

Greetings, ECDtf members and friends,

This Message # 14 alerts you to recent activities and developments of interest, upcoming events, and new resources. We welcome your comments and contributions as we move forward. We are especially pleased to launch a new platform for communication and collaboration with the first TASK FORCE TALK appearing below, *Educating Children with Special Needs: Understanding Local Realities in Developing Countries*.

Several ECDtf members will be attending the Dec 16 World Bank launch of “Stepping-Up ECD” (details appended) so we’ll gather after for an informal working session, 2:30-4. Please let me know if you are available to join us so I can provide venue details.

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**Topics (detailed below):**

1. **ECDtf and GPCwd updates**
2. **TASK FORCE TALK** – Our new forum for interaction aimed at generating mutual support and advancing our mission: Beckman on *Educating Children with Special Needs: Understanding Local Realities in Developing Countries*
3. **Webinar Small Children, Big Cities Dec 9**  
<http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/1832861/cf6e673bb9/591213065/25b96629d4/>
4. **Calls for Papers**      Disability & Girlhood: Transnational Perspectives  
   Children’s Rights & Early Intervention
5. **Upcoming meetings**
  - a. Dec 16                      Washington, DC Launch of Stepping up ECD, World Bank (details appended)
  - b. March 5-8                 ACEI Institute for Global Education Diplomacy Washington, DC
  - c. April 2015                 Council for Exceptional Children San Diego, CA USA
  - d. May 6-8                    NNDR, Bergen, Norway
  - e. June 30-July3             Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Multiculturalism, children’s rights & global citizenship, Haifa, Israel
  - f. August 2015               DISES International Roundtable Jerusalem & Bethlehem
  - g. June 8-10/16              ISEI, Children’s Rights & Early Intervention, Stockholm, Sweden
6. **New resources**

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## 1. ECDtf & GPcwd updates

- a. GPcwd Secretariat marked December 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities <http://www.idpwd.com.au> with the release of a new Issue Brief on the rights of children with disabilities [http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Disabilities\\_2pager\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Disabilities_2pager_FINAL_web.pdf) Many thanks to ECDtf members who reviewed drafts of the statement. If you are interested in working on the ECD complementary Issue Brief that will accompany the document in planned advocacy and fundraising initiatives, please contact [Donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu](mailto:Donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu)

ECDtf members will also be interested in the companion brief

[http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/ECD\\_2pager\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/ECD_2pager_FINAL_web.pdf) as well as additional materials from the International Day of Persons with Disabilities <http://blogs.unicef.org/2014/12/02/technology-transforming-the-lives-of-children-with-disabilities/>  
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1620>

- b. ECDtf has been invited to participate in the March 5-8 ACEI Institute for Global Education Diplomacy in Washington DC. <http://acei.org/programs-events/institute.html> In addition to a presentation on the mission of ECDtf, we are planning a working session for ECDtf members attending the Institute or interested in joining virtually. If you are interested in participating in either the presentation or the work session, please contact [donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu](mailto:donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu).
- b. **HELP WANTED!** Volunteer needed to serve as editor or co-editor of this ECDtf Newsletter. About 6-10 hours/month. Compile, edit and disseminate monthly communiqué to ECDtf members and friends. Could convene a task team to assist in process and implement more sophisticated communication system. Interested colleagues please contact [donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu](mailto:donald.wertlieb@tufts.edu)

## 2. TASK FORCE TALK

Initial analysis of the needs assessment survey indicated great interest in cultivating ECDtf as a forum for exchange of ideas and support basic to advancing our mission. Coincidentally, ECDtf member Paula Beckman responded to the November ECDtf newsletter with a comment on the cautiousness with which we must assess and use some of the resources we have begun to share. For instance, official data reported in a government publication may mesh insufficiently with conditions we observe on the ground. Cultural differences or sectoral silo-effects might hamper communication and understanding. Hence, we begin what we hope will be a regular feature of our ECDtf proceedings and messages with this essay Paula has submitted on understanding local realities. Please feel free to suggest topics or submit brief papers for consideration for publication in 2015. We also welcome your comments on this inaugural piece. If you would like to lead or join a task team that will develop this tool, please volunteer!

