

OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CHINA, INDIA, ETHIOPIA, AND TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the status of early childhood education in China, India, Ethiopia, and Tanzania over the past 25 years while sharing crucial new policies targeting early childhood (EC) education and EC teacher education. The paper targets four main areas such as 1) opportunities for quality pre- and in-service training of EC teachers; 2) distribution/availability of quality EC teachers; 3) perceived status of EC teachers; and 4) financial support for EC education in each country. Conclusions and recommendations for the Post-2015 area are also provided.

Key Words: early childhood education; early childhood policy; early childhood teacher education; international perspectives

INTRODUCTION

There have been major changes and developments in early childhood education, early childhood teacher education, and early childhood teacher education policies around the world over the past 25 years. In 1990, representatives from over 100 countries voted to adopt the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand. This set the tone for the changes to come in policies with regard to early childhood education and early childhood teacher education. At the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, countries reaffirmed their commitment to the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All and established the Dakar Framework for Action. During the meetings, countries also highlighted the status of early childhood education and early childhood teacher preparation as part of EFA Goal 1: “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” (UNESCO, 2000, p. 8). Over the past 14 years, many additional changes have taken place around the world and we now face another crucial time in the developments of international early childhood and early childhood teacher education policies as representatives of nearly all countries gather again to set new goals for the future as part of the Sustainable Development Goals or Post-2015 agenda (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014).

The purpose of this article is to inform readers about early childhood teacher education and early childhood teacher education policies in two main regions of the world – Asia and the Pacific and Sub Saharan Africa. More specifically, past and current initiatives from China and India as well as Ethiopia and Tanzania will be introduced. In the following parts of the paper, we will provide an overview of early childhood education in the four countries followed by challenges of early childhood teacher education and related policies, and conclusions as well as policy recommendations for the Post-2015 era.

China

During the turn of the 21st century, China underwent dramatic economic (e.g., joining WTO and shifting to market-driven economy), social (e.g., huge waves of workers migrating from rural to urban areas), and political transformations (e.g., moving away from centralization of state power towards diversification and local autonomy). Consequently, early childhood education (ECE), and early childhood (EC) teachers and their careers also went through tremendous changes. Formal ECE in the form of kindergartens serving children ages 3-6 now plays an important role in the Chinese society as well as in children's development (Zhu & Wang, 2005). In 2000, 45% of children of ages 3-6, about 23 million, were being cared for and educated in 180,000 kindergartens (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2002).

Three legislations and policies issued by the Ministry of Education during this time had profound effects on ECE: (1) The Program Outline for Children's Development in the 21st Century (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2001b) set the goal of providing 3-year-kindergarten education for children ages 3-6 in cities or in relatively developed areas and one-year pre-primary education in rural and remote areas; (2) The Guiding Framework for Kindergarten Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2001a) provided curriculum guidelines that emphasized children as active learners and teachers' purposeful and facilitating role (Liu & Feng, 2005); and (3) The national strategy of Governments Withdraw and Private Sectors Step In (國退民進) has shifted ECE funding from planned financing by the central government to self-financing regulated by the market (Li & Wong, 2008).

All the policies and strategies issued and implemented around 2000 have led to mixed results. On one hand, the new curriculum requirement and national ECE goals, as well as the newly introduced market force in ECE (e.g., kindergartens now have finance incentive to establish unique curriculum model to attract parents) have unleashed unprecedented curriculum innovations and reform efforts across the country. On the other hand, withdrawing public funding and shifting to the market model of relying on the private sector for kindergarten funding has led to the closure of many underfunded public kindergartens and drastic privatization of kindergartens. Due to lack of regulation, teachers' rights and pay in these private kindergartens are often uneven and lack protection. Consequently, many experienced EC teachers have left the field or retired, and ECE is suffering from the most severe brain drain (Li & Wang, in press).

