

Situational Analysis of Early Childhood Education within the Education Sector in Ghana

DOCUMENT PREPARED AS PART OF THE MOE EDUCATION SECTOR REVIEW (ESR)

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Acronyms

BUPL	The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECDU	Early Childhood Development Unit
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education For All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNCC	Ghana National Commission of Children
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
KG	Kindergarten
MMDE	Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOWAC	Ministry of Woman and Children's Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NNTTC	National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
SHEP	School Health Education Programme
TTC	Teacher Training College

1.0 Introduction

The Education Sector Review (ESR) aims at assisting the Ministry of Education (MOE) with a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the education sector as part of a sector wide approach to programming. The General Education, Gender and the Disadvantaged consultancy area includes a review of the current demand for early childhood education within Ghana. This situational analysis provides an up to date review of the sub sector, its challenges and provides recommendations for the way forward. The analysis is based on a literature review covering international and national studies on early childhood education, fieldwork and interviews with key stakeholders involved in the sub sector. The following methods were used to analyse the demand, challenges and potential options for the early childhood education (ECE) within the context of the education sector.

- Visits to early childhood development centres (private and public institutions), and teacher training centres for early childhood education
- Review of key policy documents including the Early Childhood Care and Development Draft Policy and Programmes,
- Consultations with representatives from the Early Childhood Education Unit, the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, UNICEF and several other agencies.
- Policy consultations on the Draft ECCD policy which is under review.

This report was developed in collaboration with experts involved in ECE including the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU), the National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre and others. The paper attempts to focus on early childhood education (ECE) and learning (ECE) since this is the MOE's key area of responsibility with regard to Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). The concept of Early Childhood Care and Development is a much broader concept that involves all aspects of the child's development from 0-8 years of age. The situational analysis focuses on the issues and processes related to educating children particularly those between 4-6 years of age taking into consideration the need for a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to programming.

The educational needs of young children are by far one of the Government of Ghana's most pressing challenges particularly within a context of high rates of poverty, infant and child mortality and female illiteracy. The MOE will require the full support of all other sector Ministries while it attempts to improve the educational conditions of young children and their families particularly those in deprived rural areas. This paper attempts to highlight the most urgent challenges in enhancing the learning paths of children particularly those between the 4- 6 years of age within the formal education context¹. More work would be needed to assess the capacity and ability of the MOE to work with other ministries in order to ensure that educational processes and inputs are provided to the 0-3 age groups.

¹ Currently the MOE is focussed on providing services for children between 4-6 years of age through pre-schools, Kindergartens and nurseries that are attached to their primary schools.

This report provides the current situation of ECCD services within the Ministry of Education, the challenges and key priority areas for improving ECE services to children particularly in rural deprived areas. It considers the current financial and human capacity needs within the MOE and the identifies options for MOE to consider in systematically moving the ECE sector forward in the coming five to ten years.

1.1 Targets for Early Childhood Education

There are several international standards related to Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), which have been set, of which the Ghana Government is a signatory. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Education for All (EFA) global framework, which distinctly iterate that pre school education is a basic right of all children and should be incorporated into all Governmental programming particularly in regions where there is a high incidence of poverty.

The 'African Declaration and Framework for Education for All' states that all children have the right to pre-school education. The EFA framework for Sub Saharan Africa states that " ECD programmes should be expanded two fold by the year 2006 and they should offer safe, secure and stimulating environments. Countries should work towards providing access to ECCD programmes for all children aged between 3-6 by the year 2015" (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). Most Ministers of Education for Africa have made commitments to fulfilling these goals.

Ghana's own **Accra Declaration of 1993** also states that "community based Early Childhood Care and Development services will be made available to at least one third of Ghanaian Children below six years of age by the year 2002".² The Accra Declaration stressed for the first time the need for a multi-sectoral approach to ECCD moving away from the traditional "pre-school approaches". A national task force was set up to move the recommendations forward containing members from the relevant Government and Non Governmental agencies. The task force began the ECCD policy development by undertaking:

- Preliminary surveys
- Preparing proposed ECCD policy guidelines
- Conducting research
- Organising workshops for reflection on the proposed policies and plans

The process of ECCD policy formulation continues to be ongoing. Despite several revisions, the current draft policy is still being debated and is yet to go to parliament. The final draft was prepared in 2000 but has been delayed due to the change of Government. The long process of policy development has created some level of ambiguity within the ECCD sector and prevented some agencies from fully operating in the sub-sector.

The **Ghana Children's Act** (Act 560) states that every child has the right to education. Unfortunately Ghana has not taken the necessary steps to ensure that

² The National ECCD Seminar was organised by UNICEF, GNAT and the Danish National Federation of Early Childhood and Youth Education (BUPL).

the legal instruments are developed to enforce the Children's Act (Act 560). Early childhood education has only become a national priority recently with the advent of the GPRS. The **GPRS** has clearly stressed the need to support ECCD since it is the most important stage of a child's development. One of the key objectives stated in the GPRS is to "establish special partnership programmes with non state actors". The Government expects the following outputs from this approach:

- That community based organisations are strengthened and able to establish/manage early childhood development centres
- The training of care givers will be decentralised to more effectively cover the entire country
- A system to regulate training, fees and to ensure that timely supervision and monitoring are established
- Existing social investment projects adopt and support community management of Early Childhood Care and Development
- Provision of funds through the MOE and District Assemblies should complement community support and existing social development projects for ECE (GPRS, p. 78).

The GPRS goes as far in stating that one of the key outputs will be to ensure that the policy for ECCD is finalised and adopted by cabinet. The GPRS also states that the roles and responsibilities for pre-schools will be under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and that the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE) will have responsibility for day care centres and crèches for children between 0 to 3 years of age. The GPRS does not go very far in defining what should be included in the overall definition of "pre school education" (NDPC, 2001).

The Ministries Policies and Programmes

The Dzobo report on the "New Structure and Content of Education" (1974) recommended that children should be given kindergarten education between 4-6 years of age in order to prepare for formal primary school education. Despite the Dzobo report emphasis on kindergarten education as desirable "owing to the governments concern on providing every child with at least basic education and the economic situation, pre school education was not considered as an immediate priority." (ECCD Unit, 2000).

The Ghana Education Service set up an Early Childhood Development committee in 1992 to plan for ECCD within the sector. A base line study was carried out to review all the programmes and services available at that time. The study examined different models of ECCD, some of which are listed below:

- Home day cares
- Centre based programming
- Pre schools (formal and non formal)
- Nurseries and crèches
- Community based health and nutritional centres
- Add on centres to religious schools (i.e. koranic schools)
- Comprehensive child development centres

A review of reports in Ghana suggest that the situation of ECCD is "diffused and a case of expressed interest but not much action" (BUPL, 2001). Several declarations and government policy attempts have been made but little collective agreement has been achieved. Boakye (2002) points out that one of the major challenges have been the issue of co-ordination between the MOE and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare since both Ministries are involved in operating some form of ECCD programmes albeit to different age groups. The other issue has been related to the financing of ECCD. The fCUBE policy and programme also did not include Early Childhood Education as a key component to basic education.

The current MOE policy states that, "All children between age 6 to 14 are required to attend Basic Education". The policy also states "emphasis will be placed on removing the barriers to schooling currently experienced by certain population groups including girls, the very poor and children with special needs (MOE, 2001, page 21).

