



Newsletter of ECD
Resource Centre

KOPILA

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"For the children we work because they are the ones who know how to love, because they are the world's hope."

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ECD Policy Review Updates

As a part of the "UNESCO-UNICEF Regional Cooperation on Early Childhood Policy Review," Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) has been entrusted to undertake a country case study on "Early Childhood Development Policy Review". The main objective of the review is to support and assist the country to meet the first goal of Education for All, that is, "expanding and improving early childhood care and education" by identifying, documenting and sharing good practices as well as constraints and challenges in early childhood policy development and implementation in Nepal. The study is focused on examining policies developed so far and identifying the policy gaps in mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs. The review will also suggest strategic measures for the development of an ECD policy framework.



Upcoming Events



Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikas Kendra, in collaboration with many other organizations including CERID, is organizing a National Conference on Peace Education. The conference will be organized on 21 and 22 September 2007 at Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur. The program is being conducted to mark the seventh year of the *UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2000 till 2010)*.

The major objective of the conference is to create space, provide opportunities, and share, exchange and promote various

initiatives for peace and non-violence education in Nepal. The program will include various activities like Film and video shows, Children's forum, Training and workshops, Exhibition and display of materials, and Plenary and seminars. To plan and prepare for the conference five different committees have been formed.

For further information on the conference interested organizations and individuals are requested to contact: Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikas Kendra, Baudha Mahankal Phant, Post Box: 1366, Tel: 4480085/2142491, Fax: 4480085, E-mail: bikalpanepal@yahoo.com

Asia Early Childhood Resource Network

During the EC Policy Review workshop in Bangkok in July 2007 participants from 9 Asian countries, (Pakistan, Nepal, Mongolia, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Singapore) representing government, NGOs, universities, institutes and the UN agencies met to discuss the possibilities of forming an Asian network of early childhood professionals. The main purpose of the network is to build the capacity of Early Childhood Development (ECD) organizations and individuals through shared vision, mutual

cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experiences and by initiating joint efforts. A Core Group has been formed, which is engaged in developing a 'concept note of the network' and 'support the mapping exercise' to identify key organizations and individuals interested in the EC Network. CERID of Tribhuvan University is one of the members of the core group. A secretariat will be soon established in Bangkok for undertaking the Asia Early Childhood Resource Network.

Overview of Action Research Mini- Grants

CERID has provided action research mini-grants to three different organizations working in the field of early childhood development. The grants recipient organizations were provided a week-long training on action research methodology by CERID. They have since then been conducting action research projects in their respective work areas. The names of the organizations involved in the action research programs are: Non-Government Organization Coordination Committee (NGOCC), Dang; Seto Gurans Child Development Service, Tanahun; and

Community Development Federation(CDF), Kaski. An introduction to each of these studies is given below.

1. Promoting the Roles of Parents for Quality Improvement of the Early Childcare Centres in Dang

Lead Researcher: Mr. Man Bahadur Kumal, NGOCC, Dang

The aim of this study is to explore the strategies for better participation of parents in Early Childcare Centers in Dang. It is accepted that Childcare Centers could not do much for want of parents' involvement.

Holistic development of children cannot be ensured without parental support. Parents' involvement is essential for proper functioning and development of the required infrastructure. The main objectives of this study are:

- To educate parents in the importance of the Early Childcare Center.
- To find out ways to motivate parents to participate in Early Childcare Centers
- To devise effective measures for good management for quality improvement in Early Childcare Centers.

To achieve these objectives the study has taken up three Childcare Centers in

Dang which belong to areas where the parental awareness condition is very critical. Research tools such as focus group discussion guidelines, interview sheets and observation schedules forms are being used to estimate the situation of parents' participation and suggest ways for improvement.

2. Increasing Parents' Involvement in Early Childhood Development Centres

Lead Researcher: Ms. Ishwori Bhattarai, Seto Gurans, CDS, Tanahun

This study intends to help increase parental involvement in ECD Center management by examining the problems associated with health, nutrition and early stimulation services and with the availability of play and learning materials in ECD Centres of Tanahun. The main objectives of this study are:

- To identify the reasons for the lesser participation of parents' in Early Childhood Development Centers
- To explore ways to promote the participation of parents' in Early Childhood Development Centers.

