Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC): OUTCOMES

17-18 June 2013
Conference Centre Room CC7
OECD, Paris, France

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JT03342761

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DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC): OUTCOMES

1. The 13th meeting of the ECEC Network was held from 17-18 June 2013 at OECD Headquarters in Paris, France. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde (Norway) and was attended by 83 participants from 28 OECD countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, as well as by partner countries Croatia, Russia, Singapore, the European Commission, UNESCO, and the World Bank. The main objectives of the meeting were:

- Advance the work on the new project “Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development” in the Programme of Work 2013-14.
- Give opportunity to all participants to freely exchange their policy experiences with respect to the theme of the meeting "Outcomes".
- Serve as a clearing house of new policy issues on the theme of the meeting and facilitate discussions among researchers and policy-makers and among other international networks.

Adoption of the agenda and summary record of the 12th meeting

2. Following the opening of the meeting by Ms. Tove Mogstad-Slinde, the agenda [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC/A(2013)1/REV1] for the meeting was adopted, as well as the summary record of the 12th meeting [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC/M(2012)3].

Opening remarks

3. Ms. Barbara Ischinger, Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, welcomed participants, underlined the objectives of the meeting and reflected on the publications of the OECD related to ECEC. She highlighted the Policy Review “Social Cohesion for Korea” which advocates to channel more public spending on ECEC and the Economic Survey of Japan which advocates an increase in the availability of affordable, high quality childcare. She also informed the meeting about the newly available German and Korean translations of Starting Strong III and those in Japanese and Mandarin, which are under preparation.

Introduction and updates regarding the Programme of Work for 2013-14

4. Mr. Michael Davidson, Head of Division, informed the Network about the relevant work of other Committees, especially regarding the INES Working Party. He presented the IEA Early Childhood Education Study and provided an update on the ECEC Budget 2013-14. The Network:
• **NOTED** that compared with the original budget and scope of the project, there is a funding gap of EUR 306,000 if only the confirmed country contributions are received and of EUR 206,000 if prospective country contributions are also taken into account.

• **ASKED** the Secretariat to set out scenarios to manage the funding gaps.

5. Ms. Miho Taguma, Senior Policy Analyst, reported on progress in the three strands of the project for 2013-14, including the delivery of the literature and draft survey, and in the respective activities of the working groups. She presented the updated timeline and the challenges faced in the work. Ms. Taguma informed the Network about contributions made to other bodies and organisations. The Network:

• **NOTED** that Strand 1 is on track as planned, while Strand 2 has adjustments with the timeline and its expected outputs.

• **NOTED** that threshold number of countries for Strand 3 (four) has not been met for “monitoring quality” and, thus, countries could request an individual country review specific to their needs.

**Special session on ‘outcomes’**:

6. Mr. Jim Grieve (Canada) presented the preliminary findings of the thematic working group on ‘outcomes’ [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)8]. The thematic working group proposed common understandings for OECD learning and development that had the following guiding principles: child and family-centred, the view of the child, the view of the family, OECD commitment to quality programmes and services. He argued that the principles embedded in the framework place the emphasis on assessment for the purpose of learning. Members of the working group strongly supported investigating methods for assessing the development of a wide range of social and developmental outcomes under the following six priority headings: communication, cooperation and collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, character, community and citizenship.

7. Mr. Jim Grieve (Canada) gave a second presentation about the Early Development Index (EDI), a population-based instrument to assess early child development, which can be used to identify vulnerable neighbourhoods in which children’s development is at risk and action required. The EDI, albeit not based on individual children, takes into account physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication.

8. Mr. David De Silva (Australia) presented Australia's work on the National Quality Standard. The Australian National Quality Framework follows principles such as the importance of children’s rights and best interests, seeing children as successful, competent and capable learners, emphasise equity, inclusion and diversity, value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, respect and support the role of parents and families, expect best practice in the provision of ECEC. All areas of the National Quality Framework are outcomes-based and the National Quality Standard sets a national benchmark for ECEC services. Mr. De Silva emphasised that shifting away from a prescriptive system requires a cultural shift for services, educators and regulatory authorities.

