COMPLEXITIES, CAPACITIES, COMMUNITIES:
Changing Development Narratives
in Early Childhood Education,
Care and Development

The term 'capacity building' has come into common usage in twenty-first century international development. While the term means different things to different people, it is often used to describe an infusion of knowledge or skills to help 'build' a government's or institution's ability to address key development challenges. However, like other well intentioned interventions from the industrialized West, such 'capacity building' can have destructive, as well as productive, impacts. This volume problematizes such activities and presents an alternative approach to promoting capacity in development contexts.

The volume starts with an exploration of the concept of capacity building and goes on to focus on two examples of capacity promotion for early childhood education, care and development (ECD). The First Nations Partnerships Program (FNPP), an innovative and successful post-secondary education program initiated in 1989 at the request of a large tribal council in northern Canada, led to 10 educational deliveries with diverse Indigenous communities over the subsequent two decades. The second program, launched in 1994 at the request of UNICEF headquarters, focuses on sub-Saharan Africa. While the program encompasses a range of capacity-promoting activities, the central vehicle for this ECD development work is the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU), a program created in 2001 and now in transition to African universities.

This book describes approaches to capacity promotion that respond to the complexities and possibilities of communities—at local and country levels. These initiatives challenge established developmental narratives in ECD and international development, and in so doing provide alternative ways for scholars and practitioners in ECD, education, and the broad international development field to enhance capacities.

University of Victoria

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Alan Pence and Allison Benner

With chapter contributions by:
Fortidas Bakuza & Clarence Mwinuka,
and Foster Kholowa & Francis Chalamanda

University of Victoria

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

uniTwin

University
of Victoria

UNESCO Chair in Early Childhood
Education, Care and Development

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Jean Cyril Dalais—
a tireless and eloquent advocate for the children of Africa.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Allison Benner has over 20 years' experience as a writer, researcher, instructor, and curriculum designer in linguistics and early childhood. Her work includes studies of first language acquisition across cultures, child care and early learning policies and programs, and capacity-building and experiential learning in post-secondary education. Over the past two decades, Dr. Benner has collaborated with Dr. Pence on many capacity-promoting initiatives in the early childhood field, including writing and curriculum projects for the First Nations Partnership Programs and the Early Childhood Development Virtual University.

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADEA   Association for the Development of Education in Africa

AECDM   Association of Early Childhood Development Malawi
                (previously APPM)

APPM   Association of Preschool Play Groups Malawi
                (now AECDM)

AS&I   African Scholars and Institutions Initiative

CIDA   Canadian International Development Agency

CRC   Convention on the Rights of the Child

DSW   District Social Welfare

ECCD   Early Childhood Care and Development

ECCE   Early Childhood Care and Education

ECD   Early Childhood Development

ECDNA   Early Childhood Development Network in Africa

ECDVU   Early Childhood Development Virtual University

ECE   Early Childhood Education

EFA   Education for All

ELDS   Early Learning and Development Standards–Malawi

FNPP   First Nations Partnership Programs

FTI   Fast Track Initiative

GoM   Government of Malawi

HIV / AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization (not defined within doc)
MCDGC	Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Children–Tanzania
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGCCD	Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development–Malawi
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare–Malawi (previously MGCCD)
MGDS I	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy I (2006-2011)
MGDS II	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (2011-2016)
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MINEDAF	Ministers of Education of Africa Member States
MINEDAF VIII	the 8th Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States
MLTC	Meadow Lake Tribal Council
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology–Malawi
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training–Tanzania
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population–Malawi
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education

NESP	National Education Sector Plan–Malawi
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSGRP	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet–Malawi
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TECDEN	Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network
TTC	Teacher Training College
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-BREDA	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF-ESARO	UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UVic	University of Victoria
WGECD	Working Group on Early Childhood Development

INTRODUCTION

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There is perhaps no more delicate a topic for discussion than what is 'best' for children—a discussion confounded by the singularity of 'best' and the diversity of 'children.' In the Western (minority[1]) world certain beliefs about children and their care are presented as 'universal', but the global evidence to support such claims is often lacking. Increasingly, leading 'Western' journals are publishing challenges to such assertions. The October 2008 edition of *American Psychologist* published an article by Jeffrey Arnett entitled "The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American". In that article Arnett notes: "I argue that research on the whole of humanity is necessary for creating a science that truly represents the whole of humanity….American psychology can no longer afford to neglect 95% of the world…" (p. 602). In 2010, Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan published an article in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* entitled: "The Weirdest people in the world?", making the case that samples drawn from "Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies…are particularly unusual compared with the rest of the species—frequent outliers.…The findings suggest that members of WEIRD societies, including young children, are among the least representative

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[1] *Consistent with Pearson Education ©: "Using the terms 'majority world' (for the developing world) and 'minority world' (for the developed world) reminds us that most people in the world live in the economically poorer continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America and that only a minority of the world's population live in the wealthier areas of the globe (Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, USA and Canada). The terms also invite us to reflect on the global inequalities and unequal power relations between the two world areas. However, a simple binary distinction can be criticised for oversimplifying a more complex picture."*

populations one could find for generalizing about behavior…" (p. 1). Clearly, the West's perspective is not the full story; it does not represent "all of humanity". There are other understandings regarding children and their care and these 'other ways' have also produced adults of outstanding ability, character, and accomplishment—but we know relatively little about them.

This is a book that focuses on 'other ways': other ways of understanding children's care and development; other ways of supporting 'communities' from local to country levels; other ways of promoting capacity; and other ways that scholars and tertiary institutions can contribute to children's and societies' well-being. It is a book that moves beyond a place of hegemonic 'universals,' to an inclusionary and multi-faceted place of diverse global understandings. It is a place beyond knowledge—it is a welcoming and interactive *place of many knowledges.*

Finding the 'place'

Finding the place was accidental—it was not planned. It began with a phone call in 1989 from the Executive Director of an Indigenous tribal council in north-central Canada, far removed from my (Pence's) office at the University of Victoria on the west coast of Canada. The Executive Director wished to meet with me to discuss an 'other' way of undertaking post-secondary education on-reserve with their nine First Nations[2] communities. We met; I was impressed by his energy, commitment and vision; and this story began.

The story continues today, a quarter-century later. However, its primary location is no longer in north-central Canada, but in sub-Saharan Africa. How the tribal villages and boreal forests of central Canada connect with the savannahs and cities of Africa is the subject of this book. And that journey is placed into a context of theories of child development, community development, and international development that are too seldom critiqued, and whose power has suppressed local understandings, local values, and local knowledge to the detriment not only of those communities, but all peoples of the world. In ways not dissimilar to humanity's loss of bio-diversity, we are similarly deprived by our loss of ethno-diversity.

The approach taken in this volume requires a suspension of established development narratives—at individual, community, and international levels. Such narratives require an allegiance to a particular pathway, a 'best way' understanding

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[2] *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2012-10-01) note: "The First Nations are the various Aboriginal peoples in Canada who are neither Inuit nor Métis."*

of 'development'; yet human and social diversity reflects a complexity of many possibilities, perhaps most especially where the care of children is involved. This volume provides examples that are predicated on multiple knowledges and 'many good ways,' rather than the singularity of 'best.' These approaches not only open up to diversity, they require it. Without 'the other' there can be no way of seeing differently, of comparing, of thinking beyond one's self or one's group—and to educate 'the other' to see only one's own way, deprives both.

Power and fear have operated in tandem, on both sides of power imbalances, to restrict possibilities—the 'power-to-do' and the 'fear-of' have restrained the pursuit of alternatives and all that could be learned from them. The term 'development' has been a means to address such fear, to define a 'normal,' a 'desirable,' or an expected progression, and also a means to address unpredictability. It is a term more palatable to contemporary minds than colonization; however, its impact has often been the same—to tame and control the world, to bring it into conformity with a plan that serves those with power.

But with such power, there are grave losses—not so obvious at the controlling end, but hard-felt at the point of lived realities, where peoples' lives are transformed from their own 'knowns' to many forms of 'unknown.' The Tribal Council was familiar with such losses. They were concerned that 'best practices' and knowledge from the West had often damaged their communities and that the scars from those interactions were still visible in the lives of their members. The Tribal Council's leadership wished to access the knowledge of the West for an early childhood development (ECD) capacity-promoting and educational training program, but to do so in a way that would minimize its toxic impacts. The result was a unique university-community partnership that created an approach to such mediation through the development of a "generative curriculum."

The generative curriculum took it as a given that there are multiple knowledges—that Western science is one such knowledge, but there are many others, including local, indigenous knowledges. The generative approach also recognized that 'knowledge holders' come in many different forms—as respected academics with many years of formal education, but also as Elders with many years of experience, known and trusted in the community, and also as new parents, young childcare workers, and the children themselves. The generative curriculum appreciated the strengths that exist in communities and that one does not 'build' capacity so much as nurture its growth. Capacity promotion is as much about stepping back, as stepping in.

The successes of the generative approach were recognized by an ECD leader in UNICEF Headquarters in 1994, Dr. Cyril Dalais, and he wanted to use it to support UNICEF's work in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This book is primarily about this second phase—the SSA phase—of generative work now entering its third decade. It is a reflection not only on the programs and activities that have been pursued, but also a contemplation of why seemingly simple understandings, such as an appreciation of multiple knowledges, diversity of knowledge holders, building on strengths, and the impossibility of 'best' in a world of diversity, continue to be largely absent in international development work.

The volume begins with two chapters that provide critiques that set the stage for this volume: chapter 1 is a critique of the term 'capacity building' and chapter 2 is a critique of what has been named the 'science of ECD.' These chapters help clarify what is often not apparent in international ECD activities—the dark, or problematic, side of 'good work.' In early childhood work, and in development work more generally, individuals and organizations are often blinded by their good intentions, believing perhaps that good intentions are enough. They are not. Such intentions should not be assumed to operate beyond a world of power dynamics and competing visions of what is 'good.' The fact that a certain understanding of the world is claimed by a powerful group or society, and validated by techniques it honours, makes it neither 'right' nor 'best.' While notions of 'right' or 'best' are often useful to consider, a dynamic of multi-faceted consideration should guide their exploration.

These principles of 'consideration' guided work with tribal organizations from 1989 on—various knowledge holders introduced various conceptions of 'good' to program participants, and as the participants themselves met and interacted with those ideas, drawing on their own knowledge and experience, new possibilities were generated. Chapter 3 describes the First Nations Partnerships Programs (FNPP) and provides a background for the programs that followed it in SSA. Overviews of three SSA programs are included in chapter 4: the ECD Seminars held in SSA in the late 1990s; an African International ECD Conference series held from 1999 to 2009; and the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU), launched in 2000/2001 and continuing to the present.

The ECDVU is the major focus for chapters 5-8. Chapter 5 describes in some detail the operationalization of ECDVU and chapter 6 presents findings from evaluations of its broader capacity-promoting purpose. Chapters 7 and 8 provide country case examples focused on Tanzania and Malawi, respectively, authored by ECDVU graduates (Tanzania: Fortidas Bakuza & Clarence Mwinuka; Malawi: Foster Kholowa & Francis Chalamanda). The book concludes with

chapter 9, which looks at extensions of the earlier work, with particular focus on the importance of SSA post-secondary institutions' leadership for ECD, both through coursework and programs that dovetail with various local initiatives and through African-led research and scholarly work. All facets of ECD in Africa, from civil society through government, from local communities through tertiary education, must seek to create webs of synergistic interaction that support, complement, and advance ECD and children's well-being.

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CHAPTER 1

FROM CAPACITY BUILDING TO CAPACITY PROMOTION

The term 'capacity building' has come into common usage in international development in the twenty-first century. Typically, the term refers to activities designed to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to create new policies, programs, and institutions in the majority world. Such capacity building initiatives are usually consistent with the agendas advanced by donor and international organizations external to countries in the majority world. These initiatives are presented as serving the best interests of the recipient country, with supports, financial and otherwise, often provided to allow the country to undertake the proposed 'advances.' Within this context, the capacity building story has at least two faces: the common one is that of benevolence, of assistance—and while that face might in many cases reflect a sincere intention, it too often conceals a second face—a face of destruction and capacity depletion. If capacity building initiatives are to prove beneficial, we need (as called for by Verity, 2007) to take a critical look at the motives and methods that infuse such policies and programs, especially when they involve (as they typically do) relationships between groups with differing access to power in the current social, political, and economic landscape.

As noted by Kenny and Clarke (2010), it was not until the late 1990s that the term capacity building began to regularly appear in the community development literature and in Western policy agendas. As outlined by Craig (2010), the first reference to the term stems from the early 1990s in the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNDP, 1991), where it referred to the United Nations' role in building capacity to support the water sector (see McGinty, 2003 for a discussion). Later in the 1990s, the term was used in Europe to refer to the need to create strategies for community economic development in

disadvantaged communities (European Commission, 1996). Around this same time, 'capacity building' found a place in the international development literature to recognize the need to move past 'top-down' approaches to development in favour of strengthening "people's capacity to determine their own values and priorities and organise themselves to act on this" (Eade & Williams, 1995, p. 64, cited in Craig, 2010, p. 47). Since that time, use of the term has increased exponentially. A search for "capacity building" on Google Scholar yields 420,000 results, 250,000 of them within the past decade (2004-2014).

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the notion of capacity building had become a powerful mobilizer of community development initiatives in both the majority and minority worlds. In many ways, the entry of this term—and the underlying philosophy and approach it was meant to capture—was a promising though problematic development, as summarized below:

> [U]nder the alluring slogan of 'helping people to help themselves' capacity building interventions have promised to change the very nature of development. Capacity building is placed in favourable opposition to traditional top-down social engineering, structural adjustment programmes or welfare-based models of development. (Kenny & Clarke, 2010, p. 4)

However, as highlighted by Kenny and Clarke (2010, passim) and others (see, for example, Mowbray, 2005; Craig, 2007; Verity, 2007; King & Cruickshank, 2012), the term "capacity building," along with its many close relatives (e.g., community development, partnership, empowerment; and their hybrids, such as community capacity building, participatory capacity building, participatory empowerment, and so on) is often used unreflectively, serving to promote a technocratic, neo-liberal agenda. The underlying assumption of many international development initiatives, whether in ECD or other fields, is that the community, region, or country deemed in need of assistance 'lacks capacity' and that the donor or international development organization is in a position to provide that capacity, whether in the form of knowledge transfer, predefined outcomes, or managerial methods imported from the minority world. The question of whose capacity needs to be built, for what purpose, for whose benefit, and as identified by whom, is seldom raised, or is not explored in sufficient depth. Indeed, the use of the term capacity building is reminiscent of an earlier critique of the term 'underdevelopment':

> …'underdevelopment' was promulgated on 20 January 1949 in Harry S. Truman's inaugural address. 'On that day, writes Gustave Esteva, a former director of planning in the Mexican

> Government, 'two billion people became underdeveloped.' In a
> real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were,
> in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted
> mirror of others' reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends
> them off to the end of the queue, a mirror that defines their
> identity, which is really that of a heterogeneous and diverse
> majority, [into a homogenous] and narrow minority." (Knutsson,
> 1997, p. 109)

Too often, it is quickly agreed that the recipient country or community is indeed deficient in x, and it as quickly assumed that the development agency (whether an NGO, a government agency, an international donor group, or an educational institution) has the knowledge and expertise that the 'beneficiary' of the initiative needs. One hears far less often of initiatives where an aid organization wants to learn from a developing country, or provides resources to give a country or community the opportunity to identify its own needs and take the time to develop approaches that build on its own self-identified strengths and goals. Even less does one hear of any genuine intention on the part of a minority world country or organization to sacrifice its own power and advantage to allow the partial dismantling of the underlying structural inequities that have generated the need for 'aid' in the first place. As a consequence, many capacity building initiatives offer short-term assistance that fails to resonate with local contexts and cultures and that ultimately undermines local capacity, enriching only the minority world organization's portfolio and strengthening its case for the need for further 'capacity building' initiatives. As such, within international development policies and programs, capacity building has too often served as a "Trojan horse for neo-liberal ideas within community development" (Kenny, 2002, as cited in Miller, 2010). As Ife notes:

> It is a short step from the inherent top-down agenda of capacity
> building to a fully-blown colonialism. The imposition of a
> developmental agenda on a community is characteristic of the
> colonialist project, where the coloniser is seen as having superior
> knowledge, wisdom and expertise, and as therefore being able to
> impose their agenda on others (Young, 2001). Such a view can
> be held by both the coloniser and the colonised, though in the
> latter case there is usually also some level of resistance and an
> attempt to challenge the agenda of the coloniser. (2010, p. 72)

In particular, capacity building initiatives focused on education and training are often based on a simple 'knowledge transfer' model, echoing Freire's (1972) critique of a 'banking' concept of education. Knowledge transfer models of

education and training assume a one-way transaction, in which knowledge is a commodity possessed by the educator. This notion gives little or no credence (or even space) for mutual transformation in the learning process or for the contribution of local knowledges (see Miller, 2010; Ife, 2010; Fanany et al. 2010; Stoecker, 2010). In this model, the opportunity for education and training to support individuals and societies to draw on their own knowledge and experience to advance their own goals and for educators and trainers to learn from students is lost. As articulated by one Australian Indigenous person:

> To restore capacity in our people is to [restore responsibility] for our own future. Notice that I talk of restoring rather than building capacity in our people … we had 40 to 60,000 years of survival and capacity. The problem is that our capacity has been eroded and diminished [by white colonialists] – our people do have skills, knowledge and experience … we are quite capable of looking after our own children and fighting for their future. (Tedmanson, 2003, p. 15, as cited in Craig, 2010, p. 55)

In brief, the literature on capacity building is rife with contradictions, highlighting the 'two faces' of capacity-building noted at the outset of this chapter—one benevolent, the other potentially malevolent and destructive. More fundamentally, the question of whether capacity building is effective, even when undertaken with the strengths of communities and cultures in mind, has not yet been adequately explored. As noted by Craig (2010):

> There clearly remains substantial linguistic and ideological confusion surrounding the term [community capacity building] just as with the terms community, and community development. This confusion is not helped by the fact that, despite warm governmental rhetoric, there is little evidence as to whether [community capacity building] actually works. The community development literature has begun to grapple with questions of its effectiveness (Barr et al., 1995, 1996; Craig, 2002; Skinner & Wilson, 2002) but none of this debate appears to have spilled over into analysing the effectiveness of [community capacity building]. (p. 53)

Why this book?

The approach described throughout this book originated in North American Indigenous communities' deep sensitivity to 'good intents' that carried tragic outcomes. As such, the approach advocated herein can be seen as a response to the concerns and contradictions raised in the literature about capacity building. In recognition of this critique, and to distinguish the approach we advocate from ones we consider problematic, we refer to the initiatives in this volume as 'capacity-promoting' rather than 'capacity building.' Ultimately, this volume takes the stance that capacity promotion, undertaken with a deep respect for the local, a commitment to inclusive processes, and a stance of 'not knowing' on the part of the international development organization, is possible and can be of genuine use and a source of deep learning for all partners involved. Through a combination of good fortune and mutual appreciation, the lead author of this volume developed a capacity-promoting approach predicated on a first principle of 'do no harm' and a second principle of 'honour the local.' This approach was developed over 25 years, first in partnership with First Nations communities in Canada and then employed in co-development activities with numerous countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The lead author felt the book could make a contribution, as he has witnessed, first-hand, the potential for capacity-promoting initiatives grounded in local initiatives to make a powerful, long-term difference in the lives of all partners involved. However, this volume has also been written out of the recognition, echoed in the literature, that 'capacity building' can be—and often is—incapacitating. The understandings and approaches that have guided this work, now over two decades old, remain in the minority of international 'capacity building' interventions—perhaps to an even greater degree at the time of writing than in 1989, when this story begins.

The experience of working with First Nations' communities in Canada will be developed in some detail in chapter 3. However, before commencing that story, a second critique of development follows—this one focusing on Western understandings of child development, with particular reference to sub-Saharan Africa. This critique of child development is relevant to many diverse disciplines and services with origins in the West that perpetuate colonizing mentalities into the 21st Century.

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A CRITIQUE OF DOMINANT DISCOURSES IN INTERNATIONAL ECD

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Africa, a land mass larger than the United States, China, India, and Western Europe combined (The Times Atlas, 2006), is home to about 14% of the world population, with slightly over 16% of the world's children under age 5 living in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (UN Human Development Report, 2014, p. 58). Despite Africa's, and sub-Saharan Africa's, size and share of the world population, Indigenous African voices are seldom heard in the child development literature that dominates policies and programs in international ECD. Both scientific and popular literature place Africa well outside the normative and desirable, representing Africa as a key target for change. While change is a constant across time and across cultures, this volume argues it is critical that African institutions, governments, and peoples lead the process of determining the nature and the need for such change in their own countries. The Euro-Western academic, socio-philosophical, and political perspectives that have dominated international ECD in recent decades rarely promote diversity in our understandings of children's care and development, and in many ways leave little room for other cultural understandings of, and aspirations for, children. In line with the previous chapter's critique of 'capacity building,' this chapter also examines the dark side of good work, and questions who decides what is desirable and how it is measured.

While this chapter critiques the dominant Euro-Western discourse of child development and the image of the child that it produces, it does not reject this discourse outright. Rather, we challenge the dominance and power of this discourse, calling for dialogue within and between cultures regarding child development and care. Indeed, within a dialogic context, in which power is more equally distributed, the discord between diversity and normalizing standards

can emerge as a potentially useful tension, rather than leaving us stuck in an either/or dynamic. Majority and minority world perspectives on ECD reflect certain histories, philosophies, and sociopolitical objectives that have shaped the contemporary world, each containing valuable perspectives for the future of early childhood education, care, and development. However, to reap the benefits of the creative tension among different world views, it is important for Euro-Western ECD scholars and policy-makers to place their own understandings of childhood into a social and political context, to take a deeper interest in African understandings and traditions in child-rearing and care—and indeed, to consider that they might have much to learn from those understandings in the global, interdependent context in which we all now live.