Findings of Researches Conducted under the Higher Education Research Grant Program

The ECD Resource Centre in CERID, under financial assistance of UNICEF Nepal, has provided higher education research grants to students of Tribhuvan University doing research work as part of their M.Ed. and M. Phil. degree programs. A total of five students—two M. ED. and three M. Phil. students have undertaken thesis work on various aspects of early childhood development. Some of the major findings and recommendations made by those studies are presented below.

1. Contributions of Childcare Centres to Early Childhood Development: A Case Study from Kathmandu Valley

-Raj Kumar Baral, M.Phil Student

The main purpose of this study was to see whether or not the Childcare Centers in the

- To suggest ways for effectively managing the participation of parents in Early Childhood Development Centres

The study includes the two Childcare Centres funded by the Ministry of Education and Sports, one conducted in the school (school-based) and the other conducted in the community (community-based). A Childcare Centre funded by UNICEF Nepal in Tanahun district has also been included. Research tools such as focus group discussion guidelines, observations forms and interview schedules will be used with the parents, management committee members and people from the civil society for obtaining information necessary for the study.

3. Increasing Children's Enrolment in Early Childcare Centers

Lead Researcher: Ms. Kesh Kumari Bhujel, Community Development Foundation, Pokhara

Low enrolment is common in most of the Early Childcare Centers in Kaski. So this study intends to examine the reasons for the discouraging phenomenon in the Early Child Care Centres being run by NGOs with support from UNICEF Nepal. The main objectives of this study are:

- To find out the existing situation of children's enrolment rates in Early Childcare Centres
- To identify the reasons for low rate of children's enrolment in Early Child Care Centres
- To suggest ways to increase enrolment in the Early Childcare Centers.

The study includes three childcare centers, all funded by UNICEF Nepal. Research tools as focus group discussion guidelines, interview schedules, observation forms, and questionnaires will be used to collect necessary information and data. Similarly, discussions and interactions will be held with the management committee members, parents and facilitators. ■

Kathmandu Valley were able to contribute to the holistic (physical, social, intellectual and emotional) development of a child to see what expectations parents have and to rate the quality of the services being provided. The study has revealed the following :

- More attention was paid to the physical development (feeding and physical care) than to the mental development of early childhood children in most of the Childcare Centers.
- The Childcare Centers have been able to socialize their children and make them frank and confident.
- The numbers of teachers in the Childcare Centers were inadequate and most of the teachers were untrained and therefore had no prior knowledge of Early Childhood Development.

- The traditional teaching method was prevalent and creative and quality education was not a priority.
- Due to their poor economy almost all the Centers had only insignificant numbers of materials and spaces for the physical development of the children.

Recommendations:

- A specific authority should monitor and evaluate the management, financial position and quality of services of commercial Childcare Centers.
- A separate curriculum based on ECD principles should be prepared for the Childcare Centers. Likewise, separate criteria should be introduced for owners, teachers and assistants.
- Proper coordination between Childcare Centers and other stakeholders is necessary.
- Commercial Childcare Centers should be competitive. They should be able to cope with the standards of ECD and pre-primary sections of formal schools in the context of services, content and pedagogy.
- Every Childcare Center management committee should include owners, teachers, parents and other members of the society.

2. A Study on Emotional Development of Early Childhood Children in Surkhet District

- Yam Bahadur Karki, M.Phil Student

The main focus of this study was to understand and recognize the normal emotional development of children at early childhood age. The major findings of this study are:

- Cultural variation affects the emotional behavior of the children.
- The child of a step-family is aggressive to the parents, especially to the step-father.
- Children having brothers and sisters are more frank and able to express their feelings and ideas than those who do not have such relatives.
- Some ECD Centers and families were found creating conditions of fear for the child (e.g. If you do wrong, God becomes angry).
- The Children of Janajatis, especially Magars were shy both at home and the school.
- Introvert behavior was demonstrated mostly by children with no siblings, single children belonging to nuclear families or girl children of Thapa Magars.
- Most of the children showed isomorphic personality.
- One child of 5 years had school phobia and some children of 4 years

demonstrated symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) behavior. The latter showed no defiant disorder (ODD) or conduct disorder (CD).

Recommendations:

- Fear hinders an unhealthy personality development. Therefore, children should not be nurtured in a situation of fear.
- Joy and happiness are positive emotional behavior whereas anger, fear and jealousy and negative emotions. Teachers and parents should work with joy and pleasure while teaching children.
- Good health is at pre-requisite for physical and mental growth. Bad health turns the child aggressive.. This creates psychological problems.
- ECD Centers and families should create an environment favorable for the all round development and personality development of the early childhood children.

