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CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA
Cross Country Virtual Knowledge Exchange Event (Webinar)
Topic : Scaling Up Quality Diagnostics in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Programmes In Africa
Proposed Date: Wednesday 31st January, 2024 (16.00-17.30 Hrs EAT)

Register <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrceyorTwwGdlay8tpfHkXzbzRfMFEEd6ok>

1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In recognition of the need to enhance equitable access to quality Education programmes, and as part of its global Agenda 2063, the African Union developed and adopted the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) that calls for special attention to ECED in CESA 16-25. CESA16-25 identifies preprimary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention. CESA 16-25 clearly states that ECED is the pillar for future learning and identifies it as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. In pursuit of the foregoing, the African Union Commission therefore established the ECED Cluster for to support relation to realization of CESA implementation objectives related to early years.

One of the key objectives of ECED Cluster is to intensify advocacy and action towards quality improvements of ECED systems, programmes and services. In this regard, and as part of contributing to implementation of the AU 2024 Theme of the Year, Africa Early Childhood Network in partnership with the Ministries of Education in three (3) countries (The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia) collaborated with ECD Measures in an initiative to scale up quality diagnostics across the region to provide a framework for improving quality ECED implementation.

The initiative involved piloting of The Brief Early Childhood Quality Inventory (BEQI), a measurement tool designed to help early childhood systems monitor and improve the use of evidence-based practices. It is adaptable and can be modified to fit the needs across different setting types. In addition to The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia where the present initiative focuses, BEQI has been piloted in other African countries including Guinea Bissau (UNICEF/Ministry of Education), Liberia (University of Liberia, Ministry of





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Education), Tanzania (Children in Crossfire and Schools 2030), Uganda (Schools 2030), and Kenya (Schools 2030). More about BEQI can be [accessed here](#)

The implementation of the initiative involved co-creation with three teams nominated by the respective Ministries of Education in each country (The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia). The country teams included focal points from the Ministries of Education (Director In-Charge of ECD), 2 Key Ministry of Education personnel responsible for Curriculum and quality assurance, as well as representatives of National ECD Network and Academia. The overall goal was to promote measurement of early childhood education and produce reliable, actionable data on the quality of early learning environments. Major activities included: i) aligning and adapting of BEQI tool to national early learning quality standards for The Gambia, Uganda, and Zambia; ii) convening of stakeholders' forum to review and validate the contextualized BEQI tools in respective countries; iii) reliability training, testing and piloting; data analysis, report writing, validation and dissemination as outlined in Box 1

Box 1: Quality Diagnostics Process

- 1. High Level Commitment from the Ministry of Education:** Engagement of highest policy making organ of the Ministries of Education in the three countries to ensure alignment of the initiative with government priorities, as well as the commitment of the Ministry to consider the findings and recommendations of the diagnostics as part of strengthening quality improvements of ECED systems, programmes and services in the country.
- 2. Planning and Orientation:** Convening of stakeholder meeting country teams to provide an overview of the BEQI tool and full adaptation and pilot process. Country teams were given opportunity to discuss internally how quality is currently being monitored and improved and then carried out bilateral conversations to gather inputs from each country about their priorities for quality assurance and improvement.
- 3. Contextualize, adapt, and pre-pilot tools:** This involved collaboration with country teams to contextualize and adapt the BEQI tools to local contexts to assure the tools account for cultural considerations and local expectations for ECED quality. The tools were then pre-piloted to see how they function in local early childhood classrooms.
- 4. Reliability training:** Training of enumerators and key Ministry of Education personnel to ensure standardization in data collection for meaningful results when using the BEQI tools. The country teams went through a 4 day training session (3-4 hours of training/work per day) which involved: i) in-depth coverage and review of the BEQI tools, ii) guidance in supporting the teachers with use of the teacher interview; and iii) data collection procedures. On the last day of training, teams went to local schools to practice using the tools in classrooms.



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- During these site visits, two data collectors administered the observation in the same classroom and score independently to test inter-rater reliability.

5. Test and pilot: The ECD Measure team supported the country teams to test and pilot the tool in a sample of 10-20 schools in each country. Piloting was done close to reliability training when the tool concepts were fresh for the enumerators to enhance reliability of results.