Childhoods

Childhoods, no less than children, come with diverse shapes and characteristics. That said, the range of childhoods has been greatly reduced over the past two centuries. To take one powerful example that is germane in both the majority and minority worlds, childhood in most countries has not been the same since the introduction of schools. International and country-level discourses—certainly those dominant over the past century—have typically argued that schools are a good thing. How can children succeed in contemporary societies without schooling? However, the structure those schools imposed, the content they deemed important, and their positions regarding traditional learning have all disrupted or destroyed long-established ways of learning and becoming an adult in every human society.

Until recently, early childhood largely escaped the normalizing impacts that schools have had around the world. Although one can, with reasonable accuracy, imagine the schooling environment for a nine-year-old in mountainous Laos, in a Kenyan village, in countless Indigenous communities across North America, or for that matter, in any North American or European city or town, the environments experienced by children younger than school age in most parts of the world are less clear and far more diverse.

Of particular relevance here is the African view of early childhood, which contrasts sharply with that of post-industrial Euro-Western views, as well as with the related view of childhood put forward by child development theories (see below). Like most people the world over, Africans view children as a gift and the early years as a special time to welcome children into the family, the community, and the culture. However, African cultures have a unique perspective on young children's abilities, on the nature and context of children's learning, and on the relative centrality of the extended family—or at least, one that has been largely

forgotten in post-industrial settings in the West, and one that many have come to regard as suspect and as violating children's rights. As documented by a number of important African scholars (see, for example, Nsamenang, 1992, 1996, 2008; Ohuche & Otaala, 1981; Uka, 1966; and Zimba, 2002), African children from a young age are viewed as capable members of the community, able to assist in caring for siblings and in the economic life of the family. While this view of children can indeed be abused—especially when it is unmoored from its traditional cultural underpinnings—it is not inherently exploitative.

While the "unmooring" process had arguably begun much earlier, with both Islamic incursions from the north and from European (and Chinese) coastal contacts, the most dramatic politico-geographic restructuring/unmooring of Africa took place in the late 1800s—a time of change for "childhood" as well.

The Entangled Roots of Africa, Child Science and Colonialism: A Brief Overview

On November 15, 1884, 14 countries, of which all but the U.S. were European, met in Berlin at the request of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck to end confusion over the control of Africa (Rosenberg, 2010). By February 26, 1885, lines had been drawn and the Western powers signed an initial set of agreements that involved no Africans whatsoever but that forever transformed their lives. The changed map of Africa, along with its problematic colonial and postcolonial legacy, is well known. However, the transformed map of childhood that emerged at a similar time is less apparent, obscured by the powers of modernity, progress, and science to suppress, and even erase, other interpretations and perspectives—a process that arguably continues to the present.

Around the same time that Darwin undertook his historic voyage on The Beagle (1831-1836) and subsequently published *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Friedrich Froebel was the most influential name in early childhood. Froebel's vision of childhood, which was not unusual at the time (see, for example, Alcott, 1830), incorporated a strong spiritual element and an appreciation of the child's innate goodness and capacity. The Froebelian child was not an empty vessel or an incomplete adult, nor was his or her development amenable to coercion: "Education must be passive and protective rather than directive, otherwise the free and conscious revelation of the divine spirit in man … is lost" (1826, p. 34). By the late 1870s, however, a quite different image of childhood was being advanced in Europe by individuals such as Ernst Haeckel, one of the first to propose a science of psychology.

From its very origins, the underlying assumptions of child psychology closely paralleled—and were often intertwined with—the rationale for colonialism (Morss, 1990). The nineteenth-century social Darwinist movement presented evolution as a scientific rationale for the observed physical and cultural differences in peoples around the world. The mechanism of natural selection was seen to account for these differences, with different peoples representing different stages of human evolution, from less to more developed. The child development movement reflected a similar understanding: children, like cultures, were situated along a continuum from less to more developed over time. To quote Haeckel: "To understand correctly the highly differentiated, delicate mental life of civilized man, we must, therefore, observe not only its gradual awakening in the child, but also its step-by-step development in lower, primitive peoples" (1879, quoted in Morss, 1990, p. 18).

From its earliest formulations, the science of child development reflects a Western 'civilizing' imperative based on an image of deficiency. Guidance by those defined as 'higher on the ladder' typically takes the form of colonization of other cultures and societies, and close adult supervision of children's development. An image of the child as incompetent and incomplete dominates the formative years of child study within psychology, as seen in William James' classic evocation of the world of the newborn: "The baby, assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin and entrails at once feels that all is one great blooming, buzzing confusion" (1890, reprinted 1981, p. 488). This image persists in Gesell's work, supplemented by an increasingly powerful metaphor of maturation as financial investment: "Three is a delightful age. Infancy superannuates at two and gives way to a higher estate" (1950, p. 40). Such economically driven perspectives regarding children's development, and subsequently ECD, became dominant international discourses in the late 20th Century and continue, with ever greater power and influence, to the present (Heckman, 2006; Heckman, Pinto, & Savelyev, 2012).

Such particular and narrow understandings of the child have persisted in part through psychology's failure to incorporate culture as a key factor in child development, for, as noted above, not all cultures and societies perceive children in the ways of the West. Cole's 1996 critique of psychology's failing, *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline,* noted Wundt's 1921 formulation of "two psychologies": a "physiological psychology" focusing on the experimental study of immediate experience, and a "higher psychology" *(Volkerpsychologie)* that was rooted in context and could not be studied using laboratory methods, but with the methods of the descriptive sciences such as ethnography and linguistics (Cole, p. 28). Cole went on to note that despite Wundt's standing as the founder of scientific psychology, "the only part of the scientific system

to win broad acceptance was his advocacy of the experimental method as the criterion of disciplinary legitimacy" (1996, p. 28). With that focus, one witnesses the marginalization of culture within child development.

The experimental method, with its underpinnings in positivism and a belief in an objective and knowable truth, dominated psychology throughout much of the 20th century. Kessen, describing his introduction to psychology in the 1950s, noted its pursuit of "laws of behavior [that] were to be perfectly general, indifferent to species, age, gender or specific psychological content" (1981, p. 27). It is noteworthy that while psychology continued throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s to strengthen its positivist orientation towards child development, the physical sciences, which psychology had sought to emulate, were engaged in poststructural and postmodern critique and deconstruction, questioning the very possibility of separating the seer from the seen, the subjective from the objective. That the physical sciences could engage in such critical reflection while psychology, as a social science, could ignore its own social fabric is as astonishing as its longstanding marginalization of culture. Despite such obvious problems and limitations, psychology's hold on the field of child development remained strong throughout the 1960s and 70s, in part because of the virtual absence, at that time, of a focus on children in other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. By the 1990s, however, both disciplines were advancing the view that childhood is a social construction rather than a universal (for early influential work in sociology, see James & Prout, 1990, and Qvortrup et al., 1987, 1994; for renewed engagement by anthropology, see Bluebond-Langner & Korbin, 2007; Lancy, 2008; LeVine & New, 2008; and Montgomery, 2009). Despite the value of such scholarly perspectives, these literatures, among others, are typically absent in the contemporary dominant discourse of international ECD, and, in particular, are not reflected in some of the most influential documents in the international ECD field.

A Particular Child on the Development Agenda: 1989/90 to the Present

It was during the period of child development's positivist and universalist ascendancy under the banner of psychology that the international development community began to elevate the child as a key component of the development equation. The years 1989/90 were a critical point in the evolution of international ECD, with the approval of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and acknowledgement at the Education for All (EFA) meeting in Jomtien, Thailand that "learning begins at birth" (UNESCO, 1990, 1995). These events were soon followed by an influential analysis of advances in child survival rates that sought to expand the focus on 'third world' children from survival

to healthy development and well-being (Myers, 1992)—a potentially positive focus, provided that images of health and well-being are diverse and culturally grounded, and that all societies have equal agency in promoting those images.

The demand for ideas, services, and products to feed new-found international development interests in the young child led to the creation of what are often termed 'best practices.' Rather than arising locally, 'best practices' are typically imported from Western sources, often through the support of Western donors. They tend to be seen as rising above ethical concerns of cultural imperialism, but nevertheless the 'trading dynamic' is a familiar one. As part of physical colonization, such a practice was called mercantilism: "The goal of the [colonizing or supplier] state was to export the largest possible quantity of its products and import as little as possible, thus establishing a favorable balance of trade" (Random House Dictionary, 1969, p. 896). The balance of trade in child development ideas has indeed favored the West. However, such processes enhance and perpetuate inequalities, serving neither science nor Africa well. What is needed instead— and what this volume offers—are ways and means that strengthen recipients' ability to draw on local capacity to engage in their own problem identification and problem-alleviating activities. Euro-Western perspectives can play a potentially positive role in that process, but only given a more equitable relationship between minority and majority world scholars and policy-makers.

At its best, the Western child development literature presents a strong case for the need for and value of ECD programs. Various strands of the literature highlight key rationales for investing in ECD. The following subsections consider the strengths inherent in a number of these rationales, but also highlight a number of weaknesses, key among them the degree to which Western perspectives and understandings, particularly those of a positivist and universalist nature, continue to dominate our understandings of children and childhood.

Human Development

Key references in the ECD literature rightly highlight the dangers posed to children's health and development by maternal and child malnutrition, and underline the need for continuing concern with child survival and programs focused on health and nutrition: if children's basic needs for nourishment, shelter, and sanitation are not met, children cannot thrive within any culture's vision for childhood or human life. In addition to valuable publications like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s annual State of the World's Children (see for example, UNICEF, 2009, special edition on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)) and EFA annual reports (of particular interest is the early childhood

care and education report, UNESCO, 2007), two series in *The Lancet* (Engle et al., 2007; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2007; Engle et al., 2011; and Walker et al., 2011) summarize compelling evidence of the developmental risks faced by more than 200 million children in the majority world. That said, of the 20 studies considered appropriate for inclusion in Engle et al. (2007), none was led by African scholars, and only two each in the two 2011 articles. The lack of opportunities for African and other majority world researchers to contribute to what should be a global discussion gnaws at the dominant discourse (Marfo, Pence, Levine, & Levine, 2011; Pence, 2011).

Western-led neuroscientific research is increasingly cited to demonstrate the critical importance of the first three years of life in the development of the neural pathways necessary for physical, mental, and emotional development. As often seen with streams of the international development ECD discourse, the neuroscientific arguments first appeared in the United States (Chugani, Phelps, & Mazziota, 1987; Chugani, 1997; Nelson & Bloom, 1997; and Shore, 1997) and were refined there (Gopnik, 1999; and Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) before key individuals and institutions brought them more fully into the international literature (Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron, & Shonkoff, 2006; Mustard, 2007; and National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). Should this Western dominance be considered problematic? Given the neuroscientific evidence, coupled with genomic advances, why should it be important that child development is studied around the globe? To this question, Van IJzendoorn (2010) has a ready response: "Simply put, because gene by environment interactions can change, even be totally reversed, when the ecological niche is taken into account" (p. 2).

Although it is appropriate to use scientific evidence to highlight the importance and potential of the early years, it is also important to recognize that our understandings of neurodevelopment are still in their early stages, particularly in regards to diverse contexts. Even as frequent a contributor as Shonkoff (2010) notes, "scientific investigation of the impact of different childrearing beliefs and practices on early brain development is nonexistent" (p. 363).

Social Justice and the (Mis)Measure of Children

While it is important to recognize the power of ECD programs to support children, it is also important to acknowledge that the instruments and concepts typically used to measure and establish child development norms may themselves confer disadvantage, further stigmatizing already disadvantaged groups. As early as 1984, a report published by the Bernard van Leer Foundation noted: "The normative approach [is] a strategy which itself brings disadvantage to children

whose lifestyle, language, cultural heritage and social patterns do not conform to supposed…norms" (p. 8). "For such children, standard educational 'processing' often devalues what they are, damages their image of themselves, their families and communities…The dominant culture, and its expression through normatively based educational systems, becomes thus an instrument of oppression" (p. 9).

In general, various UN and international organizations strongly support measurement, based on the arguments "no data = no problem" and "numbers count." These arguments do not take into account the reductionist power of numbers, thereby disabling a holistic view of the child, undermining local perspectives on what matters, and favouring exogenous and top-down priorities. Rose (1998) expresses a concern shared by many: "We have entered, it appears, the age of the calculable person whose individuality is no longer ineffable, unique, and beyond knowledge, but can be known, mapped, calibrated, evaluated, quantified, predicted and managed" (p. 88).

With such cautions in mind, minority world researchers need to be receptive to majority world understandings of child development and support non-Western researchers to play a key role in addressing international ECD policies and programs. If this does not occur, many, if not most, majority world children will continue to be defined as disadvantaged or deficient. And, as Nsamenang (2008) notes, the labels are too often applied to the Indigenous knowledge base as well:

> Whenever Euro-American ECD programs are applied as the
> gold standards by which to measure forms of Africa's ECD,
> they forcibly deny equity to and recognition of Africa's ways of
> provisioning for its young, thereby depriving the continent a
> niche in global ECD knowledge. p. 196)

Poverty Alleviation

The issue of poverty runs throughout contemporary arguments in favour of ECD as a keystone of development. Indeed, poverty is the holy grail of development and the single greatest worldwide influence on children's development. However, studies based on poverty issues in the United States and other minority world countries are deeply problematic for lived realities in the majority world. Cost-benefit analyses, common in the ECD literature, have historically been anchored by U.S.-based studies, where the issues of poverty, poverty alleviation, poverty impacts, and virtually all facets of a poverty discourse bear limited resemblance to poverty in the majority world.

It is concerning that one of the key rationales found in poverty and family/child-related work, 'breaking the cycle of poverty,' with its strong association with the 1960s War on Poverty in the United States, is used as a call for action in dramatically different contexts in the contemporary world. The cycle-of-poverty construct, as used in the United States, is profoundly individualistic and puritanistic, placing the onus on individuals to break out of their condition through meritorious activity (as defined by those not in that condition). The economic landscapes of poverty in the United States and other parts of the minority world differ dramatically from those found elsewhere. And, here again, appropriate and contextually informed child-related literature from the majority world is scarce.

A useful and relevant literature must include the local, seeking to understand poverty through the eyes of those who experience it—who may not identify themselves as 'poor.' Rather, they live their lives in the place they know, perhaps even unaware that others have called it poverty. One is reminded of the earlier quote from Gustava Esteva regarding President Harry Truman's introduction of the term 'underdevelopment' into the international discourse: "two billion people became 'underdeveloped'… and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others' reality" (Knutsson, 1997, p. 109). In a similar sense, we see children not as they might see themselves or as those close to them may understand them, but as a Western—and in particular an American—literature has led us to see and understand them. A literature that sought to hear from the local, and that used local realities and understandings as starting points, could take the poverty and ECD literature beyond preconceived or externally driven understandings.

Enabling Local Voices and Local Leadership

The role of enabler has not been common in child development, psychology, or any of the social sciences. Academics and professionals have been encouraged to believe that their knowledge trumps other, presumably less informed voices, an outlook that counters enabling processes and disables diversity. The field of international ECD, forged in the privileging, Western structures of academia and conjoined with professionals shaped in those same institutions, may wish to consider the words of the respected agronomist Robert Chambers, who came through similar corridors into international development somewhat earlier than most ECD specialists:

> [We], who call ourselves professionals, are much of the problem,
> and to do better requires reversals of much that we regard
> as normal … Normal professionalism means the thinking,
> concepts, values, and methods dominant in a profession.

It is usually conservative, heavily defended, and reproduced
through teaching, training, textbooks, professional rewards, and
international professional meetings. (1993, p. ix and 62)

Chambers' caution (and ire) was directed at himself and his colleagues, who
had long sought to shape majority world agriculture and development to their
own understanding of the world, with invariably problematic results. However,
his cautions apply equally well to the ECD field. To redress the damage done
by professionals in his own field, Chambers called for participatory approaches
that would seek to create an exchange, a hearing of different voices, without
privileging one over the other. Such approaches have been successful as part of
Indigenous ECD training and education (Pence et al., 1993; Ball & Pence, 2006).
They form the basis for Maori influence in the national Early Childhood Education
(ECE) *Te Whaariki* curriculum in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Carr & May, 1993; New
Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996), but are limited in the world of ECD and
international development (Pence & Marfo, 2008).

The importance of local leadership is often referenced in the international
literature, but the call seems tokenistic when the great flow of information and
dollars are from the top down. Critiques of these dynamics are common, but
solid examples of local actors in the driver's seat are not. Local leadership has
more than face validity. Not only has it been demonstrated and called for by
the broader development community (Chambers, 1997, 2002), it has a long-
standing history in ECD international development as well. Myers, in this 1995
afterword to the paperback release of his now classic *The Twelve Who Survive*
concluded: "Our approach must stimulate and support local initiatives that will
establish enduring processes and allow continuous learning from experience"
(p. 463). Myers' comments were echoed recently by Mamadou Ndouye (former
Executive Secretary for the Association for Education in Africa (ADEA), 2001-
2008) regarding the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) of the EFA: "We have seen the
extent to which 'solutions' and approaches aimed at promoting EFA have been
top-down.…What we can take away from this analysis is the extent to which
context matters and will determine the fate of any educational plan." (Ndouye et
al., 2010, pp. 43-44)

Context matters. Local leadership matters. But perhaps what matters most
is an understanding of the relationship between knowledge, power, and colonial
mentalities. In this respect, Shiva's (2000) comments are insightful:

[W]hen knowledge plurality mutated into knowledge hierarchy,
the horizontal ordering of diverse but equally valid systems
was converted into a *vertical* ordering of *unequal* systems, and

the epistemological foundations of Western knowledge were
imposed on non-Western knowledge systems with the result that
the latter were invalidated. (2000, p. vii)

Such subjugation of others' knowledge has taken many forms over the years, but the very few locally initiated studies that would pass 'high-level' evidence-based screening are a disturbing contemporary manifestation. This paucity creates the illusion of a void, when in fact useful activity and hard-acquired knowledge do exist. This aspect of the field must be examined closely, considering both its enabling and disabling properties.

Such an examination is critical for the success of a key imperative—the opening of the ECD international development discourse to those less heard, to scholars steeped in their own contexts, with questions that may not appear on the dominant agenda or be conceivable by its agents. The absence of a robust literature on child and sibling caregiving within the international ECD literature is but one example of a vast and largely untapped source of knowledge—a point raised by Weisner and Gallimore (1977) nearly 40 years ago. The lack of research on this key practice—common throughout much of the majority world—suggests the presence of a cultural filter that impedes the generation of important new knowledge and understanding.

Supporting majority world researchers and scholars to employ their own ways of knowing and to make a difference in their own contexts will benefit all of humankind. To develop a truly global knowledge base, it is not only the "draining of brains" but the "framing of brains" that must be addressed. We can no longer behave as though 5% of the world is a suitable proxy, a generalizable base, for the 95% unheard (Arnett, 2008). The following chapters of this volume explore some field-tested and externally evaluated approaches that bring such voices into discussions of policies, programs, research, and education.

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PROMOTING CAPACITY IN ECD: LEARNING FROM COMMUNITIES

In the first pages of this volume we briefly introduced the First Nations Partnership Programs (FNPP). Indeed, this book and the ideas it explores began with the FNPP. The FNPP was a face-to-face, in-community undergraduate education program that originated through partnerships with Indigenous communities in western Canada. Much of the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU) philosophy, approach to curriculum, and emphasis on education in support of promoting community capacity first evolved through partnerships with First Nations. The community development approach of the FNPP proved to be very effective in addressing the broader, country-level initiatives undertaken in the African ECDVU and related activities discussed in subsequent chapters.

First Nations Partnership Programs (1989-2006)

The FNPP originated in 1989, when the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) of northern Saskatchewan contacted Alan Pence with a request to partner with the Council in developing a culturally appropriate approach to early years training in their nine communities. That invitation ultimately resulted in 10 partnerships with First Nations organizations between 1990 and 2006, whose successes have been well documented over the years (Pence, Kuehne, Greenwood & Opekokew, 1993; Pence & McCallum, 1994; Ball & Pence, 2002, 2006; see www.fnpp.org for additional references[3]).

The invitation from Meadow Lake followed the Tribal Council's conviction that if they were to develop socially and economically strong communities, they must address the need for child care services "developed, administered, and operated by

[our] own people" (Meadow Lake Tribal Council, 1989). Over the years, the Council had worked with various post-secondary institutions and wished to avoid repeating certain negative experiences, such as 'dead end' certificate and diploma programs that did not ladder into degree programs, culturally inappropriate or insensitive content, and programs that pulled strong community members away from their homes, many of them never to return. While the Council had earlier approached several institutions closer to them, some of which had advertised the availability of an Indigenous early childhood education program, most of these programs had, at their core, very Western construction and content, with a "salting" or veneer of Aboriginal content that typically represented bits of various Aboriginal cultures. None of the programs provided Cree or Dene content that was specific to the Meadow Lake communities, so the Council continued its search.