These economic and social transformations also lead to worrisome urban-rural gap in access to kindergarten (UNESCO, 2007). Urbanization and industrialization of the society have driven more and more people to the cities for jobs and better lives. However, without Hukou, the unique residence permit system in China, the migrant workers are not allowed to send their children to the kindergartens in the city where they stay. All registered kindergartens are set up to meet the needs of the city children, thus the migrant parents have to send their children to those unregistered private kindergartens (which are neglected by the governments) or have to leave their young children behind at their hometown in the countryside to be cared for by grandparents or other relatives (Li & Wang, in press).

India

Historically, the care of young children up to the age of six years was the responsibility of family. However, with changing times, the government has now recognized the importance of providing care and education for children, particularly those from disadvantaged families. Currently, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in India is provided by three agencies: 1) The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)- a government of India

program, 2) The Private, and 3) The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) sectors (Kaul & Sankar, 2009).

ICDS, a major player in services for young children and families was established in 1975 to serve the nutritional and educational needs of disadvantaged children from birth through six years of age and the nutritional needs of pregnant mothers. ICDS is considered to be the world's largest agency providing services for young children and families. The second largest ECCE provider is the private sector that delivers assistance where the care and education are uneven in quality in both urban and rural areas (Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012). These are often funded by trusts, religious groups, tuition fee collected from parents, and other international funding sources. These programs vary from a minimalist to accelerated academic programs.

The main unit of service delivery under the ICDS scheme is through community Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), literally meaning *courtyard centers*. The government mandates that there be one Anganwadi Center for 800 people, with a minimum requirement of 400. There has been a 29% increase in the number of such centers operating in India, from 1,013,000 million in 2007-08 to 1,305,000 million in 2012-13 and on an average, the student to Anganwadi Worker (AWW) ratio in 2011-2012 was reported to be at 29:1 (Department of Women and Child Development, n. d). Among the many tasks they perform, the Anganwadi workers are expected to provide preschool and health education and administer the supplementary nutrition program to children and pregnant women. Because there are no standards and norms or accreditation, there are wide disparities amongst programs as acknowledged in the 2012 National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy document (Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012). The curriculum at these centers is designed to be stimulating, engaging and play based experiential learning.

It is worth noting here that the government acknowledges that there is no consistency or standards/indicators or any regulatory norms that bind the different service deliveries. There are no reliable data on the actual number of children attending ECCE (Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012) programs or on the breakdown of the delivery/type of services. According to the 2011 Census, 75.7 million children (48%) out of 158.7 million children below the six-years category are believed to be covered under the ICDS (Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011). In addition, children can attend Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Centers (a flagship program of the Government of India for the achievement of the Universalization of Elementary Education) and other schools that have pre-primary wings (Sheeranjan & Awathi, 2010).

Ethiopia

Secular preschools were not part of the formal system of education in Ethiopia up until recent times. Traditionally, church schools provided basic education for boys of age four to six in which children learned Ge'ez alphabets and numbers (Silassie & Tamerat, 1970). Mosques also played similar roles of educating boys in the fundamentals of reading. In both cases, the teachers were religious leaders without pedagogical training in early childhood care and education. Swedish and American volunteers staffed the earliest secular preschools that were part of the international schools mainly in the capital. The expatriate volunteers were the educators for local preschools that were opened in urban areas. Later, female community workers assumed the role of the early childhood educators. Even though a training program of six months for preschool teachers was opened in 1971 in Addis Ababa, workers without

training could run rural childcare centers (Tefera, 2009). Up to the year 2000, in the backdrop of lesser attention to early childhood care and education (ECCE), the status and careers of early childhood care and education teachers in Ethiopia have been at a meagre stage.

The early childhood care and education provision in Ethiopia is primarily in the hands of private, religious intuitions, and community based organizations. The role of the government in providing ECCE services has been lacking. The absence of the government's roles in ECCE has been viewed as a major challenge. In addressing this challenge, the government came up with the 2010 National Policy Framework (Ministry of Education, 2010) which is instrumental to provide standards, guidance, and regulations of ECCE for governmental and non-government service providers.