6. Analysis and reporting pilot results: Data was analysed and draft synthesis reports shared with country teams for validation. A portal for summarized results was also made available to country teams for reference. The synthesis report (for each country) included a summary of the full BEQI process (including the adaptation, pre-pilot, training, pilot, etc.) and descriptive BEQI results. In addition, recommendations were also provided for adjusting the BEQI tools or procedures for future use or scale-up.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE WEBINAR

Under the topic “Scaling Up Quality Diagnostics in Early Childhood Education and Development (EECD) Programmes in Africa”, the webinar will be convened by the AU ECED Cluster in partnership with Ministries of Education of The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Uganda, and Zambia, AfECN, UNICEF and ECD measures as part of efforts to promote AU 2024 theme of the Year “**Educate an African fit for the 21st century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa**”

2.1 Objectives of the Webinar

The webinar will be held on 31st January 2024_16.00-17.30 Hrs EAT with a focus on:

1. Spotlighting the place of quality diagnostics and measurements in accelerating better ECED outcomes in Africa.
2. Sharing implementation/field experiences on ECED quality diagnostics using Brief Early Childhood Quality Inventory in Africa, and draw lessons for policy & practice in innovative approaches and best practice in delivering quality ECED.
3. Identifying key issues for future research, policy advocacy and action to enhance the quality of ECED services in the region.

2.2 Expected Outcomes:

The expected outcome of the webinar are:





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1. Increased knowledge amongst the key stakeholder on ECED quality diagnostics that help early childhood systems monitor and improve the use of evidence-based practices
2. Documentation of policy advocacy options and intervention strategies to support national scale up of ECED quality diagnostics in the region.
3. Commitments to intensify advocacy and action towards quality improvements of ECED systems, programmes and services.

2.3 Methodology:

The Webinar will be held through virtual means and consist of power-point presentations, panel discussions and plenary/question and answer session.

1. There will be keynote speakers to share global and regional perspectives on quality diagnostics and measurements in accelerating better ECED outcomes in Africa.
2. A panel of discussants comprising of researchers/policy makers who were involved in piloting and testing Brief Early Childhood Inventory (BEQI) in four (4) across the African region (The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Uganda and Zambia).

2.4 Participants:

The participants will include members of ECED Cluster Working Groups, government policy makers, development partners, researchers, experts, NGOs, field level practitioners and development partners. The webinar will be an opportunity for ECED stakeholders to contribute to discussions and exchange ideas on broader ECED quality measurement and improvement efforts in Africa.



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Agenda

TIME	ACTIVITY	MODERATOR/SPEAKER
16.00-16.05	Advocacy Video	Dedan Nyandigisi, AfECN
16.05-16.10	Welcoming and housekeeping	Moses Abiero, AfECN.
16.10-16.15	Opening Remarks	Mr. Charm Kalimbika, Director, ECE, Ministry of Education, Zambia, and Chair Policy Working Group.
16.15-16.30	Setting the Scene <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global and regional perspectives of ECED Measurements. 2. Background of BEQI and pilot process, BEQI use in Africa. 	Divya Lata - UNICEF Global Lead, ECE Rebecca Sayre Mojgani - ECD Measure, Chief Operations Officer
16.30-17.10	Country Experiences and Reflections Panel discussion (40 mins) Selected countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zambia (Southern Africa), • Uganda (Eastern Africa), 	Ms. Josephine Ferla, Save The Children and Convenor, Access to Quality Working Group.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gambia (West Africa) • Guinea Bissau (West Africa) <p>Proposed reflection questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your BEQI pilot experience? • What are your key takeaways from the data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How will you use the data? ✓ What actions do you want to take? • How do you see this fitting into your ongoing quality assurance system? 	
17. 10-17.20	Discussion on continuous quality monitoring and improvements in ECED	Given Dhaka, AfECN
17.20-17.25	Plenary	
17.25-17.30	Closing	Mr. Charm Kalimbika, Director, ECE, Ministry of Education, Zambia, and Chair Policy Working Group.

