



# THE EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK FOR KENYA (ECDNEK) NEWSLETTER 2023



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## EDITORIAL NOTE



Dr. Teresa Mwoma, National  
Coordinator ECDNeK

Dear ECD Network for Kenya Stakeholders,

As we approach the close of the year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I extend my heartfelt greetings to each member of our ECD Network for Kenya community. This edition of our newsletter is a comprehensive reflection on the impactful activities that have shaped our collective journey throughout the year.

Our strength lies in our unity, and this year has exemplified the incredible collaborative efforts within our ECD Network for Kenya. From empowering local communities to advocating for early childhood development (ECD), your dedication has been instrumental in making a positive difference in every corner of our beautiful country. In the spirit of progress, we've witnessed the birth of innovative projects addressing critical challenges in early childhood development. From improving access to quality education to ensuring the well-being of our youngest citizens, the diverse initiatives of our members showcase the power of collective action.

Behind every statistic is a story, and this year, we've been privileged to share numerous success stories from research, advocacy and collaborations. Your unwavering commitment has translated into tangible improvements in the lives of

young children and their families, leaving a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

The insightful webinars, workshops, and training sessions conducted throughout the year have not only enriched our community but have empowered each member, enhancing our collective ability to contribute effectively to the cause of early childhood development.

As we reflect on the milestones achieved, it is equally important to look ahead with optimism. The challenges we face in the realm of early childhood development may be significant, but so is our collective resolve. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future for the youngest members of our society.

I invite you to explore the pages of this newsletter, which encapsulates the spirit of our shared journey. Your feedback is not only welcomed but crucial as we strive for continuous improvement.

Thank you for being integral to the ECD Network for Kenya. As we bid farewell to this year, let us carry the lessons learned, the bonds strengthened, and the impact created into the promising new chapters that await us in the coming year. Happy reading!



## **ECD SYSTEM MEASUREMENT STUDY COUNTY DISSEMINATION**

The ECD Network for Kenya in partnership with Mathematica has been implementing the early childhood development (ECD) systems-related monitoring and evaluation (M&E) project in Kenya since 2022. The aim was to assess progress of systems-level components of the Hilton Foundation's 2020-2025 strategy (S25). The baseline, which is the project's Phase 2 (January through October 2023) entailed implementation of the measurement framework developed in phase one through baseline data collection, analysis, and interpretation of primary qualitative and secondary quantitative data. The ECD Network for Kenya conducted a dissemination of findings in Siaya County on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Distinction Garden, Kajiado County on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at Enchula Resort, Nairobi County on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 at Royal Tulip Canaan Hotel, and Mombasa County on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at Voyager Beach Resort.



## **Past Events**

### **5th National ECD Stakeholders conference**

The ECD National Stakeholders Conference, held from July 17th to 19th, 2023, at Stegra Hotel in Turkana County, was organized by the ECD Network for Kenya in collaboration with various partners, including government bodies and NGOs. With a total of 1193 participants, the conference focused on exploring challenges and opportunities in translating policy and evidence into action in the field of Early Childhood Development (ECD). The host Governor H.E. Hon Jeremiah Lomorukai



extended a warm welcome to the chief guest, H.E. Hon Dr. Eric Mutai, Chair of the Education Committee COG and Governor of Kericho County, during the conference. Governor Lomorukai highlighted Turkana County's commitment to building new model ECD centers and renovating existing ones, ensuring children have access to quality Nurturing care despite recurring drought challenges. The chief guest Dr. Mutai praised the county's feeding programs, emphasizing the importance of providing meals to enhance academic performance. Despite challenges, he mentioned a conditional grant for ECDE to address resource

shortages and acknowledged the need for more teachers and facilities to improve access. Dignitaries present included Deputy Governor Dr. John Erus, County First Ladies, and National Coordinator of ECD Network for Kenya, Dr. Teresa Mwoma.



The outcomes of the conference included the development of a [conference communique](#), showcasing best practices, and fostering coordination among stakeholders. Looking ahead, the ECD Network plans to implement a call to action matrix and utilize webinars to sustain the conference's momentum and encourage ongoing collaboration among partners, aligning their programs with the outlined objectives. The conference significantly contributed to strengthening coordination in the ECD sector and

promoting knowledge exchange for effective program implementation. To get more of the [conference proceedings](#) and the [5<sup>th</sup> National ECD Stakeholders Conference Report](#)





