Dear members of the ECDtf,

First of all, on behalf of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPcwd), we would like to thank all of you for continuing to be devoted and active members of ECDtf. We have been observing the important discussions that have been taking place on this platform and it is truly great to see the level of depth, passion and research that is present in those dialogues.

As you may know, after serving as founding Chair for more than 7 years, Professor Donald Wertlieb left the position giving an opportunity for a new Chair to step in. Don will still remain a strong supporter of this group and now will be serving in his technical advisor capacity. We are thankful to Don for all his efforts toward establishing and strengthening this group and creating a much-needed network of experts, family members, and disability advocates.

At the beginning of 2019, the call for nomination for chair position was issued and a few people responded. After several discussions, the following volunteer positions were filled in: two Co-Chairs, two Technical Advisors and a Core Group. The Core Group was established to support the ECDtf with knowledge-management, administration, coordination, ECDtf meetings at conferences, fundraising and work prioritization. The membership and terms of references for the core group are a work in progress, but the current members will be fulfilling the TF mission and addressing the work scope decision-making as it evolves for 2019-2020.
We would like to introduce to you the Co-Chairs, Technical Advisors and a Core Group:

**Co-Chairs:** Emily Vargas-Baron and Wiedaad Slemming

**Technical Advisors:** Donald Wertlieb and Evelyn Cherow

**Core Group members:** Hollie Hix-Small, Megan Song McHenry, and Kristel Diehl

The work of ECDtf will also be supported by Asma Maladwala, ECD Focal point for the Disability Section at UNICEF and Anna Burlyaeva, Programme office at UNICEF Disability Section who also provides support to the Secretariat of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPcwd).

We hope that under its new leadership, the ECDtf will strengthen its presence in the global discourse on Inclusive ECD and ECI.

Currently the Core Group is developing new guidance for communications that is based on feedback from many of you.

Please welcome our new Co-Chairs, Technical Advisors and Core Group and let’s work together!

Warm wishes,

Anna Burlyaeva

GPcwd Secretariat

secretariat@gpcwd.org

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**ECDtf Meeting in Cali, September 12th of 2019**

**ALL students matter!**

**International Forum on Inclusion and Equity in Education**

By Marisol Moreno Angarita

Ensuring equal opportunities for everyone in education remains a global and regional challenge, even more so when it addresses people who are part of historically discriminated groups, or simply because of their condition of disability,
poverty, migration, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. “Todos y todos los estudiantes cuentan/All students matter!”

To move the debate forward and to deepen reflections on the importance of guaranteeing a truly inclusive education for ALL, from 11 to 13 September 2019, UNESCO in partnership with the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Ministry of Education of Colombia, and the Mayor of Cali, held the "International Forum on Inclusion and Equity in Education."

The Forum, which recalled the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Education for Special Needs held in Salamanca, Spain, sought to build a common understanding and a renewed commitment to inclusion in education. To this end, the Forum brought together about 500 participants from more than 40 countries, including policy planners and other governmental authorities, educational leaders and specialists, and activists. They discussed challenges and strategies to overcome barriers to school access, poor retention in schools, challenges faced by many types of discriminated groups, and initiatives and advances required to meet educational targets of the 2030 Development Agenda.

Stefania Giannini, Deputy Director General of Education of UNESCO, stressed the importance of debate, reflection and the strengthening of agendas and initiatives for achieving inclusive education. She also stated that a profound transformation of the paradigm regarding how education is understood and conducted will be necessary in order to achieve fully inclusive education as established by Goal 4 for Education of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and as foreseen in the Salamanca Declaration. She also pointed out the key value of education for the transformation of our societies and the fulfillment of all of the SDGs.

Diverse actors and sectors actively participated in Forum dialogues on educational policies and other legal frameworks, evaluation, early childhood development, and barriers and opportunities for inclusion, among other topics.

After three intense days of work, all participants were recharged and inspired with a great aspiration in mind: all are ALL, because all students really matter.

On 12 September, with the generous support of OSF, ECDtf held a special luncheon
meeting for our members who participated in the Conference. A total of 21 persons from all world regions attended our gathering. They discussed the need for articulated efforts regarding diverse perspectives of ECD, ECI, and IECD in order to develop a stronger voice and gain more attention to inclusion in educational policies, programs and strategies in countries around the world.