That search brought them to Pence at the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, an institution over 2500 kilometres from their communities. In the late 1980s, Pence had been serving as the Canadian representative on a European-based 'reconceptualizing childhood' initiative (Qvortrup et. al., 1987) that had led him to question some of the dominant Western discourses concerning early childhood education (ECE) (see Moss & Pence, 1994). This interest in 'rethinking' ECE made him an 'academic of interest' for MLTC. Pence's initial reaction was that the University of Victoria was an unlikely choice, given the distances involved, the lack of any Indigenous-focused course work at the department at that time, and the more than 13 years that had passed since he had been involved in working with Indigenous communities. But the Executive Director was insistent and felt that funding could be secured, so they agreed to partner in developing the proposal and in creating a different approach than what the Council had initially encountered in their search.

Through a series of meetings in 1990 that included community representatives, university project staff, and several international advisors who were themselves exploring innovative possibilities at the nexus of practice and theory, a respectful and creative approach to partnership and program possibilities evolved. Partners

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[3] *The FNPP, like the ECDVU and other initiatives discussed later in the volume, were made possible through small teams of committed individuals working together, both at partner sites and at UVic. For the MLTC Project team based at UVic the commitment of Lynette Jackson and Margo Greenwood at UVic were central to successes achieved. Jessica Ball joined the FNPP in 2004 with the 3rd program delivery and remained to become first the Co-Director, then, for the final several programs, the Director of the FNPP after Pence's work began to focus increasingly on Africa in 2000/2001.*

at these meetings decided that the program would be guided not by a detailed blueprint, but by a number of key principles, which included:

- Ongoing community engagement and community initiation;

- An educational and career ladder orientation;

- Appreciation of the need for a broad scope of child and youth services within the communities;

- An 'all-ways' respectful approach to diverse knowledges;

- Adherence to principles of empowerment; and

- An understanding of the child within an ecological context.

The program that evolved was called a "generative curriculum," highlighting the fact that the actual curriculum experienced by the learners would be generated through a process of interaction in which participants engaged dialogically with diverse sources of knowledge, including local knowledge (primarily communicated by Elders), Western knowledge (conveyed mostly through books, course materials, and instructor presentations), and the students' own knowledge and experiences (Pence, Kuehne, Greenwood, & Opekokew, 1993; Pence & McCallum, 1994). Unlike most post-secondary education curriculum, including the course work at the University of Victoria, the FNPP content was neither predetermined nor static, but was instead indeterminate and dynamic. Generative curriculum focuses on stimulating an ever-expanding learning process, rather than the transfer of a pre-formed educational product.

The implementation of the generative curriculum was achieved through an "open architecture," a structure that not only allowed for, but actually required the presence of information and knowledge beyond the typical Western-based ECE curriculum found in most early childhood post-secondary programs. That knowledge was not found in the established texts, nor was it a part of non-community instructors' knowledge base—it came to the students through individuals the community identified as being appropriate knowledge holders. The great majority of these knowledge holders did not have university degrees—indeed, most did not have high school graduation certificates. But what they did have was knowledge gained through experiences in the communities and the respect of community members.

The approach taken was consistent with the wishes of the community to prepare their community members for employment both on and off-reserve. However, its 'outside the box' approach both to what would be deemed suitable knowledge and the range of individuals who would provide that knowledge—

from university-approved instructors to local Elders—was one that Pence wished to pilot before proposing that the program be added to the university calendar. The development process—promoting a non-traditional approach to post-secondary education while embedded within a traditional institution—was a considerable challenge, especially in the academic climate of the time. Years later, as part of a study of an Australian Indigenous post-secondary initiative, Pence had an opportunity to reflect on that process with a senior university administrator and an on-campus Indigenous leader (see Pence, Anglin, & Hunt-Jinnouchi, 2010). Through that work, it was clear that the FNPP was well ahead of its time in addressing Indigenous education, at both pre-primary and post-secondary levels.

The Generative Curriculum Model was piloted at the Meadow Lake Tribal Council from 1990 to 1993 and externally evaluated both by an academically based team (Cook, Marfo, & Tharp, 1993) and an Elder-led evaluation organized by the Council (Jette, 1993). Both evaluations were very positive in their assessments of the program. However, the Elder-led evaluation produced valuable insights into the model's broader impacts on community development. Jette noted that ripple effects resulted from the inclusion of key community members in the generation of the curriculum: "The involvement of the Elders in the Indian Child Care Program ... led to a revitalization of cultural pride and traditional value systems ... It is obvious that their involvement is changing the First Nations communities and the positive impacts being experienced now will continue to benefit the people ..." (1993, p. 59, 60).

The insights gleaned from the two sets of evaluations of the Meadow Lake pilot were critically important when Pence and colleagues responded to subsequent requests from nine other aboriginal communities in western Canada to provide a similar ECD education/training program (these, collectively, are the FNPP). For example, the evaluations showed that the strength and sustainability of the Meadow Lake pilot lay partly in the prior work, analysis, and decision-making that had been undertaken by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council before they contacted the University of Victoria. The roles of this partnership were clear from the beginning. The University was to be a supportive partner in realizing a dream that had come from the Council and the Council would be in the driver's seat in coordinating the initiative, an approach that benefited the community in ways that would not have been possible had the university led the process. Following the Meadow Lake pilot, the FNPP strived to carry this learning into its other partnerships.

For instance, one Indigenous community approached the program in the mid-1990s and indicated that while they would like to provide the courses in their community, they could not identify any Elders who could play a role in providing traditional knowledge. FNPP leaders communicated to the community that this particular educational program did not rely on one "battery" (the university) to power learning, but two: the community with the university. Six months later, the community came forward with two Elders and the program was able to commence. At the graduation event three years later, not only were the students' accomplishments celebrated, so too was the work of the *five* Elders who had shared their knowledge with students during the program delivery period.

The participation of Elders and respected others as knowledge holders and knowledge sharers within the FNPP programs was a key dynamic within the programs. In some communities few of the young people spoke their Indigenous language, so the Elders' words would need to be translated. This situation led some communities to then launch a local language program for the students and for other community members. The challenge of translation was evident at one session attended by Pence, where students asked the Elder to say the mother-tongue word for caregiver. He responded by noting that there was no generic counterpart term—the role of caregiver depended on the relationship between the one receiving and the one providing care. Once the Elder knew that kinship relationship, he could provide the term and also describe what the caregiving could include. Such discussions broadened the knowledge bases of the students, the instructors, the authors, and the broader corpus of ECE knowledge. A graduate of the FNPP captured very well a key part of the philosophy and inspiration for the program when she noted: "Being in this program is like having the best of both worlds. We love to learn what researchers have found out about child development … and we love to learn more about our own culture and how we can use it to help the children of our community." (Lil'wat student evaluation comment).

In the late 1990s, an evaluation of the first seven deliveries of the FNPP revealed that the diploma-level (two-year) completion rates were more than double those of other Indigenous-focused programs offered during the same timeframe: 77% for the FNPP deliveries, versus 40% across all Indigenous post-secondary programs in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). In addition, 95% of diploma graduates still lived in their home communities, addressing community retention issues, and approximately 90% had either created a new child program, were serving as staff in an existing program, or were pursuing further education (Ball & Pence, 2001).

The fact that leadership and knowledge generation were rooted in the participating communities was integral to the unprecedented success of the FNPP deliveries. The FNPP programs delivered results at the individual and at the community level. In the words of Marie McCallum, Indian Child Care Program Director: "Because the community was invited into the classroom and the students' learning extended into the community, the impacts of the training were not limited to the student cohort. There was a ripple effect that reached out to all aspects of the way we as a community think and act with respect to young children and families. Everyone was transformed." (McCallum as cited in Jette, 1993)

The FNPP generated positive, transformative experiences for program participants, community members, and the wider socio-cultural ecosystem. The evaluation showed that across FNPP deliveries, the Generative Curriculum Model led to unprecedented educational and vocational outcomes and to personal and community transformations that reached far beyond the classroom. The partnerships created new interpersonal relationships, new ways of relating between cultural communities and mainstream institutions, new ways of teaching and learning, new knowledge, and new or syncretic models for supporting children and families. These outcomes would not have been possible within a mainstream, externally-driven, pre-determined program delivery framework. Across programs, graduates viewed their success not only in terms of their academic achievements, but also in terms of their emerging roles as community advocates and respected resources for their family members and friends.

The evaluation identified the following beneficiaries of the program:

- Community members who become trainees/students in the program were the most immediate beneficiaries.

- Children of the trainees were shown to benefit as a result of their parents' training.

- Parents benefited from organized child care and other support services that helped them to care for their children and that exposed their children to Indigenous culture and language.

- Elders in the communities benefited from having a valued role in the training program, a forum to share their wisdom and experience, and opportunities to forge new relationships with the younger generations in their community.

- Community administrators/organizers benefited from the experience of partnership and the addition of skilled professionals to their community.

- University-based team members benefited from opportunities to build bridges with Indigenous communities, to learn about Indigenous

constructions of childhood, care and development, and to explore new ways of making post-secondary education and training relevant, accessible, and sustaining of Indigenous cultures.

The evaluation also identified five antecedent conditions that enabled the teaching and learning processes that led to these successful outcomes:

- Partnership, especially the reciprocal guided participation of willing community and institutional partners;

- Community-based delivery that enabled community inclusion in all phases of program planning, delivery, and refinement;

- Student cohort involvement in their own professional development;

- Open architecture of curriculum that required community input ("two batteries"); and

- Community facilitation of cultural input in curriculum (typically through Elders and other respected instructors, some teaching in the Indigenous language).

Participant accounts suggested that the combined effects of these conditions accounted for the partnerships' success. Together, these conditions enabled the cultural fit and social inclusiveness of the training process and curriculum content. In turn, the training program resulted in outcomes that were consistent with community goals. In contrast to the colonial presumption of knowing what is best for Indigenous people, the FNPP model assumed that First Nations communities themselves were in the best position to define their communities' goals for their children and families.

The First Nations communities' enthusiasm for the generative approach led to partnerships not only with the tribal communities (over 50 communities and 10 tribal organizations), but also with three colleges that were geographically closer to the communities. Two of the three colleges continue to offer the two-year program, now decades beyond the initial partnership, with the colleges having had full access to the curriculum, philosophy and implementation dynamics that lay behind it. The Saskatchewan Indian Institute for Technology (SIIT) reached an additional five tribal councils in that province, in some cases with multiple deliveries, and Malaspina College (now Vancouver Island University) has a similar long-term record of deliveries in British Columbia. In brief, the FNPP offered an alternative to mainstream post-secondary education and development assistance that could be adapted to other education programs and capacity-promoting initiatives in many human services settings in Canada—and, as will be seen in the following chapters, in other parts of the world as well.

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CHAPTER 4

PROMOTING CAPACITY IN ECD: FROM COMMUNITIES TO COUNTRIES

Early in its development the FNPP's dialogic generative curriculum model attracted the attention of individuals and institutions in Canada and internationally who were looking for alternatives to top-down, externally-driven approaches to education and to ECD in particular. The development of the FNPP fit well, as a case study, into the context of a 'Summer Institutes' program that Pence had launched in the 1980s at the University of Victoria (UVic) to explore innovative approaches to early childhood issues at local, national, and international levels. The Summer Institutes proved to be a good testing ground for some ideas that would later appear in a 1994 volume edited by Moss and Pence, *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services: New Approaches to Defining Quality,* whose philosophical descendent is a well-received book by Dahlberg, Moss and Pence first published in 1999: *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* (now in its 3rd 'classics' edition and translated into 12 languages). Those volumes provided critical lenses to view what have become hegemonic and limiting forces in early childhood education, care and development, and helped to identify alternative ways forward.

In 1994, the UVic's School of Child and Youth Care and the BC Office of the Children's Ombudsman co-hosted a major international conference in recognition of the International Year of the Family and of progress towards ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The conference, *Stronger Children, Stronger Families,* featured a number of content streams, one of which was ECD. Pence, the organizer of the ECD stream, invited a number of UNICEF headquarters and country office staff to present at the conference. The conference itself overlapped with one of the UVic Summer

Institutes, so the UNICEF presenters were able to participate in both the Institute and the conference.

At the end of his stay in Victoria, Cyril Dalais, Senior Educational Program Officer at UNICEF headquarters, asked Pence to work with his office to develop an international, intensive seminar series, organized along the same interactive, participatory lines as the Summer Institutes. This invitation launched a very different path for generative work—one that ultimately led to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the development of diverse, complementary initiatives to advance ECD in SSA.

The Early Childhood Education, Care and Development Seminar Series

The first step on this new generative path was an ECD International Seminar/ Institute in the summer of 1995 at the University of Victoria. Interest in the seminar was strong, with participation from many regions of the majority world. Participants were pleased with the seminar and made three requests to UNICEF. First, they suggested that UNICEF should continue to support international ECD Seminars through the University of Victoria. The second request was to supplement the international ECD seminars with regional ECD seminars focused on enhancing capacity in specific regions (for example, Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa). Lastly, participants voiced their support for the development of a distance education graduate degree program in ECD to help meet the pressing need for high-level studies to support the well-being of children, families, and communities in the majority world. The UVic's School of Child and Youth Care was seen as uniquely well qualified to develop such an innovative graduate program, given Pence's experience in developing the FNPP and delivering the Summer Institutes and international ECD seminar series.

UNICEF responded by providing seed money for Pence to plan a regional ECD seminar/institute on sub-Saharan Africa, to be hosted at the University of Namibia, then seat of the Early Childhood Development Network in Africa (ECDNA) under the coordination of Professor Barnabas Otaala[4]. The three-week seminar took place in September/October 1997 and attracted 26 accomplished professionals from 11 primarily Eastern and Southern African countries. The design of this first regional ECD Seminar was inspired primarily by the earlier Summer Institutes and by lessons learned from the FNPP. The lead presenters

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[4] The original request from UNICEF was not limited to Africa—SE Asia and the Pacific was also identified as a priority and Pence worked with UNICEF to develop and deliver an ECD Workshop for that region as well in 1997.

included African and non-African international leaders, but the seminar was planned with a keen awareness that the participants themselves brought a wealth of knowledge and experience—most were mid- to senior-level professionals within key government ministries or NGOs in their respective countries. That local, country-level knowledge was deemed just as critical as the SSA and international sources. Thus, the seminar was structured to allow a good amount of small group activity and reporting back to the plenary for broader discussion. The seminar also purposefully opened up to possibilities beyond what were deemed 'best practices' in the West. Participants were encouraged to be very familiar with such models and discourses, but to consider them from multiple perspectives and to reflect on them from their own bases of experience, generating their own 'good ideas' and 'good practices' and sharing them with their colleagues from other countries.

We later learned from seminar participants that this emphasis on local knowledges and the purposeful exchange of South-South SSA perspectives was rarely featured in events organized by donors and international organizations. Instead, such events typically employed North-South knowledge transfer activities (an approach all-too-familiar to this day). The result, readily apparent in SSA as one visited countries, was far greater familiarity with ideas, approaches, and programs from the North than with ideas and programs underway in SSA—even from neighbors just across the border. Such dynamics were reminiscent of comments from various SSA colleagues who received their basic education in-country and at the end of that education could draw the rivers of Europe on a map, but not the rivers of Africa.

Throughout the seminar, it was also considered important for participants to engage informally with one another and the lead presenters with shared meals, entertainment evenings, and a field trip on the Sunday 'day off'—all welcome breaks from the intense work of the seminar, which started early and ran late. Gradually, it became apparent that these times for personal and informal connections served as an important 'glue' for the evolving 'community of care and practice'—a multi-organizational, multi-country ECD community that had not existed on such a scale before. Largely through the depth of this evolving community, new possibilities for ECD in SSA emerged. Shared ideas slowly evolved into realities, despite the profoundly challenging contextual conditions that characterize much of the SSA environment.

Following the successful seminar in Namibia, The Gambia Ministry of Education requested a similar seminar for their sub-region. In November 1998, the Ministry and The Gambia UNICEF office hosted a two-week ECD seminar

with 28 participants from 12 primarily West and Central African countries. The general structure and organization of the second seminar was similar to the first, though the presence of both Anglophone and Francophone participants posed challenges not experienced in Namibia (for example, simultaneous translation). The critically important informal activities tended to take place along language lines, which had not been the case in Namibia a year earlier.

Despite the language challenges during the second seminar, collectively, the first two African ECD Seminars were highly effective in identifying country-level ECD leaders, highlighting worthwhile but little-known ECD initiatives, and forging the personal and professional bases for enhanced networking and information-sharing across SSA. When the World Bank expressed interest in hosting a third ECD Seminar in Uganda, discussions rapidly moved to thoughts of expansion: hosting Africa's first International ECD Conference. In hindsight, the step to a continent-wide conference seems fated and natural, but at the time it felt risky—perhaps a step too soon for such a fledgling 'community.' But with tremendous support from the World Bank and numerous international and United Nations organizations active in ECD in SSA, the conference went from idea to reality in less than nine months—and with it, a key piece for the evolving puzzle of ECD capacity promotion in SSA was brought on board.

The World Bank's support of the conference extended beyond the costs of the venture. Somewhat surprisingly, the Bank also gave its support to highlight local initiatives and to use a strengths-based theme, as captured in the conference's subtitle, *Showcasing ECD Innovation and Application in Africa.* Highlighting innovation and success in Africa was an unusual focus for the time, and unfortunately remains so today, as funders (typically based in the North) seem to almost unconsciously revert to the North for their exemplars and keynotes, showcasing the West and perpetuating a colonial dynamic.

Registration requests for the conference soon far exceeded the 200-seat capacity of the conference centre. That demand, plus the spirit of the interactions, underscored the need for Africa's voice to be heard in the international ECD arena. Conference participants were enthusiastic in their evaluations, recommending similar Africa-focused conferences in the future (see "The African ECD Conference Series" below).

With the conclusion of the Uganda Conference, the five-year ECD Seminars initiative (1994-1999) was well placed to explore another facet of its evolution: creation of the ECD 'university without walls' (ECDVU) vision first identified earlier in the decade (ECDVU, 2000). Ideally, sufficient international funds would have been available not only to launch the ECDVU, but also to sustain the new

conference series and continue the ECD seminars, perhaps with an increasing focus on Francophone and Lusophone Africa. Such a tri-part undertaking was called for early in the 2000s (Pence et. al., 2008), but in 1999 limited funds and related resources forced a choice and the ECD seminars were discontinued.[5]

The African ECD Conference Series (1999-2009)

The African ECD conference series, which spanned the decade from 1999 to 2009, emerged from the ECD seminars, but over time came to address additional critical facets of capacity promotion in African ECD. Much larger than the seminars (conference registration ranged from 200 in 1999 to over 600 in 2009, compared to 25-30 for the seminars), and much shorter (3-5 days versus 14-20 for the seminars), the conferences provided a useful opportunity to take a large-scale 'snapshot' of ECD in Africa, to showcase African programs and people, to share work and ideas with colleagues from many other African countries, and, increasingly, to involve political leaders from across SSA. In addition, the conferences provided an important venue for broad scale advocacy. Following the 2002 conference in Eritrea, local and SSA conference organizers released the *Asmara Declaration on Early Child Development: Framework for Action* (2002). After the 2005 conference in Ghana, the *Accra Communiqué* (2005) was produced. This document was endorsed by more than 25 ministers or ministerial representatives who attended the Accra conference, and subsequently helped to inform the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) biennial, which took place in March 2006. In the wake of the 2009 conference, hosted in Senegal, participants and leaders released *A Call to Action,* which the President of Senegal took forward to the African Union.

Starting with the first African ECD Conference in Uganda, the series was primarily focused on SSA and on reaching African ECD professional and governmental leaders. However, starting with Accra in 2005, that focus expanded to include African political leaders as well, creating a second stream within the body of the conference. Many international conferences privilege speakers

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[5] *It is interesting to note that in the 2010s the calls for promoting leadership at diverse levels for ECD in SSA are once again loud. And it is also of interest to note that typically the approach taken by the North is that of North-South knowledge transfer—this despite an evidence base in support of a generative South-South (but not excluding the North) knowledge exchange model. Gaining funding for such South-South focused exchanges remains as difficult in the 2010s as it was in the 1990s—a testimony to the hegemony of knowledge in service to power. Restoring a sense of 'corporate memory' to ECD in SSA, a process of 'looking back,' should be considered along with other facets of 'moving forward' discussed in the concluding chapter.*

from the West (for example, as keynotes) above regional and local presenters, conveying a not-so-subtle message that 'good and best' reside in the West. As part of promoting capacity, it is critical that Africa appreciate its own ingenuity, leadership, and existing capacity. At the African ECD conferences, more than 75% of presenters, and all but one of the keynote speakers have been from Africa. Table 4.1 on the following page illustrates how the conference series fostered the growth of ECD capacity in Africa over a very short period.

Table 4.1 Location, Size, and Scope of African ECD Conferences

Conference Location & Theme	Date	# of Attendees	# of SSA Countries	# of Presenters	African based participation	African Government Representation
Kampala, Uganda Showcasing ECCD: *Innovation and Application in Africa*	1999	200	19	35	75%	3 national ministers
Asmara, Eritrea *Health, Nutrition, Early Childhood Care and Education, and Children in Need of Special Protection*	2002	200	28	60	80%	6 national ministers and 1 international minister
Accra, Ghana *Moving Early Childhood Forward in Africa*	2005	300	39	80	85%	6 national ministers and 27 international ministers or reps
Dakar, Senegal *From Policy to Action: Expanding Investment in ECD for Sustainable Development*	2009	600	42	146	89%	35 national ministers and 113 international ministers or reps

At the conclusion of the first African International Conference on ECD in 1999, Marito Garcia, lead economist at the World Bank for SSA, announced that the World Bank would be providing support to develop the ECDVU program through funds from the Norwegian Educational Trust Fund. The ECDVU program and its development will be discussed in the following section.

The Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU) (2000-present)

Interest in developing a distance-based, graduate ECD program was first sparked at the 1994 and 1995 Summer Institutes held at UVic, with support continuing to build at the ECD seminars held in Namibia (1997) and The Gambia (1998). Garcia's announcement at the 1999 conference was a key next step for capacity promotion in SSA—one focused on country-level, ECD development through the identification and support of key country-identified individuals who could advance policies, programs, and training. These individuals, working in teams in communities of practice, were envisioned as 'impact-multipliers,' who could create the kinds of synergistic ripples that had made a difference for communities like Meadow Lake, but which would now be possible for entire *countries* in Africa.

By 1999, the general philosophy and structure for developing the ECDVU were reasonably clear, based on experiences from the FNPP, the Summer Institutes, the ECD seminars, and the inaugural SSA conference. Unlike many projects arising from Western institutions, this one was committed to a post-colonial approach that was built on identifying Indigenous strengths, based on over a decade of experience. The importance of respecting multiple knowledges and fostering ways for those knowledges to inform one another and generate new possibilities was also understood and had withstood rigorous evaluation from both Indigenous and academic perspectives. The ECDVU proposal had also benefitted from informal discussions that had taken place in the latter half of the 1990s involving Cyril Dalais and Barnabas Otaala, focusing on operational issues in the SSA context. Separate discussions with Michael Gibbons (then with the Banyan Tree Foundation) explored how a post-colonial philosophical approach could inform capacity and leadership promotion in SSA. Gibbons' ideas resonated with Pence's own work with Dahlberg and Moss, which sought to move beyond current hegemonic practices in early childhood services and open up to sources of knowledge beyond dominant discourses (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999).

These various informal discussions throughout the late 1990s were supplemented by a decision to identify an international advisory group that would meet and review an operational plan for the program once funding was in place. That advisory meeting took place early in 2000 and produced greater clarity in numerous areas, including: overall participant numbers (28-30); participant numbers from specific countries (3-4 person teams); priority countries (relatively stable countries most in need of capacity promotion); the participant selection processes (to be led in-country); and key failings and successes with earlier ECD initiatives in SSA. The international advisory group was supplemented with an African-based group and a technology advisory group, with all three making substantial contributions, particularly over the inaugural period.

New elements beyond those used in the FNPP, the seminars, and the conference were required for the ECDVU to create a "*virtual* family of committed learners and actors" located across sub-Saharan Africa from an institutional base at the University of Victoria. The only way to meet this challenge at a reasonable cost while allowing participants to continue their employment was to incorporate use of the Internet—and that strategy, plus continuation of two-week face-to-face seminars, were core structures envisioned in the ECDVU plan. However, this vision was based on certain assumptions regarding the state of technology in Africa at that time.

In 2000, a technology feasibility study was conducted (ECDVU, 2000), yielding a cautious "yes, it [internet connectivity] should be feasible—most of the time." But there were other caveats: for maximum connectivity it would be better if participants were located in, or could access, larger urban centres; bandwidths were limited and courses needed to avoid high bandwidth features (no streaming video, for example); the program needed to be purposefully 'redundant,' providing students with discs and print materials as well as the web base; and it was recommended that the developers create a special educational support position, a "cohort manager" who would provide ongoing support for and connection among learners, instructors, technical support, and the central ECDVU office.

Around this same time, the curriculum was designed, building on the generative curriculum principles of respect for multiple sources of knowledge, including the importance of local content and context, as well as the need for a program that would mesh smoothly across a combination of six months of web delivery with a mid-point, two-week, face-to-face seminar. The curriculum, in all ways possible, had to advance the three main objectives of the program for ECD in SSA: leadership development, capacity-promotion, and network enhancement. Assignments within and across courses, discussion sessions, use

of local learning teams, personal support messages, inclusion of local leaders at seminars, and all other aspects of the program were designed to address these three central objectives (chapter 5 describes in more detail the curriculum and other features of the ECDVU program).

While curriculum development work began to move forward, it was also necessary to create a system to identify participants for the new program. All indications were that the program would generate strong interest across Africa, requiring the development of a process to select countries and students. The international advisory group helped to identify priority countries (primarily those committed to ECD but capacity-limited and politically stable). The group also helped develop procedures and criteria that could be used in-country to recruit and then select participants. The selection process that evolved linked back to the earlier African seminars, using network participants from the seminars and the conference, in coordination with UNICEF, NGO, and government staff, to create an 'ECD Intersectoral and Multi-organizational Country Committee' composed of key ECD groups and individuals from each country. The Country Committee was charged with three tasks: (1) to create an 'ECD Goals and Objectives' statement spanning a 5-7 year period; (2) to advertise the ECDVU program, identify the criteria for selecting country nominees, and solicit applications; and (3) to nominate up to four people from different sectors and organizations to take part in the program. Applicants were required to discuss with their employer their interest in ECDVU and to seek some level of employer financial support (typically travel and/or accommodation and meals for participation in the seminars). The program was free for students, with all program delivery costs covered by various 'core' donors. For the first delivery, these included: UNICEF at headquarters and at some country levels, the World Bank at country levels (for some participants), UNESCO headquarters, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and CIDA. In addition, approximately 60 per cent of local employers were able to contribute some support to their participating employee, particularly for attendance at the face-to-face seminars.

In late August 2001, program delivery started. As the program moved forward, a great deal of data was collected. For example, within the curriculum itself, Country Reports on the Status of Children and Women was a first-term country team assignment, and various other assignments supported in-country initiatives. Evaluations of courses, instructors, support services and seminars were ongoing, while broader assessments of the overall program effectiveness were collected every six months and evidence of capacity promotion within each country was documented. Every six months, the two-week, face-to-face seminars rotated to a different part of Africa (Southern, Eastern, and Western)

and in each location, regional ECD specialists joined the international faculty for presentations and discussions. Site visits to key programs were made in conjunction with each seminar and a wide variety of academic and 'community-bonding' activities took place. The pattern of courses, seminars, and collection of materials rotated through the six-month terms for the first two years of the program, with the final year focused on developing and completing a thesis or major project.

Concurrent with this three-year program, in 2001 the World Bank's Middle East-North Africa (MENA) section requested delivery of a one-year professional development program based on the ECDVU model. With funds from the Dutch government, the ECDVU developed the MENA program in 2002 and delivered it in 2003. Subsequently, a second MENA and three SSA programs, all one year in duration, were delivered, the most recent in 2010-2011. Funding support for the three one-year SSA deliveries have come from: in-country employers, World Bank country funds, UNICEF country offices, the Open Society Foundation-UK, and the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

As one might anticipate, the ECDVU organizers learned as much about supporting ECD capacity promotion as the students. A key lesson in this rich learning was the importance of forging a close-knit community—one where the power of shared commitment to a transcendent 'good' with the potential to enhance the well-being of Africa's children overrides the myriad challenges these leaders and learners faced every day. That commitment permeated every facet of the ECDVU and deeply impacted its ability to deliver 'on the ground' results (see chapter 6).

It has always been implicit in the capacity-promoting philosophy of the ECDVU that the program would eventually be led and delivered by African scholars in African universities, with initial support from the University of Victoria during the transition. That long-standing objective is now on the threshold of being met: In 2013/2014, the University of Ibadan received approvals to offer, in collaboration with the University of Victoria, their own online Graduate Diploma program. The inaugural delivery at the University of Ibadan is taking place in 2015/2016. The ECDVU looks forward to many years of African universities' leadership in support of ECD capacity, an institutional transfer and support model employed earlier with the FNPP.

Above, we have provided an overview of the ECDVU and its origins through the Summer Institutes, the African ECD seminars, and the African ECD conferences. In chapter 5, we provide a greater level of detail regarding the program and its operationalization, while in chapter 6, we provide details from the programs'

external evaluations. Perhaps, in reviewing this story, 'pieces of a puzzle'—a metaphor introduced earlier in this chapter—is a useful way to understand how the SSA initiatives developed, and how other capacity-promoting initiatives can and do arise. The approach that generated the ECDVU and all the other ECD initiatives described in this volume has been governed as much by opportunity as plan. This perspective is too often unappreciated by those governed by a logical-sequential approach to the world—an approach that has at times denied ECD the springboard of serendipity. What is too seldom understood by those with such mentalities—but what is understood more often at the grassroots— is that serendipity and opportunity are as critical for development as the pre-establishment of goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes—indeed, probably more so. It is the combination of plan and opportunity that makes for successful advances. The unexpected support of the World Bank to move onto a 'next phase' before the cement had set on the first phase—the seminars—was an opportunity not to be missed. And that lesson is important for all of those committed to building ECD in SSA: The opportunities that arise are different in each country and the pattern for development will quite naturally be different as well. In some cases policy development precedes exceptional programs, in others it is the reverse, while another has an exceptional approach to education and training that is spawning new and exciting initiatives. And always there is the unexpected feature of idiosyncratic brilliance, lighting unimagined pathways. All of these are parts of the puzzle—all are needed to advance the process of building ECD successfully across diverse contexts.

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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY (ECDVU)

The ECDVU is much more than a traditional training program. While ECDVU compares very favourably to other graduate programs in terms of program completion rates, costs, work interruption, and the key African issue of brain drain, the full measure of its value includes its impact on promoting ECD capacity, leadership, and networks at country and broader regional levels. Throughout this chapter and the next, we present evidence of ECDVU's success both as a training program, and at these additional levels. Readers who are interested in establishing a capacity-promoting education and training program, whether in ECD or in other fields within international development, may find the ECDVU to be a useful model. We also hope that these chapters demonstrate the promise that lies in honouring the local in international development. By promoting regional networks, mobilizing Indigenous knowledge, and stimulating local solutions, while also drawing on international expertise, we were able to deliver a meaningful training program with much broader impacts than we could have anticipated at the outset. In describing the ECDVU program and its outcomes, we hope to provide evidence that capacity-promoting initiatives are both feasible and desirable, inspiring others to take up similar approaches and to share their stories and lessons learned.

Program Mission and Goals

ECDVU's stated mission is to promote African leadership capacity as a key strategy to support child, family, and community well-being and broader social and economic development. As such, ECDVU's mission highlights the long-term importance of an integrated approach to ECD as a vital support to broader

Africa-centred goals, including those articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (and the soon to be determined Sustainable Development Goals), the Poverty Reduction Strategies, the national goals outlined in Education for All, and sectoral plans for education, health, nutrition, sanitation, and child protection. While ECDVU situates itself within these larger policy frameworks and strategies, the more specific emphasis is on how the local, regional, and country levels can address these frameworks with the active participation of ECDVU graduates. Program graduates can then, in turn, play a key role in mobilizing citizens in their own communities and countries to become involved in ECD policy and program initiatives 'on the ground.' Within this broader mission, ECDVU's goals are to build ECD capacity, promote ECD leadership, and stimulate supportive ECD networks within and across participating African countries. ECDVU also helps to address the major gap in ECD research studies in sub-Saharan Africa. The research completed during the program itself, the research that participants launch after graduation, and the research promoted through the African Scholars and Institutions (AS&I) initiative (see chapter 9) are all serving to address this gap.

Program Administration

To meet the commitment to its cross-cultural, capacity-promoting mission and goals, ECDVU encourages the active participation of both African and international ECD organizations and specialists in its programming. National ECD committees in Africa, African and international instructors, and (as needed) African and international advisory groups all play a vital role and complement the work of a small core team based at the University of Victoria. The project support team at the University of Victoria includes three main roles: a Project Director, a Financial and Program Support Administrator, and, during program deliveries, a Cohort Manager. At different times, according to need, the program has also employed course developers and technical support staff.

All three evaluations of the ECDVU have cited the role of Cohort Manager as a vital support to participants' learning. The evaluation of the first three deliveries of ECDVU in sub-Saharan Africa showed that most ECDVU students (69%) consulted the Cohort Manager on a weekly basis throughout the program, and many students (13%) sought assistance nearly every day (Vargas-Barón, with Joseph, 2011). The Cohort Manager's ongoing online support was considered by many students to be vital to their success.

As noted in chapter 4, the ECDVU also benefited from the support of an international ECD advisory committee, particularly in the early development stages. Individuals who have served on the advisory committee have brought a high level of

African and international expertise in ECD. Some committee members also served as instructors or facilitators in the earlier international ECD seminars. As the ECDVU has evolved, an increasing number of regional SSA specialists have supported and advised the program, many of whom have served as program faculty. At present, all but one of the ECDVU instructors (Pence) is African.

Country and Participant Selection

The country identification and the participant selection processes were also critical to ECDVU's success. The program organizers wanted to make a major impact within the available resources—not just to train ECD specialists, but to use the program to achieve broader positive impacts on ECD in the participating countries and across sub-Saharan Africa. Even before the ECDVU program was launched, there was a high level of interest in the program throughout Africa—indeed, the program was created in response to that interest. Thus, the challenge was not to recruit participants, but how to choose them from the many potential candidates. The program goals called for a selection process that would identify those individuals in the best position to benefit from the ECDVU's unique approach and who could have a significant impact on ECD in their home country. The knowledge and ability to identify those candidates lay within the countries themselves—not within the ECDVU administration.

Table 5.1 on the following page shows the countries involved in the six ECDVU deliveries. For two of the deliveries (the MENA-2 delivery in Yemen and the SSA-4 delivery in Nigeria), specific countries or donors approached the ECDVU director to mount their own ECDVU program. However, for the other four deliveries (SSA-1, SSA-2, SSA-3 and MENA-1), the ECDVU engaged in a country selection process prior to the student selection process. Like the student selection process, the country selection process was designed to maximize ECDVU's chances of fulfilling its capacity-promoting mission, with a greater focus on lower income or lower capacity countries—for example, South Africa, with a substantially higher ECD capacity than all other African countries, has not participated in the ECDVU. Additional criteria for the choice of countries included: participation in earlier ECD seminars, social and political stability, government, donor, and international organizational support for ECD, and the potential for broad inter-sectoral, multi-organizational interaction to support in-country ECD development.

Following the selection of countries, national ECD committees were formed to manage the selection of participants. The national committees typically included high-level representatives of governmental agencies, donors, NGOs,

NGO networks, universities, professional associations, and independent ECD specialists. As national ECD leaders, they could identify key national ECD objectives and the cross-sectoral processes necessary to achieve them. Then, they would identify and review potential national candidates for ECDVU, using additional criteria. The committees sought respected mid- to high-level ECD professionals who were employed full-time, had at least eight years of service and at least 10 years of active work ahead. Candidates also needed to show leadership potential and a dedication to improving ECD in their countries. Finally, candidates were asked for evidence of employer support—the hope was that employers would provide the candidates with computer access and support, funds for travel to regional seminars, and as much other assistance as possible.

Table 5.1 ECDVU deliveries, 2001-2011.

ECDVU Delivery	Countries	Number of Participants
SSA-1 (2001-2004)	Eritrea, Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia *(This was the only 3-year, Master's degree program.)*	30
SSA-2 (2006-2007)	Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda	24
SSA-3 (2009-2010)	Cameroon, The Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia	28
SSA-4 (2010-2011)	Nigeria	30
MENA-1 (2003)	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Yemen	13
MENA-2 (2005-2006)	Yemen	15

Programs and Structure

The ECDVU has offered two main programs: a three-year Master's degree in Child and Youth Care and a one-year graduate diploma in International Child and Youth Care for Development, both issued by the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria. Students in these programs had already achieved Bachelor's degrees that were recognized by the University of Victoria. Students without a recognized undergraduate degree completed essentially the same coursework as other ECDVU participants. Upon successful completion, they received a Bachelor's degree in Child and Youth Care (three-year program) or a Professional Specialization Certificate in International Child and Youth Care for Development (one-year program)[6] from the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. The three-year program was offered only once in sub-Saharan Africa from 2001 to 2004. The one-year program was delivered five times, twice in the Middle East/North Africa, and three times in sub-Saharan Africa.

Both the one- and three-year programs incorporated online and face-to-face seminar components. For each of the web-based courses in the program, approximately 40% of the learning activities took place during a semiannual two-week face-to-face seminar. The remaining learning activities were delivered online, while learners maintained their ECD employment in-country. When they were at home, participants were expected to communicate regularly with the international cohort and to interact with an ECD 'community of learners' in their own countries. Most major assignments for the program were designed to complement the participants' ECD employment responsibilities, and were thus negotiated individually between each student and the course instructor.

A Generative Curriculum

The design of the ECDVU courses drew on the generative curriculum model developed as part of the First Nations Partnership Program (Pence, Kuehne,

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[6] *The ECDVU was ahead of the University of Victoria itself in developing Graduate Diplomas—the very first one-year program offered (MENA-1) awarded graduates a Graduate Diploma on a pilot basis, however for SSA-2 when ECDVU sought to recognize graduates with a Graduate Diploma, the new incoming Dean of Graduate Studies indicated that such a program must first go through Senate—representing a delay for SSA-2 and 3 who received PSCs for the same work as the MENA-1 and SSA-4 programs. Such challenges, both within UVic and elsewhere, represent a level of detail typically not discussed here.*

Greenwood, & Opekokew, 1993; Pence & McCallum, 1994) and reflected the following capacity-promoting principles and characteristics:

- **A learner-focused approach** that draws on learners' experiences in their personal and professional lives;

- **An ecological approach** that places individuals, programs, and policies into an interactive and dynamic context and seeks to plan activities that impact the larger ecology;

- **A capacity-promoting approach** that strengthens participants' capacities to fulfill their professional mandates and to be accountable to their constituents and the broader ECD community in their countries;

- **A co-constructive approach** that encourages learners to use program curricular materials and their own in-country experiences and data to generate their own perspectives and applications;

- **A multicultural approach** that considers ideas, research, and goals pertaining to child care and development from many different cultural sources, including (but not limited to) African and Euro-Western sources;

- **A cohort-driven approach** that encourages collaboration, reciprocal learning among peers, and networking among learners of each participating country; and

- **A historical approach** that explores 'how we came to be here' vis-à-vis the evolution of various theories and constructions of children and their care, and more recent international development activities on child care and development.

The first external evaluation (Vargas-Barón, 2005) included a review of the ECDVU courses, methods, materials, dialogues, major projects and theses. The evaluator found them to be culturally appropriate and of exemplary quality, noting that ECDVU's generative curriculum and methods would be valuable for students in any world region. She noted in particular the flexibility of the program, which enabled participants to learn about ECD in their own cultural contexts, while reviewing the history and current status of ECD concepts, activities, and research throughout the world. Further, participants in all three evaluations (Schafer et. al, 2005; Vargas-Barón, 2005; Vargas-Barón, with Joseph, 2011) expressed nearly unanimous appreciation for the program's instructors, course content, and teaching methods. Figure 5.1 on the following page summarizes a range of skills that ECDVU participants indicated they learned through the program.

Figure 5.1

> ### ECDVU participants learned practical skills, enabling them to:
>
> - Assume leadership roles
> - Build and manage diverse teams
> - Plan, design and evaluate ECD programs
> - Prepare country ECD reports and profiles of child development
> - Critique ECD policies programs
> - Implement holistic and integrated approaches to ECD
> - Achieve computer literacy and achieve a series of concrete technology skills
> - Utilize information and communications technologies to accomplish networking, training and advocacy work
> - Build ECD networks
> - Employ quantitative and qualitative research methods, and
> - Design, implement and draft a research project.
>   (Vargas-Barón, 2005, p.31)

Research and Publications

A key goal of the ECDVU and related capacity-promoting initiatives (see chapter 9) is to fill a major gap in studies and data on ECD in sub-Saharan Africa. The literature on the ECD field in sub-Saharan Africa is very limited. Euro-Western research, which is based on approximately 5% of the world's children (Arnett, 2008; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Pence & Hix-Small, 2007), dominates the ECD literature. The ECDVU thesis and project requirements were part of a deliberate effort to generate a relevant literature to inform ECD policy and practice in Africa. Each study and publication by an ECDVU graduate made a contribution to advancing the understanding of ECD in SSA. ECDVU students were encouraged to work with colleagues or committee members to publish aspects of their work in professional journals, including at the country level. Some key topics explored through projects, theses, and publications include:

- Children's rights
- Orphan care, particularly related to HIV/AIDS
- Indigenous knowledge
- Use of local materials in ECD

- Integrated ECD
- Quality and effectiveness of pre-schools and ECD programs
- Policy development and implementation
- Parenting and parental participation
- Education/training programs
- Innovative 'local' programming.

Program Costs

The ECDVU is a cost-effective model of delivering graduate-level education in the majority world. The most recent external evaluation of ECDVU (Vargas-Barón, with Joseph, 2011) estimated the total cost of delivering the one-year ECDVU graduate diploma program at US $17,925 per participant, including travel and accommodation for the seminars. Based on 2008 figures, which correspond to the SSA-3 delivery, the comparable costs for international graduate students were US $33,000 at American universities and $25,600 at Canadian universities (Vargas-Barón, with Joseph, 2011, p. 5). Costs for the three-year, ECDVU Master's degree program were naturally somewhat higher—roughly $27,000-$30,000 per participant—but still considerably lower than the cost of a comparable Master's degree at an American or Canadian university offered around the same time (Vargas-Barón, 2005).

Completion rates also provide compelling evidence of the value of the financial investment in the ECDVU model. ECDVU's completion rates are outstanding for an online or blended education program anywhere in the world, at 90% for the three-year SSA-1 program, and an average of 96% for the one-year programs across all four SSA deliveries. If program completion rates are included in the base calculation of cost—and they should be—the ECDVU is extraordinarily cost-effective: online programs often have completion rates of less than 50%, representing a doubling of per-student completion costs. ECDVU's strikingly high completion rates illustrate the benefits of providing context-relevant education in SSA for appropriate candidates, supported by systems that promote both participant and country development.