### **Media Tours**

The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) organized impactful media tours as part of the pre-conference activities for the 5th National ECD Stakeholders Conference. The tours, reached over three million viewers and listeners, included Mutongoi TV, KUTV, KBC TV, and KTN TV. Dr. Teresa Mwoma, during her segments, emphasized the network's role in uniting key stakeholders and highlighted the importance of early childhood development. Addressing various topics such as "Inside a Child's Brain" and "Early Childhood Development: Period from Conception to 8 Years Most Critical," Dr. Mwoma underscored the significance of the early years in shaping a child's holistic development. These insightful media engagements aimed to create awareness and encourage participation in the conference, where policy and evidence will be translated into actionable strategies for the benefit of Kenya's children. (Theme: From policy & Evidence to Action)



### **Women in Childcare Forum**

The ECD Network for Kenya had the honor of participating in a Women in Childcare Forum with the theme "Amplifying the Needs of Women Childcare Workforce" at ABSA Sports Club on March 6th and 7th, 2023. Childcare stands as a crucial pillar of the Family-Friendly Policies initiative, advocating for government and business support to families in ensuring nurturing care for young children. In the forum, ECD Network addressed the topic of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and its correlation with childcare. The presentation underscored the significance of strengthening the foundational aspects of children, emphasizing its pivotal role in enabling optimal development to their full potential. Additionally, the forum highlighted the imperative for multisectoral collaboration among all stakeholders in the ECD sector. The key takeaway was the recognition that everyone holds a stake in contributing to the provision of successful and high-quality childcare.



### **ECD Partners Collective Impact Workshop**

"We envision our country where all children thrive and survive, this is our vision for Kenya" ECD Network for Kenya joined partners at the Hilton Grantee partner convening to share learnings and discuss how best we can achieve collective impact. Partners reflected on organizational and sectoral factors that they thought contributed towards lack of collaboration. Partners were then taken through the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) to get awareness on the state of ECD outcomes and reflect on the contribution of their interventions to these outcomes.



### **Southern Africa Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development**

ECD Network for Kenya represented by the programmes coordinator joins fellow national networks in the southern Africa regional conference on Early Childhood Development to echo advocacy on partnership for better ECED outcomes in southern Africa and all the children of Africa. The conference brought together a diverse group of ECD actors including policy makers, researchers, CSOs, Academia, Funders, ECD practitioners, Government Ministries, Agencies and ECD sector partners. The objectives of the conference were; to showcase innovative





programs in the sub-region; to harness collective experiences to enrich the advocacy agenda and to strengthen policy and programme implementation; to network, build partnerships and establish pathways for collaborations; and to disseminate ECD knowledge generated from sub-regional research efforts.

### **ECD systems measurement study: ECD Network Advisory Board's Convening**

The stakeholders convening had fruitful engagement where the researchers conducted extensive sensitization on the ECD system measurements study. The counties represented included; Mombasa county, Nairobi county, Siaya county and Kajiado county. These were derived from departments of Health, Education, Finance, Agriculture, Public Health, Sector Monitoring and Evaluation, Nutrition, Environment monitoring and compliance and asset management. From the National government, the Ministry of Health, Education and Council of Governors were in attendance. The organizations represented included; ADs Nyanza, Uthabiti Africa, Smart Start Siaya, Aga Khan University, Association of Sisterhood Kenya (AOSK), PATH, EIDU, ChildFund, APHRC and Kenyatta University amongst others. The researchers also held a debrief after the convening, which enabled reflection of the recommendations from the workshop.

### **ECD systems measurement study: Research Assistants' workshop**



In collaboration with Mathematica, the ECD Network for Kenya conducted a research assistant workshop with the central aim of equipping them with comprehensive information regarding the Mathematica project. This entailed elucidating the project's goals, outlining the milestones already accomplished, and defining the roles and responsibilities expected from them. The workshop provided a valuable platform for research assistants to acquire insights and forge connections with their peers, all in the pursuit of enhancing their

collective contribution to the success of the Mathematica project.

### **Mathematica Visit to the office**

Organizations forge and enhance partnerships through mutual support, fostering collaboration by sharing ongoing insights and knowledge. The ECDNEK secretariat was honored to host Ms. Laura Myer from MATHEMATICA during her visit to Kenya. She paid a courtesy visit to the office and emphasized the extensive reach achieved by the network



through its diverse partnership platforms.

### **Early Childhood Development workshop**

The ECD Network for Kenya received an invitation from Smart Start Siaya and KMET to participate in their ongoing ECD workshop, focusing on advancing the Nurturing Care agenda. Ms. Sally, representing the organization, emphasized the crucial need for multisectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders to amplify the efforts of both state and non-state actors. She expressed gratitude to the Siaya County government for their continuous support and recent collaboration with the network on an ECD ecosystems mapping project, aimed at fostering a shared understanding of the ECD landscape in Siaya County. During the workshop, Ms. Sally extended an invitation to Siaya County members to join the upcoming 5th National ECD Stakeholders Conference. The members were pleased to learn that a letter of invitation had already been shared with the county, indicating a positive response to the collaborative efforts in the realm of early childhood development.



