



# SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Conference Theme:

**PARTNERSHIP FOR BETTER ECED  
OUTCOMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023  LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

| CONFERENCE CONCEPT NOTE AGENDA



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# 1.0 Background and Context

## 1.1 Why Invest in ECD

The last three decades have seen increased evidence that investment in early childhood development lays a strong foundation for better Human Capital Outcomes manifested in improved health, well-being, learning and productivity. For example, evidence shows that each dollar invested in ECD programs for vulnerable children, yields a return on investment of between US\$7 to US\$122, realized through various avenues i.e., obviating of large costs associated with special education, grade repetition, early parenthood, social deviance, and incarceration. Furthermore, evidence shows that children who access high quality ECD programs are more likely to be more resilient and more likely to be employed with high income, thus contributing to government taxes as well as enhanced purchasing power with positive effect on a country's economy.

## 1.2 Status of ECD in Africa Region

Across the African region, progress has been made in improving access to ECD services, because of increased regional and national advocacy promoting investment in ECD. Available evidence indicates that while only Mauritius and Namibia had established ECD policies in 2001<sup>1</sup> the situation has improved tremendously over the last two decades (2001-2021), with over 60% of African countries having ECD policies that guide service delivery in the sub-sector (AfECN, 2021).

With respect to early learning, a common policy position across the region has been the inclusion of at least one year of preprimary education into the formal primary school system for example through the addition of the zero class in Ethiopia, reception class in South Africa, two years of pre-primary in Ghana and two years of Kindergarten in Egypt. This has resulted in rapid increase to early learning programmes in region. Access to preschool education has been increasing steadily on the continent from an average Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of below 20% in 2000 to over 30% in 2017. A number of Countries such as Algeria, Angola, Ghana, Liberia Kenya and Malawi registered access rates of over 75%<sup>2</sup>

On the health front, aggressive campaigns across the region have resulted in remarkable progress in infant and child survival rates<sup>3</sup>. For example, substantive reduction in Under Five Mortality Rates (U5MR) have been realized across many countries on the continent. Evidence show that Africa reduced its under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) by more than 50% during the MDGs era<sup>4</sup>, by 2015, 12 SSA countries met their Millennium Development Goal (MDDG#4 target. Countries such as Liberia, Rwanda, Malawi, and Madagascar all achieved a reduction of more than 60% compared to the 1990 baseline<sup>5</sup>. Similarly stunting levels among children decreased from 38.3% in 2000 to 30.3% in 2017<sup>6</sup>

Despite tremendous improvement on provision of ECD services, challenges persist characterized by low levels of access to early learning and stimulation services<sup>7</sup>, as well high rates of child malnutrition. It is estimated that approximately 66%<sup>8</sup> of children under-five are at risk of not reaching their full developmental potential due to poverty, malnutrition, and a lack of early stimulation and learning. The most at risk of exclusion are children in disadvantaged circumstances such as those living with disabilities, living in poverty, in conflict and crisis situations.<sup>9</sup> This calls for the need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration to increase investment in ECD in the region.

1. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000137564>

2. (UNICEF Our World Ready to Learn Report).

3. [https://arifchereta.com/arif\\_media/2022/06/d38a7e47-abda-45ab-a358-8e5e3e624838.pdf](https://arifchereta.com/arif_media/2022/06/d38a7e47-abda-45ab-a358-8e5e3e624838.pdf)

4. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Committing to child survival: a promise renewed. New York: Progress Report; 2015.

5. United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). Levels & Trends in child mortality: report 2017, estimates developed by the UN inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation. New York: United Nations Children's Fund; 2017

6. <https://www.afro.who.int/news/strategic-plan-reduce-malnutrition-africa-adopted-who-member-states>

7. United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) 2020.

8. Black, M. M., Walker, S. P., Fernald, L., Andersen, C. T., DiGirolamo, A. M., Lu, C., McCoy, D. C., Fink, G., Shawar, Y. R., Shiffman, J., Devercelli, A. E., Wodon, Q. T., Vargas-Barón, E., Grantham-Mc Gregor, S., & Lancet Early Childhood Development Series Steering Committee (2017). Early childhood development coming of age: science through the life course. Lancet (London, England), 389(10064), 77-90. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31389-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31389-7)

9. Agbenyepa, 2017

### 1.3 Status of ECD in Southern Africa Region

SADC region has a mostly young population with 76% being below the age of 35 years.<sup>10</sup> A study commissioned by the World Bank in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Eswatini and South Africa confirms that Southern Africa is at a different demographic moment than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11</sup> To harness the human capital development within the SADC sub-region, it is important to improve access to quality and inclusive ECD services to improve human capital outcomes in the region.

There is progress on the policy front, with provision of ECD services becoming a key policy and development goal of most governments in the SADC region. Over half of the 21 ESA countries have developed a national ECD policy or sectoral strategic frameworks that include ECD. Countries in the Southern African region. Countries such as Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa all have a national ECD policy or have ECD included in sectoral strategic frameworks especially those of health and education. Although SADC countries are at varying levels in child policy development, there is evidence of efforts to develop policy that incorporates the minimum package of services for children that has been agreed at regional level, through the SADC Minimum Package of Services (2011).

Despite the above progress, children in Southern African region still face multiple adversities that put them at risk of not realizing their full developmental potential. Evidence show that the Southern Africa region has a high prevalence of stunting (e.g., Botswana 28.9%; Zimbabwe 23.5%, Zambia 35%, Lesotho 34.6% etc.)<sup>12</sup>. Birth registration, is also low in the region, particularly amongst children in low quintiles at 20%) compared to those in high quintiles at 50%. Further only three countries show basic sanitation coverage above 67% (i.e., South Africa, Botswana, and Mauritius). There are challenges in access to early childhood education in the SADC region, for example, Zambia's access to ECE is at 30%<sup>13</sup> and Malawi at 27%.

Several debilitating factors expose some structural weaknesses in the ECD sector. In the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, there is an identified lack of sustainable, inclusive, equitable and gender sensitive ECD policies that support children's access to quality services. This is compounded by poor ECD financing and lack of prioritisation by governments, donors, and other stakeholders. For example, a study conducted by UNICEF (2018) to find out whether governments in eastern and southern Africa are maximizing returns on investments in early childhood development found that children (0-6 years) were benefitting from significantly less spending than older children. Analysis of both health and education budgets and expenditure showed that while governments and development partners in ESA spent an estimated US\$542 and USD \$ 411 (in 2017 constant prices) per person between the ages of 18-22 and 7-17 respectively; spending on services for children aged 0-2 and 3-6 averaged US\$207 and US\$88 respectively. The above findings shows that if the challenge of inadequate funding for ECD is not addressed, most countries in ESA may not reap the social and economic benefits of investing in the early years.<sup>14</sup>

Lack of cross-sectoral synergies necessary across countries in the SADC region has also been identified as a critical gap in ECD service delivery in the region. This is compounded by disasters such as Cyclone Idai in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic. In Southern Africa, Cyclone Idai destroyed existing ECD infrastructure and learning materials especially in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. While COVID-19 disrupted face-to-face learning in schools leading to learning losses due to prolonged school closures, it also affected the capacity of families to provide nurturing care to young children. Transparency and accountability, as well inadequate advocacy by CSOs have also been cited inhibiting factors to better ECD outcomes in the region .

10. Corcoran, T. (2017). Are the kids alright? Relating to representations of youth. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 22(2), 151-164.

11. Bruni, L. M., Rigolini, J., & Troiano, S. (2016). *Forever Young? Social Policies for a Changing Population in Southern Africa*. World Bank.

12. Source: SADC (2020). *SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment & Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report 2020*

13. Zambia MOE Education Statistics.

14. <https://www.unicef.org/esa/documents/quantifying-heckman>

15. Baseline evaluation for a transnational advocacy capacity building project in Southern Africa

## 1.4 Efforts at Continental and Regional Levels

The African Union through Agenda 2063<sup>16</sup> gives attention to improving access to quality early childhood development. The agenda calls for universal access to quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, ensuring that no child is left behind, and that the potential of every child is nurtured. As part of her efforts to implement Agenda 2063, the Africa Union developed the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) which observes that Early Childhood Education and Development as a pillar on which future learning and training are grounded, it is a neglected area in terms of policy and investment, and therefore deserves attention.

To facilitate improvement in the sub-sector across the region, Africa Union Commission (AUC) established the AU ECED Cluster in 2018 to serve as a mechanism to support the implementation of CESA 16–25 objectives related to the early years. This focuses on six priority areas of engagement at continental, regional and national level; (i) policy, advocacy and communication; (ii) equitable access to quality ECED programmes and services; (iii) quality of ECED systems, programmes, and services; (iv) governance and management; (v) research generation, documentation and dissemination and (vi) partnership and collaboration across all key stakeholders including state and non-state actors.

Additional efforts at the continental level include the inclusion of Nurturing Care framework for ECD as recommendation in achieving success in the implementation of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2016–2025 (ARNS16–26). This strategy falls within the agenda of the African Union Commission (AUC) to fight all forms of malnutrition among African children, given its negative impact on brain development in the early years. Current efforts include the integration of ECD within the organs of the AUC such as the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS), Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) and in the Regional Economic Communities (RECS) programmes. AUDA-NEPAD works as the main AU implementation organ and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) are among the other regional stakeholders that support the implementation of the Agenda 2063.

The Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, SADC, EAC, IGAD, UMA, CEN-SAD, ECCAS, EWOWAS) and two African Union recognised health communities (WAHO and ECSA-HC) are closely integrated with the AU's work and serve as its building blocks to accelerating better ECD outcomes on the continent. The multi-sectoral dialogue of the RECs, held in April and November 2022, in the framework of the AU Year of Nutrition, confirmed the position that the early years must be given due attention within regional policies, plans, strategies, programmes, campaigns and reports as these years are a critical foundation upon which a healthy, well-nourished, and prosperous Africa will be built.

## 1.5 Efforts in SADC Region

The commitment to promote children's rights in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is expressed through the efforts that have been made by countries in developing various national policies and programmes addressing various components of Early childhood Development. The SADC Minimum Package of Services (2011) identifies the basic and complementing needs and services for children in the areas of education and vocational skills; healthcare and sanitation; food security and nutrition; child and youth protection and safety; psycho-social well-being; and social protection.

16. <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=Agenda+2063>

## 2.0 About the ECD Conference

Building Partnerships is necessary in the scale up of ECD across the sub-region. Partnership among cross-sectoral actors operating at continental, regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels is important in informing ECD policy and programme development, ECD budget priorities, professionalization of the ECD sector and in developing robust ECD programs.

Evidence suggests that over the last decade, ECD partnerships through national and regional ECD networks have emerged as strong and complementary avenues to accelerating positive ECD outcomes as they facilitate systematic alignment and action across sectors to support country systems, strengthen the political will, and increase investment to deliver results for young children. In this regard, the Government of Zambia, Southern Africa Network for Early Childhood Development, (SANECD) in partnership with the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN), will be convening the Southern Africa regional ECD conference to provide a platform for deepening partnership to advance Quality and Inclusive Early Childhood Development and Education in Southern Africa. The conference is expected to bring together a diverse group of ECD actors including policy makers, researchers, CSOs, Academia, Funders, ECD practitioners, Government Ministries, Agencies and ECD sector partners.

### 2.1 Objectives of the Conference

The conference seeks to provide an opportunity to;

- i. Showcase innovative programs in the sub-region
- ii. Harness collective experiences to enrich the advocacy agenda and to strengthen policy and programme implementation,
- iii. Networking, building partnerships and establish pathways for collaborations
- iv. Disseminate ECD knowledge generated from sub-regional research efforts

### 2.2 The Focus of the Conference

The conference theme and sub-themes are anchored on partnerships & collaboration for stronger advocacy, enhanced visibility of vulnerable children, stronger networking; greater generation of evidence and better understanding of strategies to support enhanced access and quality in early childhood development and education. The vision is to contribute to an environment in the Southern Africa Region where children are provided with accessible, quality, and inclusive early childhood development and education services, where all children, are supported to attain, their full development potential and to contribute to the region's prosperity.

### 2.3 Conference sub-themes

The conference will evolve around the following sub-themes:

- i. Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa
- ii. Partnerships for strengthened advocacy to increase investments in Early Childhood Development and Education in Southern Africa sub-region
- iii. Innovative ways of increasing access to quality early Childhood Development and education services especially to the poor and marginalized.
- iv. Quality improvement strategies (Curriculum, play based-learning, workforce development, assessment, quality assurance etc.)

## **2.4 Conference Participants**

The participants of the ECD Conference will comprise of Government officials, National ECD Networks, development partners, local and international NGOs, academia, researchers, Global Leaders for Young Children (Africa) and ECD practitioners and programme planners from 9 countries in the Southern Africa region, AU Regional Economic communities.

## **2.5 Conference Format:**

The conference will include a mix of in-person and virtual participants thus providing a hybrid environment, maximizing on conference attendance and participation by stakeholders across the region and beyond. The conference will be organised in different sessions to ensure wide and active participation of participants. The conference will employ the following methods:

- i. Plenary sessions where keynote presentations will be delivered in line with the conference theme.
- ii. Round table discussions for smaller groups through breakout sessions. Through this, the conference participants will have the opportunity to engage in more in-depth sharing, learning and discussions on various subjects of interest and relevance for them. The round table dialogue will also be the avenue for generating key recommendations that will be taken up in the conference recommendations and in the final Communique.
- iii. Side events and clinics for various interest groups e.g. ECD Networks, researchers, funders, or country teams etc. This will enable groups to engage, network and build pathways for collaboration and partnerships that would take ECD forward in the region.
- iv. Exhibition for poster presentation and sharing of ECD materials and resources by partner;

## **2.6 Conference Host**

The Government of Zambia, in collaboration with Southern Africa Network for Early Childhood Development (SANECD) and the Africa Early childhood (AFECN), will host the conference.

## **2.7 Conference Dates and Venue**

The conference will be held from 28th – 30th March 2023, at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia.

## **2.8 Conference Speakers**

The ECD Conference will bring together experts and field practitioners, as keynote speakers, who will be drawn from continental level, SADC government representatives, civil society organization, academic partners and regional and international ECD funders and other organisations implementing ECD interventions.

## **3.0 PRE- CONFERENCE EVENTS AND LEARNING SESSIONS (27.03.2023)**

### **3.1 Track 1: Regional ECD Advocacy Capacity Toolkit with National Advocacy Partners**

**Coordinator: Joan Mutinda**

**Facilitator: Patricia Martins**

**Time: 09:00-13:00**

**Venue: AMALILA**

Investing in young children is a moral, economic, and social imperative. However, political will and commitment for increased investment in early childhood development are needed to accelerate positive early child development outcomes. AfECN's regional advocacy programme area focuses on directing advocacy efforts towards increased resource allocation and prioritization of ECD in national and regional agendas through the support and development of regional and national advocacy strategies.

Over the last 2 years, African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) supported the development of a regional advocacy capacity toolkit to strengthen the advocacy capacity of National ECD Networks working at the cross-section of ECD research, policy, and practice to have a deep understanding of the development and implementation of advocacy strategies. The toolkit was piloted in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique where multiple stakeholders in the three countries were trained to get deeper understanding of the toolkit and supported to apply it in the development of National ECD Advocacy Strategies; thus the ultimate goal is to revise the toolkit based on the experiences from the three countries and carry out further stakeholder engagement to use the toolkit as a regional resource for building a structured approach for sustained advocacy. The learning session is intended to carry out further stakeholder engagements with Southern Africa Network for Early Childhood Development members to identify and address gaps in the advocacy toolkit and to build consensus on the roadmap to facilitate adoption of the toolkit as a regional resource to inform regional and national ECD advocacy.

### **3.2 Track 2: ECSA-HC Responsive Caregiving Experts' Committee**

**Coordinators: Princess Alleluia & Rose Kamasara**

**Facilitator: Rosemary Mwaisaka**

**Time: 14:00-17:35pm**

**Venue: AMALILA**

In an effort to enhance the nurturing environments of young children through increased responsive caregiving practices across the continent, the Eastern Central and Southern Africa-Health Community (ECSA-HC) has established the Responsive Caregiving Expert Committee under non-communicable diseases (NCDs), Food Security and Nutrition Cluster in collaboration with the Family Health and Infectious Diseases Cluster Programme. This was done in collaboration with Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) in February 2022.

The Responsive Caregiving Expert Committee of ECSA-HC is composed of senior officers from various departments within ministries of health covering child and maternal health, mental health, community health and nutrition. Its role is to guide and advise on the implementation of the Nurturing Care Framework and meet quarterly and once physically in one of the ECSA Member States selected. This year, the experts' committee meeting is planned on 27th March 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia at Taj Pamodzi Hotel and shall highlight updates from ECSA countries on the implementation of the global nurturing care framework, working group sessions to update the workplan for 2023 and a session to validate the ECSA-Landscape analysis on the implementation of the global nurturing care framework. All information on the meeting were shared by emails for all the expert's members.



### **3.3 Track 3: Research- Behavioural Insights**

**Coordinator: Dr. George Evans Owino**

**Facilitator: Abigail Sellman**

**Time: 09:00-10:30am**

**Venue: MUPANI 2**

The emerging field of behavioural science offers a new way of thinking about how to improve early childhood development (ECD) programmes, policies, and outcomes by unpacking how the environment influences the behaviour of children's caregivers and ECD practitioners. By better understanding how the environment influences individuals' decision-making processes and their ability to take action, behavioural design can offer ideas for novel, targeted solutions to better support caregivers and ECD practitioners. In this masterclass, participants will learn about applied behavioural design and engage in interactive discussions to consider how it can be used to develop new approaches to address persistent behavioural problems in their contexts. Participants will engage in interactive discussions - using real-world examples from the ECD sector - to learn about applied behavioural design, and how it can help them view and address persistent problems in their work from a new angle. Participants will leave with a more nuanced understanding of the many influences on behaviour and gain insight into how they can use behavioural-science-based approaches to reframe challenges they face into opportunities for programme improvement.