Currently, early childhood care and education services are provided by the private, faith based intuitions, communities, and nongovernmental organizations. These organizations are established in urban centers. Particularly, the facilities that are run by private centers follow the market which is mainly in urban cities and this situation inevitably created disparity in the access to ECCE between rural urban areas (Orkin, Yadete, & Woodhead, 2012). With the 2010 National Policy Framework, the expectation is to organize integrated approaches involving community-based institutions including elementary schools in order to provide desirable level of services of ECCE. This integrated and multifaceted approach that involves collaborations of intergovernmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and local institutions has the potential to address the rural-urban disparity in access to ECCE (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Tanzania

In Tanzania, like in many other developing countries, around 2000 there were no clear strategies regarding early childhood education teachers and careers despite the fact that the Education and Training Policy 1995 (ETP 1995) was in place. The Education and Training Policy 1995 states clearly that pre-primary education is "for children aged between 5 and 6 years shall be formalized and integrated in the Formal School System" (The United Republic of Tanzania, 1995, p. 13). The policy directed all public primary schools throughout the country to establish pre-primary classes (Mtahabwa, 2010; The United Republic of Tanzania, 1995; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2009).

Currently, the main providers of ECE services in Tanzania are private. They are religious institutions, private individuals, and companies. Some of these institutions also train EC educators. Although the government is increasingly getting involved in regulating education provision in Tanzania; ECE is largely unregulated. Private teacher trainings, private daycares, and pre-primary schools are regulated by the market. Some schools are charging very high school fees and therefore serving the rich while those that are charging reasonable fees provide poor services. In addition, private schools are entirely funded by school fees and they do not receive any subsidization from the government. Some of these schools import teachers from neighboring countries or even Europe and America depending on their ownership. The goal is to make profit at the expense of quality and relevance of education. Private schools are also increasing in number every year and they are associated with the decline of the quality of education in public schools because government leaders are sending their children to private fee paying schools, thus are less concerned with the quality of public education.

Further, there is a wide disparity between rural and urban sites with more trained teachers found in urban areas. Books, curriculum, and guidelines can more easily be found in urban areas as compared to rural areas. There are no existing statistics of qualified teacher disparities between urban and rural but according to Mtahabwa (2010), “there is high possibility for the former (urban) to be at a better position in this regard than the latter. Most certified teachers would tend to prefer working in urban areas where social services are better than in rural areas” (p. 359). Since, there are no incentives to motivate qualified teachers to work in rural areas, ECE schools and centers in rural areas are staffed by mostly unqualified teachers.

CHALLENGES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION AND RELATED POLICIES

Following some basic country-specific information about early childhood in the four target countries, this section provides information about a few main types of early childhood teacher preparation policies for each country. More specifically, status and policy information will be provided about 1) Opportunities for quality pre- and in-service training of EC teachers; 2) Distribution/availability of quality EC teachers; 3) Perceived status of EC teachers; and 4) Financial support for ECE.

China

Opportunities for Quality Pre- and In-Service Training of EC Teachers

The 1996 Regulations for Kindergartens (Chinese Ministry of Education, 1996) explicitly stipulated basic requirements for principals, teachers, child-care workers, and medical staff while the National Requirements on Kindergarten Principals’ Duty and Qualifications (Ministry of Education, 1996) specified responsibilities and qualification of administrators of ECE facilities (Wong & Pang, 2002). The minimum requirement for kindergarten teachers was to have graduated from ECE normal schools (3-year senior high school equivalence of vocation education) or from senior high schools with kindergarten teacher certificates acquired through qualifying examinations. In addition to these qualifications, principals were also to have considerable work experience and in-service training in administration (Wong & Pang, 2002; Zhai & Gao, 2008). Due to the increasing demand for high quality early childhood programs, the qualification of ECE staff has also increased—moving from normal school education to 2-year college beyond senior high school. In many large cities or developed areas, bachelor or even master’s degree is now required. This leads to the fast growth of EC teacher education programs at 4-year universities, which brings many challenges such as how a traditionally research/theory oriented ECE program can adequately prepare classroom teachers with practical knowledge and strong hands-on experiences (Zhu & Zhang, 2008). Further, in 2010, the State Council issued Guidelines on Developing Preschool Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2010a) and placed high priority on strengthening ECE staff development through multiple approaches.

