and

academic institutions. The adoption of the *ECCD Policy* provides hope to families, communities, and ECCE specialists and supporters who have struggled for years to develop high-quality services for children and families living in poor communities throughout the nation. The enthusiasm of all who participated in this complete policy planning process was notable.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is the lead ministry for policy planning. ASEAN has encouraged the ministries of social welfare in Southeast Asia to take the lead for ECCD services. Myanmar will become the Chair of ASEAN in 2015, and this also helped to promote the development of the *ECCD Policy*.

The policy planning process began in June 2012 with the establishment of a high-level *Multisectoral ECCD Policy Steering Committee* composed of deputy ministers and leading department heads of relevant governmental agencies. In addition a hard-working and talented technical-level *Multisectoral ECCD Policy Planning Task Force* was created to guide the participatory planning process, develop the contents of the Policy and Strategic Plan, and report to the Steering Committee.

Task Force members included the: Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Information; Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security; Ministry of Immigration and Population; Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Border Affairs; Union Attorney General's Office; UNICEF; INGOs, such as Save the Children, World Vision, and Leprosy Mission International; various faith-based organisations including Karen Baptist Convention, Kachin Baptist Convention, Myanmar Baptist Convention, Karuna (Catholic) Myanmar Social Services; local NGOs such as Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Metta Development Foundation, Phoenix, Pyinnya Tazaung Association, Ratana Metta Organisation, Yinthway Foundation; and several academic institutions representing the fields of education, health, nutrition and social protection. Representatives of civil society organisations complemented governmental planners and specialists. They played active roles in the planning process and became some of the strongest advocates and leaders for the development and implementation of the *ECCD Policy*. In addition, UNICEF's expert Myanmar ECCD specialists played key technical and organisational roles in the development of policy documents.

The *ECCD Policy* extends from preconception to eight years of age. Prior to drafting the Policy, a comprehensive *ECCD Situation Analysis* was prepared regarding this age group, ECCE resources and existing policy documents. Participatory regional consultation workshops were held, including representatives from many minority ethnic and language groups. In addition, high-level interviews were conducted to involve key decision makers at all levels in the planning process, including Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Ministers from States and Regions, Parliamentarians, leading NGO representatives, and Chairpersons of Professional Associations.

Based on the results of these consultations and their own experiences and knowledge, members of the Steering Committee and the Task Force developed the contents of the *ECCD Policy*, including the vision and mission statements, general goal, core concepts, objectives, strategies, and the main activities and services of each strategy.

Once the *ECCD Policy* and *Strategic Plan* were drafted, they were reviewed in several regions, with members of other nearby regions also in attendance. Workshop participants included regional representatives and practitioners from the above-mentioned Ministries, NGOs, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, ethnic minorities, private sector leaders, media and parents. These regional reviews greatly enriched the policy documents and led to critically important changes in them. In addition, a special session was held with key Parliamentary leaders who offered useful recommendations and support.

In all, six Policy drafts were prepared, and reviews were conducted throughout the process. Once full consensus was reached on all points, participating Ministers validated the final Policy document and they presented it jointly to the Cabinet for adoption. By means of their strong participation in the policy planning process and their outstanding capacity in organising effective planning meetings, Myanmar leaders and specialists demonstrated that they will be able to develop future policy instruments needed for good governance in all areas of Social Development.

Dr. Thein Lwin, the national ECCE policy consultant observed,

“The Policy planning process was effective as it was broad-based and participatory. Many of the Task Force members had been actively involved in [ECCD] and could contribute immensely based on their experience in the field. The international consultant involved also got hands-on experience by visiting some ECCD centers supported by key government and NGO entities, health facilities, training institutes of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Border Affairs. In addition, good guidance was sought by conducting high-level interviews, technical inputs of all... involved in the field of ECCD, and public consultations were widely carried out in places where ethnic minority groups are living to get their views. Guidance and views from high level interviews, technical inputs from all stakeholders, from different ministries, directly involved in ECCE programmes, and public views and opinions were given due consideration in the drafting of the ECCD Policy. These activities created a sense of belongingness to the ECCD Policy as stakeholders were involved in the initial stage of drafting ECCD Policy and their views and opinions were well listened to and given due consideration in the policy planning processes.”