One of the most effective approaches to removing these inequalities, which exist between children due to poverty and socio-cultural practices, is the introduction of ECCD in disadvantaged areas. Currently, access to ECCD centres is mainly concentrated in urban areas and meets the needs of children from high socio-economic backgrounds (CWIQ, 1998). A reorientation of public educational services and GOG resources towards the poor would mean that ECCD service providers and programmes give priority to the most needy and vulnerable groups.

The New Government of Ghana has promised as part of its mandate that all primary schools should have a kindergarten attached to them in order to ensure that children from 5 years of age have access to ECE. Part of the challenge will not be in the provision of infrastructure but ensuring that quality pre school education is provided to children within this age group.³

Rational for ECCD Services

"The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education both in families and in more structured programmes have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive focussing on the entire child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psychosocial development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs..." (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000)

Several studies in Ghana suggest the gripping implications of not supporting ECCD:

- High malnutrition rates (one in two children with severe malnutrition in northern Ghana and one in three in other parts of Ghana, UNICEF, 2002)

³ The provision of one Pre School per public school is a commitment the President has made to the nation.

- Almost 30% of children below five years of age are underweight with 5% severely malnourished, more than 26% stunted and 10% wasted (BUPL, 2001)
- Number of deaths is as high as 154 per 1000 live births in rural communities in Ghana
- High levels of under five child mortality (25% in some of the northern regions of the country)
- The majority of poor children aged 0-6 are at risk of malnutrition disease, insecurity and inappropriate developmental practices (BUPL, 2001)
- The majority of children from poor rural and disadvantaged areas may never attend school or if enrolled will not complete schooling.
- Low levels of learning achievement particularly in poor rural areas of the country (CRT tests 1995 to 2000)

Nutrition and health status of children affects the attendance, concentration and performance of children in school. Hungry and ill children cannot learn effectively and often end up developmentally delayed due to poor nutritional intake during the early years. Results from recent studies by BUPL, (2001) suggest that:

- Iodine deficient mothers will produce babies---3% of whom will be cretins, 10% will be severely mentally challenged and 87% will suffer mild to moderate intellectual disability.
- Anaemic prevalence is 83% in pre school children in Ghana and 71% in school children. Iron deficiency anaemia reduces cognitive development and learning ability of children. These issues mainly affect the poor in rural and urban areas.
- The health status of children is one of the main factors that influence absenteeism, concentration, drop out and performance in school (BUPL, 2001)

Other conditions, which affect early childhood development and learning, are the low literacy rates (37% for females) of women and the low capacity of rural households to provide the minimum nutritional requirements of children (GLSS, 2000). High incidence of malaria and other water born diseases place Ghanaian children in a very vulnerable position particularly those living in rural deprived areas of the country.

Early Childhood Education can be an equalising factor for children from poor communities gaining a better head start in relation to their urban counterparts. Studies from western countries and around Africa indicate that Early Childhood Education (ECE) can be a key factor to ensuring that children from poor socio-economic backgrounds are able to compete and perform throughout their schooling life ensuring higher levels of productivity during working life. The better the child's quality of life, (good health, growth, development and active social participation) the greater the chances of his or her survival. The care that is provided to a child by families within communities, and/or through services and institutions—affects the child's development outcomes (Boakye, p 7 Nov 1999).

Poverty research in Ghana suggests the dire need to educate mothers concerning the nutritional and health care issues of young children; this can only be done through early childhood centres. High rates of infant /child mortality and high rates of

child malnutrition particularly in the northern regions have had a severe impact on the learning outcomes of children in Ghana (Casely-Hayford, 2000; Nantogma, 1990; Fentiman. A., 1996). These and other influences on ECE have been explored in Annex 3.

Several government and international agencies have come to recognise the vast importance of Early Childhood Education and have integrated it into all their educational programmes. ECE is of vital importance to societies in the process of development since:

- Children have a right to get the best possible start to life, since therein lies the foundation and guarantee for human development
- It assures great economic returns in the future with savings on such services as remedial education, health care and rehabilitation;
- It reduces social, economic and gender disparities;
- It offers countries the best opportunity to compete in the global economy by improving the competences of people;
- It frees girls and other siblings to go to school
(MOWAC/GNCC, 2002 p16)

ECCD is one of the most valuable poverty reducing strategic investments a Government can make along with investing in girls' education. Evidence suggests that ECCD can help to ensure that children are provided with their basic learning and developmental needs. Ghana is in a particularly critical situation since a large majority of its children suffer from mild to severe forms of malnourishment; the human development costs of not providing basic ECCD services particularly in areas of low access are staggering (see Boakye 1999 and Evans, 2000).

1.2 Access to ECCD services in Ghana

Children between 0-14 years of age in Ghana make up almost half the population at 44%. Children aged between 0-8 make up about 20% of the population. 'Out of the total population of school aged children-- 79% are able to enter primary school (82% boys and 72% of girls). However, only **27% of children between 0 to 6 years of age gain admission to ECCD centres**' (Early Childhood Care and Development in Ghana, BUPL July 2001 p. 1). The same study found that approx. 94% of children aged between 0-2 do not have access to early childhood services (approx. 75% aged 3 years from rural areas and 65% from urban areas are in the same situation) (BUPL, 2001). More recently a comprehensive study evaluating the fCUBE programme found that only 14% of children are being served by ECE centres across the country (MOE, 2002). Sector analysis does suggest that the number of ECCD places is increasing but not at the same pace as the demand for services. A review of the literature suggests that services are not keeping pace with the population growth and the high rate of fertility (one woman to six children) in Ghana. Table 1 below outlines some of the most recent statistics:

Table 1: Level of services compared to population growth

Period	Level of increase	Details
1993 to 1996	3% to 27%	Number of Public and private kindergartens
1990 to 1997	10% to 23%	Enrolment rates for 0-6 year old children in pre-school (rural and urban pre school enrolment rates for children in this age group were 21% and 28% respectively in 1997.)
1990 to 1997		Population growth between this period is 3.2 %

Studies suggest that since early childhood development centres are not available in most rural communities it is only through non-formal community based ECCD centres and approaches that children from these areas will be reached. Examples are the Koranic schools in most villages in the north where children aged between 3-6 begin training in the Koran.

The Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ, 1997) by the Ghana Statistical Service provides figures for pre school enrolment by age, locality and sex. The study found that parents provide the majority of care for children between 0-3 and that it is not until four years of age that children access more formalised pre school education. Most of the pre school facilities are attached to primary schools. Table 2 presents the results:

Table 2: Percentage of Children in Pre-school from rural and urban households

	Rural	Urban
3year olds	25%	35%
4 Year olds	46%	62%
5 year olds	60%	73%

(Based on CWIQ, 1997)

Rural pre-school enrolment rates are far lower than urban rates. There was also a significant variation depending on which region one was considering. For instance 50% of children aged between 2 to 5 and almost 80% of children from 4 to 5 were attending pre-school in urban Accra while only 11% and 21% of children in the same age groups were attending kindergarten in the Northern areas of the country.

