Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE: "WORKFORCE, QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT"

This meeting was held at the OECD Headquarters in Paris on 11-12 May 2009

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The Group ADOPTED the agenda.

2. ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

2. The Group ADOPTED the summary record of the 4th meeting of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

3. Through written procedures we have received a resignation notice from:

- Mr. Karl LeQuesne (New Zealand)

The Network elected the following officers to the bureau of the Network:

- Ms. Kari Jacobsen (Norway) – Chair
- Ms. Mugyeong Moon (Korea)
- Mr. Keisuke Otani (Japan)
- Mr. Arturo Sáenz (Mexico)
- Ms. Luisa Ucha Silva (Portugal)
- Mr. François Weldon (Canada)

4. OPENING REMARKS

4. Ms. Deborah Roseveare, Head of the Education and Training Policy Division, welcomed the participants. She underlined the objectives of the meeting and gave a brief update on the status of the network with respect to the new project.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME OF THE MEETING: WORKFORCE SUPPLY, QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

5. Ms. Miho Taguma, Policy Analyst in the Education and Training Policy Division, underlined the importance of teacher training and qualifications for delivering quality ECEC services. Additionally, she outlined the scene for sections 6-8 of this meeting. The topics of these sections are the different country policies on enhancing the workforce supply, improving the staff’s qualifications and the opportunities for up-skilling the workers. Country experiences will be shared in order to learn from each other’s (best) practices.
6. Ms. Taguma also depicted the challenges in maintaining and increasing the workforce supply. Within the early childhood and care sector there is a high turnover rate and low entry rate of workers. In addition, the low qualification levels of the ECEC workforce are identified as an important issue. A particular challenge seems to be the up-skilling of lower qualified workers and teachers. But there is little research evidence that shows that this is an effective method within ECEC. Due to these issues, there is a shortage of knowledge on these topics in the ECEC sector, ECEC-services generally have low(er) qualified personnel, and there are often not enough opportunities to face these challenges.

6. **EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO ENSURE A STABLE WORKFORCE SUPPLY**

7. Representatives of different countries of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care shared their experiences and (implementation of) policies to ensure a stable, or improved, workforce supply:

8. Mr. Christer Tofténius from Sweden presented an update on the education policies in his country. He noted that Sweden has very flexible qualification regulations for staff members, which needs to be revised. He added that the early education sector suffers from a great shortage in personnel and that this is a growing issue of concern. Due to these factors, the Swedish government proposed several adjustments to the Education Act. The proposal includes better requirements for ECEC workers in the nearby future. There are also incentives to advance the quality of the classes by improving teachers’ educational curriculum.

9. Dr. Arturo Sáenz Ferral (Mexico) explained that although the country has a wide variety of ECEC services because of the growing multiculturalism and diversity, seven million children, age 0 to 3 years, are not attending any form of pre-school service or daycare center due to economic and geographical disadvantages. Educating workers and attracting people to work in the sector, is therefore a priority for Mexico. He also stressed out the need for good indicators and criteria concerning the quality of ECEC services, which should help develop the sector further.

10. Marissa Krenn-Wache (Austria) mentions that Austria has several forms of training institutes for ECEC educators. There is a five year teacher-training (5376 hours) for teenagers and a two-year teacher-training for people of 19 years of age and older. The social pedagogical tradition in the country characterizes the development of ECEC: the ECEC sector provides both an educational and social approach. In 2008, a new governmental program has been instituted, which includes an upgrade in the training of educators and other suggestions for improvements.

11. Pauline Jones (England) presented the framework of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) in England. It is a status that can be obtained by educators in the ECEC sector which proves that they are certified and qualified teachers of young children. Ms. Jones explained what the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) does, how EYPS has been developed over time, what has been achieved and what progress has been made. CWDC has a double role: firstly it functions as a part of a sector skills council, and secondly as a workforce reform body. The main drivers of a progressive development are a strong government commitment and funding, and a focus on improving the quality of private ECEC settings. The EYPS can be obtained by meeting all the requirements and demonstrating through a national assessment that all the standards have been achieved. Although over 3,000 people have already achieved the status by now, there are plans to make more people meet the EYPS standards in the nearby future.
7. EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO ARRANGE ADEQUATE QUALIFICATIONS

12. The Network also discussed about the design and implementation of effective policies concerning qualifications for ECEC personnel. With the focus on different levels of qualifications, recognition of prior learning with work experience, the age ranges as to which different qualifications are covered under and the benefits of having a national or vocational qualification framework, the following speakers presented on behalf of their countries:

13. Mr. Mark Unwin (Australia) offered a brief overview of the frameworks which regulate the two paths in Australia towards obtaining qualifications in the ECEC sector. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) sets out standards for all post-secondary qualifications and therefore directly regulates the quality of qualifications of ECEC personnel. VET sector qualifications are regulated through the Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF), which sets the standards for the operation of training organisations registered to deliver training services and to issue VET qualifications. Under the AQTF there are national training packages and accredited courses which outline the qualifications, competencies and assessment criteria for specific areas of training. For the academic stream, the AQF is relevant in that it describes the purpose, context, learning outcomes, responsibility for assessment, pathways (including duration), authority to issue the qualification and the certification issued. In addition to the AQF, quality of the qualifications in the academic sector is ensured through agreed national protocols which outline processes and criteria for approval of higher education institutions and their courses, and the Australian Universities Quality Agency which conducts quality assurance processes and audits all government accreditation processes approximately every 5-7 years.

14. Mrs. Bea Buysse (Belgium) explained that because of the upcoming elections there were some difficulties with regard to the spread of information on ECEC policy plans in Belgium. She also pointed out that in Belgium there is no training course for care-givers in the public childcare sector, the sector which is most widely used. In addition, no evaluations on quality in the independent sector are required. Plus the country suffers from a very low entry-rate into the ECEC sector due to the low incentives for child carers and the geographical location of child care centres in Belgium.

15. Mrs. Danielle Despots (Canada) informed us on the statistical data regarding ECEC in Québec. She stressed the high turnover for caregivers although there are great incentives. There are high requirements for staff members including 1830 hours of specific ECEC training that is given to staff members including sociology, abilities to communicate, 660 hours of general training in language, physical education and philosophy and 500 hours of internship in work environment. Mrs. Despots mentioned that there are areas to improve including dialogue between the employers and unions as well as mentoring and employment diversity.

16. Pablo Rupin (Chile) explained that Chile is aiming to become a more integrated and developed nation. The training of professionals in ECEC is fundamental in the country’s development. There are over 500,000 children in the ECEC system. The requirements for personnel are dependent on their function: educators need to have university training and assistants need at least two years of technical high school education, complemented with a specialization training. To support improvement in educational development, Chile distributes full scholarships to a part of the students who wish to work in the sector.
8. POLICIES TO PROVIDE UPSKILLING OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES

17. The session focused on policies to provide upskilling opportunities for staff working in ECEC.

18. Mrs. Luisa Ucha Silva (Portugal) mentioned that ECEC caregivers in Portugal utilize a peer assessment strategy to assess each other. There is a high rate of quality ECEC educators in Portugal. Continuous training is mandatory for all workers in the ECEC sector & amounts to 25 hours per year in various courses and 50% of the training is specialized, and contributes to career progress.

19. Ms. Nada Pozar Matijasic (Slovenia) mentioned that there are several requirements for ECEC teachers and caregivers. All of them need to have at least a four-year university degree along with a specialized ECEC training. They are also required to have in-service training on an average of five days per year or 15 days every three years. The Ministry of Education provides financial incentives (payments) for participants of the training. The working hours for primary and secondary school teachers are 40 hours per week while pre-school educators work 30 hours per week.

9. NEW PROJECT PROPOSAL: ENCOURAGING QUALITY IN ECEC

20. Deborah Roseveare gave an overview of the new draft proposal for the division’s new project and outlined the importance of the project. Miho Taguma presented the draft proposal together with the overreaching policy question; new output types; scope of the project; expected outputs, tasks and timeline, and the mode of participation costs.

21. Ms. Frances Kelly (New Zealand), as a discussant, stressed the importance that the project focuses on governments' roles and capabilities in the ECEC sector. Some suggested questions for the project include: what gives the best return for different systems – direct government provision, municipality / regional provision, NGO’s, private not for profit and private for profit? What will work, and how, if government is not the owner? In particular how can ECEC initial education best support those who will be working in minority cultures, values and situations? If the biggest impact of ECEC is for the lowest socio-economic groups, what’s the minimum quality for universal subsidies, and what are the best tools to ensure minimise capture?

22. Ms. Mugyeon Moon (Korea), also as the second discussant, expressed that the proposal on Encouraging Quality in ECEC was generally clear and highly informative in terms of purposes, dimensions of quality (outcome, input, and process indicators), and proposed outputs. Among input indicators at a system level, Korea would be interested especially in the roles and responsibilities shared by central and local governments, the strategies to ensure public investment as well as public transparency of private centres, policy monitoring and evaluation, and a participatory approach for the quality improvement. Ms. Moon also mentioned that because quality issues for children under three years of age are becoming more relevant in many countries, the proposed output--policy tool box and policy dialogue seems very innovative and can contribute to improved policy making and implementation.