### **3.4 Track 4: AfECN Fellows – Side Event**

**Coordinator: Dr. George Evans Owino**

**Facilitator: Dr. Given Hapunda**

**Time: 11:00-13:00**

**Venue: MUPANI 2**

AfECN has been implementing a research mentorship programme to help enhance capacity for implementation research. To date, AfECN has implemented three cohorts of research fellows totaling 23 from across the region and now seeks to build on this and other initiatives through creation of two communities of practice (COP) that bring together the three cohorts of AfECN Research Fellows. Through these CoP, we aim to create a network of ECD researchers who will have an influential voice in the region and in the sub-regions by being strategically linked to ongoing ECD advocacy, policy, and programming efforts across the region. AfECN is Supporting participation of the AfECN fellowship holders in two sub-regional meetings (West & Central Africa and Eastern & Southern Africa) to afford them with opportunities to network with each other and to connect them to sub-regional dialogues on ECD. The intended outcomes of their participation in the conference and the side session is that there will be enhanced networking and collaboration with policy makers, other researchers, and programme implementers and enhanced learning from evidence-based interventions

## 4.0 SOUTHERN AFRICAN ECD CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TIME	<b>DAY 1: March 28th, 2023</b> <b>CHAIR: PROF. MARY GETUI – CHAIR OF AfECN EXECUTIVE BOARD</b> <b>COORDINATOR: MRS GIVEN DAKA   RAPPORTEUR: RUTH MUENDO &amp; JULIANA SELETI</b>
07:00 – 08:30	Registration
08:30 – 12:30	<p><b>SESSION 1: WELCOME &amp; OPENING</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Mr Charm Kalimbika</b> Director, Directorate of Early Childhood Education, Zambia</p> <p><b>MC – Ms. Kunda Mando</b> Public Relations Officer Ministry of Education, Zambia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival of Honorable Ministers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Hon. Doreen Mwamba</b>, MP, Minister of Community Development &amp; Social Services, Zambia</li> <li>▪ <b>Hon. Sylvia Masebo MP</b>, Minister of Health, Zambia</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Arrival of Guest of Honor/ Minister of Education – Zambia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Hon. Douglas Sykalima</b> MP, Minister of Education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Opening Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Dr. Joachim Nyoni</b>, Senior Education Officer, Directorate of Early Childhood Education, Ministry of Education, Zambia</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Zambia National Anthem</b></p> <p><b>Welcome Remarks: Mr. Joel Kamoko</b> Permanent Secretary, Educational Services, Ministry of Education, Zambia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Hon. Doreen Mwamba</b>, MP, Minister Community Development &amp; Social Services, Zambia</li> <li>▪ <b>Hon Douglas Sykalima</b>, MP, Minister of Education, Zambia</li> <li>▪ <b>Hon. Sylvia Masebo</b>, MP, Minister of Health, Zambia</li> </ul> <p><b>Commitment Statements by Regional and Continental Bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Rosemary Mwaisaka</b>, Manager NCDs Food Security &amp; Nutrition, ECSA-HC</li> <li>▪ <b>Bibi Giyose</b>, Senior Nutrition &amp; Food Systems Officer, AUDA-NEPAD</li> </ul> <p><b>Entertainment</b></p> <p><b>Remarks by Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Dr. Penelope Campbell</b>, UNICEF, Zambia Country Representative</li> <li>▪ <b>Dr Nathan Nsubuga Bakyaite</b>, WHO Representative in Zambia</li> <li>▪ <b>Jesal Chandrakant Kika</b>, World Bank, Education Economist &amp; Consultant</li> </ul> <p><b>ADVOCACY VIDEO – UNICEF</b></p> <p><b>Keynote Presentation: Prof. Linda Richter</b> AfECN Board Member – The importance of childcare</p> <p><b>Hon. Sylvia Masebo</b>, Minister of Health, Zambia, to invite the Guest of Honor</p> <p><b>Speech by Guest of Honor &amp; Official Opening of the Conference</b></p>

13.00 – 14:00	<p><b>SESSION 2: EXHIBITIONS/POSTER VIEWING</b></p> <p>This half hour period is dedicated to interacting with poster presenters as well the exhibitors.</p>
14:00– 14:50	<p><b>LUNCH</b></p>
14:50 – 15:00	<p><b>SESSION 3: GLOBAL TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: David Baysah UNICEF ESARO</b></p> <p><b>Keynote Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Hasina Ebrahim</b>, UNISA and UNESCO co-chair in ECD - ECD Data in Context of Tashkent Declaration</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Sarah Naicker</b>, Research Manager, DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of Witwatersrand- Countdown 2030 Profiles</li> <li>• <b>Sheila Manji</b>, Consultant, WHO, Reflections on Implementation of the Nurturing Care (pre-recorded)</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections Q &amp; A</b></p>
15.00 – 15:50	<p><b>ADVOCACY VIDEO</b></p>
15:50 – 16:00	<p><b>SESSION 4: REGIONAL TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: BRIDGET MOYA, DIRECTOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES, ZAMBIA.</b></p> <p><b>Keynote Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bibi Giyose</b>, AUDA NEPAD – Continental Frameworks to support Child Development</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Novuyo Nkomo</b>, SANU – SA Policy and programme context</li> <li>• <b>Elizabeth Spier</b>, American Institutes of Research – Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa</li> <li>• <b>Felistus Motimedi</b>, Regional Director, Child Rights Network for Southern Africa CRNSA – Coverage of the holistic needs of children under SADC protocols</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections Q &amp; A</b></p>
16:00 – 16:45	<p><b>ADVOCACY VIDEO</b></p>
16:45 – 17:30	<p><b>SESSION 5A: LESSONS FROM ECSA–HC RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING EXPERTS’ COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR: LYDIA KELANE, MANAGER PUBLIC HEALTH, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LESOTHO</b></p> <p>“Sharing experiences and lessons of the ECSA–HC Responsive Caregiving Experts’ Committee.”</p>
	<p><b>SESSION 5B: NATIONAL TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PANEL DISCUSSION ON COUNTRY EXPERIENCES</b></p> <p><b>MODERATOR: JORAM MUPUNZA, PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, ZIMBABWE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dudu Hlophe</b>, Senior Inspector ECD, Ministry of Education, Eswatini,</li> <li>• <b>Matsepe Margaret Ntsaba</b>, ECCD Manager, Ministry of Education, Lesotho,</li> <li>• <b>Michael Silavwe</b>, Chief IMCI Officer, Ministry of Health, Zambia</li> <li>• <b>Martha Chiwand</b>, Ministry of Gender, Malawi</li> <li>• <b>Shingirai Amos Paungano</b>, Ministry of Labour and Social Services, Zimbabwe</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections Q &amp; A</b></p>
17.30 –	<p><b>END OF DAY 1</b></p>

**\* TEA WILL BE PROVIDED ONGOING BASIS THROUGH OUT THE DAY**

TIME	<b>DAY 2: March 29th, 2023</b> <b>CHAIR: PROF. LINDA RICHTER</b> <b>COORDINATOR: PRINCESS ALLELUIA   RAPPORTEUR: DR. LUCENA MUIANGA &amp; DAMARIS NELIMA</b>
07.30 – 08.00	Registration
08.00 – 09.00	<b>SESSION 6: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE</b> <b>MODERATOR: PROF. HASINA EBRAHIM</b> <b>Keynote Presentation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>David Baysah</b>, UNICEF ESARO- Early Childhood Workforce</li> </ul> <b>Voices from the Field</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ngandu Sakala</li> <li>• Alice Moyo</li> </ul> <b>Presenters:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr Alakwisa Abraham Phiri</b>, Director Research, Zambia National Union of Teachers – The role of Teachers Unions in the development of the Early Childhood Workforce: The case of Zambia.</li> <li>• <b>Ondela Manjezi-Sokomani</b>, Programme Manager, One to One Africa, South Africa- Enable Play Learning: Addressing Access Gaps in Early Learning in OR Tambo District, South Africa.</li> </ul> <b>Reflections Q &amp; A</b>
09:00 – 09:15	<b>ADVOCACY VIDEO ON PLAY – UNICEF</b>
09.15 – 10.30	<b>SESSION 7: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY</b> <b>PANEL MODERATOR: MHAMBI NDLANGAMANDLA MOSES, DIRECTOR NATIONAL CHILD SERVICES, ESWATINI</b> <b>Keynote Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr. Nicholas Dowdall</b>, Evidence Specialist, LEGO Foundation – Promoting a world of play for the youngest in the Global South</li> </ul> <b>Panel Presenters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joy Nafungo</b>, Senior Project Officer Knowledge &amp; Innovation Exchange International Development Research Centre, IDRC – Promoting Learning Through Play in Sub-Saharan Africa; what evidence is telling us</li> <li>• <b>Futhi Mbongwe</b>, Operations Manager, Play Africa – Leveraging a Children Museum to promote play-based learning in Africa – a case for South Africa</li> <li>• <b>Dr. ZewelANJI Serpell</b>, Early Childhood Development Specialist, UNICEF Zambia Country Office – Delivering Integrated ECD at Community level-:Insaka Model</li> </ul> <b>Reflections Q &amp; A</b>
10.30 – 11.00	<b>TEA BREAK</b> <b>ADVOCACY VIDEO ON CHILD CARE – WORLD BANK</b>
11.00 – 12.15	<b>SESSION 8: CHILDCARE IN A CHANGING WORLD</b> <b>MODERATOR: RANTSOPE MOLEFA, CO-CHAIR, SOUTH AFRICAN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTER-SECTORAL FORUM, SOUTH AFRICA</b> <b>Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amanda Devercelli</b>, Global Lead for Early Childhood Development, Education, World Bank (video)</li> <li>• <b>Dr Tawanda Makusha</b>, Chief Research Specialist, Human Sciences Research Council – Male Engagement in Caregiving</li> </ul> <b>Panel Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grace Matlhape</b>, CEO Smart Start South Africa</li> <li>• <b>Misiwe Fortunate Maphumulo</b>, Field Researcher, Asiye eTafuleni, Durban, South Africa-SAFER SPACES childcare solutions for urban Africa.</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Winnie Nyato</b>, Senior Specialist for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Children in Crossfire – Childcare in the Urban Areas of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.</li> </ul>

12:15 – 13:00	<p><b>SESSION 9: ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION</b>  <b>MODERATOR: GEORGE HAMUSUNGA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ZANEC</b></p> <p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Patricia Martin</b>, Director, Advocacy Aid – An overview to Advocacy and the Regional Advocacy Toolkit</li> <li>• <b>Celso Soares Give</b>, Senior Research Manager, Development Media International (DMI), Mozambique, – Experiences in the development of mass media campaign to promote early child development: perspectives for Mozambique.</li> <li>• <b>Henry Kabwe</b>, Executive Director, Media Network for Child Rights and Development – Leverage on the power of media to promote ECD in Southern Africa</li> <li>• <b>Marcia Zali</b>, Journalist – ECD Media Advocacy: Experiences of an ECD Dart Media Fellow</li> </ul>
13.00 – 14.00	<p><b>LUNCH BREAK</b></p>
14.00 – 15.30	<p><b>SESSION 10: PARALLEL 1</b>  <b>BREAK-OUT ROOM 1: MUPANI 2</b>  <b>Partnerships for strengthened ECD advocacy in Southern Africa Region I:</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Shoeshoe Mofokeng, Lesotho Network      <b>Rapporteur:</b> Ruth Muendo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jacqueline Chebi</b> – Untapped potential of inter-faith leaders in Early Childhood development</li> <li>• <b>Chiku Lweno</b> – Strategic partnership with Media to amplify local voices and increase investments in ECD across Tanzania</li> <li>• <b>David Baysah</b> – The ECE Accelerator Toolkit: Global tools to sustainable scale ECE</li> <li>• <b>Grant Mwinsa</b> – Administrative prospects for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe District of Zambia.</li> <li>• <b>Bruno Ghumphi</b> – Experience Sharing of the Tanzanian National Multi-Sectoral ECD Programme</li> <li>• <b>Naison Bhunhu</b> – ZINECDA TRANAC Alliance</li> </ul> <p><b>BREAK-OUT ROOM 2: CLUB LOUNGE</b>  <b>Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa I:</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Dr. Novuyo Nkomo Eswatini Network      <b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr. Josephine Matha Apolot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr. Nicholas Dowdall</b> – Building data systems for early learning in South Africa: Lessons from the ECD Census</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Given Hapunda</b> – Caregiver beliefs and practices on Play in Rwanda and Zambia</li> <li>• <b>Prof. BM Diale</b> – “Closing the gap”: How Foundation phase teachers support learners presenting with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms in South Africa</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Bibian Kalinde</b> – Situational analysis of play- based learning in early childhood education in Uganda and Zambia.</li> <li>• <b>Jessica Brown</b> – Data driven ECD in informal settlements.</li> <li>• <b>Grace Phiri Bwalya</b>, Innovative Ways of Increasing Access to Quality Early Childhood Development and Education Services Especially to The Poor and Marginalised.</li> </ul> <p><b>BREAK-OUT ROOM 3: BAOBAB (Virtual Room)</b>  <b>Innovative ways of increasing access to quality ECDE targeting the poor and marginalized I:</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Joylet Genda, – Malawi Network.      <b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr. Lucena Albino Muianga</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Marceline Kahlari</b> – Innovative ways of increasing access to quality early childhood development and education services especially to the poor and marginalized.</li> <li>• <b>Prof. Godfrey Ejuu</b> – Inclusive Home-based Early Learning Project</li> <li>• <b>Violet Birungi &amp; Dr. Daniel Okello Ayen</b> – Impact of Mother Baby Areas on ECD in the refugee and host communities of Yumbe, Terego and Midi-Okollo districts in Uganda</li> <li>• <b>Betty Chipiliro Moses</b> – An Inclusive ECD Project in Ntcheu District, Malawi (video)</li> <li>• <b>Greetings Chigonda</b> – Rethinking early childhood holistic development in the COVID 19 context. (Video)</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Juliana Seleti</b> – Relational Equity and Inclusion in Early Childhood Development</li> </ul>

**BREAK-OUT ROOM 4: AMALILA****Quality Improvement Strategies****Chair:** Steelu Phiri –Malawi Network**Rapporteur:** Damaris Nelima

- **Dr. Silas Onyango** – Strengthening learning through play for preschoolers in Kenya: Existing approaches, capacity gaps and policy recommendations.
- **Jessica Li** – Cash+: an opening for behavioural interventions
- **Zanele Sibisi** – Equipping Early Childhood Educators in South Africa to Create Gender-Transformative Environment.
- **Mmatsetshweu Motaung** – Creating Opportunities for Capacity Building and Access Support in the Early Years.
- **Dr. Samuel Oppong Frimpong & Dr. Abdulai Maxim Conjoh, Leslie Casely-Hayford** – Building Teacher Capacity to Enhance Early Learning through child focused and play based approaches in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

15.30 – 17.00

**SESSION II: PARALLEL 2****BREAK-OUT ROOM 1: BAOBAB (Virtual Room)****Partnerships for strengthened ECD advocacy in Southern Africa Region II:****Chair :** Naison Bhunu – Zimbabwe Network**Rapporteur :** Dr. Habtamu Mekonnen

- **Katie Bullman** – The Value of Cost-Benefit Analyses in Advocating for Enhanced Investment in Early Childhood Development and Education: How learnings from award-winning research in Burundi can be leveraged for use in Southern Africa (Video)
- **Gracious Banda** – Collaborative approach for successful ECDE in Malawi; Filling the gap (Video).
- **Dr. Sharon Carnahan** – Literacy is a social justice issue.
- **Laura Brooks** – Towards universal access: A three-year acceleration plan for ECD funding
- **Melanie Picolo** – Collective action for Nurturing Care in Mozambique: A qualitative evaluation (virtual)
- **Lucy Palmer** – Preschool, Poultry and Parenting – innovation in integrated programming in Tanzania (Virtual)

**BREAK-OUT 2: CLUB LOUNGE****Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa I:****Chair:** Doris Chirwa, Zambia Network**Rapporteur:** Dr. Juliana Seleti

- **Dr. Josephine Matha Apolot** – Three-to-Eight-Year-Old Children's Lived Experiences of Violence in Homes. A case of Mbale Slum.
- **Takondwa Bakuwa** – Building an inclusive early childhood development system for young children with disabilities and their families in Africa.
- **Dr. Hector Swazi** – Situational analysis of play-based learning in early childhood development education in Uganda and Zambia.
- **Dr Agnes Mando Banda** – An examination of the support systems available for children in early childhood who are deaf-blind in Zambia.
- **Gloria Nkosi** – Caregiver Learning through Play
- **Abella Owuor** – A Coordinated Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development (NCFECD) implementation through a multi-sectoral lens.