International studies reveal that the educational attainment of mother's is a major contributor to the children's participation in formal education. Less than 28% of rural females are able to read and write compared to 56% of males in the same localities (GLSS 1988). Socio-economic background of parents is also a key factor in determining whether a child is sent to school or not. Children from families under the poverty line are less likely to send a child to school than those from higher wealth quintiles (see Casely-Hayford, 2002). The Fourth Round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS, 2000) found a steady increase in school enrolment from those with higher levels of income.

The Supply of ECCD and Kindergartens

The public sector and the MOE run the vast majority of pre schools except for urban areas of Greater Accra and Ashanti region where private schools take a larger share.

According to the CWIQ survey the share of private pre schools in the urban areas of Greater Accra was about 80%, Ashanti had 51% of the share and Brong Ahafo had 42%. Less than 40% of kindergartens are operated by the private sector in other urban areas across the country. The study by BUPL explains that the increased levels of private provision for kindergarten education can explain the high enrolments in these regions.

As at 1999 the MOE had 5572 public pre-schools with a total pupil population of 444,838. There are twice as many private pre-school centres available – around 11,000 private ECCD Centres. The enrolment ratio for ECCD is 27% increasing from 10% in 1990 (2000) (BUPL, 2001, p. 13). The following table is the latest information from GES:

Table 3: Public and Private ECCD centres supervised by GES

Years	No of public ECCD centres	Enrol. of Boys	Enrol. of Girls	Total	ECCD Trained Teachers	ECCD untrained teachers	Attendants	No. Of private ECCD centres	Enrolment of Private Centres
1995/96	5, 441	195,687	192,072	387,759	5,592	8,099	5,510	2,174	147,422
99/2000	5, 772			444,838					

(Source: MOE/GES, 1999)

1.3 Financing and Unit Costs for Pre School Education

According to the Ministry of Education's Policy and Plans approximately 10% of the MOE share of basic education goes into pre schools, which is mainly, used for the payment of staff salaries (MOE, 2001). Analysis by the GPRS consulting team suggests that financing of pre school education will remain stable.

"Pre-school education has not been targeted specifically as a priority objective. It is noted that Ghana is relatively ahead in this domain. The share of pre-school education will remain stable during the period, which means that if unit costs remain constant, the number of pupils in pre-school will grow at the same pace as the GDP and the share of the education in the GDP. **If there is an additional demand above this pace of development, it will be met, thanks to new private schools, which are playing a significant role at this level.** The priority will be given to primary education, to increase the participation rate from its present 77.6% level to 82% namely about 1.5 additional % per year. It is worth noting that during the nineties, access improvement has been cosmetic, and the proposed enrolment increase is a serious reversal of the on going trend." (Orivel, 2002)

Unfortunately the pace of private pre school development is not as high in rural deprived areas as it is in urban towns and cities. More work is needed to ensure that funds and resources are targeted to the needy areas where quality pre school education can be used as an equalising factor.

Pre-school recurrent costs are slightly above those for primary education despite the fact that teachers in pre-schools are often less qualified and paid less. Orivel (2002) points out that this is due to the different pupil/ teacher ratio (PTR), which is 33 PTR for primary level and only 22.8 at pre school level (Orivel, 2002). Pre-school education took a high proportion of the country budget-- approx. 7.4% for pre-school

or 104,8 million cedis compared to 32.9% for primary and 18.9% for JSS and 10.7% for SSS. The vast majority of this budget is for personal emoluments and teacher salaries. There is no **internal** GES-- Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) service budget allocated to the Basic Education Division. All funds are directed to the relevant district or project as and when a programme is funded. Often these events are supported by external agencies and carried out on an adhoc basis involving a few districts. According to the Head of ECDU there has not been a national meeting with all the ECDU co-ordinators from district and regional levels since 1993.

Since Nursery and Kindergartens are not considered part of basic education, parents are often asked to pay some fees for the maintenance of their children in public pre schools across the country. There are no fixed fee amounts approved by GES for these services at pre schools-- each pre school head often decides in consultation with his/her teachers the type of fees to be charged. GES does have a grading system for most of the pre-schools, which helps to guide the fees charged. PTA's are also involved in approval of the fees charged in some private schools. Fees are usually used for the provision of teaching learning materials and a separate charge is levied for feeding children on a daily basis. Some parents think the nurseries and kindergartens are part of the formal basic education and therefore are unwilling to pay the fees in public system. Hence the poor conditions in some ECD centres (Brief on Early Childhood Development, p 3, 2000).

Recent studies by BUPL (2001) found that mobilisation to finance pre-school education has historically relied on a cost sharing approach between government and communities. Rural families are frequently required to contribute to efforts to expand education by providing not only the direct costs of children's attendance but also the costs of building school facilities. Given their relatively large numbers the poor and rural dwellers should for equity reasons receive the largest share of education subsidies. However public spending on education is not pro poor and has not targeted the most needy populations or localities (DFID, 2001; Canagarajah and Xiao, 2000; BUPL, 2001).

A significant amount of work has been carried out by the MOE/GES on mapping areas of deprivation across the country. The National Development Planning Commission and GPRS promises to ensure better targeting of ECCD to the most needy areas. Two options, which will have to be considered is the need to introduce more pro poor measures ensuring better targeting of ECCD resources through direct subsidies to children or schools in deprived rural areas. Direct subsidies in the form of school feeding programmes, scholarships to needy children/families and school improvement funds for needy areas should all be considered.

Evidence from studies by Adamu-Issah (1996) suggests that a large proportion of rural households are willing to help establish early childhood centres and kindergartens with some assistance. The study showed that all respondents were in favour of the construction of ECCD centres. "For the provision of pre school facilities, both non urban and urban respondents thought that Government should provide these... but they also assigned a relatively large role for parents." The study also showed that respondents did not consider the provision of recreational and nutritional centres as a governmental responsibility (Adamu-Issah, p 126). Urban

mothers felt strongly that the government should provide for pre schools (68%) compared to 58% of rural mothers (Adamu-Issah, 1996).

1.4 Demand for Early Childhood Education

There have not been any comprehensive studies available on the demand for early childhood education. The closest indicator would be the rise in access and participation between 1990 and 1997 mentioned above where increases from 6 to 27% were experienced. Studies by Narh (2001) and Adamu-Issah (1996) suggest that there is a high level of interest/demand for early childhood development particularly in the rural areas although their ability to support such programmes is limited.

Studies by the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment suggests that there is a need to provide more early childhood centres particularly when taking into consideration the issues of disability and assessment of special needs in order to detect problems in the early developmental years. Interviews with the Girls' Education Unit, Special Education Division and SHEP all suggest the need for ensuring that more children have access to pre school education in order to ensure proper pre reading and orientation, before entering school. International Studies suggest that the child's most formative years are between 0-4 years of age.

Evidence from the National Nursery Teachers' Training Centres (NNTTC) also suggests that there is increasing demand for early childhood particularly within the major urban centres. Interviews with teachers and management at the National Nursery Teacher Training School at Ridge, Accra suggests that there is a high demand for ECCD teacher training. The NNTTC often receives over 120 applications for participation and can only select 40 participants for each training programme. There is often a long waiting list of people wanting to attend the training sessions. Another indicator of the high demand of pre-school training is the increasing amount of requests being received by the NNTTC for satellite training courses at the district level. Large numbers of pre schoolteachers pay for the NNTTC training when satellite programmes are organised by the District Education Offices (i.e. Volta and Brong Ahafo region). The Director indicated at most training sessions up to 100 teachers apply and pay for their training programmes. One of the reasons for the high demand of training is the potential for teachers to start their own private ECCD centres once they are professionally trained as ECCD teachers.

