



ECDDAN

Early Childhood Development Action Network

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Executive Leadership Council Meeting: October 28, 2021
Minutes



Attendance

Attendees: Amanda Devercelli (World Bank), Amina Abubakar (BRAC), Ana Nieto (UNICEF), Anshu Banerjee (WHO), Bernadette Daelmans (WHO), Borhene Chakroun (UNESCO), Erinna Dia (UNICEF), Gerda Verburg (SUN), Ghassan Issa (ANECD), Iffath Sharif (World Bank), Joan Lombardi (International Expert, Child, and Family Policy), Laura Peterson (Save the Children), Liana Ghent (ISSA), Lisa Bohmer (Hilton Foundation), Lynette Okengo (AfECN), Mark Tomlinson (Stellenbosch University), Nikolaj Gilbert (PATH), Peter Laugharn (Hilton Foundation), Rokhaya Diawara (UNESCO), Romilla Karnati (Save the Children), Sanjay Wijesekera (UNICEF), Sarah Marjane (PATH), HRH Sarah Zeid (Princess of Jordan), Sheldon Shaeffer (ARNEC), Sherrie Westin (Sesame), Stephen Lye (University of Toronto), Sneha Sheth (Dost Education)

ECDAN Secretariat: Elizabeth Lule, Shekufeh Zonji, Brett Weisel, Debjcet Sen, Jacqueline Deelstra, Nina Garcia Wright

Regrets: Muhammad Musa (CARE)

Proceedings

Welcome Remarks [Interim Co-chairs]

The interim co-chairs welcomed everybody and thanked them for their time. Lynette Okengo, the interim co-chair, reflected on the last six months, since the last ELC meeting, highlighting how the pandemic and other humanitarian crises continue to profoundly affect young children and families around the world. ECDAN continues to serve as a global platform to connect the ECD community, sharing knowledge across the globe and strengthening collaboration among partners and regional networks. ECDAN is collaborating with the regional networks in different ways, including issuing a joint call to action in response to the Beirut Crisis and convening donors to support ANECD, issuing a joint call to action with Moving Minds in response to the crises in Haiti, Afghanistan, and Lebanon, and working with ARNEC on issuing a global call to action on the impact of climate change on young children. ECDAN is also working with AfECN and ISSA around the ECD systems accelerator initiative, and plans are also in place to collaborate with all the networks on a global childcare campaign.

Review of the agenda and approval of last meeting's minutes [Interim Co-chairs]

The objectives and agenda for this meeting were shared and the agenda was adopted. The minutes from the last ELC meeting were approved.

ECDAN Progress Report [ECDAN Secretariat]

ECDAN's Executive Director (ED) thanked the ELC, the TAG co-chairs, and the Interim Steering and Nominations Committee members for their hard work on refining and improving ECDAN's governance structures. She also expressed her appreciation of the secretariat staff and partners for their work and contributions during these challenging times. She welcomed the newly elected TAG Co-Chairs and three new ECDAN Staff. She noted that the big success of the last six months has been the bridges built with diverse constituencies, regional networks, and the increase in partners' collaborative initiatives. An overview of ECDAN's progress on their strategic objectives was presented. Key achievements include:

- Establishing the Global Policy and Advisory Group.
- Finalizing the Cost of Inaction pilots in Bulgaria and Madagascar in collaboration with UNICEF and in Brazil in collaboration with the University of Sao Paulo.
- Updating the knowledge-sharing platform with curated resources by partners.
- Reviewing the Knowledge Fellows program.
- Increase in partners' collaborative initiatives including the launch of the Global Initiative to Support Parents.
- Fundraised US\$1.8 million and expanded the donor base.

Financial Report

PATH's Project Administrative Director reported on ECDAN's budget for the period of July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022. She highlighted that ECDAN's funding increased by 30% from 2020 to 2021, ECDAN has a healthy distribution of diverse funders and has several sub-awards to Regional Networks and academic institutions. A revised budget for 2021/2022 was presented to reflect the increase in funding and was approved.

Feedback and questions on ECDAN Secretariat reports [Interim Co-Chairs]

ELC members asked whether ECDAN has targets on funding and the number of funders. ECDAN's ED shared that the goal was to raise at least US\$5 million multi-year funding from a diverse group of donors over four years. Much more needs to be done to get funding from bilaterals and the private sector and further expand the donor base. The ED requested ELC members to assist with fundraising and connecting with new donors to meet the increasing demands for ECDAN services.

ECDAN was congratulated for their work and growth.