The *Global Survey of Inclusive ECD and ECI Programs* was presented, and each attendee received a digital copy. In addition, some future conferences and other invitations were announced, and they will be disseminated in our future ECDtf Newsflashes and Newsletters.

Participants insisted on the importance of disseminating the *Global Survey* using different methods, and they urged that study findings and the Call to Action be discussed in many national and regional scenarios. ECDtf will provide national and regional discussion guidance in the near future.

The meeting was concluded with remarks regarding how proud our members feel to be a part of this field and of ECDtf. Members emphasized the importance of **becoming stronger together**, engaging in dialogues with multiple voices, and reaching out beyond our own arena in order to interact with other arenas where the results of our work will be able to have an even greater impact.

NEWS FROM TASK FORCE MEMBERS

We welcome news from you regarding your important activities that are directly related to ECDtf topics. Please send your reports of no more than 2 paragraphs to Kristel Diehl (k_diehl@hotmail.com).

ECDtf member Dr. Megan Song McHenry participated in:

International Conference on Nutrition & Early Human Development

24-26 October 2019, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Nurturing Care: From Global “Pact” to National Action;
From Thriving Childhoods to Sustainable Livelihoods.
By Dr. Megan Song McHenry
The International Conference on Nutrition & Early Human Development took place Oct 24-26 2019 in Karachi, Pakistan. Aga Khan University hosted this welcoming, cutting-edge, and well-organized event. A wide array of speakers from 26 countries came to disseminate information regarding the latest advances in research and policy to improve nutrition and early childhood development. The conference highlighted critical information about the current ECD and nutritional statuses of children around the world, interventions that show promise for the future, and signature examples of how integrated interventions can effectively be implemented, such as within The Conrad Hilton Foundation/PATH's partnership with the Kenyan Ministry of Health in Siaya County. This engaging conference is one that should be on the list for any individuals working in the ECD fields, in particular, those working on the ground and capable of engaging policy makers to advance ECD care in the setting.

COUNTRY UPDATES

We welcome ECDtf members to send Country Updates on progress made in Inclusive ECD, ECI, and inclusive education systems and programmes. These may include URLs to recent studies and documents. Following is an example of recent planning for early childhood intervention services in Croatia.

Multisectoral ECI Commission Established in Croatia

By Emily Vargas-Baron

On 29 August 2019, the Government of the Republic of Croatia established a “Decision on the Establishment of the Inter-Sectoral Early Childhood Intervention Commission”. The Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr. Andrej Plenković, signed this Decision that represents a major step forward toward creating a national integrated ECI system under the leadership of the Ministry of Health. The Decision states,
The Tasks of the Commission include to:

- prepare for adoption the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Intervention, including the drafting of the Action Plan, drafting of Guidelines and standards for early childhood intervention services, drafting of procedures for early childhood intervention programs, and implementation of a pilot project;
- coordinate with partners and other stakeholders, depending on the needs, for the provision of financial, technical, professional and other resources necessary in the process of drafting strategic and action plans for early childhood intervention;
- monitor and approve working plans and reports, and give recommendations to the Executive Task Force for drafting of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Intervention (hereinafter: Executive Task Force); and
- propose to the Croatian Government the adoption of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Intervention, and monitor its implementation.

The Decision also lists the members of the ECI Commission and Executive Task Force, presents their duties, provides for the creation of specialized task forces as needed, enables the participation of additional experts, affirms financial support for ECI planning from the Ministry of Health, and calls for establishing the terms of reference and working methods of the Commission.

Currently, an ECI Situation Analysis is being conducted in Croatia to help support the future ECI policy planning process.

RESOURCES

Brain Matters

Contributed by Emily Vargas-Baron
Carlota Nelson, a noted specialist in communications media, recently prepared valuable videos and materials on early brain development and stimulation for parents and policy makers. These materials have been widely lauded by several leading ECD specialists.