Both the Regulations for Kindergartens (Chinese Ministry of Education, 1996) and the Guiding Framework for Kindergarten Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2001a) served as de facto national curriculum. Both documents emphasized that teachers needed to adapt the curriculum based on their students and local contexts. This approach, however, did not work well to accommodate diverse approaches to early childhood service provisions. In 2012, the Ministry took a different approach by setting children’s learning and development

standards instead and issued the Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Ages 3-6 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2012a). The Guidelines identified trajectories and progressions of children's learning and development in different areas and domains (e.g., Arts, Language arts, Health, Social Studies, and Science); set specific learning and development goals toward the end of each development age groups: 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6; and suggested educational and instructional activities to promote development.

The debates of EC educators' skill in China often center on skills (e.g., singing, drawing) vs. pedagogy (e.g., ability to adjust instruction based on children's individual needs), or theory/research skills vs. classroom practical skills. The Kindergarten Teachers Professional Standards (trial version) issued by Chinese Ministry of Education (2012b) has made laudable efforts addressing these debates. It uses "child-centered, ethics-oriented, ability-focused and life-long learning" principles to guide teachers' knowledge and skills and defines them in three major dimensions and 14 domains.

Distribution/Availability of Quality EC Teachers

In the Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2010b), it is emphasized that the top priority of developing ECE should be placed in rural, impoverished, remote and border areas, and into ethnic autonomous areas. It is viewed imperative to provide all children--especially those left behind by parents who migrate to cities for better work--with universal and high quality ECE. These priorities are reinstated in the Guidelines on Developing Preschool Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2010a).

The problem of insufficient professional development opportunities is severe for ECE teachers in rural and remote areas, especially in the vast middle and west regions of China. Since 2011, the central government has allocated funds to develop research-based innovative teacher training models and train those teachers as part of National Plan of Training Primary/Middle School Teachers (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2011b). The goals are to provide national-level quality training and professional development to 10,000 selected kindergarten principals and teacher leaders within the first 3 years, and for local governments to complete the first round of training for all EC principals and teachers.

Perceived Status of EC Teachers

Early childhood teachers in China have long suffered low status and low pay, especially those in rural areas--who constitute of 80% of the total ECE staff in the country. The central government has taken several concrete legislations and other measures to remedy this situation. First, the Guidelines on Developing Preschool Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2010a) was issued that placed high priority on strengthening ECE staffing through multiple approaches. Specifically, it provided guidelines in the areas of: reinforcing the teachers' right and status that are stipulated by the Teacher Law of People's Republic of China (Chinese Ministry of Education, 1994); guaranteeing teacher pay; improving teacher hiring and evaluation systems; rewarding high performing principals and teachers; and providing salary incentive to teachers who work in rural and remote areas.

Second, the Kindergarten Teachers Professional Standards (trial version) (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2012b) provided specific requirements for teachers' professional skills and knowledge. The Standards have been used to guide pre-service and in-service teachers'

professional development as well as teacher hiring, promotion, and evaluation. It is believed that a clear articulation of standards for ECE teachers helps promote professionalism and provides a basis for teachers to demand respect and status in the society.

Finally, the Ministry of Education set one of its 2014 top priorities as drafting the “Early Childhood Education Law.” The law aims to provide legal bases and further clarifications for critical issues such as the status of ECE within the whole educational system; the role of governments, administration system, and funding system; the role of public and private sectors; ECE teachers’ status and pay scales; evaluation and accountability system; etc. The law is expected to explicitly require the status, qualification, and pay of ECE teachers to be equal to those of primary school teachers; equal pay for public and private kindergarten teachers; and establish an evaluation system consistent with the one for primary and middle school teachers (Pang & Han, 2010).