The NNTTC has been experiencing a higher demand for ECCD training from the regions but can only provide 5 satellite programmes per year at the district level due to limited staff and capacity. They recommend that more teachers be posted to the NNTTC in order to carry out more training at the regional and district levels. The exciting aspect of the NNTTC programme is that most of the training programmes are run on a cost recovery basis since teachers are willing to pay for the training.

There are no studies available to make a thorough review of the demand for early childhood education. National Statistics on ECE are collected once every three to four years by the ECD unit at MOE. A comprehensive research study is needed to assess the demand particularly within rural areas where pre school education is less available. This type of study should also consider the most appropriate approaches

for cost sharing at community level since finding teachers from outside the community may be difficult since many are not often willing to work in deprived rural areas (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001).

2.0 Current Situation of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education within the Education sector is not a high priority according to the latest policy documents guiding the MOE (MOE, 2001). The fCUBE programme did not identify early childhood education within the basic education framework nor does the current policy document "MOE Policy and Programmes". (MOE, 2001). Early Childhood Education for children between 4 to 6 is an extra, which the MOE is in the process of considering. Although it is not a compulsory or free part of the basic nine years of education provided to all Ghanaian children, the costs for operating pre-schools is integrated within the primary school budget (i.e. teacher and attendant salaries).

Policy Guidelines

The Government of Ghana's Draft Policy on ECCD recognises the future implications for Ghana if the welfare of its children are not addressed. The ECCD Draft outlines several policy objectives and targets for ministries and agencies within Ghana. The following policy objectives are those most relevant to the MOE:

- Expand ECCD programmes for survival, growth and development of children especially those in rural and poor communities
- Promote pre school education
- Strengthen the institutional capabilities of those delivering ECCD services at the national, regional and district levels to foster closer collaboration among all such institutions
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Government, donors and other ECCD service providers in the country (Ghana National Commission on Children, ECCD Policy Final Draft, p. 7-9)

The Government of Ghana's main policy targets include:

- Expand primary school enrolment by 95% by the year 2020
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary school enrolment by 2010
- Expansion of ECCD programmes for survival, growth and development to 80 per cent of children aged 0-8 especially in rural and urban poor communities by 2020 (Ghana National Commission on Children, p10)

The Ministry of Education is tasked to provide the following:

- Take a lead role in providing technical input in early intellectual stimulation and development issues in ECCD programmes, both centre based and non-centre based. These would include but not be limited to the development of curriculum, setting of educational standards and monitoring of the same.
- Make provision for ECCD programmes within its budget
- Expand existing ECCD training facilities by ensuring that existing Training Centres are fully utilised and expanded
- Offer qualitative training to ECCD attendants and caregivers and support all Nursery Training Centres both financially and materially
- Existing Training institution could in the meantime, offer their facilities for use in conducting course for care givers during vacation

- Ensure a smooth transition from pre-school programmes to formal schooling. (Ghana National Commission on Children, p.20-21)

The ECCD Policy also states alongside this target that the Government will:

- Waive taxes on equipment and materials meant for ECCD programmes
- Provide incentives to private sector establishments contributing above a certain minimum level of funds or in-kind support to ECCD programmes
- Direct the establishment of an "ECCD Fund" to which Institutions, private individuals and NGO's etc shall make contributions in cash (Ghana National Commission on Children, Final Draft, P. 36)

The Government agencies responsible for registration and approval of ECCD centres are the MOE and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE). The MOE is supposed to set the guidelines for setting up ECCD centres giving care to the children between 4 and 5 while the MMDE sets the guidelines for setting up ECCD centres for the children between 0 to 3" (BUPL, 2001). Interviews with key officials in both ministries and the Ghana Commission on Children reveal that these basic roles and responsibilities are still not fully understood or adhered to.

The GES has appointed ECD co-ordinators in all the district and regional offices around the country but often these officers have more than one portfolio often acting as school health and girls education officers at the same time. In more recent years there has been no policy to increase the number of pre schools across the country. The creation of pre schools and kindergartens have often emerged as a result of female "pupil teachers" being transferred from the primary level to the KG level when new policies were put in place. Most of these Kindergartens are attached to the existing primary schools and under the responsibility of the head teacher for the school. In the late 1990's the MOE issued a guideline to all heads that primary schools give preference to trained teachers and where possible pupil teachers should be phased out at the primary or JSS levels where possible. This had a significant impact on the number of female teachers serving at the primary level and could be a factor explaining the increased number of kindergartens emerging in the rural areas (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001). Interviews during fieldwork revealed that female pupil teachers were often allowed to teach at the KG level to maintain their status with the GES.

The Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) has recently conducted an extensive mapping exercise on ECCD in Ghana. The baseline study and inventory identify all the ECCD centres in Ghana. This will provide an excellent planning tool for MOE once completed.

Infrastructure

At the last official count by the MOE there were 5572 public pre schools with a total population of 444,838 learners (1999 figures) under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Regular school census data and MOE data often do not include the numbers of pre schools unless specifically requested. According to the new policy directive at least 7,000 more classes will have to be established to ensure that all primary schools have at least one pre school class operating in the country.

Boakye (1999) found that the number of public kindergartens increased by 3 per cent and 27 per cent respectively between 1993 and 1996. In 1996, there were 5,441 public kindergartens and 3742 registered private establishments (comprising 2,174 nurseries and kindergartens and 1568 day care centres). Available data estimates total enrolment at a level of 427,460 and 155,645 pupils in public and private institutions respectively in 1997, giving a gross enrolment ratio of about 14 per cent.

His conclusions were:

- The majority of pre-schools in existence in Ghana today are public and appear to have lost the active involvement of community members, associations such as churches, and groups;
- The majority of pre-schools are urban and serve children aged 0-6, the majority of whom come from well to do families.
- The majority of poor children aged 0-6 are at risk of malnutrition, disease, insecurity and inappropriate development practices;
- The pre-schools, while being expensive to operate, provide a low quality service. (Boakye, Nov 1999 p 10)

There was no mapping or assessment exercise available to determine the current state of pre school facilities under the MOE since the GNCC could not release their mapping report at the time of this study (ECCD Unit, 2002)⁴. Field visits to some rural areas suggest that kindergarten children are often subjected to the worst conditions/facilities in the school compound since teachers often view primary and JSS education with more importance. Field visits for research conducted under the Girls' Education Unit suggest that kindergarten children are often taught under trees, in dilapidated and uncompleted buildings within school compounds where primary and JSS children are housed in better facilities (Casely-Hayford with Wilson, 2001).

Research by Adamu-Issah (1996) suggests that communities are willing to participate in the construction and support for kindergarten education if given the opportunity. Communities are often expected to provide the buildings, materials and sometimes even support for teachers in order to ensure that the children have access to pre school education. This research suggests that private or community driven early childhood education may ensure better quality education when compared to the government control and ownership. More research is necessary to determine the degree of capacity for community-managed models of ECE if MOE provides the buildings and payment for teachers. Field experience by this researcher suggest that a great deal of community awareness is needed to sustain the financing of teachers and provision of basic materials when communities own and operate their own pre-schools.