It is far too early to assess the medium to long-term results of policy implementation in Myanmar. However, some short-term results have already occurred in the following ministries. In several cases, the ministries worked together, as planned, on specific projects.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

The Ministry has already begun to seek to increase its overall funding for ECCE by submitting expanded budget requests for 2014-2015. It has projected substantial institutional and programmatic growth in line with the *ECCD Policy* in several areas:

- A new higher education institution is being designed that will provide pre-service and in-service training for ECCE services and preschool education.
- A plan is being developed for the construction of additional preschools and the improvement of existing preschools supported by the Ministry.
- Plans are progressing for the improvement of mother circles.
- Preparations are underway for planning the development of a national system of early childhood intervention services for children with developmental delays and disabilities and their parents.
- Plans for expanding special services for children with auditory and visual disabilities are being developed;
- The *ECCD Law* regarding the registration of preschools that was called for in the *ECCD Policy* has been adopted by the Parliament.
- Child protection elements of the *ECCD Policy* are being included, as planned, in current drafts of a national policy for child protection;
- The Disability Law, also called for in the *ECCD Policy*, has been initially drafted.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has been studying its options for educational reform for two years. It has now formed a Committee to develop the Education Policy and Law. The Ministry has already initiated the following activities.

- The contents of the *ECCD Policy* relating to the education sector are being included in the new *Education Law* and *National Education Policy*.
- In line with the *ECCD Policy*, a new kindergarten year has been established.
- A kindergarten curriculum is currently being drafted, along with the preparation of a manual and guidebook for kindergarten teachers.
- A plan for the expansion of school-based preschools has been developed, with the goal of greatly accelerating the construction of such preschools.
- Elements of the *ECCD Policy* regarding pre-service teacher training are being included in the reform of the Colleges of Education and Institutes of Education.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health is working to expand and improve its services as rapidly as possible. Initial ECCE activities include the following:

- New plans for health and nutrition include areas that were emphasised in the *ECCD Policy*.

- Plans for the expansion of the nutrition programme, as outlined in the *ECCD Policy*, are underway.
- ECCE policy elements for child and maternal health are being included in current health plans for universal health care.
- The *National Policy for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*, called for in the *ECCD Policy*, has begun to be drafted. It includes several key elements that were emphasised in the *ECCD Policy*.

The preparation of the multisectoral *ECCD Policy* in a highly participatory manner has led to rapid and profound changes at the level of policy formulation in the social development sector. Participatory policy planning processes are now being used to develop most national social development policies.

In general, budgets are being expanded for ECCE programme development, improvement and growth, with a special focus, as called for in the *ECCD Policy*, on children living in difficult situations and children from minority ethnic and language groups.

The President and many leaders in his administration are urgently seeking “quick wins” in social development, and the *ECCD Policy* was developed just when it was needed. In addition, by including Parliamentarians in the policy planning process and by holding a special review session only with them, the Parliament, that includes members of several parties, has been very supportive of the *ECCD Policy*, thereby potentially helping to ensure the likelihood that the *Policy* will be implemented by succeeding administrations.

In summary, the recently adopted *ECCD Policy* has already helped the Government of Myanmar to focus squarely on major national issues of equity, quality, expansion, investment and accountability. If there is a relatively smooth transition between this administration and the next, then it is expected that ECCE leaders, specialists and communities of Myanmar will continue to advocate for *Policy* implementation and will help to achieve many of the objectives of their *ECCD Policy*.

e. Republic of Rwanda

The *Early Childhood Development Policy* and the *Integrated Early Childhood Development Strategic Plan* of Rwanda (2011/12 – 2015/16) were adopted in October 2011. The Ministry of Education was the lead ministry for ECCE policy development, and together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, formed a high-level *Multisectoral ECD Steering Committee* that led the policy planning process. Under the Steering Committee, the *Multisectoral ECD Task Force* was composed of technical specialists from the three main ECD ministries as well as the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Security, and representatives of many civil society organisations including international and national NGOs, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations.

National consultants, who were fully dedicated to the policy planning process, report that they felt they did not face any major challenges. Indeed, there was such strong and united support from the Government, many stakeholders and UNICEF, that few problems were encountered during the planning process.

The *ECD Policy* and *Strategic Plan* of Rwanda call for many ECCE activities and services covering the period from preconception to children 6 years of age. These policy instruments were developed in a fully participatory manner, including: preparing a Situation Analysis; holding extensive regional and community consultation workshops; conducting high-level interviews with Government officials; holding meetings with bilateral and multilateral development partners; and conducting widespread review meetings with the Task Force and many other groups. Because of this participatory process, consensus was easily achieved regarding all elements of the documents.

Apart from a few ongoing community-level ECCE activities, in Rwanda policy implementation did not occur during the policy-planning period. Many areas of the Policy represented new activities that Rwanda's institutions wanted to undertake in order to improve child development.