Financial support for ECE

In recent years, the governments at all levels have started to realize the devastating effect of unchecked market force and reducing public input and funding for kindergartens. To address these challenges, several initiatives and legislations by the central government have been passed and funding from both the central and local governments have been increased. The Guidelines on Developing Preschool Education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2010a) issued by the State Council specifically discussed diverse funding approaches in ECE. For example, through tax incentive, private sectors were encouraged to invest in low cost and high quality kindergartens that serve the public. The Guidelines also encouraged others forms of financial incentives (e.g., contracting, reducing fee for land usage) and professional support (e.g., “lending” time of teacher leaders of public kindergartens) to help improve the educational quality of this type of kindergarten. The Guidelines also pledged to treat these kindergartens equally as public ones in the registration and approval process, accreditation, and teacher training and evaluation.

A year later, the Chinese Ministry of Education (2011a) issued a policy document regarding increasing ECE funding and set funding priority for programs serving disadvantaged groups of children and families: 1) children in rural and impoverished areas: repurposing abandoned school buildings for kindergartens, adding one-year pre-primary classes in existing primary schools, and developing mobile kindergartens or teacher training hubs; 2) migrant workers’ families and children in cities: supporting non-public EC programs that serve this population, developing diverse programs and approaches to meet the needs of this group; 3) providing high quality teacher training to teachers in impoverished middle and west regions of China; and 4) providing financial aids to poor families, children with special needs or orphans for their preschool education.

India

Opportunities for Quality Pre- and In-Service Training of EC Teachers

There is a lack of professional pathways for teachers’ advancement in India. The Twelfth Five Year Plan 2012-2017 (Government of India, 2013) discusses career pathways for professional advancement based on higher qualifications. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) training institutions proposed linking higher qualifications (degree/diploma/certificate courses, etc.) to career progression of ICDS functionaries.

Unfortunately, these remain only on paper and no details are provided as to when and how to implement them.

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) is another agency that develops guidelines for teacher preparation programs in Early Childhood Care and Education and it currently provides training to various levels of ICDS functionaries in the four regional centers, 28 Middle Level Training Centers, and 498 Anganwadi Worker Training Centers located across the country to train close to 1.3 million Anganwadi workers (Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2013).

It appears that early childhood teacher education programs and the training for the Integrated Child Development Services run parallel and the durations, expectations, and academic rigor vary. By its own admission, the Government of India struggles with the lack of a database to bring all of the programs under one umbrella and to develop standards and norms for teacher education programs. This has certainly paralyzed the government's ability to assess the effectiveness of teacher training programs (Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development, 2012). According to Muralidaran (2013), "India has demonstrated considerable progress in the past decade on improving primary school access, infrastructure, pupil-teacher ratios, teacher salaries, and student enrolment. Nevertheless, student learning levels and trajectories are disturbingly low" (p. 1). Thus, the lack of high quality training impacts teacher effectiveness and teacher in-service programs remain largely neglected.

Distribution/Availability of Quality EC Teachers

In 2000-2001, the number of out-of-school children in India was over 20 million (International Education Statistics, 2007). By 2013, it dropped down to about 1 million (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013). This improvement is attributed to another government policy, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Universalization of Elementary Education) that was launched in 2001 (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2007). Bringing in more than 18 million children to elementary education placed extraordinary demand on large scale teacher appointments. As of 2013, close to 3 million individuals taught in the primary/elementary schools as opposed to only about 2 million in 2001-2002 (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2013). However, many of these teachers are untrained/under trained and only about 40% of them received any in-service training (Kidwai et al., 2013). Clearly, there is not enough teachers to meet the demand.