⁴ Based on the ECCD unit interview, August 2002.

2.1 Teacher Training

Studies in Ghana suggest that the vast majority of teachers at the kindergarten level are **untrained female teachers** who were transferred to this level during the mid 1990's when the pupil teacher policy changed (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001). During 1996 the Government decided that pupil teachers could no longer teach at the primary level. Only a few KG teachers are "trained" since most female pupil teachers were sent to the KG level when new GES policies were enforced.⁵

There are a very small percentage of early childhood teachers who are trained. There has not been any systematic approach to training the MOE kindergarten teachers such that any training is often a result of external agency support and financing (i.e. Wenchi, Techiman, Nkoranza, Tano and Kintampo)⁶. Boakye (1999) found that less than a quarter of the KG teachers and one-tenth of attendants in public and private pre-schools received any training in nursery education. A more recent study by (BUPL, 2001) found that to a large extent ECE teachers are untrained ---on average 70% of all staff (16,917 in public pre schools) are untrained based on 2000 figures.

The National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre (NNTTC) in Accra has intensified its training programmes to help solve the problem of untrained caregivers as GES continues to encourage "trained teachers" at primary school level. The NNTTC training programme attempts to tackle the problem of lack of play/learning materials. Participants are taught how to produce and use the low cost ECE materials. Materials are made from scraps and caregivers are encouraged to collect materials from the environment to produce playthings for children. (Brief on Early Childhood Development (ECCD) in Ghana P. 5, 2000)

The MOE policy and programmes do not make provision for ECE training of teachers at the Teacher Training College (TTC) level or even at the University level although some attempts are currently being made. Early childhood education is not part of the teacher education curriculum therefore no "trained teachers" graduating from training colleges are prepared for this critical group of learners. Most teachers in the system have received limited exposure through in-service training or through their own initiative to join the National Nursery Teacher's Training Centre (NNTTC) programmes. The NNTTC is the only Government certified training institute for pre-school teachers in Ghana. It has 5 outreach programmes and the national campus in Accra. The outreach programmes reaches over 500 teachers (approx. 100 students per session) and about 160 per year at the NNTTC campus in Accra (approx. 40 participants per session).

A large number of private school operators send their teachers to the NNTTC for the training programme. According to the NNTTC director a larger proportion of teachers are from the private sector than from public pre-schools. Training fees are in the

⁵ Head teachers were encouraged to use only "trained teachers at the Primary level" where possible.

⁶ A satellite-training programme was organised for these districts through the NNTTC and over 70% of the pre-school teachers in these districts have been trained.

range of approximately 350,000 per participation for the 8-week course⁷. Participants come from all over the country including the Northern and Western regions. The other National Nursery Teacher Training Centres are established in the Volta and Ashanti region but it is unclear whether these are still in operation and providing eight-week training programmes. All candidates must have completed Junior Secondary School and pass an entrance examination before being admitted to NNTTC's eight-week programme. Each year approx. 160 teachers pass out of the NNTTC at the central level and about 500 pass out from satellite programmes at the regional and district levels.

Apart from the (NNTTC) there are a growing number of private service providers giving training to teachers for ECE. These include: the Social Welfare Training School at Madina under the MMDE, May Educational Complex in Dansoman, Accra and the Institute for Care Givers in Dome. The MMDE focuses on training ECCD caregivers who will work in day care centres and crèches for the 0-3 age groups.

Research suggests that there is the need to rationalise the location and number of teachers already serving at KG level in all districts in the country. Research by Casely-Hayford and Wilson (2001) revealed that female teachers working at public schools at the KG level tend to be concentrated at urban and town centres. Very few women opt to serve in the rural deprived areas. This pattern creates an inconsistent Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) whereby some kindergartens have anywhere from a 10:1 PTR in urban areas while those in rural areas have much higher PTR. Rural parents also use kindergartens as a "day care centre" where children can be dropped while they are engaged in farming activities.

2.2 Curriculum: Merging African and Western approaches

The Ministry of Education's "Policies and Strategic Plans for Education" (2001) states that the curriculum for pre-school education should have the following principles and objectives:

- Personal development of the child through individual play and group activities
- Pre-disposition of the child to the conditions of formal education

Unfortunately there is no national curriculum for kindergarten education developed or being widely used in the public school system. There have been several attempts to introduce a curriculum through individual initiatives at the school level and through donor supported projects, which have been started and then discontinued due to the lack of national support in the form of a policy framework. For instance the Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) has partnered with the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) to introduce a comprehensive pre school curriculum and training. There are materials available on the private market but these books lack approaches suitable to the different developmental stages.

⁷ The satellite programmes in the region are usually between 150, 000 to 250,000 per person participating in a 6 week in service programme.

There have been several challenges in ensuring that a comprehensive pre school curriculum is provided for all public schools in Ghana. The Early Childhood Education Unit at the MOE has not had the internal financial support needed to ensure its development and has had to rely on external agency support. Several agencies are pilot testing different materials, and have introduced some books into the system, but these often reach only the district level ECD officers and are not widely distributed to all the schools (i.e. BUPL's and Star of Hope experience).

The MOE Early Childhood Unit has set up a "working group" over the last year to examine the curriculum for early childhood development. The committee includes many of the agencies and individuals involved in ECD across the country. One of the books which appears to be the most comprehensive for pre school educators in Ghana developed by the Star of Hope is being field tested in all the regions. This book was approved by the CRDD unit a few years ago and has been widely distributed at the regional and district levels to ECD officers.

UNICEF has also published a book called "Guide for Educators of the Young Child" which is used by many pre-schools across the country. This book is useful for caregivers working with children between (0-3) but does not give information on the developmental aspects of the child learning needs between 5-6 years of age. Lack of KG curriculum force most KG classroom teachers to rely on the GES primary one books to help them teach the children. These books and their approaches do not use play as a means of learning so necessary for the child's development and social interaction with others.

One important aspect of early childhood development in the Ghanaian context has been the emphasis on spiritual and moral values. Although these values have been eroded by several social and economic factors, there remains a great need to ensure that children are brought up in the early years with strong moral values. Programmes for KG education should help to teach children universal virtues and values, which they will use throughout their life.

Studies suggest that there is a need for a more "African approach to early childhood education in order to bridge the child's home and school life experience. Curriculum development should attempt to use the important work on Child Upbringing Practices in Some communities in Ghana" (UNICEF, 2002). This study explores the positive aspects of traditional upbringing and cultural practices with complementary recommendations for education provision.

Merging western and African approaches to early childhood education, the study builds on local knowledge of how children grow up in the home. The study provides detailed evidence of how traditional child upbringing practices impact on the physical, social and spiritual life of the child. The study also suggests the need to ensure a strong harmony between family, work and education particularly in the child's early years so that children can learn to integrate different systems of education. "Communities raise their children with a deep knowledge of their spirituality to be socially conscious good human beings." A considerable amount of work is needed to ensure that any curriculum or kindergarten syllabus builds on the positive aspects of the child's upbringing expanding their moral as well as intellectual capacities in the community and society at large.