### **University of South California (USC) visit to the ECDNeK Offices**

Dr. Italo Lopez Garsia, a co-principal investigator from the University of South California, made a cordial and insightful courtesy visit to the ECD Network of Kenya offices. The visit was marked by a warm exchange of ideas and a collaborative spirit, as Italo engaged in discussions with the ECD Network team. The meeting served as an excellent opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the two institutions, fostering a sense of shared commitment to advancing early childhood development initiatives. Both sides left the meeting with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for their ongoing collaborative research and projects, working together to make a positive impact in the field of early childhood development.



### **Msingi Bora Project: ECD Stakeholders sensitization workshop on achieving sustained impacts at scale with a mobile health (m-health) ECD intervention: A Kenyan randomized control trial**

The Msingi Bora Project, a pioneering parenting program initiated in 2017 and ongoing to date, focuses on improving child developmental outcomes and parenting behaviors in rural Kenya. Utilizing Community Health Workers (CHWs) for an eight-month intervention, the program demonstrated success in enhancing child development through both home-based and group-based interventions. Recognizing the scalability challenges of home visits, the project explores more scalable options. The ECD Stakeholders sensitization workshop, held on May 5, 2023, brought together key participants from organizations such as the National Council for Children's Services, Africa Early Childhood

Network, Kenyatta University, and ECD Network. The workshop aimed to foster understanding of the Msingi Bora project, gather support, and share insights on ECD initiatives. Dr. Mwoma and Mr. Oscar Kadenge provided context on the ECD Network for Kenya's role and collaborations. SWAP-Kenya, the project's implementing partner, presented insights into curriculum implementation, research questions, challenges, and an open discussion with participants. Noteworthy suggestions included ensuring legal compliance, community involvement in project design, and broader dissemination of research findings. The workshop concluded with valuable recommendations for the project's success and potential continental impact.

### **East Africa partners meeting for National Networks**

ECD Network for Kenya participated in an East Africa ECD national network knowledge exchange meeting convened by Africa Early Childhood Network in Nairobi. The ECD National Networks were able to discuss and generate a capacity assessment tool that was suitable for use across all EA Networks. The countries represented included: Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia



### **Media breakfast for Conference Communique press release**

On June 16th, 2023, the ECD Network for Kenya, with ChildFund's support, held a successful media engagement at Tamarind Tree Hotel. Attended by 21 journalists, the breakfast aimed to highlight the importance of early childhood development and promote the upcoming 5th National ECD Stakeholders Conference to be held in Turkana County. Dr. Teresa Mwoma, in her welcome, emphasized the media's crucial role. Prof. Amina Abubakar and Dr. Mwoma presented transformative insights, and the Network officially unveiled the conference's press release. Anticipating media collaboration, they plan tours, webinars, and active social media engagement to ensure the success of the conference at Turkana University College from July 17-19, 2023.

### **Validation of IECD policy**

The ECD Network for Kenya participated in the validation process of the IECD policy, underscoring the collective responsibility for the journey of early years. The event brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour & Social Protection, UN (WHO), and Civil Society Organizations (ECDNEK, CRS, KIDOGO, Lwala). Dr. Janette Karimi from the Ministry of Health





emphasized that health encompasses mental, social, and emotional well-being, not just the absence of diseases. The Acting CEO of NCCs, Mr. Sheikh Abdinoor, stressed the commitment to ensuring that the IECD policy is validated and successfully implemented to help children thrive. Director NCCs, Bishop Benard Njoroge Kariuki, highlighted that validation is just the beginning, emphasizing the importance of successful implementation, monitoring, and continuous coordination across sectors in Early Childhood. The NCCs CEO expressed a strong commitment, stating, "This baby should not die," affirming their dedication to the successful implementation of the IECD policy."

### **Harmonizing Nurturing Care National Advocacy Strategy with Children Act 2022**

Harmonizing Nurturing Care National Advocacy Strategy with Children Act 2022 took place from August 16th to 18th, 2023, at 67 Hotel in Machakos County. Organized by the Ministry of Health, Division of Newborn and Child Health, and funded by AfECN, the purpose was to review and align the National Advocacy Strategy with the Children Act, 2022. Participants, including government divisions and organizations such as ECD Network for Kenya, PATH, UNICEF, and others, contributed to finalizing the harmonization. The ECDNeK's role was to enhance coordination, and with 33 participants, the event promoted multi-sectoral representation and knowledge exchange. The outcomes included the finalization of the strategy's harmonization, paving the way for collaboration with the National Council for Children Services (NCCS) on the implementation matrix. Looking forward, ECDNeK plans to align with its mandate, report accordingly, and leverage opportunities arising from the finalized strategy and existing policies for Integrated ECD programs in the country. The event significantly strengthened coordination and synergy among stakeholders in the ECD sector.