Perceived Status of EC Teachers and Financial Support for EC

The general perception is that anyone can care for and educate children. Therefore, the early childhood education profession is seen more as "custodial care." The remunerations provided are very low, which is yet another major challenge. Anganwadi workers and helpers receive only an honorarium. These workers are expected to maintain nearly 30 different records. They are paid a meagre monthly income of Rs. 4,500 (approx. \$68) and Rs. 2,500 (approx. \$38) is the Federal Government's contribution for helpers (Deccan Herald, 2013). However, one state has announced to increase the monthly remuneration for Anganwadi to Rs. 7,000 (\$106) and the helper's to Rs. 4,500 (The Hindu, 2015). According to the International Labour Organization (2014), primary school teachers worked longer hours than the Anganwadi workers. The average salary of a primary school teacher in a public school is Rs.

167,266 (approx. \$2,788) per year. Teachers, in private schools earn much less and there have been cases where salaries for teachers in private schools were not paid regularly (The Times of India, 2013). Thus, there are many obstacles to overcome in order for the government to provide quality teacher education programs.

Ethiopia

Opportunities for Quality Pre- and In-Service Training of EC Teachers

Since the year 2000, the training of teachers for early childhood care and education in Ethiopia has been receiving attention because of the interest to improve quality. Qualified kindergarten teachers follow a one-year training program offered by Teacher Training Institutes. Candidates are admitted into the programs after the completion of grade 10 level of education. These training programs, however, are limited and EC teacher education in Ethiopia is still at its early stage of development. 2010 National Policy Framework provides guidelines and standards for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) that would also contribute to the recognition and improvement of the status and careers of ECCE teachers in Ethiopia (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The 2010 National Policy Framework also outlines the overall approaches to the pedagogical components of early childhood care and education. These guidelines determine the types of skills and knowledge ECCE teachers need to acquire and demonstrate. The existing teaching force and workers as well as potential candidates are required to have skills, knowledge, and values necessary to enable children to develop the fundamental prerequisite skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and social and emotional competence, through child centered, developmentally appropriate, and culturally relevant practices and materials. The teaching and learning approaches are aspired to be based on play and the holistic development of children (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The recent framework is also developing an awareness about the need for ECCE programs. As part of the policy framework, a national ECCE Expertise Center is being opened at the Addis Ababa University for teacher education and research programs. Most of ECCE matters, however, are still left for private centers, faith based institutions, community centers and organizations--except the new initiative to include a "0" grade into primary schools as a preparatory grade that can facilitate the transition to grade one (Orkin, Yadete, & Woodhead, 2012). Another new approach in the recent national framework is referred to as Child-to-Child Initiative in which older children are trained to teach younger children with a focus on promoting school readiness and the development of basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. With this strategy, students from grade 5 and 6 are provided with orientations to become educators for the preschool-aged-children in their communities. The goal is to provide foundational skills and readiness for six-year-olds. This approach is considered to be a low cost strategy to provide some type of early childhood education in Ethiopia (Ministry of Education, 2010; UNICEF, 2010b).

Distribution/Availability of Quality EC Teachers

The 2010 ECCE policy framework initiative also provides direction for the establishment of preschools across the country. Part of the initiative includes the training of early childhood education teachers. The launching of ECCE Expertise Center at the Addis Ababa University, and eventually at other regional universities, would provide opportunities for training and professional development of early childhood educators. Expanding the existing programs such as the one at Kotebe Teachers College that runs an early childhood teacher education

program in Ethiopia can enhance opportunities for professional development of ECCE educators and professionals.

Perceived Status of EC Teachers and Financial support for ECE

As mentioned above, the role of the government is limited in ECCE, therefore matters of teachers' status, salary, and qualifications are left to private institutions, NGOs, and other organizations. The new initiative of adding a "0" grade to primary education could require the participation of elementary school teachers in ECCE. Irrespective of the government's role, ECCE in Ethiopia faces lack of teacher training opportunities, low teacher salaries, and high teacher turnover (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Tanzania

Opportunities for Quality Pre- and In-Service Training of EC Teachers

Although the Education and Training Policy 1995 did not have an implementation plan (Mtahabwa, 2010), the government identified a few teaching colleges in Tanzania to provide training for pre-primary teachers who were in-service primary teachers in public schools that had to undergo one year of residential training. Unfortunately, it is not clear how many teachers were actually trained through this program. In 2003, early childhood education (ECE) became one of the compulsory courses for all pre-service teachers in teacher training colleges, however, there were no concrete plans in place from the government on how it could recruit teachers specialized to teach ECE courses.