Report from the Technical Advisory Group [TAG Co-Chairs]

The Interim TAG co-chairs introduced and welcomed the newly elected TAG Co-Chairs Dr. Mark Tomlinson and Dr. Aminah Abubakar and shared a list of new members reflecting the diversity of geography and expertise. The TAG Co-Chairs serve on the ELC.

Report from the Interim Steering Committee (SC) & Nominations Committee (NC) [Interim Co-Chairs]

The interim co-chair thanked the members of the Interim Steering and Nominations Committees for their hard work. ELC Members were reminded that at the last ELC meeting, the Interim SC and NC were charged with the task of updating the Terms of References (TORs) for the Nominations and Steering Committees and for the co-chairs, as well as reviewing ECDAN's strategy.

Interim Steering Committee (SC)

ELC members were asked to comment on the TOR sent prior to the meeting. It was noted that the TOR and ECDAN's strategy would benefit from clear objectives and targets for success, including getting ECD on the political agenda. A scorecard of indicators aligned to the SDGs was suggested to address these comments. It was agreed that turning the ISC into a formal SC will allow the ELC to have more of a leadership role rather than just an oversight role.

Decision: The ISC TOR was endorsed by the ELC.

Nominations Committee

No comments were made about the Nominations Committee.

Decision: The NC TOR was also approved.

Co-chairs discussion

Decision: The TOR for the CO-Chairs was approved. The interim co-chairs shared that they would remain in place until new co-chairs are elected. Three options on the selection process were presented: call for self-nominations from within the ELC, ask the new NC to come up with co-chairs recommendations, or set up a small group of ELC volunteers to select co-chairs.

Decision: It was agreed that the NC should be responsible and make recommendations and present the two selected co-chairs for ELC approval.

It was suggested to include on page 3 of the co-chairs TOR under results orientation- the first sentence recommended to read as follows: 'A determination to move the network forward and an

ability to drive harmonization across ECDAN partners towards collaboration on agreed objectives and targets towards measurable change at (sub) national level’.

The interim co-chair asked for volunteers to join the SC and NC.

Approve the Conflict of Interest Statement

The Conflict of interest policy was presented and it was approved. ELC members will each need to sign the approved Conflict of Interest policy.

Expansion of ELC

The interim NC recommended four nominees to the ELC. The four nominees have all expressed interest in being part of the ELC and confirmed availability. One additional nominee has been contacted but has not yet replied. The ELC will vote on the nominees via an electronic ballot which will be sent out after the ELC meeting.

Strategy: ARNEC’s presentation on the Climate Change Campaign [Evelyn Santiago]

The ED of ARNEC, Evelyn Santiago, presented their advocacy work to protect young children’s rights to a clean, safe, and secure environment. The urgency to make ECD integral to climate action in the lead-up to the next five-year cycle of the Paris Climate Agreement was emphasized given that it affects all aspects of the Nurturing Care Framework.

ARNEC shared they plan to work on several items including:

- Developing their advocacy strategy and will share a regional call to action just before COP26 starts.
- A desk review on the status of data and knowledge on the impact on the environment and climate change on young children, the linkages between ECD and climate change. Results will be used to create a theory of change and roadmap of actions which will be co-created with parents and stakeholders.
- Developing policy and technical briefs.
- Increasing awareness by creating advocacy toolkits and convening climate change events.
- Forming a community of practice on climate change.

ARNEC shared they have released a regional call to action which is for governments and other regional stakeholders to make ECD integral to the global climate change response. In addition, ARNEC will work with ECDAN to release a global call to action. It lays the foundation to get ECD onto the agenda for COP27 and potentially the G20 in 2022.

ARNEC requested ECDAN to help with global alliances and other partners such as the ECDAN ELC to become technical leads and assist with advocacy action. Partners were invited to comment on the presentation.

Borhene Chakroun from UNESCO suggested connecting with colleagues working on education for sustainable development and raised that everything in ARNEC's strategy is toward protecting children, but it should also look at early learning and awareness about the challenges and how children can also contribute and be actors to protect the planet.

Gerda Verburg from SUN shared she is going to COP26 and would be very willing and interested to make the case for ECD there and requested getting materials from ECDAN and ARNEC that she can use at COP26 to help get ECD and young children on the agenda.

Erinna Dia and Sanjay Wijesekera from UNICEF shared they are happy to expand this effort to other regions and work with the regional networks. They will be participating in COP-26 with a smaller delegation supporting children's issues across the board including ECD and making sure children grow up in a healthy and safe environment.

Bernadette Daelmans from WHO commented that they would like to continue to work with ARNEC and expand this collaboration to other regions.

Sherrie Westin from Sesame Workshop shared that Sesame is also doing work around climate change and emphasized that making children stewards of the environment is essential.