### **BREAK-OUT 3: MUPANI 2**

#### **Innovative ways of increasing access to quality early childhood development and education services especially to the poor and marginalized II:**

**Chair:** Prof. Seth Oppong, Botswana

**Rapporteur:** Dr. Newton Mukolwe

- **Jesca Harriet Audo** - Child to Child Learning Approach: Inclusive play-based learning for smooth transition
- **Nkhensani Mabunda** - Partnerships in Action: Insights from the 'Caregiver Learning through Play' Consortium in South Africa on Scaling ECD Interventions.
- **Dr. Sylvia Mwanza-Kabaghe** - Baseline study on the state of Early Childhood Education in Solwezi District to inform Kansanshi Mine's Education Quality Improvement Programme: One year six months on.
- **Craig Ferla and Lazaro Ernest** - Demonstrating the role of Local CSOs in supporting ECD Policy in Practice
- **Getrudes Noronha** - Experience of the Early Child Development Network in Emergency ECD Implementation
- **Tolulope Ojo** - Fostering Gender and Disabilities Inclusion in Nigeria Play-based Pre-primary Education.

### **BREAK-OUT 4: AMALILA**

#### **Quality improvement strategies**

**Chair:** Felistus Motimedi, CRNSA

**Rapporteur:** Rose Kamasara

- **Lisa Voortman** - A catalyst for effective quality programme implementation and monitoring at a scale.
- **Abdoulie F.R Jadama** - Strengthening the Capacity of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Workforce in Play-Based Pedagogies: A Case of The Gambia
- **Janet Serenje** - The Role of Home Literacy Environment and language in the Development of Rhyme Awareness Skills in Zambian Preschoolers
- **Vilasack Viraphanh** - Adapting, pilot-testing, and scaling accelerated pre-primary education programs in Tanzania, Lao PDR, and Tanzania
- **Ruth Muendo** - Innovative Public Private School Meals Partnership for Quality ECDE
- **Ms. Winnie Nyato**, Senior Specialist for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Children in Crossfire - Scaling quality improved Early Childhood Education in Tanzania in line with government systems and the prevailing context

17:00 -

**END OF THE DAY 2**

TIME	<b>DAY 3: MARCH 30th 2023</b> <b>CHAIR: ROSEMARY MWAISAKA</b> <b>COORDINATOR: DR GEORGE EVANS OWINO    RAPPORTEUR: DR. HBTAMU MEKONNEN &amp; DR. NEWTON MUKOLWE</b>
07.30 – 08.00	Registration
08:00 – 09:30	<p><b>SESSION 12: FINANCING OF ECD</b>  <b>MODERATOR: DR. ZEWELANJI SERPELL</b></p> <p><b>Keynote Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Oliver Petrovic</b>, UNICEF ESARO – Quantifying Heckman: Maximizing Returns on Investments in ECD</li> <li>• <b>Jesal Chandrakant Kika</b>, World Bank – Public Expenditure &amp; Institutional Review: Focus on ECD in South Africa (Video)</li> <li>• <b>Jessica Li</b>, Cash Plus: An Opening for Behavioral Interventions</li> <li>• <b>Ndanyanja Mwale –Daka</b>, Budget Analyst, Ministry of Finance &amp; Development Planning. Title: Improving ECD service delivery through Output Based Budgeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Panel Discussion.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Oliver Petrovic</b>, UNICEF ESARO – Quantifying Heckman: Maximizing Returns on Investments in ECD</li> <li>• <b>Jessica Li</b>, Cash Plus: An Opening for Behavioral Interventions</li> <li>• <b>Ndanyanja Mwale –Daka</b>, Budget Analyst, Ministry of Finance &amp; Development Planning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections &amp; Q&amp;A</b></p>
09.30 – 10.30	<p><b>SESSION 13: DATA GENERATION, TRANSLATION AND UTILIZATION</b>  <b>MODERATOR: PROF. HASINA EBRAHIM</b></p> <p>#Africaalsoknows</p> <p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr. Vanessa Cavallera</b>, Technical Officer, Brain Health Unit, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization – The Global Scale for Early Development (GSED) (video).</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Sarah Naicker</b>, Research Manager, DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of Witwatersrand – Global Challenges Research Fund, GCRF Dissemination</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Abbie Raikes</b>, Founder, ECD Measure and Director Center for Global Health and Associate Professor, University of Nebraska Medical Center – ECD Measure</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Given Hapunda</b>, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Zambia – AfECN Fellowship Programme</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections &amp; Q&amp;A</b></p>
10.30 – 11.00	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
11.00 – 12.00	<p><b>SESSION 14: NATIONAL NETWORKING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA</b>  <b>MODERATOR: DR. PATRICK MAKOKORO</b></p> <p>Opening Remarks: <b>Dr. Patrick Makokoro</b>; Regional Advisor, Southern African Network for ECD (SANECD)</p> <p><b>Panel Discussion: National ECD Networks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joylet Genda</b> – Malawi Network</li> <li>• <b>Naison Bunhu &amp; Marceline Kahlari</b> – Zimbabwe</li> <li>• <b>Getrudes Noronha</b> – Mozambique Network</li> <li>• <b>Shoeshoe Mofokeng</b> – Lesotho Network</li> <li>• <b>Emmanuel Moyo</b> – Eswatini Network</li> <li>• <b>Doris</b></li> </ul>



12:00 – 12:30	<p><b>Communique / Lusaka Declaration to be read by Host Government</b></p> <p><b>Conference Evaluation – George Evans Owino</b></p>
12.30 - 13.00	<p><b>SESSION 15: CLOSING SESSION</b></p> <p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Lackson Kasonka</b>, Permanent Secretary, Technical Services, Ministry of Health, Government of Zambia</li> <li>• National Anthem</li> <li>• Closing Prayer</li> </ul>
13.00 – 14.00	<p><b>LUNCH BREAK</b></p>
14.00 – 15.30	<p><b>SESSION 16: SIDE SESSIONS/MEETINGS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SANECD Networks</li> <li>2. KIX Grantees</li> </ol>
15.30 –	<p><b>END OF CONFERENCE &amp; DELEGATES DEPART AT THEIR CONVENIENCE</b></p>

## 5.0 Abstracts:

### 5.1 SESSION 10: PARALLEL 1

#### 5.1.1 Break-out Room 1: Partnerships for strengthened ECD advocacy in Southern Africa Region I

##### Untapped potential of inter-faith leaders in Early Childhood development

**Author/Presenter: Jacqueline Chebi;**

**Institutional Affiliation: Catholic Relief Services**

The role of civil society and non-government organizations has been crucial over the last couple of decades in mobilizing action by the public as well as in forming policies that serve societies. Engagement of inter-faith leaders in Early childhood development (ECD) has not been largely embraced in implementation of the program. This is due to limited knowledge and understanding on the influence and role that interfaith leaders play in the community and government. Inter-faith leaders can have an enormous influence on their followers through change in mindsets that can lead to progress in society. Their congregation and an unbiased nature give them a strong platform and voice to influence policy development and implementation in ECD financing and budgeting.

However, this potential remains untapped by different stakeholders in the field even though faith communities are involved at different level of implementation of government programs. There is need to have them independently create their space and voice out issues to be addressed. It is in this regard that this presentation seeks to understand the potential of interfaith leaders in advocating for Early Childhood Development. What is the capacity of interfaith leaders in advocating and addressing ECD issues?

What advocacy role do interfaith leaders play to influence policy and implementation of ECD agenda? What is the impact of religious texts interpretation related to ECD in promoting the nurturing care framework? Capacity building plays a significant role of equipping interfaith leaders with knowledge and information on ECD to articulate and voice out pertinent ECD components. With equipped knowledge on science of ECD the religious leaders can address policy formulation, development, and implementation with key opinion leaders at government level to ensure resource allocation and investment for the benefit of the larger society. Integration of religious scriptures to these components play a big role in advocacy to the congregation and society at large. Increased engagement of inter-faith leaders will ensure involvement of the larger community members through their congregation and impartial decision making on matters policy with key opinion leaders. There has been evidence on the impact of religious leaders on peace and governance and covid-19 vaccine uptake. These findings clearly show that interfaith leaders have a significant impact on advocacy ECD notwithstanding.

##### Strategic partnership with Media to amplify local voices and increase investments in ECD across Tanzania

**Author/Presenter: Chiku Lweno**

**Institutional Affiliation: Children in Crossfire**

'From zero media articles in 2019 that could be clearly identified as promoting Early Childhood Development (ECD)—age range 0-8 years in health, nutrition, protection, responsive caregiving and early learning—to over 1000 pieces published in newspapers, online, through TV and radio within 2 years!' summarizes the evolving story of an innovative partnership between Children in Crossfire (CiC) and the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) in media-led ECD Advocacy in Tanzania. Inspired by global evidence and a call to action for scaling multisectoral ECD investments so that all children develop to their full potential and ultimately contribute to thriving societies, CiC sought to leverage the unique reach of the mainstream media to raise awareness and catalyse action for quality ECD provision from household, local government and national level. CiC and UTPC developed a pool of ECD champion journalists reporting from across all 26 Mainland Tanzania regions. They were trained in the Science of ECD, and closely mentored by ECD professionals and media practitioners on effective journalism. The journalists became uniquely placed to support the national and subnational implementation of Tanzania's flagship National Multi-Sectoral ECD Programme. In addition to generating new stories, the journalists support live community radio shows bringing together ECD experts, government officials, and citizens, with active listener engagement. After being strategically engaged, the journalists highlighted the

unique potential for media to raise awareness at scale. Initial focus was on coverage with over 1000 stories on all nurturing care components reported across all regions from 2019-2021. Current emphasis is the quality of these media stories to optimise ECD policy influence and implementation locally and nationally. Media has a unique role to play in supporting ECD policy in practice by raising awareness and catalysing action and accountability for improved ECD outcomes from household to national levels.

### **The ECE Accelerator Toolkit: Global tools to sustainable scale ECE**

**Author/Presenter: David Baysah**

**Institutional Affiliation: UNICEF**

Despite the proven benefits of quality early childhood education (ECE), the GER for pre-primary education in East and Southern Africa is 33%, well below the global average of 50%. Too often, ECE is inadequately budgeted and left on the margins of education sector plans (ESP). In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 0.3% of public education expenditure budgets are spent on pre-primary education, jeopardizing global commitments to meeting Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.2. To address this issue, the Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) approach was scaled up and expanded to produce the ECE Accelerator Toolkit, supporting countries in scaling the provision of quality ECE programs through mainstreaming ECE into ESPs and national budgets. The KIX project piloted the Toolkit in five countries, while seeking to expand the use of the BELDS approach and Toolkit globally.

In East and Southern Africa, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi and South Sudan represent countries that have successfully leveraged the BELDS approach and resources in the ECE Accelerator Toolkit to help mainstream ECE into ESPs, mobilize resources for the sub-sector and inform subsector policies and strategies. As part of the KIX project, innovations have been developed for the Toolkit including an ECE costing tool and guidance on building gender transformative pre-primary education systems. Two new sections of the Toolkit are being finalized, which will support countries in the implementation and evaluation phases of the ESP process.

UNICEF's presentation at the conference will present key findings generated from the KIX project, as well as showcase the use of resources in the Toolkit by countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, in an effort to demonstrate how this global good can be leveraged regionally to systematically integrate ECE within national budget and planning cycles to ensure the quality of ECE at scale and contribute to meeting SDG target 4.2.

### **Administrative prospects for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe district of Zambia**

**Author/Presenter: Grant Mwinsa**

**Institutional Affiliation: Chalimbana University**

The study was designed to investigate the administrative prospects for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe district of Zambia. The study was guided by three objectives being: to establish the infrastructure suitability in government ECE centres, to determine areas of investment for quality education provision and to establish the needed pedagogical support for curriculum implementation. A descriptive research design was used to conduct the study. Data was collected from 11 public ECE centres in Chongwe district using a check list. Interviews were conducted with 22 teachers and 11 head teachers. The study found that funding was not sufficient to enable the schools meet the administrative costs for their ECE centres hence they lacked appropriate facilities for every learner. It was also established the government through the school administrators has not invested sufficiently in the provision of quality ECE due to over enrolment, teachers, in door and outdoor learning environment. There has been less support for teacher pedagogical improvement through organised meetings and workshops. The study concludes that there has been ineffective administrative support for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe district of Zambia. It was recommended that the government should provide adequate budgetary allocation should be made to enable effective ECE curriculum implementation in Zambian schools.

## Experience Sharing on Coordination of National Multi-Sectoral ECD Programme, Tanzania.

**Author/Presenter: Bruno Ghumphi**

**Institutional Affiliation: Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN)**

Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN) is a national umbrella Network of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Civil Society Organizations working to promote Early Childhood Development in Tanzania since 2000 by influencing change in policies, programs and practices. Our vision is to see a society where all children are developmentally on track to reach their full potential. TECDEN has managed to coordinate non-state actors to work collaboratively with the government in the development and launch of the National Multisectoral ECD Program (NM-ECDP-2021/2022-2025/2026), and NM-ECDP Advocacy Strategy to catalyze the implementation of the program. The NM-ECDP intends to improve quality holistic services delivery to children to attain their developmental potentials by strengthening coordination, improving enabling environment as well as increasing financial and human resources.

Currently, TECDEN is Co-Chairing the national coordination mechanisms as well as championing coordination at sub-national level. TECDEN will share the experience on NM-ECDP development and implementation through plenary sessions, side event and clinics as well as exhibition. With plenary session, TECDEN will prepare power point presentation about program development process, launching and its implementation including coordination of NM-ECDP at both national and sub national levels, conclusion and recommendations. TECDEN will use side event to offer details of NM-ECDP including progress being made since its launching, available opportunities and challenges while the exhibitions will be used to share program documents and additional clarifications to the participants.

## ZINECDA TRANAC Alliance -

**Author/Presenter: Naison Bhunhu**

**Institutional Affiliation: ZINECDA**

ZINECDA, as a leader in the six Southern Africa country (Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, Eswatini and Mozambique ECDE project, responded to a number of challenges bedeviling ECDE in the region. The challenges include the sector's control and implementation mainly being in the hands of communities, civil society and private with only 14% being government; existing weak system measures (low access and participation rates being mostly below 30%, subject focused instead of domain emphasized curriculum, weak quality assurance, lack of and inappropriate infrastructure, lack of learning and play materials, and lack of trained and high-level workforce. There was need, and still is, need for civil society and oversight institutions capacity strengthening not only to demand transparency and accountability by governments but also proffer policy formulation, implementation and information management solutions. Follow through on this emerged a vibrant and transnational CSO coalitions and alliances of ECD networks and parliamentarians participating as social accountability bodies to initiate ECDE policy changes and to ensure that governments buy in ECDE issues. Several research studies were done in the consisting of developing an ECDE advocacy strategy plan, regional budget analysis, status of ECDE in the region, cost of education for an ECD child, aid quantum and effectiveness and effects of disasters on ECD children in the region. The research studies provided the evidence which needed for a policy advocacy within the region. The evidence led to collaborations in developing a protocol for children and drafting an ECDE policy framework with other civil society partners. Several lessons have been learnt in the project implementation which will inform other players considering transnational policy advocacy such as the value of alliance, adaptive management, collaborative learning, evidence-based advocacy. Several policy advocacy achievements were scored at national and regional levels. As a coalition there were several organisational and institutional experiences that strengthened the implementation project that can be shared.

## 5.1.2 Break-out Room 2: Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa I

### Building data systems for early learning in South Africa: Lessons from the ECD Census

**Author/Presenter: Dr. Nicholas Dowdall**  
**Institutional Affiliation: LEGO Foundation.**

The lack of accurate data and formality in the ECD sector in South Africa continues to hamper government and civil society's efforts to expand access to quality early learning opportunities. Recognising this critical gap in the sector, the Department of Basic Education partnered with the LEGO Foundation to carry out the ECD Census. This project constitutes the first complete mapping of Early Learning Programmes (ELPs) in the country. Data for the Census was collected between August 2021 and February 2022. Over 360 fieldworkers visited every ward in the country to identify ELPs of any size and type. Data collection involved an interview and observation of the facility. Parameters included location, fees, govt. registration, subsidies, child enrolment, staff counts and qualifications, infrastructure, learning and play materials and teaching practices, amongst others. In total, 42,420 ELPs were captured during fieldwork, with over 1.6m children are enrolled in these ELPs. 40% of ELPs are fully or conditionally registered with the government, while 16% are in the process of registering. One third of ELPs reported receiving a subsidy from the government. Just over half of ECD practitioners have an ECD qualification at the required level, and 27% have received a relevant skills training. More than half of ELPs allocate less than 30 minutes to free play daily, and only 56% have access to age-appropriate children's books. The average monthly fee amount was R509 per child. At approximately 60% of ELPs there is running water for handwashing and flush toilets. The information gathered is being used to integrate ECD data into government systems and expand education support and play-based learning programmes. This project was the first of its kind in South Africa and lessons can be shared with other countries that are interested in embarking on similar national data collection efforts.

### Caregiver beliefs and practices on Play in Rwanda and Zambia

**Authors/Presenters: Given Hapunda<sup>1</sup>; Frances Aboud<sup>2</sup>,**  
**Institutional Affiliation: University of Zambia, Department of Psychology<sup>1</sup> & 2McGill University, Department of Psychology, Montreal, Canada respectively<sup>2</sup>.**

The study explores what caregivers understand about the importance of play for children's early mental development and how they are engaged in promoting their children's play in Rwanda and Zambia, two of the four countries implementing their Playful Parenting program. Focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with 48 caregivers of children under 3 in Rwanda and 48 in Zambia, and interview and observational data (HOME) from 1016 caregiver-child dyads in Zambia only, before the program began.