In 2001, a comprehensive Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) was launched that contained the following components: a) expanding enrolment; b) improving the quality of teaching and learning, c) building capacity within the education system and other public and private sectors, and d) strengthening institutional arrangements that support the planning and delivery of education services (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). Unfortunately, this plan did not include ECE in its first phase and therefore, EC teachers did not receive any training during the implementation of PEDP.

A few years later, the government developed and issued the Basic Standards for Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Tanzania (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2009) and recently it also developed the Minimum Standards and Operational Guidelines for Day Care Centers and Pre-Primary Schools in Tanzania (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2012). However, there are some challenges—including dissemination. Many of these documents developed by the government did not reach the schools in time or they never got there. In 2009, the government acknowledged that despite some progress in the education sector, there were still some challenges regarding access to early childhood education. This also includes the training and recruitment of adequate qualified and competent teachers to match the expanded enrolment (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2009).

Distribution/Availability of Quality EC Teachers

Although there are some success stories in this area, there are still many challenges especially the high need for well qualified EC teachers. The increase in the number of primary schools and the policy directive of each primary school to have a pre-primary class have not kept pace with teacher training and recruitment. The number of schools has also continued to grow every year which has led to an even higher demand for EC teachers. For example, it was

projected that the demand for trained pre-primary teachers in 2008/2009 was 15,989.7 and 48,867.9 by 2012/2013 (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2008).

In attempts to address the growing demand of well qualified teachers in public schools in Tanzania, the government developed The Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) 2008-2013. The main goal of this strategy was “to have and sustain adequate numbers of competent teachers and tutors to effectively support the pre-primary [ECE], primary, secondary, adult and non-formal education, as well as Teachers’ Colleges” (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2008, p. 11). The implementation of TDMS is also attempting to improve the quality of teaching that is related to teacher professionalism, management, and motivation.

The need for qualified EC educators is well debated in Tanzania but the challenge remains that there is a serious shortage of teachers. According to the Basic Standards for Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Tanzania (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2009), one indicator among many of a well-trained and competent teacher is a “Certificate [certified] teacher with ‘O’ Level secondary education and teacher training with components of pre-primary and inclusive education or specializing in pre-primary methods” (p. 25). Unfortunately, there are a few teachers with these qualifications in ECE classes especially in public schools.

Perceived Status of EC Teachers and Financial support for ECE

Since 2000, there have been some advocacy strategies within and outside the government to improve the status of ECE in Tanzania. In 2004, efforts were made to bring different stakeholders from the government, civil society organizations, and development partners together to initiate strategies that would put ECE on the government’s agenda. These efforts succeeded to include ECE in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2005). In 2007, the campaign for the Education for All (EFA) Goal 1 (UNESCO, 2007) was launched at the national level in Tanzania. This launch was also accompanied by the launch of the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Service Delivery Initiative--which brought together different stakeholders to plan and implement services for young children in 2007, then later in 2010 as well (UNICEF, 2010a). The EFA 2007 national launch was also followed by the Eastern and Southern Africa Sub Regional Conference on Early Childhood. The conference was hosted by the government of Tanzania in 2008 (World Forum Foundation, 2014). In 2012, Tanzania convened The First Biennial National Forum on Early Childhood Development in Arusha (ECD Forum Tanzania, 2014). All these initiatives have driven some positive changes by promoting the agenda for ECE in Tanzania. Also, the government’s commitment to meet the EFA targets by 2015 has been another positive factor in this area. It is important to acknowledge that the development partners especially UNESCO and UNICEF have played vital roles as well by supporting different initiatives including provision, technical support, and other resources.