Thank you, Paula, for presenting your thoughts here on:

***Educating Children with Special Needs: Understanding Local Realities in Developing Countries***

Paula J. Beckman

University of Maryland, College Park

The international community has established that students with special needs have the right to education through a series of agreements, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and including the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). These agreements have spurred many countries to adopt national policies supporting the right of students with special needs to receive an education, often in inclusive settings.

Despite these initiatives, children and youth with special needs remain exceedingly vulnerable in many parts of the globe. Of the roughly 15% of the world's population living with a disability (World Health Organization, 2011), 80 percent live in developing countries (Barron & Nuebe, 2010). In low and middle-income countries, people with disabilities are significantly more likely to live in poverty (Mitra, et al, 2013), are less likely to be in school (Filmer, 2008), and in general, are among the most marginalized people in the world. In fact, Filmer concludes that the barriers to school participation for students with disabilities are frequently greater than barriers associated with poverty, rural/urban differences, and gender.

While governments in at least some economically impoverished countries have official policies promoting inclusive education for students with special needs, there are often gaps between the policies and the capacity of countries to implement these initiatives (Winzer & Mazurek, 2014). To understand this challenge, it is essential to look beyond stated national policies to see how local realities can undermine effective implementation of such policy initiatives. An example from a small village in rural El Salvador can help to illustrate the challenge.

Benicia has spent most of her life sitting in a plastic chair on the patio of a one room adobe shelter where she lives with her mother and brother. When her family receives a rare visitor, she smiles with delight, although she cannot walk and has few other strategies for communication. When she was first diagnosed, and small enough to carry, her mother took her to a hospital in a nearby city where she had surgery to implant a shunt and where she received occasional therapy. Ultimately, her mother could not continue because transportation costs were prohibitive and Benicia became too large to carry. Six months ago, a local NGO donated a wheelchair so that Benicia's mother no longer needs to carry her to visit a nearby neighbor, but it gives her little access to the world outside of her house. The wheelchair cannot be managed down or up the rutted path along the steep hill between their house and the dirt road that leads out of the village. Even if her mother could manage that, the closest school requires walking a mile on a dirt road to get to a bus stop on a two lane highway and then boarding a crowded bus. If someone could get her on the bus, her family would need bus fare for her and someone to accompany her, a cost that

far exceeds anything her mother can afford. Even if Benicia reached the school, it would not be physically accessible, and there would be no teachers or therapists who could address her special needs and little in the way of a support system to ensure her participation.

Benicia is not alone. Her example illustrates the day-to-day reality for rural families of children with disabilities who live in a poor or middle-income country where resources for education are limited. Her small village is home to four other children with disabilities who have never attended school and her village is one of hundreds in her country where the same circumstances exist. Among the many barriers that prevent the participation of students with disabilities in the educational system, some of the most important include:

**Accessibility.** In the U.S. and other developed countries we typically think in terms of assuring that buildings are accessible with ramps, wider doors and a long list of physical accommodations that promotes a student's access to a building, a classroom, and a bathroom. While the same challenges also exist in developing countries, they are the tip of the iceberg. For Benicia and those in her situation, the issue of accessibility extends far beyond the school building itself and deep into the heart of small, poor villages where local infrastructure challenges can make it difficult for persons with mobility issues to even leave their homes.

**Transportation.** In Benicia's country, as in many others, most people get to work and school by walking, standing in the bed of a truck that charges passengers, or by riding a crowded public bus. Transportation becomes a barrier, in part, because families living on as little \$400/year simply cannot afford it. Even when families can afford the transportation, simply getting to and from school becomes virtually impossible for individuals with mobility issues who cannot board or stand in a bus or truck.