Since the adoption of the *ECD Policy*, the Ministry of Health, Gender and Family Promotion, Ministry of Local Government, Imbuto Foundation, UNICEF and the National Council for Children have developed and are conducting a national campaign for the first 1,000 days of children's lives, including the establishment of several ECD services.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the ministries listed above, is launching *Community-Based ECD and Family Centres* in many sites throughout the country. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Local Government are progressively expanding a pre-primary programme of from 1 to 3 years duration as a "school-readiness" programme. In the short period of time since policy adoption, net pre-primary school enrolment has already increased from 10% to 13%. The Ministry of Education is also creating five model pre-primary schools that will serve as demonstration sites for other pre-primary schools. In addition, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs and the private sector are rapidly expanding their services for pre-primary education. Essentially, the *ECD Policy* has spurred a rapid growth in early childhood and pre-primary services.

ECCE service and personnel standards are currently being established. Pre- and in-service training continues in Colleges of Education and Teacher Training Centres and these training programmes are being redesigned and expanded. As yet, teachers' salaries have not been improved but advocacy for salary increases is ongoing. The monitoring and evaluation system for ECCE services has not been designed as yet. However, policy advocacy is underway, and the *Plan for ECD Social Communications* is being drafted.

A "school readiness year" for 5-year olds has been designed, and a national curriculum review process is being conducted to ensure improved educational contents,

methods and materials will be provided for the current school year. The pre-service training of preschool teachers began in 2011 and continues. On the basis of this work, and with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Local Government, in 2014 classrooms for school readiness year will be opened in each primary school of the country.

Attention is also being given to providing ECCE services for children with developmental delays and disabilities. Inclusive preschool education is being promoted throughout the country. An infrastructure plan with guidelines is being developed to ensure all preschool facilities will become fully accessible. All primary schools are already accessible but now attention is being given to ECCE facilities. In addition to children with developmental delays and disabilities, special attention is also being given to children who live in rural and remote areas and to children living in poverty.

The organisational structure for ECCE policy implementation has been established as planned at central, regional and community levels. However, more work remains to be done to set up the ECCE coordinating unit and some of the multisectoral committees called for in the *ECD Policy*.

The Ministry of Education's budget for ECCE has been increased from .01% to 1%. This is a relatively small expansion but it is a significant initial achievement, and further budgetary expansion is expected in the coming years. In addition, as a result of the adoption of the *ECD Policy*, international and regional donors are reported to be investing more funds in ECCE services and activities.

Our respondents report that because of the *ECD Policy*, early childhood has been given priority in various documents, such as the *Education Sector Strategic Plan* and the second *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy's* District Performance Contracts.

They believe that with better coordination, an updated multisectoral plan, and an *ECD Social Communication Plan*, more funds will be invested in ECCE. Because extensive policy advocacy has been conducted and ECCE has been given a high priority in all relevant national planning documents, our survey respondents stated that they believe the *ECD Policy* will have a "wonderful impact in the years ahead."

6. Conclusion and recommendations:

These five case studies present only a few of the positive impacts of participatory ECCE policy planning during and after the adoption of policy instruments. Impacts identified in five nations of four regions reveal that the preparation of low-cost ECCE policy instruments has been worthwhile.

In each of the five countries surveyed, participatory ECD policy planning

has led to far greater attention being given to improving and expanding ECD services.

Following are some conclusions and recommendations for future work regarding ECCE policy instruments.

a. Several conclusions may be drawn from the five case studies

- If ECCE policy instruments are developed in a fully participatory manner, it is more likely that they will be implemented.
- From the outset of ECCE policy planning, it is essential to establish multisectoral ECCE steering committees and technical working groups (task forces, committees, etc.). It is also advisable to use sensitive strategies to develop a strong multisectoral approach and *esprit de corps* among the members of these groups.
- The lead ministry should be selected before beginning policy-planning activities. The lead ministry must be capable of developing positive work relationships with other ECCE ministries.
- Representatives selected for the ECCE Policy Steering Committee should be at the level of ministers, or if necessary, at the deputy minister or top departmental level. Institutional cultures often dictate who will participate on Steering Committees; however, representatives should be selected at the highest possible levels.
- ECCE Policy Task Forces (working groups) should include the country's best technical leaders for ECCE in all key ministries, international and national NGOs, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, academic institutions, professional associations and private sector ECD organisations. They should keep the leaders of their agencies fully informed of task force activities and policy contents at all stages of the policy planning process.
- ECCE Situation Analyses were developed in all of the countries surveyed, and they proved to be indispensable for framing the policy justification and identifying high priority issues to be addressed in the policy instrument.
- In all of the countries studied, fully participatory consultation workshops and high-level interviews were conducted at central, regional and usually also at community levels. These proved to be rich sources of guidance for policy development, as should be the case if the policy is to reflect a consensus regarding key needs and programmatic priorities.