The lower status and pay of early childhood educators is a serious problem facing the sector because many people especially young teachers do not want to join the profession that they associate with low status and low pay. Many teachers in ECE are old women closer to their retirement and many of them have no prior training in ECE. In efforts to improve the situation, the government has introduced special cohorts in teacher training colleges where pre-service teachers will specialize either in ECE or in primary education. They will have the same qualifications and same levels of salaries and all of them will be employed on equal

terms. It is expected that this will increase teachers' status and it will attract young teachers and men to specialize in ECE. It is also hoped that through these initiatives all schools will have well trained and motivated teachers.

Given that these initiatives are relatively new, it is hard to judge whether they are successful in addressing EC teacher preparation challenges. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to witness unprecedented attention, efforts, and money spent on early childhood education and early childhood teacher education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY PRIORITIES FOR POLICIES RELATED TO THE POST-2015 ERA

As indicated above, there have been major developments in the areas of early childhood teacher preparation and related policies in the countries of China, India, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. These developments targeted the following areas: 1) opportunities for quality pre- and in-service training of early childhood (EC) teachers, 2) distributions/availability of quality EC teachers, 3) perceived status of EC teachers, and 4) financial support for EC education. The focus countries illustrated a number of policies that increased the quality of EC teacher preparation in the target countries by identifying the necessary content, skills, and dispositions of EC teacher candidates. Some government initiatives were also shared that show promise in establishing early childhood and early childhood teacher education programs in remote, rural, and impoverished areas of countries that would also have an effect on teacher appointments. Further, specific government initiatives were described to improve the perceived status of EC teachers in societies as well as to increase funding for programs serving young children. Despite the developments indicated above, it is imperative that governments continue their work on their current initiatives and set new priorities in several areas related to early childhood teacher preparation as indicated below.

The Post-2015 agenda should consider the SABER (2013) Teacher Policy Goals that target a wide-range of policies including recruitment of quality teacher candidates, providing quality educational content with a balanced combination of methodology and practice, appropriate assessment, professional development opportunities based on needs, and motivation. Specific, measurable, and achievable goals should be identified based on these goals for which all countries should be held accountable on an ongoing basis. According to UNESCO (2014) "strong national policies that make quality teaching and learning a high priority are essential to ensure that all children in school actually obtain the skills and knowledge they are meant to acquire" (p. 216).

Ensuring that the quality education content for teacher preparation programs also include 21st century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.) should also be a necessity. UNESCO (2014, p. 295) states that "global citizenship education includes issues such as environmental sustainability and peace-building—which require core transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, leadership and advocacy—and the promotion of core values such as tolerance, appreciation of diversity and civic responsibility." Further, "it is important to look beyond academic achievement and cognitive skills to emphasise non-cognitive competencies and skills and to re-emphasize the importance of education for social cohesion, creativity, and social and emotional development. Education for the future requires revisiting the purpose of education from an ethical and social perspective, and not simply an economic one" (UNESCO Bangkok, 2012, p. 5).

In addition, the crisis situations affecting teachers and children in natural, man-made, and/or recent health-related disaster areas should be addressed and mitigated by policies. UNESCO (2006) suggests that teachers could help “restore the core values of their societies by enabling pupils to recover their lost childhood” (p. 24). This is considered challenging especially when teachers themselves become one of the first victims of disasters. Teachers should be trained to be able to provide basic coping and social/emotional support for children in conflict, post-conflict, and crises situations as well as how to establish peaceful learning environments that foster education in emergencies.

Finally, increasing the financial and social support for education is also needed. All governments must understand the key role of the first five years in a child’s life and the economic/social implications of optimal child development for the future of their countries. As indicated by UNESCO (2000, p. 17) “governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources to all components of basic education” which will have the potential to improve the status of teachers in all societies. These investments in basic education are hoped to bring returns with significant impact on societies.

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