FGD data showed that caregivers in Rwanda and Zambia gave lower priority to playing or talking with their child, compared to food and hygiene, though with probing they confirmed that it was important for the child to have playthings. Ages when play became important was generally late, often at 1 or 2 years. Observational data in Zambia on playthings at children's homes confirmed that gross motor and pretend playthings were present in only 50% of homes; 47% of Zambian mothers made the effort to provide the child a plaything to occupy them during the interview. Only 19% of Zambian parents had provided something new in the past week. Some 23% of Zambian caregivers had a designated place for their child's playthings. Providing challenging playthings indicated whether the parent supported the child's acquisition of new skills through play: 23% of Zambian had provided a slightly difficult plaything. Caregivers' beliefs showed that play was secondary to nutrition and health. This could be due to high infection and stunting levels and lack of messages about play. The data suggest that parents need more information about the benefits of play and about providing pictures to talk about with children, more complex eye-hand coordination playthings, provision of new playthings as children age, and a designated place for children's playthings.

## **“Closing the gap”: How Foundation phase teachers support learners presenting with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms in South Africa**

**Authors/Presenters: BM Diale, R Ebrahim & NM Mabaso;**

**Institutional Affiliation: University of Johannesburg**

The importance of investment in early childhood development (ECD) forms the foundation of human development and provides socio-economic sustainability in the long term. The effects of investments in early childhood development are extremely significant in that poor, and underprivileged families become more aware of the importance of education and that early childhood development programmes can diminish the educational differences caused by socio-economic dynamics. However, many township practitioners need to be more adequately trained, thus needing to be more developed in their career trajectories. The study aimed to explore the professional development needs of ECD practitioners in a Gauteng South township, South Africa. The Bioecological Theory of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) was used as a theoretical framework to support the literature review and the study findings. Set within an interpretive paradigm. This study utilized a generic qualitative research design to explore the professional development needs of ECD practitioners. Five ECD practitioners from a township Day Care Centre participated in the study. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and individual interviews and analyzed using thematic content analysis. All ethical principles adhered to informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and protection from harm. Five themes emerged from the data: the need for training and knowledge development; teaching practice and classroom management; school-parent relationships; collaboration and mentorship; and addressing children's social-emotional well-being. The study contributes to understanding the professional development needs of ECD practitioners, particularly in disadvantaged contexts, to fulfill their career hopes and aspirations. While participants are aware of obstacles and barriers to their professional development and they are cognizant of ways to overcome them, there is a need for action from policymakers and institutions of higher education to develop ECD practitioners to improve the quality of education in the country and meet the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of Quality Education for All.

## **Situational analysis of play-based learning in early childhood education in Uganda and Zambia.**

**Author/Presenter: Bibian Kalinde.**

**Institutional Affiliation: University of Zambia**

This desk review involved the national documents on Early Childhood Education (ECE) on play-based learning, school readiness and school transition in Zambia. For this reason, the review involved grey literature on Early Child Education. The search strategy followed was an Expert Correspondence Strategy (ECS) which is an acceptable alternative to literature source for systematic reviews involving grey literature. Eight (8) ECE national documents were identified, appraised and included in the review. The review process was guided by pre-determined themes: play-based learning, play-based content, play-based pedagogies, school readiness, learner assessment for school readiness and school transition. The findings show that the national documents on ECE have addressed a considerable number of key aspects of play-based learning and content including pedagogy, child development and learning as the core of ECE. School readiness is acknowledged in the reviewed documents but not much attention has been given to it in regard to what it should constitute, and no guidelines are given how it should be determined. Learner assessment is centered on identifying a child's developmental milestones of a child for purpose of providing extra or specific attention for development and not necessarily for school readiness and transitioning from pre-primary to primary education. The recent Transition Management implementation guidelines of 2022 adopts a multi stakeholders' approach in managing school transition. However, school readiness and transition are discussed as unrelated. A recommendation is made for the inclusion of guidelines that consider learning through play as determining school readiness and overall transition.

## Data-driven ECD Programmes in Informal Settlements

**Author/Presenter: Jessica Brown**

**Institutional Affiliation: Development Workshop**

Development Workshop is a network of non-governmental organisations that provides poverty-reduction urban development programmes that seek to systematically break cycles of poverty and inequality through different entry points. As part of a holistic approach to addressing poverty in Namibia's informal settlements, DW is implementing the Play for All programme to address challenges in ECD supporting educators training, centre improvements, development of localised resources, parental support, and feeding. Play for All programme works directly with teachers, listening to teachers about their challenges and needs, working with them to address these, and measuring results frequently to enable timely course correction. The teachers taking the lead and outlining their needs, creating support groups & sharing best practices teaching methodologies that are child centred and play based. Physical centre upgrades are done through grants directly to centres, to allow teachers to spend the funds against their identified needs and to procure locally at lower costs, and with re-investment into communities. DW has worked with over 260 ECD centres and 600 teachers and supported almost 9000 children. We measure impact and involve our partner centres and community in the design and adaptation of the programme with many of our trainers and team coming from the communities we serve. For example, DW training resources have been developed for use in the unique context of informal settlements and adapted based on teachers' knowledge, practices and needs. The trainers are a mix of specialist ECD experts and skilled teachers from the informal settlements who have been supported to become master trainers. DW's presentation will discuss the benefits in programming that is co-created with and within communities and designed to evolve and adapt to community needs and highlighting the results when this approach is taken. Based on this experience we recommend a move away from top-down development work, with a shift in focus to empowering communities and focusing on monitoring for quick adaptation and increased responsiveness to need. This increases ownership, relevance, and financial effectiveness of programmes.

## Innovative Ways of Increasing Access to Quality Early Childhood Development and Education Services Especially to The Poor and Marginalised

**Author/Presenter: Grace Phiri Bwalya**

**Institutional Affiliation: Tubbies Nursery & Pre-School**

Some traders or Marketeers as they are called in the Zambian society, carry young children along as they conduct economic activities. Most of these traders are poor and marginalized. Some spend the whole day at the market, others actually spend their nights at the Market with their young children. Most of the Pre-School age children are seen running around the stands in unsafe surroundings. Access to ECE services is very important and vital for them at this stage.

Extensive research has been carried out about the benefits of ECE. Researchers have concluded that good early childhood programs improve the lives of children and families involved, and also result in substantial economic benefits for society. It is important to note that early childhood education programs have a lasting effect on children from disadvantaged backgrounds like most traders who may be subsistent farmers, charcoal traders, fish traders, and so forth. This paper is based on recommendations from a Research Study that was conducted at the Masala Main Market in Ndola, in 2021. The aim of the Research Study was to assess the Nutritional status of children at the Market place. Parents were interviewed and the children were examined. The findings in the Research Study were that, children were quite well fed and healthy at the market, however, they lacked a safe environment to grow/develop effectively centers need to be established in all trading places. Children at this crucial age, need to be accorded the right to education, in a safe and secure environment. No child should be left behind.

### **5.1.3 Break-Out Room 3: Innovative ways of increasing access to quality early childhood development and education services especially to the poor and marginalized I:**

#### **Partnerships and Networking: A possibility for success and influencing.**

**Author/Presenter: Marceline Kahlari**

**Institutional Affiliation: Zimbabwe National Early Childhood Development Alliance (ZINECDA)**

Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA) is a membership organization legally registered in 2012 with a 194-membership base of vibrant ECD Actors across the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. Its main thrust is to advocate and influence a conducive ECD policy environment, build the capacity of members and ECD actors, networking and research. As part of its 10th anniversary, it is necessary to identify the road it has travelled articulating the milestones and successes. The membership grew from less than 50 in 2014 to the present 194 with the majority being civil society, ECD centres and individuals. The initial board has taken on elected regional representation to strengthen membership voice. The achievements have seen the organization grow from a two-person organisation in 2016 to a 10-employee organization fully fledged with a strategy plan, battery of policies, periodically reviewed risk register, and from a budget of about US\$10k to several hundred thousand presently. Membership participation is enhanced through various forums and social media groups. Strategies adopted to reach national, regional and global recognition include being a member of strategic education and ECD organisations where ZINECDA participated and was an active contributor. The research component was strengthened through commissioning various studies which were used as evidence for policy advocacy especially in high level education engagements and strategy development forums. To strengthen the social accountability and transparency strand, partnerships were forged with parliament through the portfolio on education to improve budgeting and utilization of funds disbursed. Noted achievements for the past 10 years have been influencing ECD to be part of free basic education through development of a model bill late enacted as Education Amendment Act 2020, engagements and influencing drafting of several policies such as Early Learning, School Financing and Inclusive policies. It is the lead organization in a Southern Africa ECDE project influencing conducive policy environments, research, and systemic changes at SADC level. All this has been achieved because of adopting a learning and collaborative approach to programming. These and other lessons learnt can be a source of inspiration for other ECD Networks in the region.

#### **Inclusive Home-based Early Learning Project**

**Author/Presenter: Prof Godfrey Ejuu**

**Institutional Affiliation: Kyambogo University, Uganda**

Quality Early Childhood Education has been found to lay a firm foundation for children's later life. However, this quality service is largely experienced among the privileged class and not most of the poor who live in marginalized communities who greatly need it. When donors try to establish centers to provide services to the poor, such initiatives normally collapse as soon as the funder withdraws. This study seeks to explore avenues from a community perspective on what they can do to sustain early learning centers established in their communities. This is an exploratory study that employs a phenomenological design to learn what communities around established centers are doing to sustain them. Data was collected from 16 Inclusive Home-based Early Learning Project (IHELP) in Uganda located in four districts. A total of 16 teachers and 32 parents were interviewed after purposively selected and data analyzed thematically. Results indicated that many parents who have children in the established centers volunteered their services in the centre to reduce costs. They were also keen to use the centre as a learning point for livelihood activities that enabled them to get income to pay for centre demands. Exchange visits helped them to innovate some ways of sustaining their centers in terms of business innovations and fundraising from well-wishers. The activities being conducted in the centers spearheaded by the parents showed a strong ownership as they were responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. Trust in what was being taught increased as some influential parents acted as teachers to teach children morals in the centers. Policies that encourage greater autonomy of parents to manage their centers with minimum external influences should be promoted to ensure independence. Targeted support to be given to parents, including illiterate ones who have been assigned roles to play in teaching children need to be encouraged. Education officials need to designate the centers as inclusion sites for children with disabilities for targeted support.



## **Impact of Mother Baby Areas on Early Childhood Development in the refugee and host communities of Yumbe, Terego and Midi-Okollo districts in Uganda**

**Authors/Presenters: Violet Birungi & Dr. Daniel Okello Ayen**

**Institutional Affiliation: Save the Children (Uganda)**

Save the Children (SC) implements a project "Operationalization of Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) in conflict and crisis contexts", targeting children aged 0-3 years and their caregivers in refugee and host-communities in Terego, Madi-Okollo, and Yumbe districts. Mother-Baby Areas (MBA) are safe spaces for caregivers and their children where learning, play, and support for the caregivers, as well as referrals for children with disabilities / special needs and GBV cases are provided. MBAs also promote responsive caregiving, encourage breastfeeding practices, and early stimulation to children through locally available materials. Parenting sessions are conducted at MBAs, using SC Boost-for-the-youngest toolkit that covers NCF's 5-components. The toolkit is divided into 5-modules with 22 sub-divided sessions conducted for 3-months that teach caregivers how to use locally available materials for early learning activities and responsiveness. It emphasizes discussion, demonstration, and practice to ensure caregivers understand the concepts and apply them in daily routines. The project has improved by 0.6% in child development outcomes for children aged 0-3 years from 46.5% at baseline to 47.1% at midline. The result was obtained by comparing the results from CREDI assessment using the standard CREDI tool from baseline and the Midterm Evaluation. The findings from these assessments showed that Children who attended the MBAs were more active, confident, and are familiar with routine, compared to those who did not attend. The project positively impacted child development through MBAs, responsive caregiving, breastfeeding promotion, and effective parenting sessions. Government should establish MBA programs to promote child play and IYCF practices to enhance Child survival, protection, nutrition and development. This will also provide high-quality care and interactive learning for children, emphasizing the need for stakeholder investment in MBA programs.

## **An Inclusive ECD Project in Ntcheu District, Malawi**

**Author/Presenter: Betty Chipiliro Moses**

**Institutional Affiliation: SightSavers International, Malawi**

This project presents an innovative way of including children with disabilities in early learning and stimulation. The project was designed based on lessons learnt from other Sightsavers ECD projects that were implemented from the year 2011. Between 2020 and 2023, Sightsavers implemented an inclusive ECD project that incorporated lessons learnt from the 2019 to 2023 project. The project selected 20 CBCCs and implemented inclusive ECD interventions. The project focused on increasing capacity of CBCCs to deliver disability inclusive ECDE, increasing capacity of parents, caregivers, and communities to support children with disabilities attending CBCCs and increased government engagement on inclusive ECDE. The project trained caregivers on five strategies on how they could include children with disabilities into learning. Management committees were trained on how they could support CBCC caregivers. Parents support groups were formed and parents of CWD were trained on how they could support their children learning at home. Transition activities were done. A livelihood component was introduced with the aim of supporting households hosting CWDs. We have seen improved attitudes towards disability that have led to higher enrolments (from 84 at baseline in 2020 to 201 in January 2022 (+139%). Improved attendance of children in centers as porridge is provided daily. We have seen CWDs who transitioned to primary school being retained. Monetary support and linkage with various service providers has seen CWD getting specialised care. For caregivers we have seen the following: improved inclusive classroom delivery skills, adaptation and application of different teaching strategies and use of different materials to respond to diverse needs to children, Increased knowledge on the use of locally available resources to make play materials, caregivers interact better with each other and share progress with parents. For Parents, we have seen a better understanding of how take care and support their children education, confidence to send their children to centres because they are sure of the inclusive environment. Goats are an asset in the community; they provide manure for agriculture, provide milk for nutrition and income for families. Provision of inclusive ECD requires a multi-sectoral approach that calls for continued interactions among stakeholders. Caregiver and parents support is key in inclusive ECD. It is therefore imperative to increase collaboration and networking with different stakeholders and community engagement.

## Rethinking early childhood holistic development in the COVID 19 context. (Video)

**Author/Presenter: Greetings Kudakwashe Chigonda**

**Institutional Affiliation: Seke Teachers college**

All over the world, the swift onset of the COVID-19 pandemic toppled the operations of school systems. Children were suddenly locked in their homes and confronted with home-schooling. The COVID-19 pandemic experience brought to the forefront the importance of leadership in early childhood development (ECD) centre-based settings. Currently, western studies highlight the experiences of early childhood centre heads experiences in a time of disruption, but their findings have little relevance to African countries. In addition, African countries' research on the effects of COVID-19 on children's learning has mainly focused on primary and secondary education and higher institutions with extremely limited attention to early childhood development. As such, this literature review sought to examine school heads' experiences on ECD children's holistic development in the context of COVID-19 stringency in four southern African countries: South Africa, Zambia, Botswana and Malawi. A focus on these countries is of particular relevance given that ECD provision has expanded dramatically in recent years, aimed at ensuring children are prepared for primary school. The paper looks to the literature to understand what evidence exists about the experiences, practices, and outcomes of ECD leadership in order to identify acknowledged ways in which COVID-19 has impacted children's holistic development in the four countries. The intention is to provide a comprehensive overview of key messages for these countries. Several questions guide the review: What information is available about school heads' experiences on effects of COVID-19's on children's holistic development? How have school heads adapted to the needs and context of ECD learners? What evidence from these countries can support future decision-making and collaboration with various stakeholders? How can these countries learn and collaborate to minimise the effects of the current education crisis on ECD learners? In total, twelve documents were reviewed, including international and national guidelines, policy briefs, white papers and political declarations, reports based on quantitative and qualitative surveys, academic papers, blog articles, online databases, portals and webinars. The documents covered the period March – December 2020. A grounded approach was used to analyse the documents. The review's findings ascertained that despite the differences in the cultural traditions good quality early childhood education is seen as the main objective of school leadership in every country. In order to combat challenges associated with teaching and learning, school principals engaged among other things, in mobilization of resources, engendering a technological culture among teachers, ensuring effective delivery of content. Based on these findings, the review recommends monitoring future developments in priority topics, such as learning loss, cross-sectoral partnerships, remote digital education, and children's well-being and use of the current document as a living document to build on.

## Relational Equity and Inclusion in Early Childhood Development

**Author/Presenter: Juliana Seleti**

**Institutional Affiliation: Young Enterprise Initiative**

Introduction: The Young Enterpriser Initiative (YEI) has developed a programme that provides a solution to individuals becoming relationally optimized in terms of how they relate to themselves, others and their environment, resulting in the achievement of Relational Equity (RE). RE can be defined as the value we place on ourselves, others and our environment. RE includes competences such as self-love, caring, inclusion, sharing, respect, empathy self-agency, cooperation, and collaboration, appreciation of differences, tolerance and patience. All these Relational Equity competences are characteristics of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) which is very important in the ECDE inclusion discourse. (YEI) has over the past 5years studied how to activate RE competencies in various individuals including ECDE practitioners. The RE Programme study has involved putting 20 practitioners through the RE Programme which is Challenges based. The programme uses an Activation pedagogical approach which enforces self-learning and learning from others, there is no teaching involved. The programme is Challenges based. The participants listen to a relational "nature" story, and then answer relational Challenge questions. The participant's responses are analyzed using clustering and are gauged against the YEI RE Curriculum set of competences. RE competency trends are identified and each participant RE competency skill set is identified for application in their lives. The key finding of the study is that YEI's programme helps to activate RE competencies in individuals. It enables participants to discover RE competency strengths and weaknesses. Participants can learn from themselves and others their values, the value of others and their environments. Competences are a critical vehicle for SEL which drives human relational behaviour. YEI is merely scratching the surface with very significant results. It is recommended that the Southern Africa ECDE sector explore the possibility of researching further the RE programme to capacitate ECDE practitioners for improved inclusion and better-quality early learning experiences for young children.