3. ECD in Nepal : A Study on the Learning Activities Performed by the ECD Centers and Families

- Kamal Gautam, M.Phil Student

This study intended to survey the learning activities accruing at the ECD Centers in the families. The study was conducted in the Surkhet and Kavre districts. The major findings and the implications of this study are as follows:

Findings:

- Parents expect that the ECD Centres develop in their children good manners, habits of cleanliness, takecare of health and personal belongings, and the ability to read and write.
- Girls' parents were found more cooperative and participative than boys' parents for the development of the Centres.
- Children found ECD Centres a joyful. They could learned, played and danced with their friends.
- ECD activities were not carried out as required by the curriculum and the ECD program.
- The condition of ECD Centres is not generally good. Most of the Centers lacked playground, compound wall, drinking water and toilet facility.

Recommendations

- The conditions of ECD Centres should be improved through efforts of the government, parents and community people.
- Trainings should be given to facilitators.
- Since stakeholders should cooperate with the ECD program, regular meetings and discussions should be organized to make

the ECD Centers more functional and resourceful.

- Friendly and homely environments need to be created at the ECD centers.
- Regular meetings and discussions must be held to increase the participation of the community people including parents.

4. Perceptions and Expectations of Parents from the ECD Program in Kavre District

- Tirtha Raj Sapkota, M.Ed Student

This study intends to explore the perceptions and expectations of parents of the children enrolled in the ECD program in Kavre district.

Major findings of the study :

- Opportunity to play and learn together in the ECD Centers helped to socialize the children. In addition, their food habit and personal healthcare improved.
- Behavioral change was seen in the children. Language and communication skills had developed. This helped to prepare children for schooling.
- No reading-writing practices were found in ECD centers. So the parents tended to shift their children to private boarding schools.
- Facilitator trainings were ineffective; Facilitators had no idea of child psychology.
- Parents expected the District Education Office (DEO) to organize interactions, meetings and monitoring from time to time
- Most of the parents' perceived that ECD Centers were the places where they could leave their children for getting free time to engage in income generation.

Recommendations:

- Trainings should be given to facilitators so that they could run their Centers in an effective way.
- Government investments should be increased so that the Centers could design programs to educate the local people in the importance of early childhood development.
- Publicity of ECD through mass media is necessary.
- Management committees should frequently interact with head teachers, facilitators and other stakeholders and parents for quality and effect in the performance of the ECD Centers.

5. Early Childhood Mathematics Teaching Learning Strategies in Montessori School: A Multi Case Study in Nepal

-Ram Chandra Subedi, M.Ed. Student

This study tried to explore the Montessori strategies of and approaches to better mathematics for early childhood children in Nepal. The study was based on four schools of different categories from Kathmandu, Pokhara and Kaski.

Major findings of the study are:

- In Montessori schools, students were given 'indirect teaching' which helps to learn unconsciously, whereas in Montessori-based schools and government schools having early childhood education the teaching is 'direct'.
- A Montessori mathematics classroom looks like a math lab; the children manipulate hundreds of Montessori materials on their own choice and at their own pace. From these activities children develop their innate capacity, independence, learning intention, physical capacity and emotions.
- In Montessori schools, children learned mathematics only through the manipulation of the concrete materials and internalized basic concepts of mathematics, whereas in Montessori-based schools children were found learning mathematics without manipulating concrete materials. In government schools children were found learning mathematics only in the traditional way.
- In Montessori schools, children are perfect users of the lab, the teachers play the role of lab facilitators and the curriculum is an integrated part of the lab. However, the study revealed that in Montessori-based schools and government schools did not follow the lab approach.
- In Montessori schools, children learn mathematics first on the basis of the hierarchies explained to them orally, then from sight recognition and then from exchanging objects with qualities. Finally they learn the numbers through symbols. On the other hand, Montessori-based schools and government schools followed different processes of learning numbers. Mathematical competency is intended to help the overall development of the children. But in Montessori-based schools children are less competent in mathematics activities and the students of government schools have a poor competency level.

Recommendations:

- A new pedagogy for mathematics teaching-learning must be introduced in the ECD Centers and pre-primary schools.
- Comparison should be made of traditional methods and new approaches in early childhood mathematics teaching-learning.
- Government schools and private schools should be required to use the Montessori approach to mathematics teaching.
- Trainings should be given to mathematics teachers for effect in the approaches.