**Trained Teachers.** Perhaps the single largest challenge in many countries is a lack of teachers with the training to address special needs within their classrooms. Although in some countries, teachers must take a course focused on special needs, such courses are often very general. There is frequently a lack of practical training in practical teaching strategies and little emphasis on making academic accommodations (Abera, 2014 Podzimek, 2013). In addition, many schools do not have special education teachers or access to related therapies. The need for training is vast and complex – ranging from the simple management of classrooms to the far more complex activities of assessing the needs of students with disabilities, differentiating instruction, and accommodating their unique needs.

**The Quality Challenge.** As efforts toward the implementation of the EFA and MDG goals have helped provide access to primary education for a growing number of children, there is widespread acknowledgement that the task is not complete and that there needs to be more emphasis on educational quality (UNESCO, 2014). Altinok (2012) reported data on learning outcomes suggesting that students, in many developing countries, students are not acquiring even the most basic skills. The myriad of problems facing the public education system in many developing countries (deteriorating infrastructure, lack of books, computers and other didactic materials, overcrowding, the need for more

teacher training) adds an additional layer of complexity to the issue of providing education and accommodations for those with disabilities.

***Social Stigma and the Public Awareness Challenge.*** It is not uncommon for people with disabilities to remain “hidden” not only because of the limitations of their disabilities but because of the social stigma (Abera, 2014). Addressing the educational issues specific to people with disabilities will require improving public awareness of the needs, potential, and rights of people with disabilities

***Summary.*** Ensuring universal access to quality education which includes children with disabilities requires the international community to take a hard look at local issues in developing countries that interfere with their ability to fully participate in schooling. Establishing international and national policy initiatives has been a crucial first step and has focused attention on the need to serve students with disabilities. However, guaranteeing that children and youth with disabilities have genuine access to the educational system, are served appropriately once there, or are even able to leave their homes so that they can get to school is a far more complex task. Implementing inclusive policies in developing countries requires concerted efforts to address the very real barriers that families face in caring for and educating their children with disabilities in the context of poverty.

Abera, N. (2014). *Teacher’s beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in Ethiopia* (Doctoral dissertation), University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

Altinok, (2012). *A New International Database on the Distribution of Student Achievement*. Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012

Barron, L. & Nuebe, J. (2010). *Poverty and Disability*. London, UK: Leonard Cheshire International.

Filmer, D. (2008). Disability, poverty, and schooling in developing countries: Results from 14 household surveys. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 22, (1), 141-163.

MINED (Diciembre, 2010). *Política de educación inclusiva*. San Salvador: MINED. Retrieved from [https://www.mined.gob.sv/jdownloads/Politicasy/politica\\_educacion\\_inclusiva.pdf](https://www.mined.gob.sv/jdownloads/Politicasy/politica_educacion_inclusiva.pdf)

Mitra, S., Posarac, A., & Vick, B. (2013). Disability and poverty in developing countries: A multidimensional study. *World Development*, 41, 1-18.

Podzimek, K. (2013). *Emerging from the Shadows: A case study of the quality of life of students with disabilities in Monrovia, Liberia* (doctoral dissertation). University of Maryland, College, Park, Maryland.

UNESCO (1994). *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2004). *The right to education for persons with disabilities: Towards inclusion*. Paris: UNESCO

United Nations (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. New York: United Nations.

Winzer, M. & Mazurek, K (2014). The convention on the rights of persons with disabilities: Notes on genealogy and prospects. *Journal of International Special Needs Education*, 17, (1), 3-11.

### 3. **Webinar: Small Children, Big Cities Dec 9**

<http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/1832861/cf6e673bb9/591213065/25b96629d4/> Further to the newly-published edition of *Early Childhood Matters*, this webinar, moderated by John Cary (Curator of TEDCity 2.0) and guest editor of this publication, will feature brief presentations and Q&A opportunities.