- In some countries, rapid research was conducted to gather children's needs, attitudes and opinions in order to give children a voice in their own services. This positive practice has enriched ECCE policies, and it should be used wherever possible.
- In four of the five countries, it was found that it helped to begin ECCE activities during the policy planning process in order to help ensure that policy instrument(s) would be well implemented.
- Positive synergy occurs when more than one ECCE policy instrument is developed during the planning period, and doing so helps to ensure a high level of policy coherence and harmonisation.
- Not only do ECCE policies result in the implementation of more and better ECCE activities and services, they also often lead to the preparation and passage of a multitude of related laws, policies, plans, and bylaws in order to ensure the implementation of the policy and to carry the policy further than may have been possible to predict at the time of its preparation.
- An organisational system for policy implementation should be included in policy instruments, and priority should be given to establishing this system soon after policy adoption.
- Policy indicators (inputs, outputs and outcomes) should be listed and included in national systems for ECCE monitoring and evaluation. Selected international indicators should also be included. However, to meet its special needs, each country should have its own system of ECCE indicators, monitoring and evaluation.
- It is helpful and often essential that the national and international specialists who worked on the development of the ECCE policy instruments continue to support their implementation.

While the policy planning processes of some countries have not been as successful as those of the nations reviewed in this study, nonetheless it is possible to conclude that well-designed and comprehensive ECCE policies including essential elements for policy implementation are worth the relatively small investment that is required to develop them.

This brief review also allows us to assert that, barring wars and highly authoritarian regimes, nations using participatory processes to develop ECCE policies, strategic plans and laws have been successful in achieving some of their stated objectives. More in-depth field research is currently being conducted on this topic, including in nations where policy-planning efforts have had less impact.

b. Some recommendations for the future

Within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals and Education for All, it is important to consider some policy recommendations for the future.

1. Most countries that currently lack a viable ECCE policy instrument should be encouraged to establish a comprehensive ECCE policy and/or a strategic plan with an action plan.
2. For countries that used non-participatory policy planning methods and experienced difficulties in preparing and implementing their policy instruments, participatory methods should be considered and applied in a second or third effort to develop an effective policy document for ECCE.
3. In some countries, only an “umbrella” ECCE policy or a policy statement has been developed, and policy implementation has been challenging. In addition to ECCE policies, it is recommended that nations also prepare ECCE strategic plans, including detailed action plans.
4. ECCE laws can help with the implementation of ECCE policies and strategic plans by providing normative guidance and general regulations that in turn can be used to develop specific bylaws, decrees and ordinances.
5. Methods of multisectoral policy adoption differ from country to country. Cabinet approvals are generally easier if the groundwork has been laid to ensure united inter-ministerial support for policy adoption. When several ministers strongly support the adoption of an ECCE policy instrument, it is relatively easy to ensure adoption. The parliamentary adoption of ECCE policy instruments usually is much more time consuming than adoption by cabinets. For example, Tanzania’s parliament still has not adopted the draft ECCE policy that was validated by a national policy-planning group in 2011-2012.
6. To the extent possible, essential elements of the structure and processes for policy implementation should be put into place within 12 months after policy adoption. Essential parts of the ECCE system should be established as soon as possible.
7. To help ensure a continuity of effort, national and international policy advisors who assisted with policy preparation should be asked to help with the initial implementation process and the establishment of the organisational structure for policy implementation and coordination.
8. To the extent possible, precise indicators, targets and measures should be included in ECCE policies, strategic plans, action plans and laws. Additional technical support for designing and implementing the national ECCE monitoring, evaluation, reporting and planning system appears to be needed in all countries surveyed.