Carlota prepared a long documentary video that is available from several sources at a modest cost. (I saw from $5 to $10.) The following short trailer provides an introduction to her documentary.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFFUB-X58m8

The “Brain Matters” documentary video and materials were very favorably reviewed in the September 2019 *Lancet*.  
and  
https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2352-4642%2819%2930298-6

More Brain Matters Promotional and Advocacy Pieces:

• THE BRAIN IS ONLY BUILT ONCE: https://youtu.be/XAY6VPoWqLU
• WHAT MAKES KIDS THRIVE: https://youtu.be/FQluqNvsEJs
• EDUCATION BEGINS WAY BEFORE SCHOOL: https://youtu.be/yulhBkK94PM
• THE SCIENCE OF ENGAGED PARENTING: https://youtu.be/YTE-bmw_wwc
• THE SCIENCE OF RICH LANGUAGE: https://youtu.be/HdYxqGAAYUc
• THE SCIENCE OF INTENTIONAL PLAY: https://youtu.be/ygTfXsD3BfU
• THE SCIENCE OF GOOD NUTRITION: https://youtu.be/vj-HOewfYqM
• MANAGING EMOTIONS: https://youtu.be/A8k7VG8WnSg
• WHY INVEST IN THE EARLY YEARS: https://youtu.be/AbmF1ZrdesY

Learn more:
Web: brainmattersfilm.com

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Collaboration among several ECDtf member:

A research team newsletter for the

Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project (IECSS)
https://iecss.blog.ryerson.ca

This newsletter is to update all team members (researchers, partners and staff) about recent, ongoing and upcoming activities of the IECSS project. You are welcome to share the newsletter within your organisations, but it is not intended for public circulation. If you would like additional updates, you are always welcome to contact Kathryn Underwood (Project Director, kunderwood@ryerson.ca, or the office).

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www.InclusiveEarlyChildhood.ca
International Guide to support Parents and Professionals  
TACinterconnections

A guide to support families of children with complex needs and the professionals who care for them. Here you can find links to the guide in English, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Czech and Chinese:

Are you worried about your child?  
Estão preocupados com o vosso filho?  
Vi sentite preoccupati per il vostro bambino?  
¿Tiene alguna preocupación sobre su hijo?  
Děláte si starosti o své dítě?  
您为您的孩子感到担忧吗?

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Doha International Conference on Disability and Development 2019  
7th and 8th of December 2019

The proposed conference will mark a turning point whereby Qatar will be helping to develop and advance a new approach that will harness the power of sustainable development to advance human rights of persons with disabilities – a visionary 21st-century approach that will positively impact all world-wide 1.5 billion persons with disabilities.

This event is premised to form a global platform where policymakers, governments, bi-laterals and multi-laterals and civil society organizations, disabled people’s
organizations, experts, academics and other relevant stakeholders from all around the world will share their views and experiences regarding ways and means of getting the best from the two approaches working together for the disability-inclusive future.

You can learn more about the conference by visiting the DICDD website: www.dicdd.qa
To confirm your attendance and provide the guest list requested, kindly contact us at dicdd-fa@qatarsocial.org.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY INTERVENTION

Early Intervention-Maximizing the Potential of Children with Special Needs towards Inclusion

Pre-conference workshop - 13th February 2020
Conference - 14th & 15th February 2020
Chennai, India

Registration is now open for the most awaited International Conference on Early Intervention 2020 and the Pre-Conference Workshop. We invite you to register at the earliest to take advantage of the discounted Early Bird registration pricing.

The Pre-Conference workshop and the Conference will be held in vibrant Chennai, India from February 13 - 15, 2020. The enthusiastic participation of international health care professionals, NGOs and scientists from around the world is reflected in the theme chosen for the conference: "Early Intervention - Maximizing the Potential of Children with Special Needs towards Inclusion".

Please submit your abstract:
The scientific committee for IASSIDD’s APRC welcomes abstract submissions for the 5th IASSIDD Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, 2-5 September 2020, Hyderabad, India.

We encourage submissions from scientists, policy makers, service providers, advocates, family members, and people with an intellectual disability.

Abstracts can include research-based studies, analysis of policy, or evidence-based programme descriptions. They should focus on something new that has been tried and something new that has been learnt.

Submissions should indicate if presenters would like their abstract considered for: a poster presentation, an oral presentation, or a round table discussion.

Abstracts should be submitted under one of the following topics, based on IASSIDD’s Special Interest Research Groups (SIRGs).

https://iassidd2020.com/call-for-abstracts/