Importantly, the ECDVU program successfully avoided the 'brain drain' that typically results when ECD expertise migrates from Africa to countries of the industrialized world. Participants remained employed in their countries throughout the program, where they were also able to remain with their families and respond to personal and community needs. After graduation, 99% of participants remained employed in their countries, building new ECD networks, partnerships

and programs, and improving and expanding training systems, developing new ECD tools and publications, and sharing their learning and resources with colleagues. When considering the costs and benefits of the ECDVU model, it is important to take these broader 'ripple effects' into account—we will explore these outcomes more fully in the next chapter.

Distance education programs are typically less expensive to mount and deliver than face-to-face programs. With ECDVU, the blended delivery was more than cost-effective: it was critical to the success of the capacity-promoting generative curriculum model at the heart of the program. If learners were located in a distant, foreign university, cut off from interacting with their home, community, and national contexts, it would have been impossible to fully implement the generative curriculum model, and learners would not have been able to produce the Africa-based literature and initiatives that are among the greatest outcomes of the program.

ECDVU: A Model of Capacity-Promotion in Post-Secondary Education

The ECDVU, like the FNPP before it, drew on the complexity and the expertise of 'the local' to create a program that goes well beyond the individual to impact broader social structures. Participants were not uprooted from their home countries, their families, or their child-focused employment to participate—indeed, that daily focus was integral to the contextually meaningful educational experience the program sought to provide. Participants' learning rippled throughout their families, their employment, their communities, and their countries. Through that daily 'immersion,' ideas moved from theory to praxis, from possibilities to realities. Being part of a cohort of similarly motivated individuals was enabling and energizing, making ongoing consultation within and across countries possible, often for the first time. Through the face-to-face seminars, the program also invited diverse leaders from academia, government, and programs into those interactions, promoting additional contacts within and across countries, and increasing the reach of the ECDVU's influence. In the next chapter, we explore these broader impacts.

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EXPLORING THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF THE ECDVU

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From the outset, the ECDVU's purpose has been to promote capacity at the individual, community, and country levels. The question of how to define and promote capacity is central to this volume. In this chapter, we carry forward key elements of that discussion, drawing on the findings of three evaluations of the ECDVU's effectiveness in promoting capacity in sub-Saharan Africa. These evaluations include internal and external evaluations of SSA-1, the three-year graduate program (Schafer, with Pence & colleagues, 2005, and Vargas-Barón, 2005, respectively) and an external evaluation that included SSA-1 participants and graduates from the one-year SSA-2 and SSA-3 programs (Vargas-Barón with Joseph, 2011). Most of the evaluation data discussed here is based on participant surveys from these evaluations, all of which had very high response rates—ranging from 85% and 90% for the 2005 and 2011 external evaluations, respectively, to 100% for the 2005 internal evaluation. The focus for much of this chapter is on the 'ripple effects' or 'multiplier' impacts achieved by ECDVU graduates. We start, though, with a portrait of the participants themselves, based on their own self-reports and comments from colleagues in their home organizations.

Impact on ECDVU Graduates' Work and Lives

Increased Confidence

Whether educational programs empower or disempower participants hinges largely on the relevance of the topics and activities to learners' contexts. When education provides people with the knowledge and skills to become leaders within their own organizations and countries, it empowers. When learning is

disconnected from context, it can undermine learners' effectiveness and others' perception of them as knowledgeable and suitable leaders.

A danger with much post-secondary education, both in First Nations communities and in Africa, is the very common 'pull-out' model, where students pursue higher education far removed from their home contexts, with the ensuing issues of relevance of education and 'brain drain.' As highlighted in chapter 5, the structure and learning activities of the ECDVU were designed to take place in and be relevant to the local context of the learners and to value their knowledge of their communities and countries. Many ECDVU participants reported that the program increased their confidence, allowing them to participate actively in decision-making and policy development at higher levels than before the program. These benefits are reflected in the quotes below from SSA-1 participants:

> I can now discuss ECD issues with much more self-confidence whenever and wherever I happen to deal with them—at organizations, UN agencies and associations, media (both TV and radio), including at the line ministries level. (Student, SSA-1, Eritrea)

> [The ECDVU program] has built my confidence in presentation skills, IT abilities and finally, there is an in-depth knowledge on the concept of ECD. (Student, SSA-1, Ghana)

> The program has raised my level of confidence and not surprisingly I am now considered as an 'authority' in ECD by my colleagues and supervisors in my place of work.
> (SSA-1, Tanzania)

During the internal evaluation (Schafer, with Pence & colleagues, 2005), researchers followed up with the supervisors and co-workers of the ECDVU graduates, to gain their perspectives on the program's impact. Many respondents commented on the increased confidence of ECDVU participants, echoing the comments of the learners themselves:

> He is able to communicate with various groups of people so effectively and confidently and because of that he is usually asked to lead in various activities/programs. (Colleague, SSA-1, Malawi)

> The course has given her a lot of confidence to speak in public about early childhood issues and even to help other organizations develop programs on [these] topics … in an integrated manner. (Colleague, SSA-1, Malawi)

Increased Skills to Enhance Capacity Promotion

ECDVU graduates gained many key capacity-promoting skills through the program, including leadership, management, research, policy analysis, networking, and computer skills. When asked to assess how much ECDVU had contributed to their development of such skills, the majority of respondents reported a great improvement (see Figure 6.1). Leadership skills were cited as showing great improvement by the highest proportion of graduates—over 85%—a clear success given the program's emphasis on leadership development. Following close behind, with over 80% of participants reporting great improvement, was the use of integrated approaches to ECD, a skill that is considered critical to advancing the health and well-being of children and families in sub-Saharan Africa and one promoted throughout ECDVU learning activities and assignments.

Figure 6.1 Participants' rating of their skills improvement due to the ECDVU Program
(excerpted from Vargas-Barón with Joseph, 2011, p. 50).
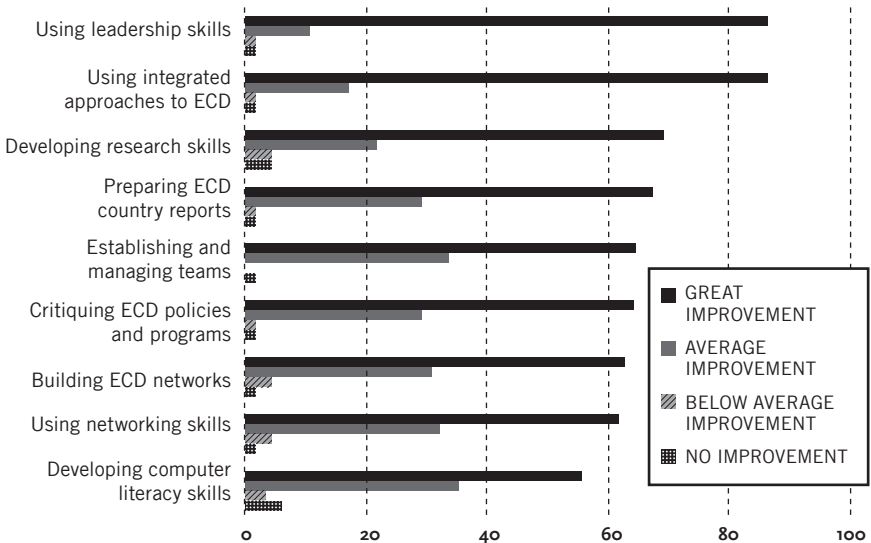
Not surprisingly, SSA-1 graduates, who received two more years of training than SSA-2 and SSA-3 graduates, and who had worked longer since graduation at the time of the evaluation, were more likely to report additional skills, such as helping plan ECD policies, plans, regulations or standards; improving ECD coordination in their program or countries; and providing ECD training workshops. All these skills were essential to creating the 'multiplier effects' of the ECDVU program in the participants' home countries.

Enhanced Professional Experiences in ECD

While ECDVU graduates' increased self-confidence and skills are significant, the program's impact goes far beyond the individuals involved. Each ECDVU graduate leaves the program with extensive experience as an advocate for culturally relevant, respectful, and integrated ECD, because this skill and perspective is an integral part of the program. In course work and major projects, ECDVU learners are required to disseminate information and resources and to apply their learning to their everyday ECD activities at work. This approach allows learners to be active in the ECD field within their countries during the program, with wide-ranging local, regional, and international impacts. Table 6.1 shows professional activities in which participants have engaged since graduation and Figure 6.2 shows ECDVU's impact on such activities. In the rest of this chapter, we discuss the broader 'ripple effects' that ECDVU graduates' professional activities have created.

Table 6.1 Professional activities since graduation
(excerpted from Vargas-Barón with Joseph, 2011, p. 58).

Professional Activities	%
Helped plan ECD policies, plans, regulations or standards	85.3
Improved ECD coordination in your program or nation	76.5
Implemented ongoing ECD services and/or programs	76.5
Provided ECD training workshops in your country	75.0
Planned or designed new ECD services and/or programs	72.1
Helped integrate ECD services across sectors	63.2
Gave talks at local, national, or regional meetings	63.2
Engaged in networking among programs	61.8
Prepared or adapted ECD curricula, materials, or methods	57.4
Developed inter-institutional partnerships	52.9

Conducted program monitoring activities	50.0
Conducted research or evaluation projects	47.1
Assessed children's development	45.6
Prepared publications on ECD	32.4
Taught university or training college courses on ECD	30.9
Conducted Early Childhood Intervention programs for children with developmental delays or disabilities	22.1

Figure 6.2 Impact of ECDVU on Participants' Future Activities (excerpted from Vargas-Barón with Joseph, 2011, p. 62).
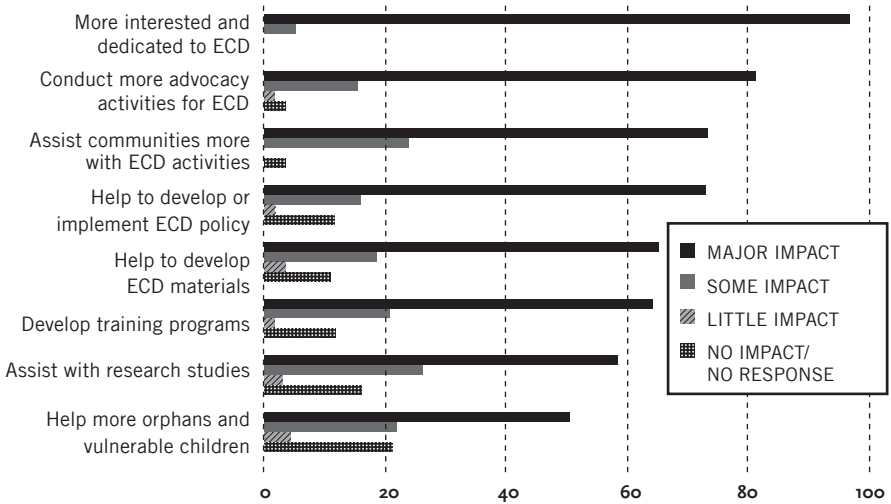
ECD Policy

ECD policy is critical to advancing the ECD agenda in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly all SSA-1, SSA-2, and SSA-3 graduates reported helping to plan ECD policies, regulations, or standards—indeed, many ECDVU graduates work as policy developers. Whether through their jobs or other commitments, ECDVU learners took on new, more influential roles in advancing ECD policy in their countries by participating in policy forums, lobbying, and advocacy.

Many ECD advocates across sub-Saharan Africa have cited the need for discrete and holistic national ECD policy frameworks to develop effective programs. Around the time that ECDVU proposed its capacity-promoting program, only a few African countries had national ECD policies or policy frameworks, with significant negative consequences for the health and well-being of children and families (Colletta & Reinhold, 1997, p. 73; Torkington, 2001). As noted by Colletta and Reinhold, "with few exceptions, the needs of children in SSA are not being met through integrated inputs of health, nutrition and early education and wider family and community support services" (1997, p. 73). The *Asmara Declaration* (2002), released following the 2nd International African ECD conference, emphasized the importance of macro-level policy frameworks and integrated and coordinated planning, a theme taken up at the Accra Conference in 2005 and at Dakar in 2009. By 2008, the year before the Dakar Conference, 19 countries had tabled ECD policies, and another 20 were preparing them (UNESCO-BREDA, 2012).

ECDVU has supported learners to play an active role in advancing the policy agenda in their countries. During the ECDVU deliveries, nations represented at ECDVU programs were at different stages in developing comprehensive, holistic ECD policies. For example, during SSA-1 (2001-2004), Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia were in the early stages of gathering support and momentum for an ECD policy. Remarkably, during the three-year delivery of SSA-1, Malawi went from having no policy at all to having an approved policy in place, largely due to the work of key ECDVU participants (see chapter 8). Tanzania developed a very effective, nation-wide network (TECDEN), which provided the foundation for significant governmental and NGO interaction, ministerial coordination, and policy framework development work (see chapter 7).

ECDVU supported participants to advocate for ECD policy development and to carry out sensitization campaigns in policy circles and with the general public. Through their ECDVU course work, many participants gathered information and conducted research to help advance an ECD policy or policy framework in their countries. The Gambia, Eritrea, and Lesotho were at the preliminary policy design stage at the outset of SSA-1, and each moved forward in developing multi-sectoral ECD policies. Nigeria has a federal system, so policies are developed at both the state and federal levels. Nigerian participants in ECDVU were mainly active at the state level, but some successfully reached the national level as well. Throughout SSA-1, they strove to ensure the inclusion of ECD in important plans, such as the Education for All plan of action and HIV/AIDS strategies. In 2007 the Nigerian federal government established a policy that called for the establishment of a pre-primary program in every primary program in the country (Oluwafemi, Nma, Osita, & Olugbenga, 2014). In Ghana, Jophus Anamuah-

Mensah, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education-Winneba and the instructor of the ECDVU leadership course in SSA-3 and SSA-4, authored the White Paper on Education (2004), which called for pre-primary programs throughout the country.

ECD Curriculum and Training

Curriculum

In 2001, when the ECDVU program was launched, many participating countries had identified ECD curriculum development as a key objective. The need for ECD curriculum, materials, and methods that fit the multilingual, multicultural nature of sub-Saharan Africa remains pressing—typically, overly simplified Western-based ECD curricula and materials are used. African universities, institutes, and large-scale programs require new curricula, educational materials, methods, and training manuals to enhance pre- and in-service training.

ECDVU graduates have made substantial contributions to the development of culturally relevant ECD curriculum in sub-Saharan Africa. Chapter 8 provides an extensive case study of ECDVU participants' achievements in curriculum and training in Malawi, but here we highlight some other notable achievements. The 2011 evaluation indicated that nearly 60% of participants in SSA-1, SSA-2, and SSA-3 have prepared or adapted ECD curricula, materials or methods since graduation. These initiatives have reached hundreds of individuals in some countries and thousands in others. In Nigeria, one ECDVU participant alone reached 420 people through training on important topics such as the use of an Indigenous communicative teaching approach and the management of child-friendly schools. Another prominent achievement was the work by ECDVU participants in Ghana and Eritrea to create curricula for non-formal caregivers, a key but often neglected sector in ECD. One SSA-1 graduate's innovative, generatively focused work with parents in Eritrea was cited as exemplary in an international evaluation.

In Lesotho and Uganda, ECD-specific coursework has been added to existing undergraduate programs, creating new specializations. In Ghana, one ECDVU graduate revised the country's ECD curriculum for caregiver institutions and developed a training manual that reached caregivers nationwide. Working at the national level, he organized workshops for ECD experts to critically examine documents used by ECD centres and training institutions. These workshops ultimately led to development and implementation of a national ECD preschool curriculum—an excellent example of the ripple effects made possible through ECDVU.

Training

Across sub-Saharan Africa, there is tremendous demand for 'training of trainers' in holistic, integrated ECD principles and practice. ECDVU participants have significantly impacted this area of the ECD field: 75% of graduates from SSA-1, SSA-2, and SSA-3 became workshop trainers, taught ECD classes, or spoke at related events after graduation. Below are some examples of innovative training endeavours that ECDVU graduates have led (Vargas-Barón, 2005):

- **Eritrea:** One graduate introduced the Training of Trainers Strategy, which reached approximately 200 community caregivers across the country, enabling them to provide service to parents and children in villages in the most remote parts of the country. A second graduate organized training in administration, financial accounting, procurement, communication, and using technology for ECD leaders, who could then train other ECD stakeholders at the regional and sub-regional levels.

- **Ghana:** One ECDVU graduate organized three-day ECD workshops for informal child minders of street children, their parents, and community leaders. Topics included birth registration, health and nutritional needs, immunization, growth monitoring, and early childhood stimulation. Another graduate trained 68 members of the Ga District Assembly, the district planning authority, on legal provisions to protect and promote children's rights. Preschool teachers and attendants received further training on child rights.

- **Nigeria:** A graduate facilitated community-based training of trainers on integrated ECD. As a result, health, nutrition, education, and water and sanitation officers from the 10 participating states integrated ECD issues into program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation at the state and national levels, with very strong community participation.

- **Uganda:** One ECDVU graduate used her ECDVU learning to train others in the use of computers and the internet in ECD research. A second graduate provided training to facilitators, local and zone leaders, grandparents, and guardians in ECD and HIV/AIDS.

Innovative Program Development

Following graduation, many ECDVU learners piloted new programs or brought innovative approaches to existing programs—many became models that were replicated throughout the country. The 2011 evaluation (Vargas-Barón with Joseph) found that 76.5% of graduates had improved ECD coordination in their programs and had implemented ongoing ECD services and/or programs in

their communities and countries. Further, 72.1% of participants said they had planned or designed new ECD services and/or programs. Indeed, a colleague from an internationally respected university in the United States contacted the ECDVU Director to say that as she went from country to country across SSA, the ECDVU graduates were invariably the most knowledgeable and capable in helping her to move forward with her own ECD project.

One unusual and valuable project developed by a graduate from Malawi was the creation of an ECD centre at Zomba prison. This graduate also assisted single mothers in rural Malawi communities to improve their standard of living and their capacity to care for their children. The internal evaluation of SSA-1 (Schafer, with Pence & colleagues, 2005) highlighted the importance of this learner's creative approach in working with hard-to-reach populations using a community development approach:

> She is piloting new approaches in working with single women and teenage mothers. … She has already expanded the program … to 15 new areas where participation by all community members is key for sustainable ECD programs. Communities are opening communal gardens to feed the children and sell surplus for buying other necessities. (Colleague, SSA-1 graduate, Malawi)

> Another sign of the wider impacts of the innovative work … is that one of the communities they have been working with has been voted a model village in terms of child care and an integrated approach to child development. The UNICEF country representative and the Regional Representative for the Eastern and Southern regions of Africa visited the project village with a big convoy … (Email from UNICEF colleague, SSA-1, Malawi)

While enrolled in ECDVU, one SSA-1 student worked on a highly innovative program with grandmothers who care for AIDS orphans in Uganda. The quality of her work was recognized by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, whose representatives came to Uganda in September 2003 to visit her project and asked her to write a three-year funding proposal, which was approved. As part of this initiative, a group of grandparents was taken for study tours of similar projects in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Several ECDVU graduates piloted new approaches to the use of Indigenous knowledge. In addition, an ECDVU graduate from Uganda introduced children's participation into the review of government policy. Policy-makers have not traditionally sought children's input into policies relating to their lives, but this

practice is now considered an integral aspect of the new rights-based approach to children's development and was adopted into the UN Charter of Children's Rights, which was discussed extensively in the ECDVU program.

Community-Level Work

In many African countries, ECD has typically been delivered in formal centres and based around an academic curriculum. ECDVU emphasized the importance of working at the community level and empowering communities to respond to the challenges of providing integrated ECD services, which reach far beyond purely academic goals. Over 73% of SSA-1, SSA-2, and SSA-3 graduates said they had helped to integrate ECD services and/or programs at the community level since graduation.

Participants in all ECDVU deliveries said they learned new techniques for working with communities that enhanced grassroots participation and community leadership skills. Graduates and colleagues alike noted the usefulness of the 'community dialogue' strategy in working effectively with communities and empowering people at the grassroots. For example:

> Our exposure to ECD information that recognizes community members as vital in implementing the community-based programs—well summarized in the saying 'It takes a village to raise a child'—has also helped us to network with community members in order to reach the child. We have so far worked with community members to establish community-based programs like preschools, and have conducted training in villages to empower the community members. The results of these endeavours were very encouraging. (Student, SSA-1)

Several people noted that ECDVU had helped graduates to value and use Indigenous knowledge in community-based ECD initiatives:

> She has carried out research on key household practices, working with parents and caregivers at the community level, respecting their cultural beliefs and practices (Colleague, SSA-1, Nigeria)

> During a team visit, I found her singing the tune of local people in each particular community (Colleague, SSA-1, Zanzibar)

In-Country, Pan-African, and International Contacts, Partners, and Networks

The motivation to create the ECDVU program stemmed partly from African ECD leaders' expressed need for more networking between ECD partners

within countries, across Africa, and internationally. The ECDVU program explicitly recognizes the strength of network building as a tool for leadership capacity promotion in Africa. Networks support ECD professionals within each country, helping to link the work of different stakeholders and creating a strong force for ECD lobbying. Importantly, they also help to eliminate the 'silo' mentality that tends to predominate in sectoral ministries—ultimately supporting the creation of policies and programs that put the interests of children before the political fiefdoms of government. For all these reasons, ECDVU built requirements for in-country and Africa-wide networking directly into the course work. Reflecting on these experiences, participants wrote:

> We formed a "Country Team", which in itself is [an advance for ECD] as four very different personalities from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds became a group that would grow and work together for the next two and a half years. (Participant, Malawi, SSA-1)

> I have also learnt from colleagues across Africa, especially those from countries where ECD is much ahead … networking among ECDVU partners has also promoted dissemination of experiences among different countries. (Colleague, Tanzania, SSA-1)

Seventy-five percent of participants reported that prior to the ECDVU program, they engaged in very little ECD networking and felt considerable isolation. While we have no pre-program measures on the number of their previous contacts, partnerships, and network memberships, anecdotal evidence suggests that these were minimal. The 2011 ECDVU evaluation (Vargas-Barón, with Joseph) asked participants to estimate the number of contacts, partnerships, and networks they had developed or engaged with since graduation. Eight-seven percent of graduates developed new contacts in African countries through the ECDVU program. Most people said they had made up to 10 new contacts and many people (27.5%) had made more than 10. Similarly, 52.9% of graduates said they had established partnerships with groups in other African countries, and 60.3% said that they engage in one or more African networks. Finally, 35.3% have participated in non-African networks and 38.3% are members of networks with international agencies.

