



ECDAN Executive Leadership Council Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2024
Virtual Meeting
9:00-10:30 AM EST

In Attendance:

- **Executive Leadership Council Members:** Borhene Chakroun (ELC Co-Chair/UNESCO), Lynette Okengo (ELC Co-Chair, AfECN), Bernadette Daelmans (WHO), Eduardo Quieroz (Bracell Foundation), Boniface Kakhobwe & Erinna Dia (UNICEF), Kammerle Schneider (PATH), Marcy Vigoda (SUN), (UNICEF), Dr. Ghassan ISSA (ANECD), Rokhaya Diawara (UNESCO), Lisa Bohmer (Hilton Foundation), Sarthak Goyal (Pratham), George K. Werner, Emily Garin (Sesame Workshop), Gabriel Denombynes (World Bank Group), Sheldon Shaeffer (ARNEC), Liana Ghent (ISSA), George Laryea-Adjei (UNICEF), Mark Tomlinson (Stellenbosch University)
- **ECDAN Secretariat:** Elizabeth Lule (Executive Director), Sarah Marjane (Director of Finance and Operations), Emily Gilkinson, Shekufeh Zonji, Hannah Frohm, Brett Weisel, Amanda Germanio

Apologies: Sneha Sheth (Dost Education), Muhammad Musa (BRAC), Youssef Hajjar (The Arab Resource Collective), H.R.H. Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan, Joan Lombardi

Welcome and Agenda

ECDAN's Executive Leadership Council (ELC) Co-Chair, Lynette Okengo, welcomed ELC members and Secretariat staff to the 2024 virtual ELC meeting and proposed the agenda and prior meeting minutes for approval.

The Co-Chair introduced the new ELC member, George Laryea-Adjei, who serves as UNICEF's Director of Programmes. George spoke briefly reinforcing UNICEF's commitment to early childhood and participation in ECDAN.

The ELC unanimously approved the agenda as planned.

2024 Workplan and Budget

The Secretariat had provided ELC members with a folder of documents to review in advance of the meeting. Instead of a narrative update, the ED provided highlights in pictures with captions, to showcase the many in-person convenings that happened in the first quarter. The ED introduced the Global Technical Lead to briefly present the Q1 highlights slides. It included the GISP partner consultation in Geneva, the Playful Parenting community of

practice meeting in Kigali, the childcare systems map development workshop in Dhaka, and AfECN's regional conference in Dar es Salaam. The conference included side events on parenting and systems thinking as well as a stakeholder consultation around childcare and a special event to officially launch ECDAN's new strategy. The Secretariat also held a three-day planning workshop in Washington, DC.

The ED then proceeded to cover highlights of the 2024 workplan, which ELC members were also provided in advance. She commented on some of the most unique or significant plans. This included emphasis on the following:

- ECDAN is collaborating with numerous partners specialized in humanitarian response and local engagement such as Moving Minds Alliance and ANECD. They are guiding the network in response to cross-cutting issues such as the conflict in Gaza, climate change, etc.
- ECDAN plans to host a roundtable with partners to catalyze investment and respond to the deteriorating situation in Haiti in partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- ECDAN is collaborating with TheirWorld to create a global financing working group to inform the ECD Financing Campaign. As part of this, ECDAN, TheirWorld, and Sesame Workshop are co-hosting a session on unlocking financing for ECD alongside the World Bank and IMF meetings on April 18. ELC members are invited to participate, if possible.
- ECDAN is conducting a Systems Thinking Masterclass which starts on April 23 and consists of 14 sessions led by more than 20 global systems thinking and ECD experts.
- NurtureFirst will be transitioned to its new hosting organization, the Global Development Incubator, midway through the year.
- New co-chairs will be selected for the climate change working group and additional stakeholders invited to participate.
- ECDAN partners will coordinate representation and messaging during the Expert Dialogue on the Impact of Climate Change on Children that will take place in June in Berlin. This is an important step leading up to the advocacy push for COP28 in Brazil to be dedicated to children.
- ECDAN's 2024 cohort of 6 Knowledge Fellows will complete projects focused on climate change.

Following the presentation, the Co-Chair opened the floor to questions. The following questions were raised and responses provided.

- What is ECDAN doing related to adapting the early childhood education curriculum content so that children will have the skills they need to face the future including responding to climate change?
 - UNESCO is a leading partner in curriculum development and pre-primary. There are also members of the Climate Change Working Group, such as Save the Children, who are piloting climate-responsive programming. The ED will also be meeting with GPE's new ECD expert to learn how they are incorporating climate into their work.
- How is ECDAN coordinating with MMA, INEE and others to pull in the same direction in response to crisis situations?
 - ECDAN met with MMA's new director at the end of 2023 and coordinates with MMA on calls to action and messaging. MMA has offered to monitor country climate action plans and record how governments are prioritizing ECD in those plans as this was included in ECDAN's new results framework.

After discussion on the planned activities, the Director of Finance and Operations presented the 2023 Financial Report and 2024 ECDAN budget. Points she highlighted included:

- ECDAN spent 86% of its total budget for 2023 and had lower overhead expenditures as PATH's overhead rate for 2023 was 18.75%, down from 20-25%.
- The proposed 2024 budget totals US\$3,178,033. It includes a 7% increase year to year with the primary cost drivers being personnel and related benefits.

The ELC unanimously approved the 2024 work plan and budget.

Strategy Launch Plan

The Co-Chair invited the ED to present the updates on the launch of ECDAN's new strategy.

- The final designed strategy was published in early March. The ECDAN website was redesigned to reflect the new strategy, and the changes went live the same month.
 - The strategy was launched at the AfECN's Conference in March 2024. Many ELC members were there plus over 100 partners. Other regional networks are requested to give ECDAN time to present its strategy during the plenary to reach the maximum number of participants. The Secretariat has reached out to ARNEC and ISSA to collaborate on further strategy dissemination events as a part of their regional convenings in May and October 2024, in addition to other convenings led by partners such as UNICEF, the World Bank, SUN, and UNESCO.
 - The ED asked ELC members to continue using their social media to repost and share ECDAN's strategy updates within their networks and country offices.
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Reflection on ECDAN's Roadmap to Sustainability

The ED reported back to the ELC on the investigation conducted to explore multiple registration options and presented pros and cons of registering in different locations including Kenya, USA and Switzerland, three costed options, and elaborated on the risks involved. The Secretariat also reported that several donors consulted supported ECDAN becoming an independent entity and shared their requirements with the Secretariat.

The ED also presented the elements of sustainability required to be in place for ECDAN to operate effectively and efficiently and register as an independent entity. After discussions of the various options, the ELC directed the Secretariat to go forward with registration in the USA if and when multiple year funding becomes available.

Closing remarks and action items

The Co-Chair thanked the participants for their attendance. Action items that ELC members should look forward to in the coming months include:

- The Secretariat will prepare the 2023 annual report.
- The Q1 narrative and financial report will also be compiled and shared at the end of April.
- The Secretariat and Co-Chairs to propose a meeting time and location after considering budget availability.
- The Secretariat to conduct a donor consultation and pursue multi-year funding in order to register.