2.3 Approaches to ECCD in Ghana

Assessment by experts from Oslo University College and visits to kindergartens in the Eastern and Greater Accra region reveal that KG schoolteachers often rely on the P1 curriculum to train children at the Pre School and KG level. Reports by MOE officials and parents themselves suggest that some KGs are even examining children before admission (mainly private KGs). Field visits and interviews with teachers in these regions suggested that play was not being used as a means for helping children learn nor were teachers aware of approaches to pre school education such as:

- Methods which use sensory approaches to learning
- Learning through play

Boakye's (1999) study suggests that most teachers are not aware of the need for psychosocial stimulation at the early learning stages of a child's life. The pre school level where learners are between 4-6 should use a holistic approach to education which will help the child develop all aspects of their lives including the:

- Learning through experience
- Caring for the child
- Discovery
- Helping the child discover their inner potential

Boakye (2002) suggests that pre school education in Ghana usually involves more of the caregiving aspects and less on the early psychosocial stimulation.⁸ Much more work is needed to introduce holistic educational approaches to pre school education in order to ensure Ghanaian children obtain an effective education in their early years. This would require that pre schools and kindergartens under the operating under the MOE and within the private sector agree to set of holistic principles to ensure that all schools provide the minimum of standards using approaches which consider all aspects of the child's developmental needs.

Multi-sectoral programming would be required and has been identified in the policy as one of the ways to help improve the quality of the current ECD programmes. For instance health, nutrition and the physical development of the child would have to be considered by having School Health Unit. Other areas, which need attention for a holistic education, include:

- Moral and spiritual needs of the child
- Facilitating growth and developmental
- Cognitive
- Pscho-social

The proper provision of food and water are an essential part of the child's development in the early years and even later on. Pre schools will have to ensure that a programme of nutrition is introduced with the assistance of parents and community members.

⁸ Interview with Boakye, July 2002.

" a child born without barriers. Its needs are integrated and it is we who choose to compartmentalise them into health, nutrition, hunger or education. Yet the child itself cannot isolate its hunger for food from its hunger for affection or its hunger for knowledge.

The same unity extends to the child's perception of the world. The child's mind is free of class, religion, colour or nationality barriers, unless we wish it otherwise. It is this intrinsic strength in the unity of the child that we need to exploit for building a better world." (Alva M. 1996 in Boakye, 1999)

This approach to early learning would require a reorientation of teacher training, IEC campaigns and curriculum development.

2.4 Management at National and District level

The Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) is under the Basic Education Division. The National ECDU contains one national co-ordinator that is responsible for:

- The co-ordination of the ECCD programme country wide
- The development of a policy framework within GES/MOE
- Development of a national policy framework with other stakeholders such as the GNCC, MMDE and UNICEF

Unfortunately the ECD Unit at National head quarters has only one staff member and much of her time is spent engaged in the development of a national policy on ECCD education and more recently on developing a national curriculum development. She also works with development partners on specific projects in some districts and has little time or financial support to concentrate on nation wide programming issues such as training and curriculum development. There needs to be a tremendous increase in the capacity of staff at the national ECDU in order to ensure that a regular programme of activities supported by internal funds is implemented. This will ensure that the unit focuses on the core business of the MOE and ECCD programme along lines relevant to the entire country needs.

There are currently 110 ECD officers in all the districts across the country. Often these officers have other responsibilities such as SHEP and Girls Education. All of the national, regional and district ECCD officers are women. Interviews with ECD officers in the field suggest that district officers do not have enough financial support to execute programmes such as providing in-service training for teachers. They complained that information shared at workshops on ECD does not filter to the pre school level because the ECD officers are unable to provide in-service training to other teachers in the district. Some districts are being supported to conduct pre school training through NGO and donor support such as UNICEF Districts, World Vision, and Plan International. Some district education offices and communities are supporting ECD activities where there is supportive leadership.

According to the National ECD Co-ordinator there is no effective district ECE organisers. The ECD officers are not given transport in most districts in order to properly supervise and monitor pre-schools in their districts. District officers are

supported only in districts where the education director has an interest in ECD activities.

2.5 Planning and Policy Formulation

Over the last 10 years there has been a concerted effort by several agencies to develop a Policy Framework for ECCD in Ghana. The Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC), which is currently under the newly created Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) is coordinating the processes of submitting the draft policy to cabinet for approval.

A great deal of dialogue and consultation has taken place surrounding the ECCD policy. Several workshops and stakeholder consultations have been held to solicit views from all the stakeholders. Unfortunately there seems to be "too many" players involved in the sub sector and little action to move the policy into implementation. There is still ambiguity over the exact roles of MMDE and MOE. Without clear roles and responsibilities for each Ministry the Policy might further delay the implementation. ECCD does call for a multi-sectoral approach but this type of collaboration can more effectively take place at the district level where implementation will be focussed.

The policy does not acknowledge the large number of KGs and pre schools under the Ministry of Education nor the existing day-care centres and crèches under the MMDE, which are already supported by various Ministry sectors. The policy remains ambivalent as to who will take charge of the sector. The most recent developments suggest that the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs will co-ordinate and lead ECCD policy on a national level. The ECCD arena appears to be have great potential for donor assistance and could be one of the reasons why the relevant ministries are not fully co-operating in the progression of the sub sector.

2.6 Major interventions and donor assistance in the sub-sector

There are a large number of actors in the ECCD programmes across the country. ECCD requires a collective and multi-sectoral approach but this review suggests that such an approach takes time and commitment from all the relevant ministries. The new GPRS framework may assist the ECCD sector move forward using a more multi-sectoral approach. Resource concerns by different sectoral ministries may be one of the reasons for these problems combined with the persistent lack of time given for multi-sectoral planning. Some of the agencies involved in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field are included in Table 4.

Table 4: Agencies, programme profiles and interventions in the ECE sector

Agency	Programme Profile	Scope of Intervention
UNICEF	Integrated ECCD programme in District schools with UNICEF interventions. (Childscope Work)	Six Northern Districts One District in the Eastern Region (Afram Plains)
GNAT/BUPL	Development of Curriculum, Training of Teachers	Country Wide
PLAN	In-service Training for Teachers	Selected regions and districts of the country

Agency	Programme Profile	Scope of Intervention
World Vision	In-service Training of Teachers	
31 st December Women's Movement	860-day care centres with aim to improve the care of the children and help mothers go to work.	

Several of the NGO programmes for Training pre-school teachers have been successful in improving the quality of teaching in the system. Many of these NGOs' work in deprived rural areas and can provide a key capacity building link to local and district ECE providers.

The MOE should consider working more closely with NGO and non-state actors in the delivery of pre school education particularly to remote and deprived rural areas. MOE could consider supporting these agencies by funding their teachers and providing books in exchange for their training and monitoring support once the national curriculum is prepared.

3.0 Challenges Facing the Early Childhood Education System

There are several challenges facing the early childhood education system. The main problem is the lack of integration of pre school education within the MOE's Basic Education mandate. Pre school education has been considered an optional part of the first nine years of a child's schooling life; the ECD unit has been under-resourced and unable to provide the minimum operational support required to assist the entire system (i.e. curriculum development, monitoring and training).

There are also a number of major problems in attempting to bring too much under the umbrella of early childhood development. The MOE is working on expansion of the system rather than concentrating on improving quality within the system as it stands. The most critical areas or next steps appear to be in the area of curriculum development. There is tremendous need for the ECD Unit to focus on completing a simple yet comprehensive curriculum for KG1 (4 year olds) and KG2 levels (5 year olds). The MOE should be wary of not becoming involved in trying to help all the age groups which fall within the ECCD category and improve the focus by ensuring that at least 4-6 year old children particularly in rural deprived areas of the country are provided with quality pre-school education.