9. Ms. Abigail Raikes (Unesco) presented the work on the Learning Metrics Task Force and gave an overview of where its work stands. The task force engages high-level political actors, technical experts and practitioners in a global consultation process to build consensus on standards (what learning is important for all children and youth?), measures and methods (how should learning outcomes be measured?) and implementation (how can measurement of learning improve education quality?). Six areas for global measurements were recommended for tracking, including two areas of educational inputs and four areas of learning outcomes. She reported that efforts are made at a global level to develop a school readiness
indicator. The next steps taken by the taskforce are to identify a range of possible measures that countries
can use to measure child development from birth to 8 years (with WHO, UNICEF as partners) and to
identify how best to use assessment data to inform practices and policies.

10. As result of the small discussion groups on outcomes, the Network:

- **AGREED** with the general direction of the proposed framework.
- **INDICATED** that the word “framework” could trigger unintended reactions and that applicability across different countries, with distinct pedagogical traditions and separate systems for different age groups, may be challenging.
- **INDICATED** that several member countries have developed and implemented national quality and early development instruments at different levels of sophistication.
- **INDICATED** that the proposed holistic view might not always be shared by parents who have experienced a different educational trajectory.
- **NOTED** the potential cost and risks involved in creating and disseminating outcome measures but **RECOGNISED** the opportunity that the Network has to influence OECD work in this area.
- **ASKED** the thematic working group to take stock of the current instruments in use, explore definitions of desired child outcomes and engage international researchers.
- **SUGGESTED** that the definitions of outcomes proposed by the thematic working group be revised, possibly considering areas such as health, well-being, motor development, and resilience.

**Session on strand 1: monitoring quality**

11. Mr. David De Silva (Australia) presented the preliminary findings of the working group on monitoring quality [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)5; EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)5/ANN1; EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)5/ANN2; EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)5/ANN3; EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)5/ANN4]. Acknowledging that quality ECEC is not a universal concept, Mr. De Silva suggested that quality ECEC service is driven by the following inter-related indicators: the quality of interactions between children and staff, educational programs to support learning and development, connections with family and community, service leadership and management, staff qualifications and training and staff-to-child ratios, physical environment requirements, health and safety requirements. He argued that a clear regulatory framework, such as regarding minimum standards, and effective monitoring are key for promoting quality ECEC services. He illustrated his points with the example of the Australian National Quality Framework.

12. Prof. Vladimir Sobkin, Director of the Center for Sociology of Education, Russian Academy of Education made a presentation on monitoring of parental attitudes to pre-school education in Russia. Drawing on studies in Moscow and Krasnoyarsk, he elaborated on equality considerations, and the role and priorities of parents. The new standard addresses socio-economic inequality, the change of family priorities and the schoolification of ECEC. Prof. Sobkin explained that the Vygotsky theory serves as a basis, with ‘play’ seen as a major activity and with a focus on curiosity.

13. Ms. Ineke Litjens, Policy Analyst, presented the draft literature review on monitoring quality [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)3]. In her presentation, Ms. Litjens provided an international overview of monitoring practices as well as the design and implementation of quality monitoring. In doing so, she referred to research evidence from several OECD countries. The Network:
• AGREED to provide written comments on the draft literature review by the end of July 2013.

14. Ms. Miho Taguma, Senior Policy Analyst presented the draft survey on monitoring quality for discussion. [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)6; EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)6/ANN1]. Asking for the Network’s suggestions, she clarified that the survey uses the same definitions and terminologies as the EURYDICE survey, where applicable. She also referred to the glossary which is under preparation by the EU Peer-Learning Activity. The draft network survey includes both closed and open-ended questions to reduce the time needed to respond and process results, whilst ensuring rich qualitative information. The Network was asked to indicate priority questions, which the Secretariat could consider and review the questions in finalising the survey. The Network

• AGREED to provide written comments on the draft survey by the end of July 2013.

15. As a result of the small discussion groups on Strand 1, monitoring quality, the Network:

• INDICATED that the regulatory/ legal status of monitoring differs across countries and depends on the concerned age group.

• INDICATED that in many cases monitoring focuses on service quality, staff competences, regulations and minimum standards

• SUGGESTED that the question on the regulatory/ legal status of monitoring should, with some modifications, be kept as a priority question.

• INDICATED that the levels of governance should be clarified in the survey questions and terminology.

• SUGGESTED to use the EU glossary in the survey if possible and to provide definitions from the Secretariat otherwise.