23. Several delegates stressed the need for prioritizing the selection of indicators by system level, project level and outcome indicators. There was strong feedback that the outcome indicators should be the focus of the project and that ETP should collaborate with DELSA on this respect. The delegates appreciated that system level input was built on the previous work of Starting Strong I and II.
24. In general, the feedback was positive. Most agreed on the opinion that the project was very interesting and timely. There was an appreciation of the target group ages of 0-6 years but it was also felt that the proposal needed to include scientific output as well and that the ECEC role of the Network was missing when refining the indicators. The feeling was that there should be a stronger link to outcomes rather than to the process and that the UNESCO and the European Commission could be more involved in this project.

10. DRAFT TEMPLATE FOR UPDATING COUNTRY PROFILES

25. Miho Taguma presented the "menu" for the exercise of updating country profiles. Countries were asked to select topics which should be covered in the template for updates, suggest priority items for updates, and agree how to publish the outputs. It was suggested that the updating exercise will be complemented by the DELSA's data collection and that the network will focus on the data and information that is of high policy priorities.

26. Dominic Richardson of the DELSA Division gave the Network an update on what is happening in DELSA and how this directly correlates to the new project of the ECEC Network. He gave us an insight on the data being collected in SPD with the child well-being database and Wikichild and how the country profiles would be implemented in collecting data. He mentioned that the country profiles would complement the work in SPD in helping to understand the early interventions and other areas including social expenditure data.

27. Overall the Network liked the idea of comparing results and publishing these on the website. Several delegates mentioned that they would comment in writing.

11. UPDATE FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

28. With the OECD ECEC Network aiming to explore opportunities to collaborate with other international organizations with respect to the new project, the European Commission and UNESCO made presentations.

29. Ms. Nora Milotay of the European Commission gave a presentation using the Commission’s work on Improving Competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for Cooperation on Schools (June 2008). "Early intensive multi-systemic approaches to ECEC can offer impressive long-term results, especially for the disadvantaged", she quoted. Currently, the Commission is in the process of identifying priority areas and working methods for future work in the ECEC field at European level. In this process, the 40 Quality Targets identified by the European Commission Childcare Network (1996), the recently published EACEA publication on Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities Through Early Childhood Education and Care (2009), and the forthcoming NESSE study Early Childhood Education and Care - Key Lessons from Research for Policy Makers are very helpful.

30. Ms. Paula Razquin and Ms. Yoshie Kaga (UNESCO) presented UNESCO's work in the field. The early childhood data collection and data sources in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) mostly cover only developing countries. The achievement of EFA Goal 1 is on early childhood and comes from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and several cross-country household surveys. UNESCO not only monitors but carries out policy analysis. UNESCO outlines that feature quality related issues include inter-ministerial collaboration on improving the training of early childhood staff. The ongoing UNESCO study on drawing policy lessons from integrating early childhood education and care pays close attention to the rationales and consequences of adopting options from the perspective of quality at different levels. Mr. Kaga mentioned that OECD’s work on
profiles and quality would contribute to the work on ECEC in non-OECD countries and would constitute valuable inputs to the 2010 World Conference on ECCE/ECEC, organised by UNESCO and the City of Moscow.

12. A WAY FORWARD

31. Ms. Kari Jacobsen, Chair of the Network, reflected on the meeting and how the Network could move forward effectively in making the new project a success. With the focus being on what would be the necessary sequencing of policy change, gaps of knowledge, priorities for research and evaluation, managing policy time lag, policy responses and strategies that have been effective and under what conditions, she expects that the Network will gain some interesting policy information.

32. Ms. Taguma outlined the action plan for refining the new project and sending out a formal letter with a project proposal seeking voluntary contributions by fall 2009. There will also be a questionnaire sent out to countries by fall 2009 and countries are encouraged to respond by mid-October 2009.

13. ANY OTHER ISSUES

33. The chair presented the chair’s summary and announced that the next meeting will be on ‘integration of education and care’ and is scheduled in Paris in December 2009.
Participants list for Education Policy Committee - Network on Early Childhood Education and Care - 5th Meeting: Workforce supply, qualifications and development / Liste des participants pour Comité des politiques d'éducation - Réseau sur l'accueil et l'éducation des jeunes enfants - 5ème réunion : Provision, qualification et formation de la main d'oeuvre


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