#### 5.1.4 Break-out Room 4: Quality Improvement Strategies I

##### **Strengthening learning through play for preschoolers in Kenya: Existing approaches, capacity gaps and policy recommendations**

**Author/Presenter: Dr. Silas Onyango**

**Institutional Affiliation: African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)**

While the government of Kenya has committed to implementing learning through play (LtP) in national curriculum and ECE standard guidelines, challenges exist on how best to support key education stakeholders to facilitate this approach. The paper aims to determine the existing LtP approaches in preschools and at home, and to establish the capacity gaps in the provision of LtP for preschoolers. We conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study using baseline data from a prospective study in Kenya. We established parents' and teachers' understanding of LtP across four domains. Also, we determined the current approaches, information on LtP and support from school or home and issues hindering or enhancing the implementation of LtP. Categorical variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages while continuous variables were presented using means and standard deviations. We interviewed 93 teachers and 119 parents. Under the fine motor domain, drawing and modeling were reported as the main activities by parents (80%) and teachers (90%) respectively. In gross motor, ball games and skipping ropes were the main activities practiced at home and school respectively. Singing, which promotes language development, was reported as the main activity at both home and school. Similarly, sharing which promotes socio-emotional development was also the main activity at home and school. Over 70% of the parents reported that they had not received any LtP information from school while 58% said they had not received any LtP related support. Support from school would be the most effective way to enhance LtP implementation while lack of material was reported as a major hindrance. The majority (70%) of the teachers had received some training on LtP where material development was one of the main activities (82%). The majority (68%) of the teachers reported that training would strengthen the implementation of LtP. More than 90% of the teachers make play materials compared to 40% who buy from shops. The results reveal that strong link between the school and home can strengthen LtP for preschoolers. Providing parents and teachers with knowledge on a variety of play activities will be useful in strengthening LtP implementation.

##### **Cash+: an opening for behavioural interventions**

**Author/Presenter: Jessica Li**

**Institutional Affiliation: ideas42**

In 2016, the government of Madagascar began the Human Development Cash transfer (HDCT), an unconditional cash transfer program aimed at supporting mothers and caregivers in their children's growth and development from birth to 5 years old. However, healthy childhood development depends on the use of practices such as nutritious feeding and stimulating interactions, which can be influenced by a variety of behavioral factors that go beyond access to services or knowledge. ideas42 partnered with the World Bank and the Government of Madagascar to identify and address the behavioral barriers to using these practices among cash transfer recipients. We designed three interventions to reduce the barriers that mothers and caregivers faced when trying to achieve their long-term goals related to their child's development. These interventions included mutual support groups called Mother Leader groups, a Plan Making intervention to support achievement of longer-term goals regarding their child's development, and Self-Affirmation activities that encouraged mothers to consider their values and how their actions embody those values. Results from a multi-arm cluster-randomized trial indicate that households in the behaviorally enhanced arms undertake more desirable parenting behaviors, interact more with their children, prepare more (and more diverse) meals at home, and report lower food insecurity than households that received only cash. Children from households in several of the behaviorally enhanced arms also perform better than children from households in the cash-only arm on several measures of socio-cognitive development, including language learning and social skills. These promising results add to the growing body of evidence that combining cash transfers with parenting programs may be an effective way to optimize their impacts on children. Next steps on the path to scale include generating further evidence of impact on longer-term child development outcomes, improving approaches to costing and cost-effectiveness, and tackling challenges such as political buy-in.

## **Equipping Early Childhood Educators in South Africa to Create Gender-Transformative Environment.**

**Author/Presenter: Zanele Sibisi**

**Institutional Affiliation: VVOB and Ntataise**

Gender stereotypes affect children's sense of self from a young age and have long lasting impact on how children perceive themselves and others; how they develop their own potential and how they relate with others. Schools and early childhood centres can play an important role by addressing or broadening beliefs about gender roles and gender identity, so all children can develop to their full potential. However, early childhood educators are often unaware of the role they can play in setting a solid foundation for positive values, respectful relationships, gender equality and violence prevention. This presentation showcases two early childhood interventions in South Africa that aim to break the perpetual cycle of gender-based violence. Through their network of community based ECE training providers, Ntataise's intervention influences mindsets, attitudes and values about gender equality of the adults that work with young children and their parents. Ntataise has developed training materials to guide an ECE workforce capacity-building programme that aims to prevent gender-based-violence. The presentation describes a pilot programme that has been implemented in six provinces. VVOB supports the Department of Basic Education and the South African Council of Educators in a pilot-to-scale intervention to build competences of early childhood educators to implement a gender-responsive pedagogy. The presentation describes the contextualised materials that were developed, findings from a pilot intervention and the experiences with the Department's first scaling phase. The presentation highlights how these interventions are leading to a gender mind shift among ECE trainers and educators; what constitutes effective intervention models; the role parents/caregivers and the community can play; and lastly, implications for partnerships with policy makers and civil society to scale effective interventions.

## **Creating Opportunities for Capacity Building and Access Support in the Early Years**

**Author/Presenter: Mmatsetshweu Motaung**

**Institutional Affiliation: Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE)**

Research aims The Sivilithuba project is a community engagement research project that materialized through a partnership between UNISA Department of ECE and two KZN early childhood NGOs, namely TREE and Midlands Community College in 2020. The main purpose of the 5-year project is to enable access, build capacity and transform student support for Level 4 practitioners before they enter higher education. Relationship to previous works-referenced to existing literature and how it underpins your study This project is informed by the work of PIECCE and the urgent need to develop the ECD workforce. Theoretical and conceptual framework the project seeks to advance transformative learning with its substantive focus on competency building including digital learning for a blended response to professional development and well-planned transitions to the digital learning environment. Paradigm and methodology Action Learning Research through the lens of the Transformative Learning Theories will be used throughout the project. Data will be collected through interviews, questionnaires, observations to inform our situation analysis, collaboration and reflection over the various phases of implementation. Ethical considerations Ethics clearance was obtained from the UNISA College of Education's Ethics Review Committee (Ethics Reference #: 2020/05/13/90237323/29/AM). Discussion The presentation discusses two parts of the pre-university programme. The curriculum design shows the shift from academic skills focus to developmental education. Implications for practice or policy regarding 'transforming teacher education in the early years' The two levers for change – capacity building prior to university admission and developmental education – are viewed as entry points for equity of opportunities and for equity of outcomes to professionalize ECD.

## **Building Teacher Capacity to Enhance Early Learning through child focused and play based approaches in Ghana and Sierra Leone**

**Authors/Presenters: Dr. Samuel Oppong Frimpong & Dr. Abdulai Maxim Conjoh, Leslie Casely**

**Institutional Affiliation: Associates for Change**

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 seeks to ensure that by 2030 all children of school going age will have access to quality early childhood education (ECE) to prepare them for primary education and later life. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa have started to put in place policies, programs and training structures to reorient their education systems towards EEC including Ghana and Sierra Leone; this includes the introduction of play-based learning pedagogic models enabling children to learn through play. Education innovators in the civil society space along with bilateral and multilateral donors have been proactive in supporting ECE helping equip teachers with competences and skills in play-based pedagogies for effective lesson delivery. This study aims at generating evidence of what works to improve classroom practice in play-based learning at early childhood level in Ghana and Sierra Leone. An exploratory sequential design of mixed-method research approach was employed to compare and contrast intervention schools and non-intervention schools where play-based approaches were being scaled. Findings from the qualitative studies suggest that in cases where the Government fully mainstream play based methodology in the curriculum at school and training college levels; and that education innovators support with school based inset, teachers are able to better embrace play based pedagogy; and that in-service training which is district led can have a significant impact on transforming the culture of learning at the school base (case of Ghana); additionally the placement of teacher mentors and "fellows" who are trained specifically in ECE and play based approaches are transforming gender norms and inclusive practices in early learning classes/schools in Sierra Leone. The application of play-based strategies amongst teachers at the pre-tertiary level in both countries will be pivotal to the transformation of ECE.

## 5.2 SESSION 11: PARALLEL 2

### 5.2.1 Break-out Room I: Partnerships for strengthened ECD advocacy in Southern Africa Region II

#### A Coordinated nurturing care for early childhood development (NCfECD) implementation through a multi-sectoral lens.

**Author/Presenter: Abella Owuor**

**Institutional Affiliation: Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET)**

This paper underscores the need for a multi-sectoral approach in the provision of early childhood development services a case of Siaya County to meet the needs of young children between 0-3 years by identifying common goals, generating political will, leveraging resources, monitoring joint actions, and building effective collaboration on a lasting basis through a 'pull system'. County-led: The County Government of Siaya facilitated high-level formal coordination- An oversight committee comprising four County Executive Committee Members and a Multi-Sectoral Team (MST). The MST comprised technical officers from national, county line ministries, and nongovernmental partners led by an appointed NCfECD Focal person facilitating a comprehensive NCfECD through existing systems. Training of sector leaders on the Science of Early Childhood Development to enhance knowledge and incorporate NCfECD into sector plans. Champions Identification - a central feature of the model is government leadership evidenced by the Governor's personal engagement and that of the First Lady as the County nurturing care for early childhood development (NCfECD) Patron.Co-creation and co-designing: Regular meetings were held to highlight sectoral areas of adoption and their operationalization. Appointment of NCfECD Departmental Focal persons fast-tracking development and operationalization of relevant policies to include coordination of sector activities. Departmental budgetary allocations. Improved capacity of key sector leaders to integrate NCfECD. Generated learning hence Scale-up of the best practices to other counties within the Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB). The initiative enhanced the principle of a whole of government approach-County- led process and designed a capacity-building program that initiated a whole of government approach towards investment for NCfECD through a 'pull system' with technical assistance from implementing partners. The study recommends that the county builds on current achievements and lessons for broader replication and make appropriate contextual changes to ensure sustainability.

#### Demonstrating the role of Local CSOs in supporting ECD Policy in Practice

**Authors/Presenters: Craig Ferla<sup>1</sup> & Lazaro Ernest<sup>2</sup>**

**Institutional Affiliation: Children in Crossfire<sup>1</sup> and Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN)<sup>2</sup>**

Moving from Policy to Practice is a perennial challenge, especially in multisectoral agenda like ECD. Tanzania recently launched its National Multisectoral ECD Programme 2021/22-2025/26 (NMECDP), a flagship programme aiming to ensure all young children develop to their full potential. The Mtoto Kwanza project implemented by Children in Crossfire, the Tanzania ECD Network (TECDEN), and Union of Tanzania Press Clubs, is strategically positioned to catalyze NMECDP implementation. This abstract highlights the potential of Local CSOs in supporting ECD policy in practice. Local CSOs across Tanzania's 26 mainland regions act as focal coordinators partnering regional and local governments in coordinating NMECDP implementation locally. The Mtoto Kwanza project provides these CSOs with seed funding and training and mentoring across ECD technical competencies and policy engagement with local governments. Given the nationwide scope, CSOs are recruited in two phases, 10 in 2022, and 16 in 2023. By Yr-1 end, CSOs demonstrated core competencies for ECD programming and local policy engagement, scoring 81% against a 58% baseline. NMECDP was launched across all ten regions. Project spend was only 10% of total cost with >US\$40,000 funding mobilised locally. Regional leadership presided over launches, and >400 local government officials and >100 other CSOs participated. As per NMECDP coordination framework, two cycles of quarterly review meetings have been convened across the ten regions. These are unique forums for catalyzing action, mobilizing additional resources, instilling accountability, and generating lessons for NMECDP implementation. Tanzania is making progress in ECD programme implementation, through the leverage and institutional support of TECDEN, and forming government and civil society partnerships around ECD policy implementation locally. Importantly, synergies can be optimised across multisectoral ECD services, and resources mobilised locally, where systemic coordination and accountability processes are leveraged, and where a Project strategically identifies with Programme objectives and nurtures wider agency across government and civil society.

## **The Value of Cost-Benefit Analyses in Advocating for Enhanced Investment in Early Childhood Development and Education: How learnings from award-winning research in Burundi can be leveraged for use in Southern Africa**

**Author/Presenter: Katie Bullman**

**Institutional Affiliation: Genesis Analytics**

Early childhood development is chronically underfunded in Southern Africa and making the case for greater investments is critical in order to drive progress on key indicators of early childhood development and education (ECDE). Genesis Analytics has delivered Investment Cases for ECDE in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda in conjunction with UNICEF and relevant governments. The Burundi Investment Cases was recognised with a 'Best of 2022 Global Research' Award from UNICEF. We developed a multi-sectoral Investment Case (including cost-benefit and cost-of-inaction analyses) based on the Nurturing Care Framework. The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data and analytical methods. Two comparable multisectoral ECD packages were designed based on international best practice, and on the specific needs of young children in Burundi. The team modelled the incremental scaling-up of interventions in various packages from their baseline coverage levels to specified target levels towards specific time horizons up to 2050. The team used Avenir Health's One Health Tool, SimuEd and advanced Excel to perform the modelling, and extract the monetary and non-monetary benefits associated with the scale-up scenarios for each package. The findings were impressive - while the costs of this scale-up were significant, a benefit-cost ratio of 68 was estimated. This means that for every \$1 invested in scaling up these interventions, \$68 would be returned in socio-economic gains by 2050. Furthermore, scaling up coverage of key ECD services was projected to avert the deaths of nearly 600,000 children, reduce cases of stunting by up to 17.5 million, and ensure that nearly half a million additional children will graduate from high school. Such evidence is not only of immense value to ECDE in Burundi, but in many other contexts too - where both investments plus quantifiable evidence surrounding those investments are concerningly low. In presenting this data at the conference, we would like to highlight the advocacy benefits of conducting ECDE investment cases in parts of Southern Africa. An investment case is both quantifiable and long-term and can complement other advocacy strands which rely on moral arguments or quality of service provision intended to drive short-term benefits such as school readiness or illness prevention.

## **Partnerships in Action: Insights from the 'Caregiver Learning through Play' Consortium in South Africa on Scaling ECD Interventions.**

**Author/Presenter: Nkhensani Mabunda**

**Institutional Affiliation: HOPE worldwide South Africa**

Partnerships are crucial for the advocacy, success and scale up of Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes, as they bring together stakeholders to work towards the common goal of improving the lives of young children. However, partnerships in ECD can face numerous challenges, including differences in goals and culture, as well as power imbalances between partners that limit their success. This presentation explores the benefits and challenges of partnerships in ECD and identifies key learnings that can help guide the development of effective partnerships and advocacy. Using the Caregiver Learning through Play (CLTP) Consortium of 4 national ECD NGO partners in South Africa, we explored challenges and success factors for the successful development and management of a consortium and multi-stakeholder engagement. A mixed-methods approach was used to investigate the 360 degree-approach to relationships between stakeholders including Implementation Partners, Communities, Government and the Macro Funding Environment. Key in-depth findings from the analyses will be presented at the conference. However, initial factors impacting success and advocacy that were identified included, differences in organizational culture, priorities, and operational approaches, perception around unequal distribution of resources, leadership approaches and power-related conflicts. Key learnings include, the importance of building strong relationships and trust from the inception phase, ensuring clarity on goals, roles, responsibilities and processes, transparency on resource allocation, and joint planning, learning and decision-making. Although there is agreement that partnerships are crucial for the success of ECD programmes, they require careful planning, construction and management. Building trust, ensuring clear roles and processes, and joint decision-making are key factors for success. In addition, involving all stakeholders in the partnership process can help to address power imbalances and ensure that the partnership is equitable and sustainable.

## Collaborative approach for successful ECDE in Malawi; Filling the gap

**Author/Presenter: Gracious Banda**

**Institutional Affiliation: Do for Children**

In Malawi, over 52 percent of children under the age of 5 are at risk of not fulfilling their full developmental potential due to risks of poverty, poor nutrition, and a lack of access to basic services and early enriching opportunities. Early Childhood Development and Education is such a basic service and its success hinges on partnership and collaboration of NGOs, Government, and caregivers. Do for Children conducted a study titled "Collaborative Approach for Successful ECDE in Malawi, Filling the gap". This study embraced qualitative data methodology using the Citizen Generated Data approach called Community Score Card (CSC). CSC is a citizen-driven, social accountability approach that supports the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of the delivery of local government services. The CSC brought together community members, service providers/caregivers, and local government officials in a facilitated process of ECDE issues identification, prioritization, and action planning development. The study unearthed poor policy implementation and dissemination of national plans, poor infrastructure development, limited learning materials, lack of nutritional support, and capacity building of the ECD center caregivers. Government is more kin to support primary, secondary, and tertiary education neglecting ECD. According to the 2022/2023 national budget ECD was allocated less than 1% of the national budget. There is poor coordination and collaboration among ECDE stakeholders, for instance, not all ECDE players are part of the national ECD Coalition and NGO Coalition and Child Rights. This creates duplication of efforts, and resources, a lack of collective impact measurement, and misalignment of priorities. Recommendations from the study included increasing of domestic resources investments on ECD education. Enhance inclusive ECDE policy implementation to support children with special needs. Facilitate engagement platforms for citizen led accountability and feedback mechanisms. Dissemination of ECDE policies and operational guidelines at sub-national level. Build capacity of local volunteers that are supporting ECDE.