There have been significant problems in finding a common solution to early childhood education due to the dual ministerial role that the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE) and the Ministry of Education play in the lives of young children. The New Early Childhood Policy document attempts to define clearly the roles of these two ministries. More detail is needed to ensure that the subsector moves forward by preparing young children for school and tackling the severe problems faced by young children and their families.

The BUPL study found the following major problems at school community level to be:

- Poor participation of parents in ECCD and lack of interest in the education and care of children
- An over-reliance on government to provide for the needs of children
- The poor response from local communities in the provision of infrastructure, play and learning materials
- Lack of financial and material support for pre service and in service training
- Laxity on the part of trained teachers in their duties since they do not think they can be dismissed
- Lack of effective supervision of most ECCD centres
- Lack of interest on the part of head teachers who are responsible for both primary and KG levels of education

Challenges at the National level

- Absence of national policy on ECCD
- Withdrawal of "trained teachers" from ECCD / KG levels to teach at the primary level.
- Lack of new ECCD syllabus to reflect the changing situation from a global perspective

- Inability of ECE's in private sector to unionise at the local and national level to press for better conditions of service
- Poor orientation of schools using play as a means of learning instead of the emphasis on rote learning of the alphabet.

One of the major challenges, which the ECE sector faces, is the lack of interested and trained early childhood educators. The MOE should provide simple training for all KG teachers whether they are " pupil" teachers or Training College graduates. Any person who is training young children should have the requisite moral attitudes, qualities and skills to train young children since they are most vulnerable at this age.

Another key challenge will be the ability of the ECCD Unit and Basic Education Division as a whole to integrate the different inputs needed to providing a holistic approach to Early child hood education including health, nutrition, moral and cognitive development of the child. Providing a holistic ECE approach will require very close collaboration between the MOE, MOH and MMDE at a district and school level. It will require close collaboration between ECCD unit and other divisions including Teacher Education, CRDD, Guidance and counselling, SHEP, Social Services and other divisions. A quality ECE programme at school level will require increasing support from the Parents, PTA's and SMC's in order to ensure that proper resources are provided for running the programme at the community level (i.e. food and clean water, educational materials and parental support).

4.0 Key Recommendations and Strategic Options

The Ghana National Commission on Children has outlined the following strategies to be adopted in order to expand the coverage and quality of ECCD programmes:

- (a) Create a conducive Environment for Developing and Implementing ECCD Programmes
 - (b) Promote Integrated Services
 - (c) Encourage the Establishment of Conventional and Non-Conventional ECCD Systems for all Children
 - (d) Train ECCD Care-Givers
 - (e) Broaden Parent Participation
 - (f) Provide Quality ECCD Services
 - (g) Build the Capacity of Existing Institutions to sustain ECCD Systems
 - (h) Organise Regular Research, Monitoring and Evaluation to improve all aspects of ECCD Systems
 - (i) Mobilise Resources for Implementation of ECCD Programmes
- (Ghana National Commission on Children, Final Draft ECCD Policy, p.25-30)

The following section reviews the main recommendations and strategic options for the sub sector.

Streamline responsibilities between ministries

There are a large number of stakeholders controlling and defining the future of ECCD in Ghana including three ministries: The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment. There is an urgent need to really streamline responsibilities and ensure that the MOE policies and programmes for ECE move forward. The MOE should make it clear that it is only going to deal with children between 4 to 6 years of age and let the other stakeholders look at realistic programming for the 0-3 age group.

Pro poor policy orientation for publicly funded pre school education

Pre-school education should be available for all children in Ghana. Publicly financed pre-schools should focus on areas that are deprived and under served by private financing for pre-school education.

Deprivation analysis should be used to target public financing and the mapping of kindergartens in the country. Districts should be given special funding to enhance pre school quality and ensure that the most deprived areas are served first. The main challenge will be in relocating teachers to deprived rural areas since most women are unwilling to serve in these areas.

The most feasible option for implementing a comprehensive and pro poor ECCD policy with the MOE is to hire community based teachers who have a minimum qualification of having completed Junior Secondary School. In-service training

programmes which focus on the use of play through arts and crafts should be encouraged to ensure children are given holistic early learning and pre reading techniques before they enter schools.

Targeting

- All rural schools should be given access to publicly financed pre-school education. Public kindergartens should be fee free. This is not regulated and several public kindergartens are charging fees.
- Parents should be encouraged to support the establishment of these pre-schools through the provision of food at the beginning of the month or other in-kind contributions for children to eat while in the pre-school.
- Fee regulations should also be introduced for Private school operators; they should be encouraged to meet the demand in the urban areas. Special Subsidies should be offered for low income parents living in urban areas (i.e. pre-school vouchers)

Planning and Policy Formulation

- The MOE/GES should incorporate policy guidelines for pre school education into all existing policy documents (i.e. MOE Policies and Programmes).
- These guidelines should help to guide the ECD unit and officers at national, regional and district levels
- The guidelines should also assist the progression of the overall National ECCD policy within the Education sector.
- A comprehensive research study is needed to assess the demand particularly within rural areas where pre school education is less available.

Inclusion of Pre-school Education into the Basic Education mandate

- Pre-school education should involve a commitment by government to ensure free public pre-school education is available to children particularly from rural deprived areas.
- The MOE should begin by ensuring all primary schools have at least one KG level for five year olds attached to their schools. Teachers should be properly deployed to ensure a 30 to 1 pupil teacher-ratio with one teacher and one assistant/attendant. This approach should be implemented in a systematic manner moving from one region to the next (relating to the regions with the highest incidence of poverty).

Multi-sectoral approaches to Early Childhood Education

- A collective and multi-sectoral approach at all ECE centres is needed in Ghana. This would require more collaboration within the MOE, its' divisions and units (i.e. SHEP, GEU, Early childhood education unit and social services). It would also require more collaboration between ECD officers at the district levels and their MOH counterparts, District Social Welfare officers and NGO's in order to ensure a holistic approach to ECE.
- There needs to be basic school feeding programmes introduced in some regions and communities in the country (i.e. Northern region, central and possibly the Western region). School feeding particularly for young children could ensure that early learning and development takes place and the negative impact of malnutrition is minimised. The GOG should consider introducing nutritional supplements for children attending KG classes if full feeding programmes are too costly in areas with a high poverty incidence.
- Basic water and sanitation facilities at all schools must also be ensured in order to encourage proper hygiene for children at the early ages.
- The MOE should collaborate with the relevant sector ministries through the GPRS framework, which provides the opportunity for increased collaboration.

Increasing Parental Education at National and Community Level

- A national orientation toward ECCD is needed to increase the level of parental support for education in the long run.
- Government IEC campaigns to educate parents on the importance of early learning and care could also significantly enhance learning outcomes of children. Pre School should introduce parents' education particularly around child nutrition and stimulation techniques in order to ensure proper cognitive development and reduce the rates of malnourishment in young children.

Teacher Training

International best practice in ECCD training suggests that teachers for early learners need special training particularly in the use of play as a means to learning. Teacher training programmes from Denmark and Norway are considered the best in the world and promote a 'learning through play' approach.