Work on Other Key ECD Themes

The ECDVU gave learners the chance to share their knowledge, research and experiences in addressing some of the more difficult ECD issues across sub-Saharan Africa. The ECDVU program was initiated during the second decade of the

Education for All (EFA) initiative, 2000 to 2010. The first goal in the EFA Framework for Action calls for "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children." (UNESCO, 2000) This line became a rallying call for progress in ECD in sub-Saharan Africa and generated much discussion in the ECDVU program. The 2011 evaluation (Vargas-Barón, with Joseph) asked graduates about their involvement in EFA-related activities. Nearly 84% of graduates had participated in at least one EFA activity following graduation. Integration of ECD into EFA plans or education sector plans was the most commonly reported activity (61.8%), followed by participation in other national EFA activities (50%), assisting with EFA plan implementation (44.1%), participation in international EFA activities (33.8%), and evaluation of the implementation of an EFA plan (23.5%).

The Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) in each African country provide a major opportunity to promote ECD services—many PRS indicators include indicators often used in ECD policies and strategic plans. Most ECDVU graduates (77.9%) said they had participated in some PRS activity, the most common being the integration of ECD in to PRS activities, at 55.9%. Other PRS-related activities reported by ECDVU graduates were helping to include ECD in PRS planning efforts (47.1%), conducting advocacy to include ECD in PRS activities (47.1%), and participating in evaluations of PRS documents (29.4%).

The ECDVU is a compelling case story of how a relatively small-scale program can have large ripple effects on communities and countries when it is designed to respond to local needs and to respect and build on Indigenous knowledge and skill. The program participants were carefully selected by the countries themselves as individuals who were well placed to grow as ECD leaders, given support and the flexibility to keep working at the local level throughout the program. The model's success is clearly demonstrated across three separate evaluations. This chapter has reviewed only a small fraction of the many accomplishments that ECDVU graduates have made in their communities and countries. The next two chapters provide a more in-depth view of ECD related developments in two countries which have had multiple cohort involvement in ECDVU deliveries (SSA-1, 2, and 3): Tanzania and Malawi.

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COUNTRY CASE REPORT - TANZANIA

Fortidas Bakuza and Clarence Mwinuka

This volume highlights the importance of supporting Africa-based leadership in ECD and an African ECD literature. Chapters 7 and 8, written by graduates of the ECDVU program, illustrate the potential for both. This chapter, authored by Fortidas Bakuza (SSA-3) and Clarence Mwinuka (SSA-2), is a case report on Tanzania, focusing primarily on the key contributions of the Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN), an organization whose founding and activities over time are closely associated with the ECDVU initiative. The next chapter, written by Foster Kholowa (SSA-2) and Francis Chalamanda (SSA-1), focuses on Malawi, highlighting its ECD education and training initiatives. These two reports provide a level of country-focused detail and first-hand reporting that is not possible in the broader overviews found in the other chapters. Importantly, they also provide concrete evidence of the capacity-promoting potential of the ECDVU model from African leaders' perspectives.

Introduction/Overview

This chapter tells the remarkable story of ECD advances in Tanzania from 2000 to 2012, highlighting the key role that a multi-sectoral, multi-organizational network can play in promoting child well-being and advancing ECD capacity development. At the same time, this is also a story of ECDVU participants who, over multiple cohorts, and working with colleagues in government, NGOs, educational institutions, and civil society, played a key leadership role in these developments.

In 1998, just prior to the launch of the ECDVU, Tanzania ranked 134th out of 158 countries on the UN Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 1998). The mortality rate of children under five was estimated at between 150 and 161 per 1000 (Ahmed et al., 2002)—very high compared to other developing countries at that time (URT, 2000). Family incomes were declining, especially in rural areas, where 76% of the population lived and where 87% of the population were poor (World Bank development indicators). The delivery of education services was inadequate, and children had very limited access to pre-primary education (Ahmed, Kameka, Missani, & Salakana, 2002).

However, despite these challenges, by 2000, some new perspectives and policy initiatives were emerging in Tanzania. One such initiative was the Education Development Program, a sector-wide approach to education designed to address the then fragmented system of educational interventions, including the ECD system (Ahmed et al., 2002). As part of this process, key stakeholders in education planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation were to be involved in the development of new initiatives.

Alongside these developments, several international initiatives, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), Education for All (1990, 2000), and the Millennium Development Goals (2000) were raising the profile of ECD in Tanzania and in other countries across sub-Saharan Africa. With this growing awareness came increased recognition of the need for trained ECD personnel. Thus, building the capacity of the key ECD team at the national level in government and civil society emerged as a high priority in Tanzania.

Tanzania had flagged its interest in ECD capacity development at the 1999 Kampala ECD Conference, and it maintained strong contact as the ECDVU development process moved forward in 2000. In 2000/2001, when the ECDVU Director visited countries that had expressed an interest in the program, over a dozen organizations attended an information and planning meeting held at UNICEF and organized by Chanel Croker, founder of AMANI ECD[7]. The timing of the ECDVU launch resonated with a groundswell of interest in ECD within Tanzania, and key individuals from multiple sectors were identified as potential participants. Between 2001 and 2010, three Tanzanian cohorts—13 individuals in total, representing both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar—participated in ECDVU. The first cohort (SSA-1) had four participants, all occupying high-level positions in government and NGOs. The SSA-2 cohort of five participants worked in government, higher learning institutions, or civil society organizations. The four SSA-3 participants were employed in similar organizations.

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[7] Also referred to as AMANI ECCD at certain times.

Before beginning the ECDVU program, all 13 participants made a commitment to remain in Tanzania and to continue working in the broad child and family field following graduation. During the ECDVU program deliveries, and in keeping with the program's philosophy, these 13 professionals worked full-time on projects that responded to key national priorities and collaborated in building ECD into the agenda of all national development programs, an approach they all maintained following their graduation from the program. Thus, at a key time in Tanzania's history, the ECDVU program was able to support Tanzanian participants to introduce major changes to ECD in their country. One such achievement was the creation of the Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN). The story of TECDEN's creation—and of the many significant ECD policy and program developments TECDEN has helped to mobilize from 2000 to 2012—is the focus of this chapter.

Establishment of the Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN)

In December 2000, the group that was eventually to develop into TECDEN met for the first time. The establishment of this group followed a series of inter-organizational ECD meetings that were arranged to discuss Tanzania's participation in the ECDVU program. AMANI ECD was instrumental in organizing these meetings and other developments associated with the development of the ECD network. As a national NGO supported by UNICEF, UNESCO, and government, and as the organization with the strongest base in ECD, AMANI often took the lead in organizing meetings to discuss ECD issues in Tanzania. The initial meetings organized by AMANI ECD helped to create an informal network of mindful and concerned individuals and organizations working in the ECD field. This collaboration of government and non-government ECD stakeholders identified eight objectives to support ECD in Tanzania, one of which was "to develop and maintain an active ECD network through strong institutional links between ECD-related organizations" (TECDEN, 2004).

In 2001, one of the network's first activities was to propose four Tanzanian participants for the ECDVU SSA-1 program, all of whom were accepted. Most of the prospective ECDVU candidates were themselves key members of the network, or were soon to become members. One of the SSA-1 participants—and a key member of the rapidly developing network—was the late George Kameka, then the Commissioner for Social Welfare in Tanzania. Kameka, in his work and his ECDVU studies, was concerned that most approaches to government intervention focused on individual sectors (e.g., health and education) without explicitly taking into account the compatibilities and inconsistencies among

these sectors. Kameka observed that because ECD spans many sectors, a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, need to be involved in the development of ECD programs. Kameka recommended that ECD task forces and working groups organize around specific technical themes (as opposed to specific sectors), a holistic approach that he considered important in helping to ensure that ECD programs would be responsive to children's needs (Kameka, 2004).

Kameka's ideas were very influential in the formative period of the network from 2000 to 2004. On September 5, 2001, the network facilitated *Towards a Common Path for ECD in Tanzania,* a roundtable discussion of key ECD stakeholders, including senior government representatives from three ECD-related ministries. Following this discussion, in December 2001, the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children was designated the coordinating ministry on ECD issues, gaining the network's support to be the convener of future ECD discussions. In February 2002, a Coordinating Committee was nominated, which included senior government representatives from across the health, education, social welfare, and community development sectors, as well as UN agencies and NGOs.

In August 2002, the Ministry of Education and Culture was preparing its report to the ADEA Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF) VIII conference (to be held in Arusha, Tanzania) on progress towards Education for All (EFA) goals. At this time, the network successfully lobbied the ministry's EFA Coordinator to support its stance that Tanzania had yet to address the first EFA goal, which had been identified at the Dakar EFA Conference held in 2000: Early Childhood Care and Education. In September 2002, an ECD EFA stakeholders' meeting was held that attracted the broadest representation of sectors ever seen in Tanzania. Following this meeting, the network formed an ECD EFA Working Group to draft Tanzania's ECD EFA Action Plan. In October 2002, the working group facilitated the development of the ECD Special Session at MINEDAF VIII and created numerous ECD EFA advocacy materials and strategies through regional, national, and international networking.

In short, what started out as an inter-organizational committee gradually developed into an informal but increasingly influential network, and then into TECDEN, a national ECD network of government and non-government stakeholders committed to strengthening national early childhood support through networking, information exchange, awareness-raising and advocacy. At the time of its formal registration as a society in 2004, the specific objectives of TECDEN were:

- influencing policy and program development;

- providing a leadership role in ECD initiatives;

- contributing to ECD curriculum development and training;

- building the capacity of community-based organizations who
  work on ECD;

- promoting inter-sectoral collaboration;

- surveying, researching, documenting, and disseminating information;

- piloting, documenting, and disseminating information about
  community-based ECD experiences in order to influence
  future sector development; and

- establishing links with ministerial sector development planning.
  (TECDEN, 2004)

In 2004, George Kameka completed his Master's thesis, *Improving Multisectoral Cooperation and Coordination in Support of Early Childhood Development Programs in Tanzania,* and became the first Chairman of the National Steering Committee of TECDEN. In the years before and after the formal establishment of TECDEN, the holistic approach to ECD emphasized in the ECDVU program supported and extended the network's activities. Kameka's participation in ECDVU and TECDEN, along with that of other ECDVU cohort members, was mutually enhancing. Thus, in the remainder of this chapter, any mention of TECDEN's participation in a process is, de facto, a mention of ECDVU participants' involvement. Below we describe in more detail the most notable achievements from 2002 to 2012 of TECDEN and other Tanzanian partners in ECD.

Inclusion of ECD in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty

Between 2002 and 2004, Tanzania was in the process of developing the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). TECDEN mobilized ECD stakeholders from around the country to promote the inclusion of ECD issues in the NSGRP. These lobbying and advocacy strategies were ultimately successful: 40% of the NSGRP addressed ECD-related issues—an impressive showing for a sector that had barely been on the government radar just a few years earlier.

In developing the NSGRP, the government of Tanzania consulted with a wide range of stakeholders. TECDEN and AMANI ECD mobilized ECD stakeholders through emails, meetings, and workshops that proposed key priorities to be

included in the NSGRP. The inclusion of ECD in the NSGRP I and II was a significant achievement for the ECD sector in Tanzania and was a response to the strong call—particularly between 2000 and 2004—for government to develop a coordinated response to ECD issues. The NSGRP proposed stronger links between services that target young children, including nutrition, psychosocial support, and pre-primary education. The NSGRP also proposed the development of a policy framework for multi-sectoral collaboration on ECD services. With the adoption of the NSGRP in 2005 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005), the road to a coherent and coordinated process for ECD services involving all stakeholders was paved (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007).

The Development of the National ECD Strategy

Starting in late 2004, several analyses and workshops were conducted to initiate the development of a National Strategy on ECD. Throughout these processes, a consensus emerged on the prerequisites for the development of the national strategy.

In order to inform the ECD strategy development process, the Country Support Team for ECD and HIV/AIDS commissioned the development of *Policy Capitalize Analyses and Recommendations on Early Childhood Development and HIV/AIDS in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar* (Vargas-Barón, 2004). The objectives of the analysis were to:

- identify and assess existing policies, plans, guidelines, and laws related to young people in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar;
- determine whether the latter reflected the rights and well-being of young children;
- assess the extent to which ECD was integrated into HIV/AIDS frameworks and vice versa; and
- provide recommendations for the development of national policy frameworks for ECD and HIV/AIDS for Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

The analysis, while identifying major gaps in legislation, policy, harmonization, and coordination, also stressed Tanzania's strong capacity to address these challenges. The report recommended the immediate development of policy frameworks for ECD and HIV/AIDS, annual plans to implement the policy frameworks, new guidelines for implementing the programs in the annual plans, and legislation to enforce the policy frameworks and action plans. In addition, the analysis identified areas and topics to be included in the policy frameworks.

A second document, *Assessment of the Situation of Young Children for Early Childhood Development and HIV/AIDS in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar* (Ara, 2005), also informed the development of the national ECD strategy. The situation analysis identified the existing status of young children in family and community contexts, community responses to ECD and HIV/AIDS, and gaps in data, key challenges, and specific recommendations for the development of national action frameworks for ECD and HIV/AIDS. The analysis concluded that public data collection systems did not reflect the needs of children in the early years, and that implementing programs to address young children's needs would require collaboration between all involved ministries. The situation analysis recommended various action points within these areas and proposed ECD indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

These key analyses (Vargas-Barón, 2004; Ara, 2005) were highly influential at the time and remain key references to this day, particularly in promoting an integrated response to ECD issues. Following their release in 2004 and 2005, various government ministries, especially the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children (MCDGC), took the lead in implementing the recommendations of the two reports, starting with a series of national consultations.

In February 2006, the Primary Education Department in the MoEVT conducted a consultative stakeholder workshop to establish a common understanding of the importance and scope of ECD, to reach agreement on the strengths and weaknesses of existing ECD policies and ways forward, and to develop recommendations to improve human resources, curriculum development, advocacy stakeholder relations, and funding for ECD activities. Workshop participants agreed on the need for a comprehensive policy that would assign roles to the relevant stakeholders. Participants also agreed that ECD should be viewed holistically. Finally, workshop participants recommended that a framework for a national ECD policy be developed under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office.

Shortly after the workshop, the MCDGC conducted *Towards an Integrated National Strategy for Early Childhood Development,* a brainstorming workshop to gather input on the development of a national ECD strategy, including the identification of the main contents, key stakeholders, alignment with the NSGRP, and steps in the strategy development process. Workshop participants agreed that an umbrella framework to complement the ECD elements of the NSGRP was necessary and that a high profile, national ECD coordination body should be established. Participants discussed a wide range of ECD issues and recommended

a framework for the strategy, key strategy components, implementing bodies, and financing mechanisms.

These two workshops confirmed the need and created a consensus to view the child holistically and to develop a comprehensive ECD strategy. Participants in both workshops agreed on the requirement for a national coordination structure. Further, the two workshops identified very similar milestones for the way forward. To build on these accomplishments, the MCDGC convened an ECD stakeholders' meeting in July 2006 to compile the recommendations from the two workshops, confirm their appropriateness, and develop an action plan to guide their implementation. At this meeting, stakeholders confirmed the MCDGC as the most appropriate body to lead and coordinate this process.

In response to the NSGRP, the government of Tanzania, in collaboration with other ECD stakeholders, agreed to develop a mechanism to meet the needs of infants and young children in a holistic manner, an approach for which the ECD community had strongly advocated between 2000 and 2005. Existing mechanisms to address ECD issues were limited by duplication of effort and a lack of information-sharing among ministries and departments working in ECD. Several suggestions for a coordinating mechanism were made, including the formation of an independent ECD commission under the Office of the Prime Minister. Ultimately, an agreement was reached to develop a national ECD strategy to:

- integrate the policies of the various sectors that address children's needs, including the most vulnerable children;
- identify major gaps in policies and ECD services provision;
- give clear direction to each sector in an integrated manner; and
- improve implementation, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of ECD interventions.

The national strategy identified four main areas to be addressed: human resource development, service delivery, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation (Bakuza, 2010). Moreover, the strategy proposed a multi-sectoral governing structure that included (a) an inter-ministry steering committee, composed of the permanent secretaries of five key ECD ministries, development partners, and civil society organizations; (b) a technical committee composed of directors from key ECD ministries and the national coordinator of TECDEN; and (c) three sub-committees for each of curriculum development, human resource development, and service delivery.

The Joint ECD Service Delivery Initiative

In early 2007, the MoEVT, with support from UNICEF, coordinated the first workshop on the development of the Joint ECD Service Delivery Initiative, a first step in the implementation of the national ECD strategy. This initiative, to be jointly implemented by three key ECD ministries and TECDEN, was launched in June 2007 by Tanzania's First Lady, Mama Salma Kikwete. The launch was attended by the Ministers of Education and Vocational Training, Community Development, Gender and Children, and Health and Social Welfare, as well as by Members of Parliament, development partners (especially UNICEF and UNESCO), civil society organizations, universities, parents, and children. The launch of the Joint ECD Service Delivery Initiative went hand in hand with the national launch of the 2007 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. The initiative responded to a variety of recommendations to improve ECD in Tanzania, including:

- the need for an integrated service delivery program that focuses on children and their families;

- a culturally appropriate service delivery program that builds on existing informal community problem-solving models;

- the recognition of capacity-building as crucial to addressing all levels of ECD responsibility concurrently and incrementally;

- the appointment of ECD "focal points" in the three key ministries of Community Development Gender and Children, Education and Vocational Training, and Health and Social Welfare; and

- the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems to secure and maintain high quality service delivery.

Further, a national, multi-level coordination structure for the Joint ECD Service Delivery Initiative was created. The first level is the inter-ministerial committee, comprised of Permanent Secretaries from all key ministries, development partner representatives, and TECDEN (representing civil society organizations). The second level is made up of directors and commissioners from key ECD ministries. The third level is the national secretariat, which is comprised of 'focal persons' from all key ECD ministries. The national secretariat is the key mechanism in launching the ECD agenda and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of any agreed-upon plans. The majority of secretariat members are ECDVU graduates, working to enhance the effectiveness of communication on ECD service delivery issues. Since its launch in 2007, the Joint ECD Service Delivery Initiative has been piloted in nine districts on the Tanzania mainland in preparation for scaling up to the whole country.

Developing an Integrated ECD Policy

Perhaps the most important of all the ECD initiatives from 2000 to 2012 was the creation of an integrated, comprehensive ECD policy. Existing policies, including the Child Development Policy (1996) and the Education and Training Policy (1995), were either sector-specific or gave scant attention to the early years, paying more attention to issues affecting older children. As ECD began to gain increased national attention, Tanzanians recognized the need for an integrated ECD policy to direct resource mobilization and to use as a basis for setting standards for the implementation of ECD activities. In particular, ECD partners recognized the importance of developing a policy to help define the partnership and to guide the sharing of resources among different actors within and outside government.

Several activities helped to stimulate the development of the national ECD policy. For example, in 2008, Tanzania hosted an Eastern and Southern Africa conference to follow up on the implementation of the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, *Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education.* The conference was jointly organized by the government of Tanzania, development partners, and TECDEN. At the conference opening, the guest of honour was the Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania. TECDEN, on behalf of civil society organizations from Eastern and Southern Africa, also read a statement at the opening. Tanzania hosted this sub-regional conference partly to learn about the successes and challenges of other SSA countries, but also to create a forum for information exchange and to increase opportunities to promote the ECD agenda in Tanzania and beyond.

All participating countries, including Tanzania, highlighted ECD issues that required immediate attention in their countries. Participants noted the need for state-wide policy frameworks to enhance collaboration between governments, development partners, community-based organizations, and non-government organizations working with and for children. Participants also proposed the revision of curriculum at all levels, particularly at the pre-primary and primary school levels, to reflect linkages between nutrition and other ECD considerations and to promote comprehensive, participatory approaches to addressing related challenges.

The 2008 sub-regional conference intensified Tanzanian ECD stakeholders' calls for an integrated ECD policy. Most countries that had attended the conference had ECD policies, some had ECD policy frameworks, and a few were in the process of finalizing either an ECD policy or a policy framework. Following the conference, the government began developing an integrated ECD policy to govern a holistic approach (Bakuza, 2010). Between 2008 and 2009, TECDEN

mobilized ECD stakeholders throughout the country to provide initial input in the development of the policy. UNESCO and UNICEF showed interest in supporting the process of reviewing existing policies and in the later development of a new, ECD-specific policy.