## Literacy is a social justice issue

**Author/Presenter: Sharon Carnahan**

**Institutional Affiliation: Hume House Child Development & Student Research Center**

Before acting towards the development of a robust early childhood education system in Uganda, it is necessary to obtain a wholesome idea of the "need," or the gap, that exists between the current and desired conditions of school preparedness. To accomplish this, we examined the educational infrastructure on and around Lake Bunyonyi, a uniquely remote island population in southwestern Uganda. We compared the early childhood practices applied in these village communities with those recommended by The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Action Plan of Uganda (2018-2021). Rollins College, Enjuba (Kampala), and the Global Livingston Institute, a non-governmental research organization in Uganda and Rwanda, conducted the study. Data collected from this project offered useful recommendations for future steps, such as the strategic planning initiative designed and directed by members of the Lake Bunyonyi community in the Kabale District of Uganda. Method. We assessed community knowledge and support for efforts designed to get children ready for formal education, termed "school readiness." Our method included five phases: 1) A grounded theory based interview with 52 community educators and parents, followed by 2) Site visits and classroom observations, ending with 3) a 2-day planning summit with community education leaders, 4) a 2-day professional development program for principals and teachers, and 5) an additional 2 day training plus provision of books and materials to two schools. Over a three-year period, this community development project identified and ranked major barriers (food insecurity, teacher training, learning materials, and lack of parent engagement) and strengths (trained teachers, large attendance, local garden projects). We formulated an action plan and continue with teacher training. Next, we will work to partner with the local teacher college and larger, more established programs that have worked in rural areas such as ours.



## 5.2.2 Break-out Room 2: Knowledge Generation and Dissemination: Understanding the ECD Landscape in Southern Africa II

### Three-to-Eight-Year-Old Children's Lived Experiences of Violence in Homes. A case of Mbale Slum.

**Author/Presenter: Josephine Matha Apolot**  
**Institutional Affiliation: Kyambogo University**

Violence against children is a prevalent phenomenon in the world. Most studies have always focused on documenting violence against largely adolescent children, leaving out those in early childhood. The phenomenology research design focused on establishing lived experiences of three to eight old children experiencing violence at home. The study collected data using interviews on the children, focus group discussion guides on the parents and participants' observation guides on the children. The techniques like; body mapping and photo voice were also used to get more detailed information from the children. The findings indicated that the children were exposed to different categories of violence that include verbal, physical, child labour, child neglect, psychological and sexual abuse. Regarding the meaning children attributed to violence against children at home, it was discovered that whenever children are abused, they felt isolated, not loved and confused and basing on the strategies they used for coping with violence at home, they said they applied practical thoughts, emotions, and actions to different situations in order to face the pressures and most of the violence they faced was done to them in the guise of discipline. The children need education and training from an early age about their rights and how they can protect themselves. The communities need initiatives to empower children to report cases of violence at home to local authors, such and children needed education and training from an early age about their rights and how they can protect themselves.

### Building an inclusive early childhood development system for young children with disabilities and their families in Africa

**Authors/Presenters: Dr. Wiedaad Slemming<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Alecia Samuels<sup>2</sup> & Takondwa Bakuwa<sup>3</sup>**  
**Institutional Affiliation: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town<sup>1</sup>, University of Pretoria<sup>2</sup>, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg<sup>1</sup>**

Despite most African states having ratified the international and regional human rights treaties that protect the rights of children and persons with disabilities, there has been variable progress in translating these into meaningful reforms for children with disabilities on the continent. A desk review commissioned by the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) in 2022, analysed the growing body of work related to legislative and policy provisions, and services/programmes for children with disabilities between birth and six years of age across the African continent. Global and regional commitments have improved the availability and quality of data on children with disabilities in the Africa region, as well as improved policy and legislation aligned with human rights instruments. Nearly half the countries have an ECD policy in place, however, there is considerable variation regarding how countries make mention or provisions for children with disabilities in their policies. There remains gross under-resourcing and underfunding for provisions for children with disabilities and their families, particularly during the early childhood period. Access to health, nutrition and early learning support remains challenging across the region and support for responsive care is still unavailable to most caregivers. Forty countries did not have a child protection specific policy or legislation, highlighting the inadequacy in this area across the region. Countries should ratify The African Disability Protocol to promote and realise rights of persons with disabilities in the region. Better data systems and capacity building to improve the availability and quality data on young children with disabilities across the region is needed. A more robust evidence base is required to develop context-specific and appropriate solutions.

## **Situational analysis of play- based learning in early childhood development education in Uganda and Zambia. An Examination of The Support Systems Available for Children in Early Childhood Who are Deaf- Blind.**

**Authors/Presenters:** Agnes M. Banda<sup>1</sup>, Daniel L. Mpolomoka<sup>2</sup>, Rose Chikopela<sup>3</sup> and Brian Mumba<sup>4</sup>  
**Institutional Affiliation:** **Zambian Open University<sup>1</sup>, School of Education, Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, Unicaf University Zambia, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences<sup>2</sup>, Chalimbana University, School of Education, Department of Special Education-Guidance and Counselling<sup>3</sup>, University of Lusaka, Research and Consultancy Unity<sup>4</sup>**

The value of early childhood development is now widely acknowledged on a global scale. The brain grows at this stage, and a lot of its "wiring" is established. A child's experiences, relationships, diet, and health can all have a significant impact on this. The development of the brain in healthy ways is aided by positive experiences. In Zambia, many households with working mothers are forced to utilize home-based infant care and employ house maids as a cheaper option. Thus, this study sought to assess the perceptions of parents on the training of housemaids in infant care in Zambia. The study employed a mixed methodology, in particular employing a descriptive research design. The population comprised parents and housemaids in Lusaka District. Sample size of 50 parents and 50 housemaids were conveniently sampled after randomly sampling ten workplaces. Data were collected using a questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS analytical software while qualitative data were analysed by using thematic approach. Findings revealed that the majority of the parents and housemaids did not believe that there was need to get specialized training in infant care. However, parents acknowledged the need for their children to receive good quality care as most of them spend the whole day at work. On the other hand most the house maids acknowledged the fact that they were not employed to specifically take care of infants but to do house chores.

## **Caregiver Learning through Play**

**Author/Presenter:** Gloria Nkosi  
**Institutional Affiliation:** Hope Worldwide South Africa

The Caregiver Learning through Play (CLTP) consortium is a collaborative effort between four NGOs (HOPE worldwide SA, Save the Children SA, Ntataise and the Early Learning Resource Unit) and is funded by the LEGO Foundation. The CLTP ECD programme was developed based on the research that children learn best through play and aims to promote playful parenting in under-resourced settings. The CLTP curriculum is evidence-based and is delivered through a face-to-face, facilitated approach over four sessions. The curriculum focuses on promoting responsive parenting and playful interactions between caregivers and young children (0-6 years). The programme's impact was assessed through an initial evaluation of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of caregivers around the importance of play and monitoring of caregivers' stress and depression levels. Over the past 18 months, CLTP has trained over 105,000 caregivers and nearly 2,000 ECD practitioners. Initial assessments have shown positive trends in the KAP of caregivers around the importance of play. Specifically, there has been an increase in knowledge of play and its role in child development, more positive attitudes towards play, and an increase in play-based activities with children. The programme has also shown a reduction in stress and depression levels among participating caregivers. These findings support the value of the CLTP programme and its approach. In conclusion, the CLTP programme is an innovative approach to promoting Playful Parenting in under-resourced settings. The programme's evidence-based curriculum and facilitated approach have had a positive impact on caregivers and young children. As the programme continues, it is recommended that further research be conducted to determine the long-term impact on child development and the sustainability of the impact and programme. The CLTP consortium model and curriculum can also be used as a model for other under-resourced settings globally.

## **Towards universal access: A three-year acceleration plan for ECD funding**

**Author/Presenter:** Laura Brooks  
**Institutional Affiliation:** Ilifa Labantwana

National Policy prescribes that the South African government should ensure that cost is not a barrier to achieving universal access to early childhood development (ECD) programmes by 2030. Yet, less than 25% of children (aged 0-5) attend early learning programmes (ELPs); and only 12% of those that are eligible are subsidised by the state. South Africa's ELPs are delivered through a wide array of largely non-state providers, many of which operate informally. While this is an appropriate and affordable

format for localised delivery that builds on and enhances social capital and local jobs, it is not scalable unless organised and supported. This research analyses the gap in coverage of ECD programmes to achieve universal access and puts forward a costed plan to close the access and quality gap. The analysis draws from an Excel-based model. We estimate that to achieve universal access to ELPs, a further 2.25 million poor children need access, and subsidies need to be expanded to reach 2.88 million more children. This will require registration of the 25 452 ELPs currently unregistered, an additional 57 000 ELPs, and an additional practitioner and managerial workforce of over 350 000. Reaching universal access to quality ECD programmes requires a financing plan beyond just the subsidisation of ELPs. A series of actions is required that increases the supply of ELPs; supports nutrition in all ELPs; ensures that the supply of ELPs is supported to meet compliance requirements; increases the number of trained practitioners; measures and supports quality; enables community health workers to provide home-based support; and provides income support for pregnant women. To achieve this, South Africa must build toward an annual budget of R36.6 billion (2022 prices) required to support universal access to quality ECD programmes.

### **5.2.3 Break-out Room 3: Innovative ways of increasing access to quality early childhood development and education services especially to the poor and marginalized II:**

#### **Child to Child Learning Approach: Inclusive play-based learning for smooth transition**

**Author/Presenter: Jesca Harriet Audo**

**Institutional Affiliation: Shimoni Core Teachers' College**

Introduction: Children start preschool learning at home focusing on basic skills in self-care, communication, socialization, and mobility as critical steppingstones for the transition from preprimary to early grades of primary school. However, their enthusiasm is never met as various obstacles to their thriving come in different forms. In many countries in Africa, preprimary education does not adequately prepare children to transfer to primary school. Children are viewed by teachers as recipients of knowledge who cannot actively participate in their own learning. There are different approaches for promoting the transition of children from pre-primary to early grades of primary school, but such approaches remain within organizations with little effort/lessons on scaling. This project aims at generating knowledge on how to scale the child-to-child (Literacy and Adult Basic Education {LAFE}) model to improve the transition of children from pre-primary to early grades of primary school in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Malawi. In the project, a total of 160 children, 10 from each of the 32 centers are purposively selected. Five children are selected from the lower primary who stay near the centre come during the weekend to provide playful learning experiences. The other five from the home centers lead play activities during class time to supplement teachers' efforts. Data is collected through observation and interview sessions with young facilitators and analyzed thematically. Results show more children getting engaged in activities than before. Also, more children in the centers are getting used to those from the primary school where they will be going later to ease their experiences. More children are getting used to learning. Learning can be done anywhere, and adults are not the only teachers. Sensitize parents to appreciate the role of other children in supporting learning in centers. More strategies for scaling and impact evaluation need to be employed to collect evidence on the impact of the model on learning.

#### **Preschool, Poultry and Parenting – innovation in integrated programming in Tanzania**

**Author/Presenter: Lucy Palmer**

**Institutional Affiliation: Mott MacDonald Ltd**

"Preschool, Poultry and Parenting (PPP)" Tanzania is an integrated intervention comprising interactive parenting sessions over 12 weeks. The PPP intervention was developed by Mott MacDonald working closely with Government MoHCDGEC and PO-RALG. The intervention took place in three relatively poor and marginalised wards of Dodoma region. The community-based School Readiness Programme provided a platform as parents of pre-schoolers were invited to attend the PPP trial. Public sector Community Development Officers served as session facilitators. An innovation was including fathers as well as mothers, through inviting them to attend practical sessions on poultry vaccination (to protect flocks against Newcastle disease and ultimately increase children's and mothers' consumption of eggs and meat). Men were very keen to participate in these sessions and could be sensitised to other messages and behaviours. Improvements in nurturing care - Results showed substantial improvements in practices, especially around nutrition (dietary diversity and frequency) and play-based interaction. At baseline, 30% of families fed their child only once in a 24-hour period. By endline, this fell to 1.4% of

households, while 42% fed their child four or more times (up from 18%). By end line, 67% of parents reported playing a game with their child in the past 24 hours, compared with 25% at baseline. Some parents reported advising their fellow parents to stop using harsh and violent punishment and language with their children. Sustaining results at community level – most households have created home gardens because of the intervention. Some now sell the surplus to commercial vendors. Parents from Chihanga and Ibihwa decided to form and register poultry farming groups. Leaders in Hombolo centre decided to vaccinate all the village's chickens through villagers' cost contribution. The intervention was popular, led by an existing cadre, and used innovative methods to improve parenting practices. We recommend that the intervention be scaled up with further implementation research carried out to determine optimal dose and frequency for a sustainable and scalable programme.

### **Baseline study on the state of Early Childhood Education in Solwezi District to inform Kansanshi Mine's Education Quality Improvement Programme: One year six months on.**

**Author/Presenter: Dr. Sylvia Mwanza-Kabaghe**  
**Institutional Affiliation: Kansanshi Mine PLC**

The purpose of the study was to assess the state of ECE services in Solwezi District through aspects affecting quality education such as teacher availability and qualifications, classroom arrangement, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure, water and sanitation, playgrounds/indoor space, teacher pupil interaction and instructional leadership in schools. This was done to inform intervention to be taken by Kansanshi Mine's Education Quality Improvement Programme at ECE level. This was a mixed-methods study that collected both qualitative and quantitative data, the research design was quasi-experimental. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with ECE teachers, Questionnaires for head teachers and ECE teachers as well as through observations. Data was analyzed quantitatively through descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that 44% of teachers teaching at ECE level are not ECE trained. Infrastructure is strained as no ECE classrooms were built after annexing ECE to primary schools, Sanitation is a problem as 25% of the schools did not have toilets designated to ECE classrooms. The study further found that school readiness tests are done in schools, however, there is a general lack of proper record keeping. With regards to parental involvement, parents were not fully involved in their children's education, making it difficult to bridge the gap between the home and the school. The state of ECE services in Solwezi district's public schools was in a poor state and needed concerted efforts from both public and private institutions to improve the situation. Several recommendations were made to Kansanshi Mine PLC and government for possible collaborative efforts to improve the situation: At the conference I will present the study results in detail and what has changed one year six months after Kansanshi Mine's ECE improvement programme was revived.

### **Collective action for Nurturing Care in Mozambique: A qualitative evaluation**

**Author/Presenter: Melanie Picolo**  
**Institutional Affiliation: PATH**

Health systems offer unique opportunities for integrating services to promote more comprehensive nurturing care. In Monapo District of Mozambique's Nampula Province, PATH is supporting the government to integrate developmental monitoring, nutritional screening, and early learning and nutrition counseling into facility- and community-level health services. There is limited knowledge about the implementation experiences of using health services to promote such interventions—especially in sub-Saharan Africa. PATH and researchers from Harvard University and Maraxis South Africa conducted an implementation evaluation to assess the delivery, acceptability, perceived changes, and barriers and facilitators to provision of these interventions. Individual interviews were carried out with caregivers (N = 36), service providers (N = 27), and district stakeholders (N = 10). Nine health facility observational visits were carried out at three primary health care facilities. Data was analyzed using thematic content analysis. Results supported fidelity of implementation and acceptability of integrating these interventions within routine health services. Respondents expressed various benefits to integration—including strengthened health system capacity and improved knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Government leadership and supportive supervision were identified as key facilitators, whereas health system resource constraints were described as a significant barrier. Health systems offer promise for integrating interventions that promote comprehensive nurturing care. To maximize impact, dosage of key messages to caregivers must be increased by using complementary channels such as media and group-based sessions. Furthermore, since health systems are often weak, systems strengthening needs to happen in parallel to integration of child development-supportive interventions. It is also important to mitigate the natural tendency of service providers to “medicalize” service delivery and

instead focus more on promotion of desired caregiver behaviors and strengthening the continuum of nurturing care across facility and community levels.

### **Experience of the Early Child Development Network in Emergency ECD Implementation**

**Author/Presenter: Getrudes Noronha**

**Institutional Affiliation: Rede para o Desenvolvimento da Primeira Infância (RDPI)**

Context of RDPI intervention in ECD in Emergency and methodological Approach: Mozambique is affected by several disasters caused by natural phenomena such as floods, drought, cyclones and earthquakes. Some of these phenomena are cyclical, while others are occasional. Cyclones, droughts and floods are due to the country's climatic influence, dictated by the subtropical anticyclones of the Indian Ocean, the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone, thermal depressions in Southern Africa and the passage of cold fronts in the south. In addition to these factors, Mozambique has zones classified climatically as semi-arid and arid where rainfall, even in the best years, is not sufficient for the practice of agriculture and there is a water deficit throughout the year. In addition to climate-related disasters, a large part of the national territory rests on tectonic faults, thus being subject to seismic shocks. The national territory subject to earthquakes is that located in the Rift Valley and the Mozambique Channel". As a way of preparing us to intervene in situations of natural disasters, RDPI has been preventively training member organizations in emergency ECD. " Early childhood development (ECD) training in emergency: In January 2019, UNICEF conducted training on Emergency ECD for its partners in Mozambique. RDPI participated with 6 representatives who, after training, carried out three replications, namely: (i) The first, in Beira-Sofala as part of the response to cyclone IDAI, between 17-19 April 2019. The organizations ESSOR, Terre des Hommes Italy, MUODJO Association, ADESSO Association and their partners participated in this training. (ii) The second took place in Maputo, at the RDPI offices, on the 23rd of April. (iii) The third, also took place at the RDPI offices, in the city of Maputo, on the 24th and 25th of July 2019. The general topics of the 03 training courses were: 1) Concepts of comprehensive care in early childhood, 2) Presentation of the ECD kit in an emergency; 3) Working with young children aged 0-5 years in an emergency context; 4) Creation of stories, books and other materials for children's learning; 5) Planning of activities; 6) Implementation of the emergency ECD kit; 7) Monitoring and evaluation of children's progress and self-evaluation of caregivers. In total, 77 members and partners of the RDPI participated in the 03 training sessions, 37 women and 40 men, who had a workload of 8 hours per session, between three and five days. Members of the RDPI respond to the ECD in an emergency in the Central and Southern Zone of Mozambique: Member organizations of the Network for the Development of Early Childhood - RDPI as a result of the training promoted by UNICEF for its partners including the RDPI on Early Childhood Development in an Emergency context, the organization Terre des Homme Italia, provided assistance to children victims of Cyclone IDAI in 2019 in Sofala province, Dondo-Mandruze district. For this purpose, RDPI with the support of UNICEF made available two (02) (ECD emergency kits that allowed the creation of two safe spaces for the assistance of at least two thousand (2000) children. In the second week of February 2023, there were again floods caused by heavy rains and increased discharges at the Pequenos Libombos Dam, which left several families homeless and destroyed seedbeds and cut roads in the District of Boane, in Maputo Province. The children have not yet returned to school and in the meantime, member organizations of RDPI, ADDESSO - Association for the Defense and Development of Society, APC - Projeto Cidadão and CHAPATECA Association are carrying out various psycho-social support activities for child victims. of the floods in the province of Maputo, in the district of Boane, promoting activities using games, games and other methodologies centered on the child and based on the KIT in ECD in Emergency. This type of intervention demonstrates the importance of providing support at all levels in emergency situations and the importance of organizations and beyond, being prepared to look at these aspects in times of natural disasters and act to mitigate their impacts on children.