• SUGGESTED several modifications and clarifications for specific questions and definitions in the survey.

• SUGGESTED to merge, simplify and re-design parts of the survey to reduce the overall length.

• ASKED for the deadline for comments on the survey to be extended (It was changed from 7 July to the end of July).

Session on strand 2: data development

16. Mr. Richard Walley (New Zealand) presented the draft paper for discussion on Data Development and Policies for ECEC - Implementing ISCED 2011, Input to the INES Working Party. [doc. ref. EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2013)4]. Following an introduction to ISCED 2011 and its implications, Mr. Walley suggested that not dividing data (collection) between education and care but taking a unified approach would allow to describe at a later stage how systems emphasise different goals. Nonetheless, informal care and care-only services should be excluded. Commenting on the inclusion of home-based care in the data collection, Mr. Walley suggested that the classification criteria for other educational arrangements set out in ISCED 2011 should be applied in determining which programmes should be included. While a broader set of indicators could be commissioned and developed by the INES working party, Mr. Walley proposed to discuss priorities for the development of additional indicators such as the level of qualification, equity and results of quality monitoring frameworks.
Ms. Miho Taguma, Senior Policy Analyst, presented the draft data development strategy for discussion. Ms. Taguma underlined that the data development strategy would allow the Network to ensure that the collected data serves policy needs and to define short-term and longer-term goals, the latter of which could be proposed for the Programme of Work 2015-16. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to avoid overlapping responsibilities and duplication with the work of other organisations. The strategy’s proposed objective is to address the data gaps identified by the mapping exercise that was reported in the previous Network meeting. Ms. Taguma explained the typical procedure followed in data development and emphasised that the Network’s strength lies in the identification of relevant policy questions and indicators. She moreover illustrated the proposed analytical framework, demonstrating a model for simplified relationship between context, policies, factors (inputs, outputs, processes) and child development. A work plan for data development was then proposed, with the next phase in Q3/Q4 2013 dedicated to the conceptual development at system, service and classroom level as well as regarding outcomes. For 2014, data development and analysis was proposed for system level data, while a feasibility study was proposed regarding the other items, with results reported in Q4 2014. The Network:

- AGREED to provide written comments on the data development strategy by the end of July.

As a result of the small discussion groups on Strand 2 of the project, data development, the Network:

- EXPRESSED mixed views as regards whether or not integrated or separate reporting for different age groups in ISCED 2011 would be desirable as national frameworks do not concern the same age groups in different countries.
- INDICATED that it does not expect problems when applying ISCED 2011 for the collection of data for existing indicators as long as clear criteria are applied.
- AGREED that the data development strategy should aim to fill the identified data gaps but also to improve quality of existing data.
- AGREED that the proposed policy questions in the draft data development strategy are relevant.
- AGREED that the Network’s role could be to provide guidance to INES regarding data development.
- INDICATED that indicators for process quality are a priority.
- EXPRESSED interest in exploring what data could be gained from a TALIS-type survey of ECEC staff within ECEC settings.
- NOTED the difficulty in singling out factors due to inter-linkages.
- AGREED on the value of the Network continuing its work on outcomes but EXPRESSED mixed views about the desirability and feasibility of developing international indicators on this.
- SUGGESTED that the Strategy fully recognises the longer-term nature of some of the data development activities.

The way forward

Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde, Chair of the Network, discussed the theme and date of the next ECEC Network meeting and the way forward regarding the project.
20. Mr. Richard Walley (New Zealand) provided further information on the 14th Network meeting which will be held in Wellington, New Zealand on 9-11 December 2013. He explained that the meeting will focus on ‘curriculum’ and will include one day of conference, site visits to services and thematic sessions according to the programme of work.

21. It was announced that the 15th meeting is planned on 16-17 June 2014 at the OECD Headquarters back in Paris.

22. The Chair reflected on the 13th Network meeting and indicated it has been a successful meeting with fruitful discussions and many opportunities for peer-learning.

Any other business

23. Chair thanked the speakers and all the Network members, whose contributions helped producing a successful meeting. The Chair also thanked the interpreters and note-takers, as well as the OECD Secretariat for their assistance in the preparation and delivery of the meeting.

24. The Secretariat thanked Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde for chairing the meeting and all Network members for their contributions and active participation in the 13th ECEC Network meeting.
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