Also, the development of the 2009 *Law of the Child Act* complemented the development of the integrated ECD policy, along with several ECD initiatives from this same time. Broadly, the Act came into being in response to intense lobbying efforts by different children's coalitions and agencies in Tanzania. The Act recognizes and sets standards for the provision of early years services in Tanzania.

At the time of writing, Tanzania's integrated ECD policy remains a draft in its final stages. The government has also made a commitment to incorporate ECD into other policies, strategies, and programs. When implemented, the integrated ECD policy is expected to promote community-owned child care and preschool programs, a smooth transition from early childhood programs to primary education, and improved monitoring and evaluation of ECD interventions.

Tanzania's Regional Initiatives in Early Childhood Development

In 2012, Tanzania organized the *First Biennial Tanzanian National Forum on Early Childhood Development,* which was officially opened by the Second Vice-President of Zanzibar and attended by four Ministers with ECD responsibilities. The forum emphasized the transition from policy development to program development and implementation. This national ECD forum brought together high-level advocates from across the country to ensure that ECD programs are responsive to local contexts, well resourced, and implemented in a timely manner. One objective of the forum was to complete the development of a framework for policy and program implementation. The forum provided the opportunity for government representatives to present their draft plans to the public, receive feedback from stakeholders, and to discuss possible enhancements to the plans. Another forum objective was to forge partnerships among private providers, businesses, civil society, and development partners for technical and financial support of ECD initiatives. Specifically, the forum sought to enlist the private business sector's support of a broad-based social responsibility initiative that would enhance the survival and long-term productivity of children in Tanzania. Finally, the forum was intended to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange among stakeholders regarding challenges, barriers, opportunities, and successes. Since the general public is largely unaware of most initiatives planned and implemented by government and other stakeholders, the forum also gave

the government a chance to share information and solicit input from the public on ongoing and future ECD initiatives.

At the conclusion of the national ECD forum, a declaration (United Republic of Tanzania, 2012) signed by the Prime Minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) and four other government ministers (Finance; Community Development, Gender and Children; Education and Vocational Training; and Health and Social Welfare) was issued, stating the government's commitment to:

- strengthen leadership and management of ECD at the national level;

- increase resources for ECD programs;

- strengthen ECD partnerships;

- strengthen inter-sectoral coordination at sub-national levels; and

- build the capacity of individuals and institutions to ensure delivery of quality ECD services.

To this day, TECDEN continues to actively represent civil society organizations in meetings of high-level government and development partners, both nationally and internationally. Tanzania's participation in these meetings and forums reflects the international community's growing recognition of Tanzania's significant progress and leadership on ECD issues. These conferences and meetings also provide opportunities for high-level Tanzanian leaders to interact with, and learn from, other ECD leaders from around the world. High-level decision-makers who have participated in these gatherings have tended to strongly support measures to strengthen ECD in Tanzania, illustrating the power of TECDEN's networking activities to influence ECD 'on the ground.'

Conclusion

Within the last 15 years, and particularly since 2000, ECD in Tanzania has come a long way. The success of the various initiatives described in this chapter is the result of numerous concerted efforts of different stakeholders—and it is primarily the result of Tanzanians choosing to work together. The success of ECD stakeholders in developing and maintaining a national network is to be commended and TECDEN continues to bring them together. The story of TECDEN is a strong case study in ECD capacity development for Africa. Brought together initially by AMANI ECD in 2000 to identify participants for the soon-to-be-launched ECDVU program, the participants of the initial and subsequent programs forged a leadership cadre that not only took the lead in the evolution of TECDEN, but of ECD more broadly in Tanzania. Such leaders, working with key development partners, especially UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, the

Aga Khan Foundation, and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, have significantly contributed to the success of local initiatives. However, as a country, Tanzania still has a long way to go to realize the potential of the ECD field. To meet the ECD goals that have been set, strong leadership at the national and local levels continues to be essential. The Tanzanian government's commitment to invest in the ECD sector and to strengthen ECD partnerships needs to be sustained and should be supported by all stakeholders. Finally, over time, further capacity-promoting opportunities for individuals, together with strategies to strengthen learning institutions, will help to ensure the delivery of high quality ECD services in Tanzania. That focus on promoting and building national capacity for training and education has been a key feature of ECD efforts in Malawi, as will be seen in the next chapter.

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COUNTRY CASE REPORT - MALAWI

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Foster Kholowa and Francis Chalamanda

Like Tanzania, Malawi had a strong presence in the first three deliveries of the ECDVU program, with 12 ECD leaders graduating from SSA-1, 2 and 3, four in each delivery. Two of those leaders, Foster Kholowa (SSA-2) and Francis Chalamanda (SSA-1) provided the text for this chapter. Malawi's participation in the ECDVU was central to advancing many of its very significant developments in ECD from 2001 to 2012, including the development and approval of an ECD policy in the exceptionally short period from 2001 to 2004. However, those advances, significant as they are, require a level of training availability and post-secondary engagement that has been a challenge to create and sustain. The stories of Tanzania and Malawi underscore not only that exceptional accomplishments are possible with appropriate leadership and teamwork, but also the need to build on those accomplishments to address other aspects of development—in the Malawi case, with a particular focus on the need for greater engagement with post-secondary institutions.

Introduction/Overview

In 1998, a few years prior to the launch of the ECDVU, Malawi was ranked seventh among the 16 poorest countries in the world (Chalamanda et al., 2001). Seventy-six percent of the population lived in rural areas, where 91.3% of the poor and 91.5% of the extremely poor were concentrated (Government of Malawi, 2002). Poverty severely compromised the health and well-being of most Malawian women, children, and families and HIV/AIDS levels were high.

Compounding these factors, budgetary expenditures on ECD were low compared to other SSA countries, and incomes were worsening.

Today, children in Malawi continue to experience, among other things, "high prevalence of diseases, high mortality rates, high prevalence of HIV, high incidence of malaria cases, limited access to maternal health services, low institutional capacity, inequitable access and utilization of Essential Help Package (EHP) services, inefficiency of the health care system, high prevalence of health risk factors, inadequate supply of essential drugs, and inadequate health infrastructure" (MDGS II, 2011-2016, p. 41). The majority of children in Malawi (65%) still do not have access to ECD services and enter primary school without any meaningful ECD experience (MGCCD, 2010; MGCCD & UNICEF, 2009). Thus, much remains to be done to strengthen ECD in Malawi.

However, some outstanding achievements have been made in recent years. For example, according to the 2010 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (NSF & ICO, 2011), between 2004 and 2010, the infant mortality rate fell from 76 to 66 per 1000, while the mortality of children under five fell from 133 to 112 per 1000. The maternal mortality rate fell from 984 to 460 per 100,000 during this same period. The percentage of births that were attended by skilled health personnel increased from 38% to 75%, while the percentage of underweight children fell from 22% to 13%. Finally, the rate of malaria in-patient case fatality was cut in half, from 7% in 2004 to 3.2% in 2010. These improvements stem from a number of ECD interventions that various stakeholders implemented to improve the health and nutritional status of children under five in Malawi, such as school health and nutrition programs, vitamin A supplementation, and nutrition support programs.

During a similar period, Malawi also made great progress in expanding access to preschools, nursery schools, crèches, day care centres, and playgroups. As shown in Table 8.1, from 2000 to 2014, the number of public and private centres increased more than elevenfold, and the number of children served grew by a factor of more than 26. The most dramatic increase in service occurred between 2004 and 2005, following which services steadily increased.

Table 8.1 ECD Access Trends in Malawi, 2000-2014
(MGCDSW, 2014; MGDS II, 2011).

Year	Number of Centres	Number of Children	Total % of Malawian children served
2000	1,155	51,550	2.63
2001	1,645	72,760	2.91
2002	2,602	127,036	4.88
2003	3,207	135,436	5.64
2004	4,529	229,823	9.70
2005	5,945	582,407	22.46
2006	6,240	615,478	26.76
2007	7,801	683,825	29.77
2008	8,388	720,292	30.21
2009	8,890	771,666	32.00
2010	8,933	820,000	33.00
2011	9,780	895,818	34.79
2012	9,796	1,132,369	36.56
2013	9,873	1,255,373	38.04
2014	13,786	1,344,723	39.60

Since 2000, Malawi has made significant strides in achieving greater coordination and creating legal frameworks to implement ECD programs. For instance, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (now the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare) was designated the lead agency for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of ECD activities. The ministry's role is to promote meaningful collaboration between and among sectors

that play different roles in ECD—a considerable challenge in a context where government departments are used to working on a sectoral basis to implement the policies and activities for which they are specifically responsible. Further, Malawi developed essential child-related national guidelines to ensure effective implementation of ECD programs, including the National ECD Policy (2003), the ECD National Strategic Plan (2009-2014), the Advocacy and Communications Strategy (2009), and the Early Learning and Development Standards (2010).

The development of the national strategic plan eventually resulted in the incorporation of ECD into the basic education sector within the National Education Sector Plan, 2008-2017 (NESP), a remarkable formal recognition of the importance of ECD within Malawi's education system. In addition, the Malawi Parliament's (2010) enactment of the *Child Care, Protection and Justice Act No.22* provides a legal means of ensuring that policies that help guide and regulate the delivery of children's services in Malawi will be applied. All the above-noted policies and guidelines operate within an overarching broader national level strategy enshrined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS I, 2006-2011; MGDS II, 2011-2016).

In brief, ECD in Malawi has evolved significantly since 2000. Prior to 2000, Malawi's ECD initiatives, while deserving of recognition, were largely focused on preparing children for school. After 2000, the emphasis increasingly shifted towards a holistic approach to ECD, providing a springboard for the post-2000 ECD policy and program developments in Malawi that are briefly noted above. This shift in emphasis stemmed from a number of factors, including capacity-promoting initiatives such as Malawi's full participation in three ECDVU deliveries (SSA-1, 2, 3). Cooperation between the government of Malawi and Malawi-UNICEF resulted in funding support for a total of 12 participants from 2001 to 2011, which in turn impacted ECD developments from local through national levels. For the remainder of this chapter, we would like to highlight Malawi's accomplishments in strengthening ECD education and training.

ECD Education and Training Opportunities in Malawi

Before 2000, ECD training in Malawi received scant attention and was performed on an ad hoc basis, mainly because ECD as a distinct topic of study or training was largely invisible. In fact, over many years the Government of Malawi played a very limited role, as reflected in the minimal budgetary support for ECD. It was only in the 1980s that interest in ECD began to increase, primarily through UNICEF support (Chalamanda et al., 2001; Kholowa, 2007).

After 2000, as part of capacity-promoting initiatives, local and international opportunities to take ECD courses began to open up for staff in government and civil society. The ECDVU's one- and three-year graduate programs (SSA-1, SSA-2, and SSA-3) were by far the most substantial of these courses. Most other capacity-promoting programs offered short-term training programs ranging in length from several days to several weeks, as outlined in Table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Summary of ECD-related, short-term professional development opportunities for staff in Malawi, 2001-2012 (MGCCD & UNICEF, 2010)

Period	Nature of Training	Length	Location	Key Institutions represented and # of Malawians trained
2001	Creating a Stimulating Environment in Early Childhood	2 weeks	Mpemba Staff Development College	APPM, UNESCO, SAFE, MGCCD [30]
2002	ECD and HIV and AIDS	1 week	Tanzania	MGCCD, APPM, MoHP, UNICEF [4]
2002	Early Learning and Developmental Lags in Early Childhood	2 weeks	Mount Carmel International Training Centre in Israel	APPM [1]
2006-08	Play Therapy	4 days	South Africa	UNICEF, MGCCD [4 +]
2006	Study Tour on Child Survival and Early Childhood Development	1 week	Peru	MGCCD (1), MoEST (1), APPM (2), Chirunga ECD Centre (1), UNICEF (3) [7]
2009	Short course on ECD Curriculum Development	2.5 weeks	Kenya Institute of Education	MGCCD (2), MIE (1), MoEST-HQRs (1) [4]
2009	Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)	4 days	Safari Club, Nairobi, Kenya	University of Malawi (Chancellor College) (1), MGCCD (1), UNICEF (1)
2009	Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)	5 days	Nkopola Lodge, Mangochi, Malawi	MGCCD, MoEST, University of Malawi, Raising Malawi, SAFE, Orphan Support Africa, Department of Nutrition in OPC, APPM, UNICEF [30]
2011-13	UNICEF-ESARO	1 week	South Africa	UNICEF, University of Malawi, MGCCD, MoEST

The training opportunities highlighted in the table were typically targeted for specific ECD issues as they emerged in Malawi. Generally, participant selection was conducted to maximize the participation of staff from key departments and institutions that are in a position to advance the ECD agenda in the country—staff in the two key Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and Education, institutions of higher learning, and civil society. One typical example is the 2009 Kenya-based training on Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and curriculum development, which led to team work to strategize and develop the current ELDS for Malawi and to produce draft curriculum for the country.

Basic Training Initiatives for Practitioners in Malawi

Through the development of the National ECD Strategic Plan (2009-2014), ECD capacity promotion in the form of basic training has become more structured and comprehensive, involving issues of parenting at the household level; caregiving and mentoring at the ECD centre level; supervision and monitoring at the community, district and national levels; planning and implementation at the district level; and policy development and resource mobilization at the national and district levels. The following subsections provide an overview of training initiatives at these various levels of the ECD system.

a) Training for Caregivers and Community Personnel

Up until 2001, basic ECD training programs, ranging in length from two to four weeks, were conducted mainly through the Association of Preschool Playgroups in Malawi (now the Association of Early Childhood Development). In more recent years, especially from 2001 to 2007, the Association's role diminished for a number of reasons, including lack of support, limited human capacity to manage the organization, and a general lack of strategic direction at a time when the demand for capacity-promotion in Malawi was steadily increasing (Chibwana & Mpesi, 2009).

Given the Association's diminished role, over time the training of caregivers and other community personnel was left in the hands of District Social Welfare Offices, which proved an ineffective way to ensure quality training. For instance, while the designated minimum period for basic training is two weeks (with a weekend, 12 days), research has consistently shown large variations in adherence to the designated training period. In some cases, trainees have reported receiving as little as five days of training (GoM & UNICEF, 2009; MGCCD & UNICEF, 2010). This situation impacts the quality of services at the community level, especially since the educational background of most caregivers in Malawian ECD centres

is so low that they often have difficulties coping even with the basic training program (see MGCCD & UNICEF, 2010).

Fortunately, in 2008, the Association of Early Childhood Development underwent a repositioning process to respond to Malawi's ECD capacity needs. The subsequent rejuvenation of the Association stems partly from the contribution of ECDVU graduates from SSA-1 and SSA-2. For instance, two of the Board members (including the Chairperson) are ECDVU graduates. The presence of other ECDVU graduates at the lead Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare made it easy for the Association's new Board to collaborate with government and UNICEF to restore the Association's role in implementing the national ECD Strategic Plan (MoWCD & UNICEF, 2009). Additionally, in the early stages of the repositioning process, another ECDVU graduate was appointed Executive Director; she helped complete the strategic plan before she left the organization in mid-2011. By the beginning of 2012, the Association had greatly improved in most of the key areas of management and funding levels.

In 2012, with support from UNICEF, the Association worked on a training program that has led to the institutionalization of comprehensive ECD training for caregivers across Malawi, implemented in 2013. The first phase of the training covers 734 caregivers from 13 districts of the country—a promising step in the training of caregivers and in the possible future expansion of ECD training modalities. It is also envisioned that the Association will take up its former leadership role in advancing ECD capacity development in Malawi.

b) Parenting Education Training

To support children's right to know and to be raised by their parents, it is important to empower households, the community and other guardians of parenting practices. To enhance care for young children, effective parenting education programs are needed in Malawi. It is generally agreed that "the broad objective within parent programs is to create awareness of the importance of the caregivers' role in relation to supporting children's growth and development, and to strengthen or modify caregivers' attitudes, beliefs and practices in relation to caring for a child" (Evans et al., cited in Garcia et al., 2008, p. 271). In most cultures, the custodians of parenting knowledge, attitudes, and practices for children are parents and legal guardians who are responsible for the upbringing and development of the child. These custodians require support to fulfill their vital roles in promoting the holistic development of children (Evans, 1994; Myers, 1993; Kabiru and Njenga, 2007).

Based on the available literature, health and nutrition programs that address the needs of children aged 0-6 are becoming common in many sub-Saharan African countries. Some evidence suggests that various stakeholders—mostly local and international NGOs—are addressing child care partly through parenting programs. For instance, in South Africa, the Lesedi Educare Association delivers family-related programs, namely the Rural Family Support Program, and The Community Development and Family Facilitator Program. Malawian ECD specialists have visited those programs. Current parent education initiatives in Malawi began in approximately 2008 when a manual was developed to train community workers and paraprofessionals in health, education, and social services who work with young children and families. Such resource material is intended to help these workers to facilitate discussions with parents and caregivers on the needs, rights, and developmental characteristics of children (MGCCD & UNICEF, 2008). Parenting education and support is being piloted in two districts of Blantyre and Mchinji. During the orientation for the pilot, sessions were conducted for extension workers and district officials in the two districts.

While numerous training initiatives have taken place, more work on parenting education is necessary, as the majority of ECD stakeholders need to build their capacity in this area. In fact, very few Malawian organizations are delivering substantive parenting education programs focused on children aged 0-3. UNICEF, Save the Children, and a few other organizations have spearheaded parenting education in Malawi (Save the Children Malawi & USAID Malawi, 2011). Similarly, while some elements of parent education are supposedly embedded in some health programs offered in under-five clinics by the Ministry of Health and Population, these activities are not specifically branded as 'parent education programs' (Save the Children, 2009).

Through Malawi's Protecting Early Childhood Development (PECD) initiative, supported by the World Bank, a parenting manual focused on school readiness was developed. This manual draws heavily on the generic national parenting manual developed in 2008 by a multisectoral team of ECD stakeholders. Through this initiative, parenting facilitators have been trained in the four project districts of Balaka, Dedza, Nkhata Bay and Thyolo. While this initiative focuses on a limited geographic area, it may introduce an interesting dimension to future parenting education in Malawi.

c) Training for Mentors and Supervisors

One barrier to the implementation of quality ECD services in Malawi is the lack of consistent mentoring and supervision (GoM & UNICEF, 2009, 2010). Despite

these documented gaps, few initiatives have focused on capacity promotion in this area. Save the Children has supported mentorship and supervisory training for supervisors of caregivers in the Blantyre, Chiradzulu and Zomba Districts (Save the Children Malawi & USAID Malawi, 2011), who are now better placed to offer technical support to caregivers in service delivery. Also, through the World Bank-supported Protecting ECD in Malawi Project, more elaborate one-week training sessions for mentors and/or supervisors were available for the first time. While such short-term training can be problematic if it is not followed up with refresher courses, in this case, follow-up initiatives were provided.

Role of Higher Education Institutions in Advancing the ECD Training Agenda in Malawi

The general importance of higher education institutions and universities in Malawi cannot be overstated. However, these institutions have been slow to respond to the steadily emerging need for ECD capacity-promotion over the past ten years. A number of factors have contributed to this situation. For instance, compared to other academic programs, ECD capacity promotion has not benefited from any clearly stated, consistent and coordinated effort at the university level. Furthermore, historically, most capacity-promoting programs in higher education institutions have tended to focus on secondary and primary school education. Finally, over the years, the entry requirements of higher education institutions have not been sufficiently flexible to accommodate the majority of ECD personnel, whose academic qualifications are often low despite their long experience in the ECD field.

A recent study that examined Malawian higher education institutions' capacity to offer ECD programs (see MGCCD & UNICEF, 2010) found that only a few institutions are in a reasonable position to develop and deliver such programs. This finding suggests that to address the immediate needs of the ECD system, it is necessary to begin by strengthening the capacity of the few institutions that are already reasonably placed to develop and offer ECD programs. However, to address long-term needs, it is equally important to begin strengthening the capacity of all the other institutions that have the potential to deliver ECD programs in the future.

On a more positive note, it is important to observe that since 1998, the Department of Human Ecology at Chancellor College (Faculty of Sciences) has worked to address ECD issues through the delivery of undergraduate courses in ECD Care and Education. In addition, the department conducts some training for ECD centre caregivers and directors in Zomba and across the country. In

2011 and 2012, the Department developed more comprehensive ECD courses. When these courses are approved, students from the University of Malawi will be able to graduate with a specialization in ECD, rather than incorporate ECD into a B.Ed. or B.Sc. program, as is currently the case. It should also be noted that the University of Malawi's Chancellor College is currently offering a web-based undergraduate ECE diploma through an Indian University. While this program is simply using Chancellor College as a satellite, the College may be able to sustain the program in the future, making necessary changes for cultural and contextual differences. Another ECD training effort that deserves mention is one currently being undertaken by the Bunda College of Agriculture, which is part of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)[8].

While the above-noted initiatives are positive steps in ECD capacity promotion, much work remains to develop comprehensive and accredited ECD capacity-promoting programs in higher education institutions to address the demand for ECD personnel in the country. Furthermore, to ensure a coordinated response to the need for ECD capacity promotion at the national level, meaningful collaboration is necessary among the different university-colleges in Malawi. The slow overall response to the need for ECD capacity promotion by Malawian institutions contrasts sharply with the huge demand for ECD at both the national level and across sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. ECD is now being 'scaled up' at the national level (MoWCD, 2007). To properly support these nation-wide efforts and to ensure not only increased services but high quality services, clear programs on ECD capacity promotion must be put in place. While the challenges in providing quality ECD services are multifaceted, they are undoubtedly compounded by the lack of qualified personnel at various levels of the system, from ECD centres to policy development.