### **Fostering Gender and Disabilities Inclusion in Nigeria Play-based Pre-primary Education.**

**Author/Presenter: Tolulope Ojo**

**Institutional Affiliation: Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI)**

Access to quality and inclusive play-based pre-primary learning for children from marginalized backgrounds including those with disabilities, has the potential to promote school readiness, completion, and overall learning outcomes of children. Since 2016, the Nigerian government has provided in-service training to pre-primary teachers in public schools using a Reggio-inspired curriculum. Adopting a mixed-method research design, the current study was conducted among a total of 960 Reggio-trained teachers purposively selected from 8 states in Nigeria. Teachers were

surveyed, and thereafter, a smaller sample (160), were engaged through focus group discussions (FGD). The survey elicited information on teachers' personal and professional backgrounds, their classroom practices of play-based learning, and inclusive education. The FGD explored their experiences and perspectives on gender and disability inclusion in the classrooms. The quantitative data were analyzed using STATA-17 while the qualitative data were thematically analyzed using NVivo-12. About 59% of the teachers surveyed reported that having children with disability (CWD) in integrated classrooms would impact other children's learning. On the other hand, most of those interviewed believed implementing inclusive education in play-based learning would improve the learning outcomes of CWD. Nine of every ten respondents indicated they would need additional training to support CWD in their classrooms efficiently. Regarding gender inclusion, the study revealed that play was gender-selective in many pre-primary classes. About nine out of every ten respondents reported they would more likely encourage girls to play with dolls, than boys. The study recommends that play-based programs should be adapted to all children's needs. Specifically, CWD must be taken into consideration when designing and implementing play-based learning opportunities. Also, adaptive/-adapted resources should be adequately provided for teachers in pre-primary classrooms to promote inclusive education.

#### **5.2.4 Break-out Room 4: Quality improvement strategies II**

##### **Technology - A catalyst for effective quality programme implementation and monitoring at scale.**

**Author/Presenter: Lisa Voortman**

**Institutional Affiliation: GROW Educare Centres**

GROW Educare Centres is a leading South African ECD social enterprise. We believe that every child deserves 5-star quality education if we are going to break the cycle of inequality and poverty. We know that quality improvement interventions can only be sustained if ECD small business owners and teachers are paid a fair wage and centres are professionally operated and sustainable. Our proven recipe for success makes running a 5-star early learning centre a possibility for all. We have taken all the lessons, tools and resources that we have learnt over 8 years, developing a franchise model and integrated that into a unique mobile first, one stop shop, ECD management technology platform, designed for Africa by Africans. This platform is now free to use for all ECD stakeholders (ECD owners, principals, teacher, parents and ECD support organisations) in South Africa and is backed by an international financial services company. The speaker will share with the audience how technology that is specifically designed for teachers and integrates all the training, tools, resources and daily education plans she needs to manage her classroom, is a game changer for cost effective quality programme delivery. She will share how organisation's (like GROW, other NPOs, Govts) are using data better to monitor and drive programme improvements and efficiencies. Participants will be able to experience how these technology tools are helping teachers focus on learners' individual needs and better engage parents. She will share how ECD owners and principals are using the tools to develop their teachers and to run a professional centre that is compliant with legislation. The technology platform is now used being used by more than 1400 ECD businesses, with 25000 children registered on the platform as well as many non-profit organisations serving the ECD sector in South Africa. She will share insights on how the platform is serving as a tool to unite the sector around common quality measurement frameworks to ensure we all work towards a common goal of quality for all.

##### **Strengthening the Capacity of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Workforce in Play-Based Pedagogies: A Case of The Gambia**

**Author/Presenter: Abdoulie F.R Jadama**

**Institutional Affiliation: The University of The Gambia**

Play is central to how children learn. Indeed, children enjoy living and learning through play. This is important since play provides children with a platform and means to explore the environment and make sense of their world. In the Gambia, the government through the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MBoSE) recognizes the importance of promoting learning through play, hence developing the Gambia Open and Active Learning Spaces (GOALS) curriculum aims to cognitively stimulate children aged 3-6 through structured play. Despite the development and deployment of the GOALS curriculum, little empirical research has explored the implementation of play-based approaches as envisaged in the curriculum. This study, therefore, explored early childhood teacher perceptions and knowledge gaps about play-based curricula and pedagogy in The Gambia. A descriptive survey approach was employed where data was collected through questionnaires and Key Informants

interviews (KII). The target population is 176 teachers drawn from 100 schools. The findings showed that most of the ECD teachers positively perceived the role of play in child development. The teachers reported that incorporating learning through play in content delivery allows children and teachers to interact well in the classroom and makes children more active in the classroom. However, the majority of the teachers reported that time, expected curriculum coverage, and limited play materials and resources constrained effective delivery of play-based learning within the GOALS framework. They also reported limited professional development opportunities to re-skill and up-skill them on the use of appropriate technology to deliver play-based curriculum. The study recommends strengthening the content and pedagogical knowledge and capacity of ECD teachers to learn through play to support the effective implementation of the Gambia Open Active Learning Space (GOALS) Curriculum.

### **The Role of Home Literacy Environment and language in the Development of Rhyme Awareness Skills in Zambian Preschoolers**

**Author/Presenter: Janet Serenje**

**Institutional Affiliation: University of Zambia**

Previous research has demonstrated that the home literacy environment and children's language abilities influence the development of different components of phonological awareness skills, including rhyme awareness. However, the extent to which these factors support the development of rhyme awareness skills, one of the earliest phonological awareness skills to develop in children as young as three, has not been investigated extensively. This study investigated whether some aspects of the home literacy environment (i.e., literacy resources, literacy activities, parental education level) and children's language skills are associated with rhyme awareness skills. A total of 353 children (Mage=81.1 months; SD=15.7) from 14 public preschools in Lusaka province of Zambia were randomly selected to participate in this study. Parents completed a questionnaire on their children's literacy experiences at home, which included questions on the availability of literacy resources, the type of literacy activities children participate in, and the frequency with which they participate in literacy activities. Children's language skills were assessed by measuring their receptive and expressive vocabulary and familiarity with the language of instruction in preschool. Both the ability to recognize rhymes and the capacity to produce rhymes were tested as part of the rhyming skill set. The data were analyzed using a linear mixed-effect model. Results revealed that literacy activities and language skills were strong predictors of rhyme awareness skills. However, rhyme awareness was not associated with parents' education level, the availability of literacy resources in the home, or the frequency with which children were engaged in literacy activities. Results from this research stress the value of home literacy activities and language in fostering children's phonological awareness skills, particularly rhyme awareness. Rhyme awareness skills predict future reading and school success; therefore, these skills must be supported at home.

### **Adapting, pilot-testing, and scaling accelerated pre-primary education programs in Tanzania, Lao PDR, and Tanzania**

**Authors/Presenters: Vilasack Viraphanh & Simon Gervas & Fe Nogra-Abog**

**Institutional Affiliation: Plan International**

Access to pre-primary education has increased in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Tanzania in recent years, but many children (30% in Laos, 65% in Cambodia, and 23% in Tanzania) still miss out on early childhood education. Those who are most affected are typically poorer, rural, displaced, or from minority groups. The situation is expected to worsen due to the COVID-19 crisis, which has led to reduced funding for education, with pre-primary education receiving the least funding. To address these challenges in access, equity, in early childhood education, the LEARN Plus project is working in partnership with the governments of Cambodia, Laos, and Tanzania to adapt, pilot, and test an accelerated pre-primary education program. The program aims to support the holistic development and school readiness of children about to enter grade 1 without any previous early childhood education experience. The program is delivered by teachers or community volunteers in any safe community space and promotes gender equality, nutritious meals, hand washing, oral hygiene, and strong parental engagement in early childhood education. With support from GPE-KIX, the project aims to demonstrate that the accelerated program is an innovative and effective way to increase access to quality ECE, especially for disadvantaged children. The evidence generated from this project will help governments to decide whether to scale up the program and reach underserved areas to make progress towards achieving SDG 4.2. The government partners are leading the adaptation and piloting of the program, while research partners are leading the program evaluation and evidence generation. This panel

presentation will share the progress, experiences, and lessons learned in adapting and piloting the program, and present results from research and evaluation studies provide evidence of the program's relevance, effectiveness, affordability, and sustainability across different settings.

### **Innovative Public Private School Meals Partnership for Quality ECDE**

**Author/Presenter: Ruth Muendo**

**Institutional Affiliation: Food for Education**

School Meal Programs have illustrated significant impacts on equity and inclusion. In an effort to find an operable and scalable model, the current governor of Muranga reached out to Food for Education to test the practicality of a government led porridge program using centralized cooking and distribution channels. Food for Education documented both the process and implementation realities. The study aimed at evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of the program. A mixed methods design was used to gather data. Under the study, ninety-five centers involving seventy-two head teachers, ninety-five center managers, ninety-five children, thirty motorbike operators and sixteen cooks participated. Observation data were grouped based on predetermined themes. We also generated maps that clustered routes and costs while quantitative data were analyzed and presented as versatile dashboards. In total, 294,688 cups of porridge were delivered to 20,004 beneficiaries across 314 ECD centers, within 17 wards in a period ranging three to twenty-four days. The study findings revealed that 77.3% of the respondents stated that the piloted model was better than the previous dry ration model indicating reduced financial and logistical commitments, as well as trickle down effects to the local economy. Further, the study established increased enrolment (4.2%) and attendance (67.4%) for the duration of the implementation period. The porridge program was perceived to be useful in mitigating school hunger and promoting the development of young ECD going children. Moreover, the centralized design of the program was valued as a means to alleviate the challenges of previous interventions such as high financial and energy costs.



## 6.0 PROFILES OF CHAIRS, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND SESSION MODERATORS



**Professor Mary Getui**, Chair, Board of Directors, Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN), and professor, Department of Religious Studies, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).

Mary N. Getui, MBS, is the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) and a professor at the Department of Religious Studies, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). She has been Director, Quality Assurance and Academic Programmes (2011-2017). Previously, she worked at Kenyatta University (KU), where she held various positions including Chairman, Department of Religious Studies; Director, Board of Undergraduate Studies; and Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences. In both CUEA and KU, Professor Getui has acted as Deputy Vice-Chancellor-Academics. Prof Getui has published widely in the areas of religion, family, education, gender, culture, peace and health. Between 2009-2015, she served as Chairperson, National AIDS Control Council. She has served and is a member of several

boards, including the Africa Early Childhood Network. Her current research interests are on contemporary issues and their interface with religion. In 2009, she was conferred Moran of the Burning Spear, MBS. In 2012, she was awarded Honorary Degree, Humane Letters by De Paul University, Chicago, USA.



**Dr. Penelope Campbell** – UNICEF Zambia Country Representative

Penelope Campbell is the UNICEF Representative to the Republic of Zambia, based in Lusaka. She took up her post in April 2022. She leads a team working on a broad range of programmes in support of the rights and well-being of children and young people under the UNICEF Country Programme of Cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

With a career spanning 20 years in UNICEF, Ms. Campbell has led multiple global programmes focusing on Health, Nutrition, HIV development & humanitarian work. Additionally, she has represented UNICEF at leading international forums and engaging with senior-level stakeholders including local governments to diplomatically drive improvements in the health sector, focusing on women and children, especially from vulnerable communities.

Ms. Campbell is of Jamaican and British descent with a MSc in Health Education & Health Promotion and a BSc (Hons) in Nursing Studies from King's College, University of London. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Public Health with the University of West Indies.



**Dr. Nathan Nsubuga Bakyaite** – WHO Representative in Zambia.

Dr. Nathan Nsubuga Bakyaite has been WHO Representative to Zambia since 4 December 2017. Nathan is a medical doctor specializing in Public Health with experience spanning 26 years. He joined WHO as M & E Officer in the Malaria Program at WHO-AFRO (2005-2011); Medical Officer Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) at WHO-AFRO in Brazzaville (2011-2013); and WHO Malaria Adviser Kenya (2013-2017). Before joining WHO, he worked with the Ministry of Health, Uganda in the fields of HIV/AIDS control; Malaria Control and IDSR between 1994 and 2005. He holds a degree in Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) from Makerere University Kampala, Uganda and a master's in public health (MPH) from the University of Leeds, United Kingdom.



**Jesal Kika – World Bank, Education Economist and Consultant**

Jesal Kika is an Education Economist and Consultant at the World Bank, supporting operations and providing analytical and advisory support across South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini. Her work mainly focuses on early childhood development, foundational learning, and overall education systems strengthening. She is also involved in various research projects in South Africa, with a particular focus on early childhood development. Prior to joining the World Bank, Jesal worked at the national Department of Basic Education in South Africa, and was responsible for research, monitoring and evaluation activities. She also provided technical support on social sector policy issues to the National Planning Commission Secretariat at the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation under the Presidency of South Africa.



**Prof. Linda Richter – Distinguished Professor at University of the Witwatersrand and AfECN Board Member**

Linda Marlene Richter is a Distinguished Professor of the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Extraordinary Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Stellenbosch University (SU). Her research focuses on developmental origins of health and disease, life course and inter-generational factors influencing child and adolescent health and wellbeing. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the South African Medical Research Council President's Lifetime Achievement Award for Research Excellence and National Research Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. She is a member of the American Psychological Association and member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).



**Professor Hasina Ebrahim  
– University of South Africa and UNESCO co-chair in ECD**

Hasina Banu Ebrahim is a research professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education at UNISA. She also holds the UNESCO Co-chair in Early Education, Care and Development. She is a rated researcher with the National Research Foundation. Her research coheres around Early Childhood at the Margins with special reference to policy, practice, and workforce development. Professor Ebrahim won prestigious awards institutionally and nationally for her research. She has numerous books and journal articles in national and international journals. She served as the sector editor for the South African Journal of Childhood Education and currently serves on editorial boards of international ECD journals. Prof Ebrahim is the convener of the knowledge generation working group in the Early Childhood Cluster in the African Union. She has led international ECD projects on knowledge transfer,

professionalisation and curriculum. She is currently leading projects on the ECD workforce with special reference to sustainability, professional standards, evidence-based professional learning and developing competent systems. She serves on the South African task team for ECD Human Resource Development and Quality Assurance.



**Dr. Sarah Naicker – Research Manager, DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of Witwatersrand.**

Dr. Sara Naicker is a Research Manager at the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of Witwatersrand. Her research focuses on child and adolescent health and development with a specific focus on early childhood development and the impact of childhood adversity on lifelong outcomes. Sara is a member of the Harnessing Global Data to Advance the Learning and Development of Young Children Group as well as the ECD Countdown to 2030 Technical Working Group



**Sheila Manji, Consultant, World Health Organization**

Sheila Manji is a consultant and ECD Specialist at World Health Organization. She has 10+ years' experience working with field-based teams, partners, and government to ensure access to quality early years programmes and services and primary education in 15+ countries. She has 10+ years writing experience including literature reviews, reports, publications, strategic documents, proposals, video scripts, lesson plans, curricula (for teachers and students), and facilitators' guides. Sheila also has 15+ years' experience teaching children and adults, facilitating workshops and parenting programmes, training, and mentoring stakeholders at multiple levels online and face to face. Most notably, she has led a global initiative which catalysed a deeper understanding of the importance of the early years and encouraged collaboration across sectors, geographies, and stakeholders at all levels.



**Bibi Giyose – AUDA NEPAD**

Boitshepo Bibi Giyose is a Senior Nutrition Officer for Policy and Programmes in the Nutrition and Food Systems Division at FAO, but currently on secondment to the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) as special advisor to the CEO since January 2018. Her work focuses on integrating and mainstreaming nutrition into agriculture and related development agendas, and to promote a multisector approach for addressing all forms of malnutrition. She holds a MS in International Nutrition from Cornell University, NY. and a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics from Appalachian State University, USA.