Ghassan Issa from ANECD requested all the regions to endorse this message about the impacts of climate change and that it is very important to consider what climate change means in different geographies in the context of regional priorities.

Strategy: Reflect on ECDAN's Strategic Objectives in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian crises, environmental degradation, food insecurity, and climate change impacts on young children [Interim Co-Chairs & Partners]

Provide guidance if a strategy refresh is required and, if needed, how to implement it.

The interim co-chair brought up the ongoing discussion of ECDAN's strategic objectives including a bigger focus on emergencies and conflicts worldwide amid a global pandemic. ELC members were invited to comment on the strategic plan.

It was suggested that ECDAN should have a mechanism in place to respond to these emergencies to have a more systematic approach. However, other partners recommended that partners working on the ground should continue to implement on the ground, with ECDAN doing advocacy work and facilitating connections, learning, and sharing.

Finally, it was agreed that the Steering Committee should work with the Secretariat on updating the strategy. The challenges such as on pages 9, 13,17 need review and clarity. ECDAN should revisit partners' collaborative initiatives and how they support concrete collaborative actions on the ground and support countries. It was generally agreed that many elements of ECDAN's strategies are still relevant, and instead of overhauling the strategy that was approved in April 2020, it will be more important to focus on refreshing elements like the outputs, which can be reviewed to fit the current context and address current challenges.

Partner Updates [Interim Co-Chairs]

UNESCO presentation on Global Partnership Strategy [Borhene Chakroun]

An update was given on UNESCO's Global Partnership Strategy, which was presented at the previous ELC meeting. UNESCO has had meetings with stakeholders and member states and several member states expressed support. They are in the final steps of finalizing plans to launch on December 6. UNESCO is also working on policy mobilization with Uzbekistan, which will launch a global summit on Early childhood education and care in 2022. UNESCO is working with the Djokovic Foundation to establish a national prize related to ECEE. UNESCO requested support from ECDAN to champion the global partnership strategy and continue to capture synergies across partners.

Other partners share opportunities of how they contribute to collective action and ECDAN's strategy

ECDAN's interim co-chair (Joan Lombardi) then invited other partners to share their updates.

Iffath Sharif from The World Bank emphasized the importance of investing in early learning as a foundation of human capital. They shared the following:

- The IDA 20 negotiation provides an opportunity, and for the first time, a pillar on human capital and a specific commitment to focus on ECD and childcare is included in the latest paper.
- The research done by the human capital team shows that almost 5 million children have lost a caregiver to a COVID-related death.
- Amanda Devercelli will be leading a childcare program globally.
- The second cohort of the ELP fellows graduated in July and look forward to cohosting some webinars with ECDAN to disseminate their work.

Bernadette Daelmans from World Health Organization reported on:

- Prioritizing supporting parents across several areas and hope that the Global Initiative to Support Parents can lead to more collaborative action to support countries.
- The increased attention on early childhood from the lens of health in the African regions, an area of work in which WHO and AfECN are collaborating.
- The life course approach that they are taking on nurturing care in partnership with UNICEF.

Lynette Okengo from the Africa Early Childhood Network reported that they will focus on childcare will continue to collaborate with WHO to embed nurturing care into some of the continental campaigns. Sub regionally, they are working with WHO and UNICEF with the east, central, and southern African health communities, which will help raise visibility among ministers of health in these subregions.

Peter Laugharn from The Hilton Foundation shared that they are doubling their commitment to ECD and are expanding to the US and refugee populations in Africa and Latin America, increasing their budget by 30% to about US\$ 55 million globally. They have made their first large grants for multilaterals like the WHO and World Bank and hope to persuade bilaterals to invest in ECD.

Sanjay Wijesekera from UNICEF reported that they have increased their efforts on children within various countries. Next year, they will also roll out their caring for the caregiver package and are finalizing their parenting strategy which will be launched soon.

Liana Ghent from The International Step by Step Association reported on:

- Their Europe-wide ECD financing campaign, which tackles several issues.
- Country studies focusing on inequities, which will be launched on November 10.
- They asked ECDAN partners to join and support their next phase workforce initiative
- They are working with partners on creating a knowledge hub and a learning community on home visiting.

ECDAN's ED thanked Joan Lombardi and Lynette Okengo (Interim Co-Chairs for their leadership and all the partners for sharing and updates. She highlighted the importance of collective action and more coordination, especially at the country level.

Closing Remarks and AOB [Interim Co-Chairs]

Lynette Okengo (Interim Co-Chair) closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their impactful work on supporting young children around the world and for a productive meeting. She emphasized the

importance and power of partner collaboration and coordination for greater impact. She reminded partners that we are stronger together.

