



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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Early Childhood Development Policy Review: Second Consultative Workshop

A one-day consultative workshop on "Early Childhood Policy Review" was organized by CERID in Kathmandu on November 22, 2007 in collaboration with UNESCO/Nepal. The workshop was participated in by Honorable Minister of Education and Sports, Mr. Pradip Nepal, Secretary of MOES, Director General of the Department of Education, high level officials from the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. The workshop was also participated in by representatives from non-governmental and international non-governmental organizations and private schools and by educationists. The total number of participants was 37. The main objectives of the workshop were :

- To share the major preliminary findings of the review



- To collect consolidated views of the relevant stakeholders.

UNICEF Nepal, Save the Children



In this workshop there were two presentations on the policy review. The first presentation was made by Dr. Kishor Shrestha, coordinator of the review project. Dr. Shrestha highlighted the major activities undertaken under the review task. He said that the review had been conducted in the persuasion of the guidelines provided by UNESCO and UNICEF. An advisory committee comprising representatives from MOES, DOE, MOH, MOLD, MOCWSW, UNESCO,



Alliance, PLAN Nepal and CERID was formed to provide suggestions to the policy review team. The review focused on these three aspects: mainstreaming of the ECD programs, inter-sectoral coordination of organizations involved in ECD and sustainability of the ECD programs. The second presentation was made by Dr. Prem Aryal. Dr. Aryal highlighted the major findings of the review. His findings concentrated on the three aspects of the review i.e., mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability. The findings related to the requirements for mainstreaming and the issues related to the mainstreaming were presented in the workshop. Under the area, inter-sectoral coordination, Dr. Aryal pointed out the lack of coordination for the development of ECD activities and programs. He also made policy suggestions for improvement in this sector. The requirements for the sustainability of the ECD programs were also highlighted in his presentation.

The participants gave the following suggestions and recommendations based on the two presentations:

- The government representatives gave emphasis to the sustainability of the ECD program.
- Support should be provided, according to the need, for conducting the programs.
- The roles of local bodies should be highlighted in the very process of ECD policy development.
- The program implementation process should be started right from local bodies so that people have a feel of responsibility toward the program, which ultimately will help build the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

National Conference on Peace Education

Peace Education Conference 2007 was held on 21 and 22 September 2007 at Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur. The Conference was organised by Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikash Kendra of Bouddha, Kathmandu, in view of the need to prepare a peaceful and creative environment for children. A steering committee comprising fourteen or more leading organizations of Nepal, including the Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), working on education and welfare of

children formed a humble network in order to host the historic Peace Education Conference in Nepal. The committee was headed by Stella Tamang, founder president of Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikash Kendra.

The Conference was basically meant for children and school teachers. So extra curricular activities such as games, dramas, art competitions and video projections were presented on themes ranging from child labour and child rights abuse to teaching of conflict resolution skills, peace building and peace management. These activities brought in understanding among children through entertainment and made them aware of the social evils affecting their growth and well-being. Also various presentations were made by professionals working on peace.

The theme of the Conference was "consolidating peace education in Nepal." The Conference had targeted to bring Children, Teachers, School Managers, Peace Activists, Human Rights, Activists, Government Dignitaries, Peace Educationists, Political & Social Leaders, Parents and Guardians, and the Activists working for the welfare and development of children under one roof for two days. The activities were all themed on the development and welfare of children and the creation of awareness regarding peace education and child rights. Moreover, the Conference was to tell the importance of peace education to different professionals. In this regard, different professionals working on peace were invited. Dr. Robert Kittel, Chief Consultant Director for South Asia for Universal Peace Federation (UPF); Dr. Kishor Shrestha of Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) and Steering Committee Member of the Conference; Mr. B. N. Sharma, Vice President of Private and Boarding Schools Organisation, Nepal (PABSON) and Steering Committee Member of the Conference; Mr. Dambar Bir Thapa, Associate Professor and President of Peace Education Academy in Nepal; Dr. Nareshman Bajracharya; and Ms. Pamela Baxter, a UNESCO consultant to talk on the importance of peace education. The talks themed primarily on the concept of peace, importance of peace education in schools, and the reasons for making schools "zones of peace".

Findings and Recommendations of Action Research Mini-Grants

1. Increasing Children's Enrolment in Early Childcare Centers

-Kesh Kumari Bhujel, Community Development Foundation, Pokhara

The main purpose of this study was to identify the reasons for the low rate of enrolment in Early Childcare Centres. So the research was done in three early childcare centres.

Major Findings

- Parents and even teachers are unaware of the importance of Early Childcare Centres.
- Parents and management committee members do not interact for the development of Early Childcare Centres.
- There are no teaching materials and playing things in Early Childcare Centres.
- Parents transfer their children to schools even before they are five years of age.