ECD Activities in Tanahu Distirct



ECD Centers are run by the Government on INGOs/NGOs partnership and in collaboration with private boarding schools. 273 ECD Centers have so far been established in Tanahu (2064 B.S figure). As per the DEO records, 207 ECD Centers are operating on government quota, 17 with INGO/ NGO partnership and 49 in collaboration with private boarding schools all as pre-primary classes. Some ECD Centers have been run on UNICEF partnership. Moreover, Seto Gurans Child Development Service, Tanahu has launched the project "Prarambhik Bal Bikash ka lagi Gunastariya Abasar Karyakram" on partnership with the District Education Office and Save the children/ Norway. Seto Gurans

is conducting awareness programs for the stakeholders and mobilizing them in the program for enhancement of the quality of ECD Centers. The major goal of the project is to create the child-centered learning environment and network parents, families, community members, management committees, facilitators, schools, local bodies and child clubs to get their support for the implementation of the program. A total of 110 ECD Centers of 34 VDCs have benefited from the program.

The annual report of the project entitled "Prarambhik Bal Bikash Ka lagi Gunastariya Abasar" Tanahu Distirct, (January-December 2006) prepared by Seto Gurans CDS, Tanahu and submitted to Save the children, Norway, presents the major achievements of the program, which are as follows:

1. Change in children and their parents behaviors (leadership, health and sanitation, social behavior).
2. Change in policy and plan (extra resources for facilitators' training and extra remuneration, quota distribution, coordination of local bodies, formation of

friendship groups for day snack management, and ECD Centers correspondence).

3. Good practices in ECD Centers: increase in the priority of children, turnwise snacks preparation by parents, awareness programs run by child-groups for peace

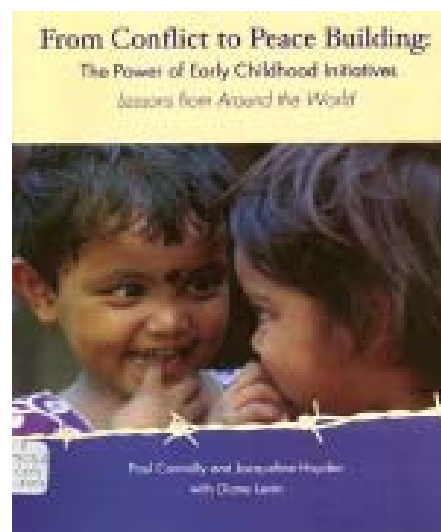


for the children, opportunities for the children of disadvantaged groups.

4. Increase in the involvement of children in various activities.

Book Review

From Conflict to Peace Building: the Powers of Early Childhood Initiatives--Lessons from around the World is a book written by Paul Connolly and Jacqueline Hayden in association with Diane Levin. The book was published by World Forum Foundation in the US. This book has eleven chapters, which picturize the effects of conflict upon young children around the world. It includes the impact of war on young children in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Colombia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, and Palestine. It has generally, been seen that children have to pay heavy in war and during armed conflict. A UN report (2006), estimates that around two million children were killed in wars and six million were mutilated. In addition, one million were orphaned, twelve million were displaced and left homeless and ten million were permanently marked as "irreparable psychological and spiritual scars". Therefore, the purpose of this book was to underline the role of early childhood development as a force for reconciliation and peace building in the regions affected by armed conflict.



Chapter Six of the book includes "Nepal: Kishor Shrestha's Story," which reflects the effects of conflict on Nepalese children and families. The writer has mentioned that in the eleven years of violence known as "People's War"

Nepal suffered a high loss of lives, including those of children. It has been estimated that 14,000 people were killed, 460 children lost their lives and 535 got injured some of them seriously. Moreover, 8,000 children were orphaned and 40,000 children were displaced. The writer has focused on four different ways in which conflict affected children's lives:

- Break-up and complete disintegration of families because the families had to flee their homes to save their lives.
- Families are internally displaced and not willing to return to their home-places
- Ongoing sense of fear in the mindset of children and families.
- Restrictions on children's access to education.

The writer has also presented some of the positive initiatives taken in Nepal, which include "Children as Zone of Peace," research on displaced children and families, and use of the media in advocating and supporting the rights of children and families.



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