Training Development Opportunities in Malawi: Efforts Towards Comprehensive ECD Capacity-Promotion

From the discussions above, it is clear that the challenges posed by limited capacity in human and material resources have constrained efforts to further

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[8] *At this point it may be useful to note that ECDVU and its participants recognized the need for enhanced ECD tertiary leadership and in the late 2000s submitted a joint ECDVU, Chancellor College, and University of Education Winneba (UEW, Ghana) proposal to CIDA, and subsequently to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, to develop educationally laddered ECD undergraduate and graduate level programs at both institutions. Neither proposal was funded, but UEW has proceeded to develop such programs in the years since, and as noted, Malawi has recently identified such work as a priority.*

expand ECD services in Malawi, and more particularly, to address issues of quality assurance (GoM & UNICEF, 2009). It is evident that despite the great demand for qualified ECD personnel at different levels of the system, ECD training in Malawi has not received sufficient attention.

Current efforts by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and development partners in Malawi point towards the development of a comprehensive, implementable ECD training framework that addresses all levels of the ECD system, including ECD Managers, ECD caregivers, parents, other caregivers and helpers, ECD management committees and other relevant local leaders, extension staff (all relevant ministries), ECD Trainers, and staff in ECD academic and professional training institutions. When complete, this framework will provide a clear path for ECD staff at various levels to advance in their academic and professional development. Further, as a means of creating this path, the framework will prioritize the institutionalization of ECD training (MoGCD & UNICEF, 2010).

The development of a comprehensive training framework for Malawi has the potential to create more opportunities for ECD capacity promotion in Malawi, both for ECD training providers and for those involved in ECD service delivery, including government and civil society. Such a training framework, if well coordinated, will likely create important synergies among ECD policy-makers, training institutions, and organizations involved in service delivery. While a comprehensive ECD capacity promotion strategy is crucial, careful implementation of the strategy is necessary to take advantage of the opportunity to advance ECD capacity development. In particular, to maximize results, it is critical for Malawi to learn from other institutional training models that emphasize a multifaceted approach to ECD, such as the ECDVU program. It is likely that the strategy will benefit from flexible approaches, given the varied needs of ECD practitioners and staff at different levels.

Conclusion

Improving the quality of any ECD system depends, among other things, on the quality of the training provided to key players. If the gains since 2000 in ECD are to be sustained and improved upon in Malawi, this factor is critical. Discussion of ECD capacity promotion in Malawi has not occurred in a vacuum: both local and international influences played important roles in stimulating ECD capacity-promoting initiatives.

A well informed and country-level trained cadre of ECD leaders has been and continues to be essential to advance the ECD agenda for Malawi. Such

leadership is beneficial not only at the planning and goal identification stage, but also in implementation, follow-up, and planning the next stages in responding to what is happening on the ground. The training of a cadre of government and civil society leaders through ECDVU has had a significant, demonstrable impact in Malawi, as most of these leaders are in positions to influence the ECD agenda through policy and capacity-promotion. As Malawi plans its next steps in advancing ECD capacity development, this example illustrates the importance of continued strategic targeting of ECD capacity promotion through both local and international initiatives. In-country initiatives supported by development partners (e.g., UNICEF, the World Bank, Save the Children Malawi, Plan Malawi, Action Aid, etc.), local NGOs, and institutions have also been critical in ensuring the realization of ECD goals, especially capacity promotion.

It is evident that ECD networking at both the national and international levels has greatly benefited Malawi in shaping its policy directions and in promoting capacity. To create future gains in ECD, Malawi will need to strengthen such networking.

As Malawi moves towards the institutionalization of ECD training, existing training institutions need to strategically reposition themselves to respond appropriately to the training needs of the various stakeholders as articulated in the comprehensive ECD framework that will soon be developed. Strengthening institutional capacity to deliver services should also be a priority. At the same time, it is critical that national government and civil society systems are properly coordinated and that mechanisms are put in place to provide a supportive environment for trained ECD personnel to enhance ECD service delivery at various levels of the system.

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WAYS FORWARD

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This volume began with a call to honour 'other ways': other ways of understanding children's care and development; other ways of supporting communities, from local to country levels; other ways of promoting capacity; and other ways that scholars and tertiary institutions can contribute to children's and societies' well-being. For the lead author of this book, the past 25 years, starting with the First Nations Partnership Programs in Western Canada and since 1994 in sub-Saharan Africa, has been a process of becoming ever more open to, and encouraging of, those 'other ways.' Part of that openness has been motivated by a growing uneasiness with the biases and limitations of 'traditional' Euro-Western understandings of children and development, as reflected in the perspectives expressed in chapters 1 and 2 of this book, which offered a brief critique of capacity-building and child development in international development. But most of that openness has come from an appreciation of the importance of local knowledge and local knowledge holders— knowledge and holders intertwined in ways that communities derive a sense of inherent capacity that externally driven capacity building often deplete or undermine. Such an approach requires an appreciation of many knowledges, and a wariness of the uni- of universal and other singularities. In the experiences recounted in this volume we have found such approaches can indeed effect changes 'on the ground'—some, like policy development in Malawi, are surprisingly fast; others are less dramatic but typically feature a level of sustained commitment over time (like TECDEN in Tanzania) that is often missing in externally driven projects. In that spirit, we continue to work on ECD initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa, guided not only by specific 'plans,' but, more importantly, by a set of overarching, guiding principles gained and tested over the years:

- Recognize the importance of not knowing, and not taking on the power 'to determine';

- Recognize and reinforce communities' strengths;

- Focus on identifying and supporting local, appropriate leaders and stakeholders;

- Work to achieve a sense of 'family' amongst child and family supportive leaders;

- Support knowledge holders to become knowledge sharers, not just within their communities but more globally;

- Support continuing quests for 'new knowledge' and its sharing;

- Encourage interactions across communities and networks;

- Encourage many ways of seeing and understanding and an openness to others;

- Fade away, but work to ensure impacts remain and approaches are sustained.

In the spirit of these principles, this concluding chapter highlights current extensions of ECD and ECDVU work that focus largely on the importance of re-envisioning post-secondary institutions in sub-Saharan Africa as *knowledge generating* institutions capable of providing leadership that is at once contextually meaningful and effective. To date, most post-secondary education in SSA is descended from colonial institutions featuring *knowledge transfer* approaches, with knowledge bases and socio-historical origins external to the continent. Despite decades of self-rule, post-secondary institutions in SSA, as in most of the rest of the world, have not engaged in transformative contextualization. The insights and possibilities of the local have been consistently eclipsed by 'evidence' from the West—too often such 'evidence' is a function of power masquerading as 'truth.' One result (among a plethora of examples) is a failure to significantly advance an African-led and Africa-sensitive science of ECD and child development that can not only guide developments in Africa, but also be a respected global contributor.

While developing a proposal to explore and address this concern, Marfo & Pence (2008) echoed Arnett's position regarding developmental psychology (2008): "…that research on the whole of humanity is necessary for creating a science that truly represents the whole of humanity" (p. 602). Even if the concept of 'knowledge universals' retains some merit, much greater value accrues when 'universal' perspectives engage and interact with local knowledges, which

can in turn be assessed for their individual and combined contributions and effectiveness. The principle *engagement of knowledges,* with each respectfully learning from the other, is central to all the initiatives described in this volume. That principle resonates throughout a more recent set of activities, the African Scholars and Institutions (AS&I) initiative (see www.ecdvu.org), described below. African scholarly leadership is absolutely central to consolidating gains in ECD development in SSA that have taken place over the past two decades and to opening up new avenues of research and leadership in SSA and globally.

Partnerships with Post-secondary Institutions

From its inception in the late 1990s the ECDVU did not envision itself as a continuing presence in Africa, but rather as a transitional tool supportive of individual and institutional development on the continent. As part of that objective, ECDVU has engaged with universities in three sub-regions of SSA (West-Central, Eastern, Southern) regarding the development of undergraduate and graduate programs. To stimulate program development in those regions, ECDVU makes freely available the ECDVU generative curriculum materials and online experience, which can be adapted to the needs of new host institutions. This transition process is most advanced with the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, which launched a collaborative delivery with ECDVU of its own ECE/ECD online Graduate Diploma program in April, 2015.

At the undergraduate level, a number of ECDVU participants have developed ECD/ECE education programs in their home countries.[9] Lesotho was among the first to do so, but others have followed, including Tanzania, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria. Edith Sebatane, an ECDVU graduate, has led the Lesotho post-secondary education efforts. For her final project in the SSA-1 delivery, she developed a strategic plan to engage tertiary institutions in Lesotho in advancing ECD at the national level. Initially, that 'roadmap' was realized through a certificate program; development of a diploma program began in the early 2010s. In Tanzania, Daphina Libent drew on her experience in the SSA-2 ECDVU program to design a Bachelor-level ECD distance learning program for her institution, the Open University of Tanzania. In Nigeria, some members of the ECDVU SSA-3 and SSA-4 cohorts were associated with Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), many of which are in the north of the country. During the ECDVU program, these cohort members focused on expanding training opportunities for ECD frontline teachers.

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[9] *It is also interesting to note that one of the Nigerian participants used her participation in the ECDVU as an opportunity to develop a PhD program at her institution.*

This expansion was necessary to support Nigerian federal policy changes that called for the joint development of new pre-primary and primary programs. In both the SSA-3 and SSA-4 deliveries, one of the face-to-face seminars took place in East Africa, allowing visits to progressive ECD Madrassa programs initiated through the Aga Khan Development Network. These Madrassa programs differed substantially from those found in northern Nigeria, inspiring some cohort members to create progressive programs in their home states (see World Bank video: *Brain Gain: Leadership Development for Africa's Children,* 2011).

Surveying Post-secondary Institutions in sub-Saharan Africa

Through the African Scholars & Institutions initiative, surveys were conducted in 2010 (East & Southern Africa, with UNICEF) and 2012 (West & Central Africa, with UNESCO) to identify ECD and child development programs at post-secondary institutions across sub-Saharan Africa (Pence & Fleury, 2012). The survey results highlight a significant growth in such programs but a skewed geographic distribution: 16 of 18 countries in East and Southern Africa have or are planning ECD/ECE education or training programs (89%), versus 8 of 19 in West and Central Africa (42%) (see Table 9.1). With respect to institutional language, 18 of 22 Anglophone countries either have or are planning ECD/ECE education or training programs (82%), versus 3 of 12 in Francophone countries (25%) (Table 9.2). This skewed development may reflect, in part, the absence of an ECDVU program in French—an objective long sought by ECD leaders in sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 9.1 Overview of Survey Responses by Region

Region	ECE/ECD programmes				
	In place	Planned	Courses only	Unknown	Total
East & Southern Africa	11	5	2	0	**18**
West & Central Africa	5	3	6	5	**19**
TOTALS	**16**	**8**	**8**	**5**	**37**

Table 9.2 Overview of Survey Responses by Language

Language	ECE/ECD programmes				
	In place	Planned	Courses only	Unknown	Total
Anglophone	13	5	4	0	**22**
Francophone	1	2	4	5	**12**
Lusophone	2	1	0	0	**3**
TOTALS	**16**	**8**	**8**	**5**	**37**

Scholarly and Research Development: Workshops, Networks and Publications

Any institution or organization that works extensively with children in Africa is aware of how little of the research employed has been conceptualized and led by Africans. This is a problem for Africa—but it is also a problem for knowledge and scholarship globally. This lacuna was apparent even before the development of the ECDVU program—during the ECD Seminars period of the 1990s. The development of the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative was largely an outcome of this long-standing concern. Below we describe a number of related activities, for most of which we are currently seeking financial support.

Scholars' Workshops

In 2008, while seeking funding for their proposal for the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative, Marfo and Pence became aware of a series of a 'small-group workshops' initiative developed and funded by the well-respected, U.S.-based Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD). The workshops sought to advance an appreciation that: "…an understanding of development requires 1) the perspectives and methods of multiple disciplines; 2) cultural and contextual diversity…, and 3) international perspectives…" (SRCD, 2008). Marfo and Pence submitted their proposal to the SRCD, but without much optimism that it would be supported. The SRCD had long been associated with strongly Western—and more specifically American—understandings of child development. If the SRCD announcement of the funding opportunity was a surprise, it was an even greater surprise when Marfo and Pence learned their somewhat 'critically framed' proposal was one of only four of 70 to be funded. Marfo and Pence (2008) had noted in their proposal:

> This project is an invitational conference designed to help
> advance a science of child development that opens up to other

populations and to other ways of thinking about childhood and child development… Often marginalized, contextually significant issues and perspectives in the majority world (the so-called developing world) rarely find their way into leading dissemination outlets in our field. This project focuses on Africa because African voices—as contributions driven by unique African conceptions and realities—are woefully underrepresented in a global knowledge base dominated by Euro-American conceptions of child development and developmental inquiry.

Funding provided for the workshop was not large, but with supporting funds from ECDVU, nine key international and African scholars convened in Victoria, B.C. for a week of discussions in 2009. Those discussions led to the publication of six articles in a special section of *Child Development Perspectives* (2011). The titles in the special section reflect the concerns and foci of the workshop:

- Strengthening Africa's Contributions to Child Development Research: Introduction (by Kofi Marfo, Alan Pence, Robert A. LeVine, & Sarah LeVine)

- Early Childhood Care and Development Research in Africa: Historical, Conceptual, and Structural Challenges (by Alan Pence)

- Think Locally, Act Globally: Contributions of African Research to Child Development (by Charles M. Super, Sara Harkness, Oumar Barry & Marian Zeitlin)

- Social Responsibility as a Dimension of Intelligence and as an Educational Goal: Insights from Programmatic Research in African Society (by Robert Serpell)

- Bridging Culture, Research, and Practice in Early Childhood Development: The Madrasa Resource Centers in East Africa (by Peter A. M. Mwaura, Kofi Marfo)

- Envisioning an African Child Development Field (by Kofi Marfo)

At the top of the participants' minds was the need to secure sufficient funds for a predominantly African group of scholars to participate in a similar workshop in Africa. It took a few years, but eventually the initiative went forward with support from the Open Society Foundation and the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA). The Africa-based follow-up workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in February 2013, with 23 African scholars from 18 SSA countries in attendance.

Preparations for the Johannesburg workshop were led by a team who had participated in the earlier Victoria Workshop (Alan Pence, Kofi Marfo, Bame Nsamenang, and Robert Serpell). Before the Johannesburg workshop, the team distributed the six articles published in *Child Development Perspectives* as background information. In addition, Serpell initiated a pre-workshop online forum that posed various questions for the invitees to consider and discuss. One question asked each invitee to identify and rank priorities for ECD-related research in SSA. The top-ranked responses, in order of priority, included: Indigenous language, knowledge and play; Indigenous child-rearing practices; involvement of the local community; issues involving parents; developmental assessment; and identification and inclusion of children with special needs. After the Johannesburg workshop, a sub-group of scholars from Southern Africa met in Lusaka to plan a joint, multi-country proposal for collaborative research. The priority areas in the proposal largely reflected those identified by the larger group before the workshop.

It is noteworthy that top priorities identified by African-based researchers are not the same as those typically described in the international ECD community, with its much greater focus on Western-based issues and approaches, such as cost-benefit analyses, school readiness, and early brain development, to name a few. It is also important to note that despite the work by African scholars at both the Johannesburg Workshop and the follow-up workshop in Lusaka to establish research priorities, the very minimal funds required to support participants to complete full proposals for that research have been extraordinarily difficult to secure. However, many other donor-driven projects have moved forward for implementation in SSA over the same time period. Those difficulties underscore a point made by Marfo & Pence in their 2008 submission to the SRCD:

> Current global realities in the field, as reflected in research funding, publications, conferences, and other means of professional/academic gate-keeping, virtually ensure the marginalization of intellectual agendas contemplated outside academia in the Western World.

Networks

The intensive, small-group, multi-country workshops described above have yielded a way forward for specific research contributions from African scholars. That same networking process can promote more effective and comprehensive long-term ECD capacity for SSA, if these scholarly networks have opportunities to interact with country-level and regional networks of ECD professionals, such

as those formed through participation in the ECDVU program. Many professional networks, such as the Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN, discussed in chapter 7), are in turn connected with district and local leaders in ECD. Such cross-network interactions are critically important for Africa-based ECD research to play a maximally relevant and constructive role for ECD's holistic and comprehensive development in Africa.

This approach—interactions across networks, some of which are research-focused and others with civil-society or government orientations—was implemented in a recent research project in Tanzania initiated by the Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED) and the UVic-ECDVU. In that project, TECDEN (civil society with government participation) was invited to participate as a key member of the project's steering committee and in the data collection. Both researchers and civil society gained through this inclusive process, which revealed information sources, such as those in the 'grey literature,' that presented valuable possibilities for further collaborative work in the future.

Journal and Newsletter Publications

It is important for the work supported through the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative to have academic visibility. SRCD Newsletter summaries (2008, 2009) and the special section of Child Development Perspectives (2011), noted earlier, helped to achieve this goal. However, the Johannesburg workshop highlighted the need for a larger, ongoing venue for academic visibility—a journal focused on sub-Saharan Africa. While development of a refereed journal was beyond the nascent nature of the scholars' network at Johannesburg, an opportunity to create a hybrid "News-Journal" arose through UNESCO-BREDA and the SSA Working Group on ECD (WGECD). The resulting *Africa ECD Voice* distributed four issues between September 2013 and October 2014, serving to better connect the professionals associated with the workshops, the ECDVU, the WGECD, and other SSA-related organizations. Future issues depend on the availability of funding. Workshop leaders will continue to pursue the larger issue—the creation of an ECD- and Africa-focused scholarly journal—over time.

The ECD Literature in sub-Saharan Africa

The African Scholars and Institutions Initiative has also sought to identify and better understand the existing ECD literature in sub-Saharan Africa. Some effort had already gone into identifying the 'grey literature' through the Tanzania-based AKU-IED/ECDVU project noted earlier. The ECDVU sought to

extend that work by creating a 'Compendium' of the e-accessible literature for SSA, particularly for the less developed countries served by the ECDVU (thus, the relatively substantial literature from South Africa was not an initial part of the work, but was undertaken later–see Pence & Ashton, 2015). The result of this research highlighted the dearth of Indigenous, African-led publications over the decades. The majority of authors—and especially lead authors—were from outside SSA.

Such patterns call into further question the dominant approach to capacity development, which emphasizes *knowledge transfer* over Indigenous knowledge generation. With knowledge transfer, the movement is from the West to 'the Other.' Indigenous knowledge generation focuses on promoting local capacity, where 'the local' spans from village, to country, to the whole of SSA. It is only since 2007 that one can see a noticeable and steady increase in the number of Indigenous African authors publishing in the internationally accessible literature. More often than not, the topics of interest for those authors are 'local': failings in policy implementation, education/training needs, contextually sensitive programming, Indigenous language issues, and related topics with a strong local/country focus (Pence & Ashton, 2015).

It is interesting to note both the timing and the topics associated with the increase in African ECD literature. Starting in 1999 with the 1st African International ECD Conference, awareness of the need for ECD policy development steadily grew. An ever-increasing number of political leaders participated in the conferences and politically-focused advocacy intensified, as evidenced by communiqués issued from the conferences in 2002, 2005 and 2009. The conferences also featured a growing number of professional leaders associated not only with government, but with NGOs and civil society as well—and many of those leaders emerged from the ever-increasing ranks of graduates from the ECDVU program deliveries. As evidenced by the case information from Tanzania and Malawi, those graduates shared many key goals: to address policy development needs; to bridge silos within and between governments, NGOs, and civil society; to create multi-sectoral and multi-level networks; and to address education and training needs across the country. Momentum on these and related issues grew throughout the early 2000s. The development of ECD policies offers an example: as noted by UNESCO, in 2000, only a few countries had ECD-related policies, but "as of December 2008, 19 countries had adopted ECCE policies, [and] 20 are preparing them…" (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010, p.13). Given such momentum, it is perhaps not surprising that scholarly publication numbers begin to increase in the late 2000s, many of them focusing on issues of 'local' or country concern.

While the good news of broad ECD capacity development in SSA needs to be appreciated and celebrated, it is also important to pay attention to how those advances relate to 'local stories,' 'local heroines and heroes,' and 'on the ground' advances whose energy is fed by forces inside Africa. For the most part, these advances, this energy, are compatible with Western ideas. Indeed, a central argument of this book is that it is through a respectful engagement across diverse sources of ideas that sustainable achievements can be realized—that new and innovative 'other' possibilities can be generated.

As cited in chapter 3, a student in the First Nations Partnership Programs once noted that: "We love to learn what researchers have found…, and we love to learn more about our own culture." Years later, this young woman's comments were echoed at an ECDVU seminar in Africa by a participant who held a very senior position in his government. At the end of an activity in which the group shared proverbs from their childhoods, he noted that in all his years of education and in all his years in government, no one had ever suggested that words and sayings from his childhood in a small, remote village had any place in his education or his work. While this man seldom showed his feelings, there was a tear in his voice as he noted that he would take this lesson back to his ministry and never forget its importance.

The lesson repeated throughout this book is not to reject a single knowledge, but to cultivate a deep appreciation of multiple knowledges. This lesson resonates with the FNPP experience: we cannot create in today's complex and multi-faceted world durable and effective education, service systems, programs or policies across contexts with just one 'battery.' The lesson from the African experience is similar—to paraphrase Rumi and to encircle science and belief: "God created Truth with many doors, to welcome all who come there." For the children, families and communities of Africa, and indeed from anywhere in the world, we must create such welcoming places.

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