9. Regional leadership and support for ECCE policy planning should be expanded, following the examples of *Red Primera Infancia*, ARNEC, ISSA and the earlier efforts of the ADEA WG. Increased attention should be given to supporting policy development and implementation in all regions.
10. Participatory methods have been developed to prepare successful and effective ECCE policies. However, additional experienced and well-trained ECCE policy advisors from all world regions are needed. They should be knowledgeable, sensitive to different institutional cultures, and skilled in participatory planning methods, negotiation, and consensus building. Only a few specialists been trained to lead or assist with these processes and to ensure that participatory methods will be used consistently and effectively in a diverse array of challenging country contexts. Post-graduate training is urgently required to prepare a new cadre of specialists who will be able to support effective ECCE policy planning within their countries and regions.
11. Finally, ECCE policy planning is a relatively new endeavour. Balanced and in-depth research is needed with respect to many topics related to ECCE policy planning.

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Annex I

ECCE Policy Instruments June 2014

Regions/Countries	Policy Dates	Adopted ECCE Policy Instruments			Instruments reported to exist	Instruments being prepared	Comments
		Policy	Plan & Dates	Law & Dates			
Caribbean							
Antigua & Barbuda			X 2009				
Barbados					X		Reported
British Virgin Islands						X	Reported
Dominica						X	Reported
Grenada					X		Reported
Haiti	2012	X					
Jamaica			X 2008				
Montserrat	2011	X					
Saint Kitts & Nevis					X		
Saint Lucia						X	Reported
Saint Vincent & Grenadines	2006	X					
Turks & Caicos Islands						X	Reported
Central and East Asia							
Mongolia	2005	X					
Eastern Europe, South-eastern Europe and the Caucasus Regions							
Albania						X	Reported
Azerbaijan					X		Reported
Bosnia & Herzegovina	2011	X	X 2012				
Estonia	2011	X					
Georgia			X 2007			X	New policy underway
Kosovo					X		Reported
Latvia					X		Reported
Montenegro			X 2010				
Russian Federation						X	Reported
Slovakia						X	Reported
Middle East and North Africa							
Algeria						X	Beginning June 2014
Jordan	2004	X					
Palestine					X		Reported
North America							
None							
Pacific Islands & Australia							
Australia	2009	X					
Kiribati	2010	X					
Palau	2007	X					
Papua New Guinea	2007	X					
Tuvalu	2007	X					
Vanuatu	2011	X	X 2013				

South and Central America							
Argentina	2005	X		X 2007			
Belize						X	Policy in advanced stage
Brazil	2006	X	X 2010				
Chile	2009	X	X 2009				
Colombia	1968, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2013	X	X 2006-2013				
Ecuador	2011	X					
El Salvador	2010	X					
Guatemala	2010	X					
Guyana						X	Being drafted
Honduras						X	Being drafted
Paraguay		X	2011				
Suriname						X	Reported
Uruguay	2009	X	X 2009				
South Asia							
Bangladesh	2009	X	X 2008				
Bhutan	2011	X					
India	2011 & 2013	X					
Nepal			X 2004				
Pakistan					X		Reported
Sri Lanka	2004	X					
South East Asia							
Cambodia	2010	X				X	Drafted not adopted
Indonesia	2008, 2011 & 2013	X					
Lao PDR						X	Still drafting
Malaysia	2007	X	X 2007				
Myanmar	2013	X	X 2013				
(The) Philippines			X 2009	X 2000			
Thailand	2007	X					
Timor Leste	2012	X					
Sub-Saharan Africa							
Angola	2011	X	X 2012				
Benin	2010	X					
Botswana	2001	X					
Burkina Faso	2008	X					
Burundi	2008	X					
Cameroon	2008	X	X 2009				
Cape Verde						X	Drafted not adopted
Central African Republic	2009	X	X 2009				
Chad						X	Drafted
Comoros					X		Reported
Djibouti	2008	X	X 2011				
Eritrea	2004	X					
Ethiopia	2010	X	X 2010				
(The) Gambia	2004	X					
Ghana	2004	X					
Guinea	2001	X					
Kenya	2006	X	X 2006				

Lesotho	2014	X			X		Plan drafted
Liberia	2011	X					
Madagascar						X	Being drafted
Malawi	2003	X					
Maldives	1999	X					
Mali	2004	X					
Mauritania	2005	X	X 2005				
Mauritius	1999	X					
Mozambique	2012	X					
Namibia	1996 & 2007	X					
Niger	2008	X					
Nigeria	2006	X	X 2006				
Republic of the Congo						X	Reported
Rwanda	2011	X	X 2011				
Senegal	2006	X	X 2006				
Sierra Leone						X	Reported
South Africa	1997	X	X 2005				
Swaziland						X	Reported
Tanzania						X	Drafted not adopted
Uganda	2007	X	X 2010				
Western Europe							
Malta	2006	X					
France						X	Being developed
Totals		61 +7	28	2	10	23	