Ms. Giyose was awarded a "Distinguished Alumna Award" in recognition of exceptional professional achievement by Appalachian State University in 2007. She was also named Senior Policy Scholar in 2011 by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation – USA – for her work on Home Grown School Feeding. She has served on numerous international scientific technical and policy advisory committees



**Dr. Nvuyo Nkomo – SANU**

Dr Navuyo is passionate, self-motivated, dedicated and technologically adept educator with over 15 years' experience invested in developing and grooming teachers for young learners in diverse settings, to achieve success in Early Childhood Education. She holds an MPhil in Childcare and Protection (School of Law, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2022), Certificate in Education for Sustainable Development Leadership and Practice in Teacher Education, Rhodes University in partnership with UNESCO, South Africa, (2021- 2022), PHD – Early Childhood Education (University of Pretoria, 2018), Masters in Early Childhood Education (University of Zimbabwe, 2013), Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (Great Zimbabwe University, 2009), Diploma in Education Specializing in Infant Education (University of Zimbabwe, 2001).

She is enthusiastic about research and community development projects in child development. She has an avid interest in children with disabilities, their welfare and access to ECD services.



**Elizabeth Spier – American Institutes of Research**

Elizabeth Spier, PhD, is a Principal Researcher at AIR. She has nearly 20 years of experience designing and managing large-scale, policy-relevant evaluations examining the effectiveness of programs and interventions designed to improve developmental and educational outcomes for children. She also has experience in providing technical assistance in areas such as safe and supportive learning environments. She has carried out applied research in over 25 low- and middle-income countries, as well as the United States. Dr Spier has expertise in evaluation design, early childhood development, school readiness, conditions for learning, school safety, social and emotional learning, and the provision of trauma-informed supports for children who have experienced adversity. Since 2014, she has served as a member of AIR's Institutional Review Board. She holds a doctoral degree in Psychological Development from New York University.



**Felistus Motimedi** – Regional Director, Child Rights Network for Southern Africa (CRNSA).

She is a human rights expert with a wealth of experience spanning for more than twelve years in engaging with health, social development, gender, and human rights and engaging with duty bearers from the local or national level, regional up to the global level.



**Lydia Kelane** – Manager Public Health, Ministry of Health

Ms. 'Marethabile Lydia Kelane has served as the Coordinator Departmental Nursing Services (CDNS) since 2020, where her responsibilities have included administrative oversight and integration of maternal, neonatal childhood services through, advocacy, focusing on child health and family, well-being, safety, learning and development.

She has also supported in coordinating and managing child health services, working directly with all district facilities and other line ministries pertaining child health issues.

She attended the University of Free state from 2001-2004 and obtained a BA degree in Nursing, A registered nurse midwife, pediatric nurse working for Ministry of Health Lesotho as Coordinator Departmental Nursing Services (CDNS) Managing the Child Health Program.



**Mr David Woods Baysah**, Independent Consultant at UNICEF Regional Office East & Southern Africa

David has Over 20 years of work experience in policy, planning, implementing, and evaluating developmental programmes, including ECD. He currently serves as a Consultant at UNICEF Regional Office for East & Southern Africa where he provides technical support in strengthening Early Childhood Education systems in a number of countries including Kenya, Mozambique, Lesotho, South Sudan, Angola, Zambia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Madagascar among others. He has also served on strategic committees at the Global Partnership for Education in Washington D.C, managed education programmes funded by the World Bank in Liberia, as well as consulted for UNICEF in New York, and was part of a team that developed the UNICEF "Build to last" framework, and the global ECE accelerator toolkit. He has supported programs and interventions of

many partners including USAID, the EU, the Conrad Hilton Foundation, the BigWin Philanthropy, Mercy Corps, OSIWA, Concern Worldwide, AfECN among others. He is the founder and Lead Consultant at the ADARA Research and Management Consultancy, a West African firm based in Monrovia, Liberia.



**Mr Alakwisa Abraham Phiri** – Director Research, Zambia National Union of Teachers

Alakwisa Abraham Phiri has served as the Union Director, research, and information in the Zambia National Union Teachers (Znut) for 5 years. He taught as a primary school teacher for 12 years, as a secondary teacher for 8 years; and lectured at primary teacher's college for 8 years. Mr Alakwisa has achieved a bachelor's in education at University of Zambia (UNZA), and a master's degree in physical education and sports in Greece IOA.



**Ondela Manjezi-Sokomani** - Programme Manager, One to One Africa, South Africa

Ondela Manjezi-Sokomani is a highly motivated Population Studies graduate with a passion for promoting equality and inclusion in healthcare for women, young girls, and children. Her dedication to food security, nutrition, and development has led her to successfully lead programs in Maternal and Child Health, Adolescent Health, and early childhood development.



**Mhambi Ndlangamandla Moses**, Director National Child Services, Eswatini

Mhambi is an administrator and human ecology specialist with a strong focus on programme management, resource management and research methodology. He has over 20 years' experience working in the civil service as an educator and administrator. He holds a Human Ecology master's degree from the University of South Africa and has undertaken training in leadership and governance and Child Development from ESAMI and the University of Haifa in Israel respectively. Mhambi is currently an Acting Director in the National Children Services Department under the Deputy Prime Minister's Office a position he has held since March 2020.



**Dr. Nicholas Dowdall**, Evidence Specialist, LEGO Foundation

Dr Nicholas Dowdall is an Evidence Specialist at the LEGO Foundation, working in the Africa & Asia team from the Johannesburg office. In this role he has oversight of all research and learning activities within the South Africa Initiative, and also works closely with partners on implementation of projects. He has a special interest in parenting interventions, ECD policy and systems development, and quantitative approaches to testing parenting and education interventions. He also works on projects in Rwanda, Ghana, and Kenya.

Prior to working at the LEGO Foundation, he was a technical advisor based in the ECD Directorate in the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa where he worked closely with the ECD Director and Deputy Director General for the Curriculum Branch. Much of his work at the DBE focused on planning for the ECD Function Shift from the Department of Social Development to the DBE.

Previously, he worked as a researcher at Oxford University while completing his PhD which focused on evaluating interventions to promote child development and sensitive parenting in Low and Middle-Income Countries and evidence synthesis projects of ECD and adolescent health interventions. During this time, he led a randomized controlled trial of a parenting intervention in Khayelitsha, South Africa in collaboration with the University of Stellenbosch. He also completed a master's degree in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. His research has been published in leading international child development and public health journals.



**Joy Nafungo** - Senior Project Officer, Knowledge & Innovation Exchange, International Development Research Centre, IDRC

Joy Nafungo is a Senior Program Officer with the Global Partnership for Education, Knowledge, and Innovation Exchange (GPEKIX) at International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Currently pursuing a PhD in Comparative Education, she holds a master's degree in education (Innovation in Teaching and Learning), a master's degree in project planning and management and a bachelor's degree in education. Her role at KIX involves managing and providing technical oversight to several applied projects while directly supporting the KIX Africa 19 hub. Prior to joining IDRC, she worked in various programmes at UNICEF, RTI International and Plan International.



**Futhi Mbongwe** – Operations Manager, Play Africa

Futhi serves as an Operations Manager at Play Africa – a children’s museum based in Johannesburg. He joined Play Africa in 2017 as a Play and Learning Facilitator and subsequently a programme manager. Prior to this he has worked with organisations such as GIBS, a business school spearheading educational programmes for social entrepreneurs and business leaders and Endeavour South Africa working with high impact entrepreneurs. He has been instrumental in the creation and managing of programmes and exhibits for children from birth to age 10 that have become a flagship of Play Africa and put the organisation in the global and African map.



**Dr. ZewelANJI Serpell** – Early Childhood Development Specialist UNICEF Zambia’s Country Office

ZewelANJI Serpell, Ph.D. is an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Specialist in UNICEF Zambia’s country office. She is responsible for the ECD/ECE portfolio, including Zambia’s flagship ECD programme—Insaka. She has 20+ years of intervention work in community settings, and community-based participatory research in child development and education. She is well published, and has a doctoral degree in developmental psychology, and post-doctoral training in early childhood education, and education policy. She is a Zambian national.



**Dr Amanda Devercelli** – World Bank Global Lead for Early Childhood Development, Education

Amanda E. Devercelli is the Global Lead for Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the World Bank. She works across the institution to expand and improve investments in ECD, ensure delivery of high-quality operational and analytical work and build capacity of Bank staff and clients. In 2012, she launched the Bank’s Early Learning Partnership, a \$100 million multi-donor fund that has generated more than \$2 billion in funding to scale -up high-quality ECD services worldwide. Amanda leads operational and analytical work in Kenya, Somalia, Senegal, and South Africa currently and has previously worked in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and India. She created the World Bank’s Early Years Fellowship in 2017 to build future leaders in the field of early childhood. She was the lead author for the World Bank’s white paper on childcare Better Jobs and Brighter Futures: Investing in Childcare to Build Human Capital and is leading a major expansion of childcare work across the institution. Amanda co-led the development of the Bank’s Systems Approach for Better Education Results-Early Childhood Development (SABER-ECD). She has published on a range of topics including childcare, measuring early childhood outcomes, engaging with the nonstate sector and systems approaches to early childhood. Prior to joining the World Bank, Amanda worked with community-based schools and international civil society organizations. She has a master’s degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and was awarded the Reynolds Fellowship for Social Enterprise from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.



**Dr Tawanda Makusha** – Chief Research Specialist, Human Sciences Research Council

Tawanda Makusha is a Chief Research Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council. He holds a PhD in Gender Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Tawanda's major contributions are within fatherhood research, mainly focusing on masculinities, fatherhood, and male involvement in maternal and child health in the first 1000 days; the impact of poverty and HIV and AIDS on children and families. Of great importance and relevance to the field of fatherhood in South Africa, he is the co-editor of the two State of South Africa's Fathers Report 2018, and 2021.



**Misiwe Fortunate Maphumulo** – Asiye eTafuleni, Durban

Misiwe Fortunate Maphumulo has a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of South Africa and is a Field Researcher at Asiye eTafuleni in Durban, South Africa. Misiwe is a compassionate and skilled social worker who effectively engages with informal traders for positive change in the Market of Warwick by advocating and motivating care for children. She is a team player and is involved with facilitating the cross-cultural interface on most of the projects that Asiye eTafuleni undertakes. Besides her daily engagement with the childcare program, she is also currently involved with the development of a health champions among informal traders and represents Asiye eTafuleni on the Warwick Zero Waste project.



**Ms Winnie Nyato** – Children in Crossfire

Winnie Nyato is a M&E expert and Qualitative Researcher with 9+ years of focused M&E and research background across a range of sectors (early childhood development, adolescents and youth, education, health, media) and exposure across key stakeholder settings including government agencies, NGOs, and commercial organizations.

Winnie has worked on different youth and children related programmes with different international organisations including Restless Development, BBC MediaAction, WellToldStory, Girl Effect, and currently as Senior Specialist Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning at Children in Crossfire Tanzania – an international NGO focused on increasing access to quality early-childhood-development and supporting young children develop to their fullest potential.



**Patricia Martin** – Director, Advocacy Aid

Patricia Martin has a Master of Laws degree in Public Law from the University of Cape Town, and has been an active advocate, researcher, and policy analyst in the children's sector for more than 20 years. She was the executive director of a national child rights advocacy alliance (ACCESS) for 8 years in South Africa. Following this, she started her own consultancy – Advocacy Aid. In this capacity she has provided technical support to a variety of organisations in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Asia. Her clients include UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, the AfECN, the South African National Child Rights Coalition, the African Child Policy Forum and various government departments in South Africa, the broader SADC region and Uzbekistan.

Patricia has been more than 15 years' experience in the ECD sector. She has undertaken research, advocacy, systems diagnostics, supported the development of ECD policies, advocacy strategies, investments cases, human

resources, and quality improvement plans, as well as the design and development of multi-sectoral ECD coordination structures. In addition, she has worked with many organisations, including the AfECN to develop the advocacy planning and implementation and ECD systems strengthening capacity through child-centred governance.



**Celso Give** – Senior Researcher, Development Media International (DMI).

Celso Soares Give is a Senior Researcher Manager at Development Media International with over 10 years of experience conducting research in social development and public health, publishing working and peer-reviewed papers. Expertise in center human design; dissemination, and implementation research, and participatory action research. Additionally, Celso is a lecturer and president of the Scientific Committee at the Faculty of Medicine at the University Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique). Experience managing large-scale research projects, including evaluations of national-scale programs.



**Henry Kabwe** – Media Network for Child Rights

Scaling Up Nutrition (CSO-SUN) Chairperson and has served on various other boards. He serves on the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU), a CSO advisory organ of the continental body. He is the former Chairperson of the Zambia Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa – MISA, chaired the MISA Zambia Legal Defence Committee and currently one of its trustees. He holds a Diploma in Journalism, Public Relations and Advertising from the Evelyn Hone College, a Bachelor of Communication Studies from the Mulungushi University and an Executive Master of Business Administration in Leadership and Wealth Creation from the University of Lusaka (UNILUS).



**Marcia Zali** – Journalist

Marcia Zali is an award-winning freelance journalist from South Africa. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the Tshwane University of Technology and a Reporting on Children in the Media certificate from the University of Witwatersrand. She specialises in health reporting with a special focus on maternal and child health.

Zali is a 2022 Early Childhood Development Global Reporting fellow from the Dart Center for Journalism. In 2019, she was awarded the inaugural Grow Great journalist of the year for reporting on stunting and child nutrition. She has also been awarded several international fellowships and scholarships.



**Jessica Li**, Senior Behavioral Designer, ideas42

Jessica Li is a Senior Behavioral Designer at ideas42 with experience conducting research and applying behavioral insights to both US domestic social programs and in the global development context. Prior to working at ideas42, she worked at The People Lab, where she used insights from behavioral science and public management to support government workers and improve the implementation of social safety net policies. Before her time at The People Lab, Jessica worked at an international NGO as the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, where she focused on improving the delivery of primary healthcare services to school-aged children in Zambia. Jessica received her Master's in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Bachelor's in Geography from Colgate University.





**Dr. Vanessa Cavallera** – Technical Officer, Brain Health Unit, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization.

Dr. Vanessa Cavallera is technical officer within the Brain Health Unit in the Department of Mental Health and Substance Use at the World Health Organization. She is a child neuropsychiatrist by training, who has been working on early childhood development and child mental health in developing and humanitarian contexts over the last 10 years. Her work is now focusing on the early years, supporting the nurturing care framework by developing measures to capture child development globally in order to inform policies and programmes to support children.



**Dr Abbie Raikes** – Founder, ECD Measure and Director Center for Global Health and Associate Professor, University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Dr. Abbie Raikes, PhD., MPH, is an associate professor at the College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center and Director, Center for Global Health and Development. Dr. Raikes' recent work has focused on improving early childhood programs and policies in low- and middle-income countries. Her research background also includes a strong focus on young children's social/emotional development. Previously, Abbie contributed to early childhood policy development in several countries as a program specialist for the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, where she also participated in UNESCO's process to develop indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals. Abbie was a senior program officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and has advised several organizations on early childhood development and education. Abbie has served on several boards, including the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, Creighton Preparatory School, and the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition.



**Dr. Given Hapunda** – Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Zambia.

Given Hapunda is a lecturer and researcher of psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Zambia. He holds a Ph.D. in Developmental and Paediatric Psychology from the University of Tilburg, in the Netherlands. His master's degree is in Child and Adolescent Psychology, a joint program he did between the University of Zambia, Zambia and Leiden University, The Netherlands, while his bachelor's degree is in psychology English from the University of Zambia. He has 11 years of research and teaching experience. His scientific career and research interest focus on child and adolescent health, child stimulation, attachment theory and emotional regulation, identity across cultures, and program evaluation. He has published in interventional journals, contributed book chapters, and written monographs and a book. He is done consultancy work for national and international organizations, especially in monitoring and evaluation, and basic research.



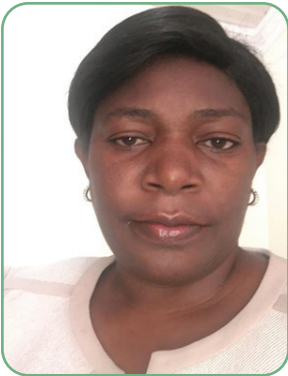
**Ms Rosemary Mwaisaka** – Manager for NCDs, Food Security and Nutrition Programme at ECSA Health Community.

Rosemary has broad experience in public health, nutrition and development; policies, programme planning, management, monitoring and evaluation. She has more than 15 years of experience in the field of Public Health, Nutrition and Development through working with the UN and other international organizations. Her role at ECSA HC gives her mandate to provide leadership in establishing regional policies, strategies, guidelines and support capacity development, knowledge generation and dissemination and advocacy efforts on NCDs, food security and nutrition. She has pioneered the ECD agenda in the region by facilitating adoption of global Nurturing Care Framework in 9 ECSA-HC member states through the established Responsive Caregiving Experts' Committee. Contact: [rmwaisaka@ecsahc.org](mailto:rmwaisaka@ecsahc.org)



**Dr. Patrick Makokoro**, Regional Advisor, SANECD

Patrick Makokoro is a social entrepreneur, an early childhood development practitioner, scholar, and educational researcher. The work he has carried out includes early childhood development program implementation, national ECD network establishment in Africa and providing extensive early childhood development consulting support to international non-profits working in Africa.



**Ms. Bridget Moya**

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## AGENDA 2063 The Africa We Want

### Aspiration 1

A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

### Aspiration 2

An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance

### Aspiration 3

An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

### Aspiration 4

A peaceful and secure Africa

### Aspiration 5

An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics

### Aspiration 6

An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth

### Aspiration 7

Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner



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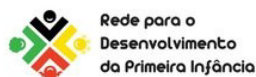


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