Much more work is needed to orientate caregivers and teachers to the special nature of pre-school education as a time of exploration, learning through play and discovery as opposed to the usual rote methods of teaching. More emphasis should also be placed on using indigenous knowledge, Ghanaian language and value education at the pre school level.

Teacher training in early childhood should be introduced as a regular course for all teachers at training colleges. Those wanting to work as kindergarten teachers

should be given the option of either entering a special stream in the training college or opting for a specially designated training college in order to learn about the special needs of early learners. Three options are open to MOE:

Option one: mainstream ECE as a stream in selected teacher training colleges in all regions of the country. If funds are available at least one TTC in each region should offer ECE training as an option. The draft policy suggests that ECCD units be attached to all training colleges.

Option two: allocate at least one TTC in the Northern, Middle and Southern belt to the training ECE teachers.

Option three: Increase the trainers and space allocated to the NNTTC in order to increase enrolment. Increase the number of teacher trainers attached to the NNTTC in order to increase satellite programmes on a regional basis. NNTTC Centres at Ho, Sunyani and Accra should all be updated with better facilities.

Since there is a high demand for qualified teachers working at the basic education level, entrance to the ECCD stream should require at least SSS certificate. Interviews to assess the teacher's interest in teaching young children should also be conducted after the entrance examination is taken.

Curriculum

- A high degree of effort and support is needed to ensure that a comprehensive pre-school curriculum is provided to all public schools currently operating in Ghana.
- The curriculum should focus on both learning through play and the use of psychosocial aspects of a child's development. The UNICEF report on child upbringing practices should also help to integrate the indigenous knowledge concerning ECE as well as the more western approaches. The Star of Hope curriculum developed for Ghana and being field-tested should play a major role in this process.
- The ECE unit should make every effort to ensure that the curriculum is available to a wide range of public schools in the shortest period of time. Full support from the MOE is necessary to ensure that the final materials are field-tested and go to print. The private sector will also play a significant role in this process.

Language of instruction

- In keeping with the EFA guidelines in order to ensure that local community based teachers can be recruited to increase access to pre schools in Ghana, local language should be used at the pre school level. This will also help to ensure full participation of parents and families in the pre-school programmes particularly communities in rural deprived areas.

Management and Capacity Building

- There needs to be a tremendous increase in the capacity and staff at the national ECDU in order to ensure that a regular programme of activities supported by internal MOE funds is available.
- Regular meetings and in-service training sessions should be held with all the ECDU officers and co-ordinators. These funds should be provided by internal sources.
- MOE should increase the number of teachers serving at the NNTTC in order to allow more satellite in-service training programmes at regional and district levels. Programmes should continue to operate on a cost recovery basis.
- Some financial resources should be made available to ensure monitoring by the national and regional ECD officers particularly after the training sessions and on a regular basis to ensure a high quality of pre school education is being delivered.

Conclusion

The MOE's Early Childhood Education programmes should focus on providing at least one year of pre-school education to children from poor and deprived rural areas of the country. Children living in towns and cities already have access to both public and private sector alternatives. The Ministry of Education should therefore focus its resources (i.e. teachers and materials) on providing public pre schools/kg classes in primary schools in the most deprived areas of the country. This will require a systematic approach over the next ten years whereby one region each year is added to the MOE's pre school programme. This will allow the capacity of the national, regional and districts ECCD officers to gradually increase.

The main preparatory steps for implementing such a programme require that the National ECD unit develop a simple but comprehensive curriculum. The curriculum should emphasis the use of local language, learning through play, and psychosocial aspects of a child's development. The integration of Ghanaian and western themes should be used based on the indigenous knowledge of upbringing practices in the home. The entire pre school programme should also foster a strong relationship between the child, parent and the school. Parental education programmes and the parental involvement in pre school education should be emphasised in order to ensure their commitment to child education throughout the child's life.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Main indices used to evaluate the sector

TOR Objective: Examine the Demand for Early Childhood care and Development and early learning	
Data Theme	Data needs
Examine the access to early childhood facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Number of children in various early childhood age categories (1-3, 4-5, 5-6)➤ Number of KG 1 and KG2 classes➤ % Being served by ECCD facilities➤ Attempt to disaggregate for rural and urban dwellers
Examine the approaches to providing cost effective early childhood facilities and best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Interview key stakeholders in the sector (i.e. UNICEF, SCF and ECCD Unit, Social Welfare) to identify approaches➤ Review projects and evaluations on ECCD approaches in Ghana (DANIDA, UNICEF etc).➤ Look at global best practice particularly the experience with community financed ECCD options.

Annex 2

SUMMARY OF THE ECCD STATISTICS FOR 2000/2001 ACADEMIC YEAR

NAME OF REGION	NO OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS	ENROLMENT			NO OF TRAINED TEACHERS	NO OF UNTRAINED TEACHERS	NO OF ATTENDANTS	NO OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS	ENROLMENT		REMARKS
		BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL					BOYS	GIRLS	
GREATER ACCRA	127	6969	6059	13028	408	1162	623	457	21736	21557	
EASTERN	794	22704	22089	44793	902	1157	968	255	9988	20475	
VOLTA	590	19730	20046	39776	568	820	1170	217	7477	7626	
CENTRAL	598	18596	19100	37396	248	1221	113	121	5038	4861	
WESTERN	972	35179	35179	70358	573	3031	557	184	7998	7856	
ASHANTI	640	18766	18680	37446	605	902	956	232	6999	6712	
BRONG-AHAFO	570	24739	24090	48829	559	1583	1280	193	8623	8668	
NORTHERN	448	24380	25683	50063	228	842	130	50	3105	2918	
UPPER EAST											
UPPER WEST											
TOTAL	4739	171063	170926	341689	4091	10718	5797	1709	70964	80673	

Annex 3 Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Programmes

FOR	CHANGES IN	NATURE
Children	Health and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased chances of survival; reduced morbidity • Improved hygiene • Improved weight for age • Improved height for age • Improved micro-nutrient balance
	Psycho-Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cognitive development (thinking, reasoning) • Improved social development (relationship to others) • Improved emotional development (self image, security) • Improved language skills
	Progress and Performance in Primary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher chance of entering • Less chance of repeating • Better performance • Higher learning
Adults	General knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and hygiene • Nutrition (related to own)
	Attitudes and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Skills • Health and Hygiene • Preventive medical practices • Opportune treatment • Nutrition; improved diet
	Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self- esteem • Better husband-wife relationships • Better parent-child relationships • Better child-child relationships
	Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased market for programme-related goods • Care-givers freed to improve or seek employment • New employment opportunities created by programme
Communities	Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation • Spaces for play • New multi-purpose facilities
	Social Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved solidarity • Community projects benefiting • Increased participation of women

FOR	CHANGES IN	NATURE
Institutions and Departments	Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination of activities through grouping or changed users practices
	Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover age
	Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater ability/confidence and/or changes in organisation • Improved methods and curriculum
Country	Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier population; reduced days lost to sickness • A more literate, educated population • Reduced delinquency • Greater social participation; improved labour force • Reduced fertility and early births • Reduced social inequalities

(Ghana National Commission on Children, Final Draft of ECCD Policy, Appendix A)