Recommendations

- An orientation class should be started for the community. The class should focus on the importance of Early Childhood Development and Early Childcare Centre.
 - Refresher trainings must be given to the facilitators from time to time.
 - An orientation class should be given to the management committee members to motivate them to enroll more children in the Centres.
 - Teaching materials and playing things should be provided to Early Childcare Centres as required.
 - Increase in the size of the child development fund should be reported to the management committee and parents.
- ### 2. Promoting the Roles of Parents for Quality Improvement of the Early Childcare Centres in Dang.

-Man Bahadur Kumal, NGOCC, Dang.

The main focus of this study was to explore strategies for better participation of parents in Early Childcare Centres in Dang. It is a well accepted fact that parents' involvement is essential for the holistic development of the children. Thus, this research was done to find ways to motivate parents to participate in Early Childcare Centres. For this

purpose, three childcare centres of Dang were taken for in the study.

Major Findings

- Parents are sending their children to Early Childhood Development Centres without knowing about the importance of ECD centres. As a result, the rate of absenteeism is high.
- Parents send their children to nursery classes of government schools because education is free there .
- Parents are not interested in ECD Centres.
- Some ECD teachers are not paying full attention to the ECD class because they are taking primary classes as well.
- There is no mutual trust between the community members regarding the development of ECD Centres. So the meetings of the management committee is not regular.

Recommendations

- The management committee should be effective .
- Awareness about the holistic development of the child should be built.
- Child-friendly environments must be created in the ECD Centres so that children can enjoy and use their time profitably.
- ECD centres should hire substitute teachers when necessary. Closing the Centres when the teachers are absent will only create a negative attitude in the community and parents.



3. Increasing Parents' Involvement in Early Childhood Development Centres

-Ishowari Bhattarai, Seto Gurans, CDS, Tanahun.

The main purpose of this research was to examine the reasons for the discouraging phenomen in the Early Childcare Centres. This research tried

to identify reasons for the low profile of children's enrolment and suggests ways to increase enrolment. The research was done in three Childcare Centres.

Major Findings

- Parents' participation in the Early Childcare Development Centres is nominal. People do not know much about ECD.
- People do not see the importance of ECD Centres in their personal lives.
- People assume that they unnecessarily have to invest in ECD Centres.
- There is no mutual trust between the community peolpe about regulating ECD Centres.
- Prejudice in the community prevents development of ECD Centres.



Recommendations

- Awareness programs should be given time and again to the parents and the local community to drive home to them the importance of ECD Centres.
- The objectives, functions of the management committee and role of parents should be explained to the local community prior to the implementation of the program.
- ECD Centres should focus on child-friendly environments for the holistic development of children.
- ECD Centres should be handed to the community so that every parent could take responsibility for the betterment of ECD Centres.

Organization of Dialogue Session

A Dialogue session was organized on 7th January 2008 at the CERID Meeting Hall. The topic was "Mid-Decade Assessment of Early Childhood Development in Nepal". The speaker

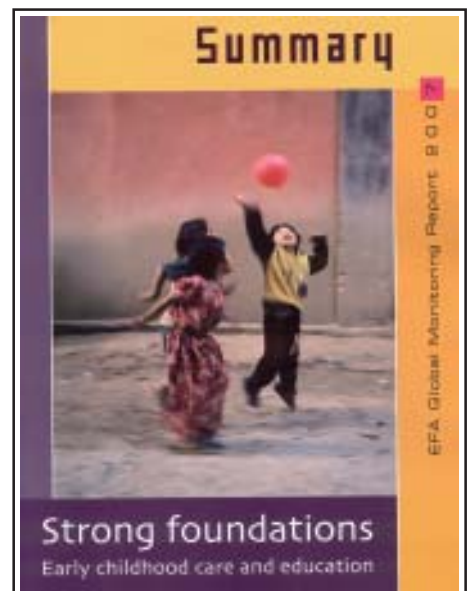


was Ms. Devina Pradhananga, Deputy Director,DOE/MOES. The session was based on the MDA National Report prepared by the ECD Thematic Group. It focused on the National Action Plan/ Education Reform Program, Implementation of the EFA Goal, Progress in achieving EFA goal, Implementation Gap and Disparities or Variations, Success and Challenges (remaining) in Implementation of the EFA Goal and Recommendations for Adjustments. A total of 35 persons represeting facilitators, researchers, ECD workers, university teachers, representatives from NGO/INGOs and policy makers took part in the session.