### 4. **Calls for Papers**

#### a) **Disability & Girlhood: Transnational Perspectives**

A special issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, “Disability and Girlhood: Transnational Perspectives” invites manuscripts (no longer than 6,500 words) that explore the critical intersections and tensions between the two contemporary fields, girlhood studies and disability studies; thus far this has been inadequately explored in both theoretical literature and empirical studies. This exploration is necessary because disability studies can actively disrupt normative notions of girlhood in transnational contexts mediated by the intersectional politics of identity and constituted through ableist social, political, and economic hierarchies that have concrete implications for developing transformative social policy.

We encourage the submission of manuscripts that engage the following questions: How does the politics of disability have an impact on and inform the actual conditions/experiences of disabled girls within transnational contexts? How do dominant discourses framing the subjectivities/identities of disabled girls at the intersections of race, class, gender identity, and sexuality become normalized and institutionalized in contemporary transnational contexts? What are the impacts of multinational institutions such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and Human Rights Watch in shaping the life experiences of disabled girls in the context of various international disability rights movements of the twenty-first century? What are the theoretical and empirical challenges that inform social constructions of girlhood and disability within the complex web of other intersectional identities?

Please send expressions of interest and abstracts to the Guest Editors by 15 JANUARY 2015. DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS OF FULL MANUSCRIPTS: 30 JUNE 2015

Inquiries and submissions may be sent to: Girlhood Studies

([girlhood.studies@mcgill.ca](mailto:girlhood.studies@mcgill.ca)) Nirmala Erevelles ([nerevell@bamaed.ua.edu](mailto:nerevell@bamaed.ua.edu))

Xuan Thuy Nguyen ([xuan.thuy.nguyen@msvu.ca](mailto:xuan.thuy.nguyen@msvu.ca))

#### b) **Children’s Rights & Early Intervention**

International Society on Early Intervention Conference, June 8 – 10, 2016 Stockholm, Sweden. The rights of all children to develop to their full potential and to participate without barriers in all aspects of society constitutes the overarching theme of this conference. Encouraging and supporting the inclusion of children with developmental delays and disabilities in natural environments, including family settings, child care, and preschool programs, is at the core of maximizing children’s rights. Indeed, the concept of full participation is consistent with two United Nations treaties that address these rights:

Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In this conference, early intervention is proposed as a basic right of all vulnerable children, and will be explored from many perspectives. Issues related to access, equity, quality, and accountability are paramount. Strengthening families, training professional personnel, promoting social-emotional development, conducting reliable, valid, and culturally appropriate assessments, exploring issues related to institutional care and deinstitutionalization, examining the impact, prevention, and treatment of trauma, abuse, and neglect, testing and evaluating new strategies and techniques to promote a child's development to the fullest, and developing approaches to enhance social inclusion will be among the topics included in our program. The development and evaluation of policies in individual countries or regions within countries to ensure that early intervention is among the rights of young children will provide an important context for our program. Abstracts due October 1, 2015 at <http://depts.washington.edu/isei/2016conf.html>

## 5. Upcoming meetings

- a. **Dec 16** World Bank launch of ECD Report *Stepping Up Early Childhood Development: An Investment for Life* | Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014 | 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm | Preston Auditorium, World Bank Washington DC. Details appended below. Also on-line <http://live.worldbank.org/early-childhood-development>
- b. **March 5-8** ACEI Institute for Global Education Diplomacy Washington, DC <http://www.acei.org/programs-events/institute.html>
- c. **April 2015** Council for Exceptional Children San Diego [http://www.cec.sped.org/cec2015/Register?sc\\_lang=en](http://www.cec.sped.org/cec2015/Register?sc_lang=en)
- d. **May 6-8** Nordic Network on Disability Research Bergen, Norway <http://www.cvent.com/events/nndr-13th-research-conference/event-summary-874cd3c94ce04d119a5ad0dcf9122124.aspx> NNDR conferences brings together researchers, policy makers, activists and practitioners to share scholarship and ideas, and provides a forum for Nordic and international collaboration in disability studies. The conference welcomes a wide range of contributions applying social, cultural, historical and philosophical perspectives to the study of disability. Its next conference will be held in the historic Norwegian town of Bergen, May 6 - 8, 2015. The NNDR 13<sup>th</sup> Research Conference aims at giving new insights into frontline topics, questions and approaches within contemporary Disability Research and will in our plenary session raise the following questions: What characterises disability studies as a field? What impact does technology and innovation have on the field? How has the concept of gender been dwelt upon? What are transnational issues in the disability field? What are seen as disabling conditions or practices?

- e. **June 30-July3 Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Multiculturalism, children’s rights & global citizenship**, Gordon College, Haifa, Israel Dr. Rhonda Sofer –Conference chair Dr. Roxana Reichman – Conference co-chair. Information: [doit\\_conf@gordon.ac.il](mailto:doit_conf@gordon.ac.il)
- f. **August 2015 DISES International Roundtable** Jerusalem & Bethlehem. Details soon at <https://www.facebook.com/DISES.CEC>
- g. **June 8-10/16 ISEI, Children’s Rights & Early Intervention**, Stockholm, Sweden <http://depts.washington.edu/isei/2016conf.html>

**6. New resources** (these have come to our attention since our last communiqué; please feel free to contribute and share other resources with a “reply-all” to this ECDtf Message, pending our establishment of our ECDtf Collaboration and Resource Sharing Platform. Please consider elaborating upon or critiquing one of these resources as a contribution to our new feature, TASK FORCE TALK)

- a. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7UoQ9zJnsU#t=104>
- b. <http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Perspectives-Files/2014/Discussion-Papers/EarlyChildhoodFramework.pdf>
- c. <http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Children/InvestingYoungChildrenGlobally/IYCGReactionVideos.aspx>
- d. <http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=3876f626ad9cef03b4233c63c&id=e4089fc806&e=f6519a772c>
- e. <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=8&tb=6>
- f. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002275/227503e.pdf>
- g. <http://beitissieshapiro-eng.blogspot.co.il/>
- h. [http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ceelo\\_fast\\_fact\\_qris\\_inclusion.pdf](http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ceelo_fast_fact_qris_inclusion.pdf)
- i. <http://www.scchildren.org/public/files/docs/Advocacy/2015-Early-Childhood-Common-Agenda.pdf>
- j. <http://us3.campaign-archive2.com/?u=a87a86cb03d0b3fd08f07f1b7&id=8856477fc3&e=7bf6c409ef>
- k. [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Home/GetFile/6/291/annlrpt2014/pdf](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Home/GetFile/6/291/annlrpt2014/pdf)
- l. <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/33/11/2003>
- m. <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/33/12/2116.abstract>



**Sent:** Monday, December 08, 2014 3:28 PM

**Subject:** INVITATION | Stepping Up Early Childhood Development: An Investment for Life | Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014 | 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm | Preston Auditorium



Tuesday, December 16, 2014  
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm  
Preston Auditorium, World Bank Group Headquarters  
Washington DC

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*Light lunch will be served*

For **WB staff**, [RSVP here](#).

For **external participants**, [RSVP here](#).

Watch the event live at [live.worldbank.org/early-childhood-development](http://live.worldbank.org/early-childhood-development)

A child's earliest years present the best window of opportunity to ensure good outcomes later in life.



Early childhood development programs that include education, health, nutrition and social protection components have proven to be effective in several countries, but despite this growing evidence, more than 200 million children in developing countries under the age of 5 will not reach their development potential.



The panel will discuss how to use the evidence to influence policy makers and scale up investments to ensure that children, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, thrive during their early years.

#### SPEAKERS

**Claudia Costin**, Senior Director, Education, World Bank Group

**Serigne Mbaye Thiam**, Minister of National Education, Senegal

**Carolyn Miles**, President & CEO, Save the Children

**Maureen Samms-Vaughan**, Professor of Child Health, Child Development and Behavior,  
University of West Indies, Jamaica

**Peter Colenso**, Executive Director, Children's Investment Fund Foundation

**Alice Albright**, Chief Executive Officer, Global Partnership for Education

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Follow the event hashtag [#InvestEarly](#)

[www.worldbank.org/education](http://www.worldbank.org/education)

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