The major objectives of the program were to share ideas and experiences and to disseminate the major findings of the assessment to various organizations and individuals working in the field of Early Childhood Development.

Book Review

Strong foundations--Early Childhood Care and education is a report published by UNESCO. The report includes the EFA Global Monitoring Report of the year 2007, which has six parts followed by a conclusion. In addition, the report monitors progress towards the other five



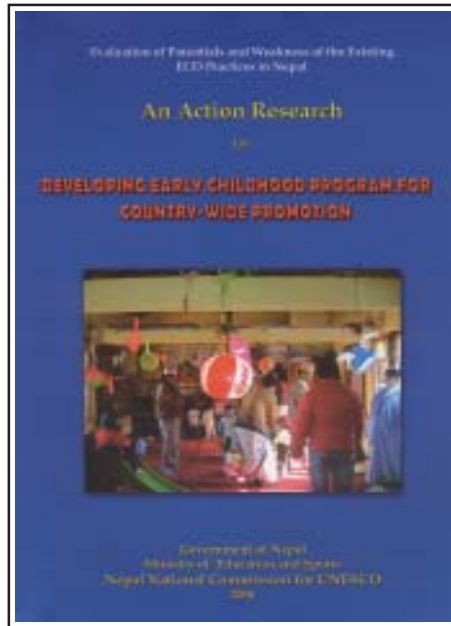
EFA goals, with more analysis than in the past on out-of-school children and the strategies to reach them and others as risk groups. It records the activities of governments in the implementation of policies to achieve EFA and the extent to which donors support these efforts.

Education for All (EFA) is a goal adopted by 164 countries in Dakar in 2000. This report focuses on the first Education for All goal, which calls upon countries to expand and improve early childhood care and education using a holistic package that includes education, care, protection and nutrition for the child's well-being and development. The call for comprehensive programs refers to a holistic approach for children from birth to age 8. The holistic approach programs have a leading role to play in any strategy seeking to attain basic education for all and to reduce poverty, which are also the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, this report concludes with a warrant for urgent policy attention in nine areas:

- i. Returning to the comprehensive approach Dakar
- ii. Acting with urgency
- iii. Emphasizing equity and inclusion
- iv. Increasing public spending
- v. Increasing aid and allocating it (most needed)
- vi. Moving ECCE up onto domestic and international agendas.
- vii. Increasing public financing for ECCE.
- viii. Upgrading the ECCE workforce, especially as regards qualifications, training and working conditions.
- ix. Improving the monitoring of ECCE.

An Action Research for Developing Early Childhood Program for Countrywide Promotion is a book published by the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO. This book



mainly highlights the potentials and weaknesses of the existing ECD practices in Nepal.

Nepal is committed to the EFA campaign. It had signed the declarations in Jomtein in 1990 and in Dakar in 2000. So the ECD goal has set the target to provide institutional services to 80% of the children of 3 to 5 years in the country. The main objectives of this study are:

- i. To evaluate the potentials and weaknesses of the existing ECD practices in Nepal
- ii. To develop suitable models that could be easily replicated
- iii. To pilot the models in the existing ECD Centres

For the fulfilment of the objectives of the research project, secondary data related to the ECD programs in Nepal were reviewed. The project conducted field survey, participatory action research, visioning workshop, training for ECD facilitators, development of monitoring and feedback, and preparation of resource packages.

In Nepal it is rather difficult to attain the EFA goals regarding Early Childhood

Development—especially the goal designed for the children of disadvantaged groups—both in terms of development of the number of ECD Centres and the quality of services. Currently, two types of ECD programs are in operation: Community-Based and School-Based. From the study it has been found that most centres do not have ECD-specific provisions for children. Classrooms are similar in appearance to the classrooms of primary or secondary levels. ECD centres are neither standardized nor maintained properly. Further, there is a huge gap between what is envisaged in the government plan and the program and implementations. Most of the government-supported ECD Centres, whether school-based or community-based suffer for lack of:

- i) functional participation of the community in the development and operation of the ECD Centres
- ii) holistic approach to child development that ensures good health, nutrition and education
- iii) physical, social, emotional and cognitive development efforts.

The research study recommends the following:

- a. Parental education pertinent to ECD
- b. Community awareness campaigns
- c. Clarity of vision in policy makers and implementers regarding the difference between pre-primary school and ECD program activities.
- d. Development of a curriculum for meeting the actual needs of ECD and with emphasis on the holistic development of the child.
- e. Theoretical as well as practical training for the facilitators.

In order to give appropriate trainings to the facilitators, ECD practitioners and teachers a resource package, *Countrywide Promotion of Early Childhood Development Program* has also been published by UNESCO. This package will be highly helpful for conducting ECD Centres.



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