### **Gender consultative meeting in the Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB)**

The Gender Consultative Meeting in the Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB), meeting held at Sunshine Hotel, Kericho County, on August 31st, 2023, aimed to address the triple threat of HIV, teenage pregnancy, and gender-based violence in the region and its impact on Nurturing Care implementation.



Organized by the LREB secretariat and funded by KMET, the event involved various partners, including government representatives, organizations like UNICEF, KMET, ECD Network for Kenya, and others. ECDNeK's role was to provide insights into the implementation of Nurturing Care in the LREB region. The meeting, with 50 participants, emphasized the need for gender-responsive budgets, child protection, and gender policies at the county level. Key outcomes included advocating for gender mainstreaming, behavior change programs, and community dialogues on child protection and gender issues. The way forward involves continued collaboration during the Day of the African Child and the quarterly partners' meetings convened by LREB. This event contributed to ECDNeK's grant objectives by strengthening coordination, showcasing achievements in ECD, and fostering engagement with policymakers. Opportunities for furthering grant objectives include participation in quarterly meetings and planned advocacy convening's in Kisumu and Siaya counties, engaging county governments and organizations implementing programs in those regions.

### **NCFED County Directors' Induction workshop and partners sharing on status of Nurturing Care implementation**

The NCFED County Directors' Induction Workshop and Partners Sharing on the Status of Nurturing Care Implementation, took place on September 14th, 2023, at Cold Spring Hotel in Homa Bay County.

Organized by LREB with support from PATH and KMET, the workshop aimed to provide an understanding of the science of ECD and the Nurturing Care framework, delineate sectoral roles in promoting NCfECD, and strengthen coordinated action for NCfECD in the LREB region. Although not the organizer, ECDNeK's role was crucial in emphasizing Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development to county directors, underlining the importance of investing in ECD and unpacking



nurturing care components. Approximately 40 participants attended, and key outcomes included sharing current work within the LREB region, outlining collaboration areas with stakeholders, and providing an overview of the Children's Act, 2022. The way forward involved planning a workshop for Members of County Assembly (MCAs) of the region to further induct them on NCFED and continue advocacy work. This event significantly contributed to ECDNeK's advocacy agenda, promoting the scaling of NCfECD in LREB and enhancing visibility for the Network's work in the region. Opportunities for furthering grant objectives include regional stakeholder convening's and leveraging the formed LREB chapters in Homa Bay County and its environs.

## **The Regional G20 Interfaith Meeting (IF20): "Partnership in Action: Towards One Earth, One Family, One Future"**

The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) participated in the Regional G20 Interfaith Meeting in Nairobi, co-organized by the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities and Arigatou International. The event, held on September 21st, 2023, brought together diverse



stakeholders, including faith leaders, government officials, and scholars, to address global challenges under the theme "Partnership in Action: Towards One Earth, One Family, One Future." Discussions focused on key areas such as climate change, freedom of religion, child dignity, conflict resolution, and refugee support. The regional perspective allowed nuanced discussions on interconnected issues, with participants acknowledging and addressing specific challenges faced by

the region. The collaboration between IAFSC and Arigatou International enriched the meeting by incorporating a local focus, ensuring relevance to regional needs. The outcomes emphasized the shared responsibility of all stakeholders in shaping a sustainable future, with faith leaders playing a crucial role as advocates for a more compassionate world.

## **Dialogue on centering pregnant and parenting adolescents in research, policies, and programs in Kenya**

ECDNeK participated in a dialogue focused on centering pregnant and parenting adolescents in research, policies, and programs in Kenya. Hosted by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) at Safari Park Hotel on September 26th, 2023, the event discussed a mixed-methods study conducted in partnership with Miss Koch Kenya and the Directorate of Children's Services, Nairobi County. The study aimed to understand the experiences of pregnant and parenting adolescent girls in the Korogocho informal settlement in Nairobi. With about 15% of girls in Kenya beginning childbearing before the age of 19, the study delved into the drivers of early pregnancies, the impact on health and socioeconomic well-being, experiences in health facilities, and barriers to school re-entry. The dissemination workshop aimed to share research insights, discuss best practices, and identify policy engagement and advocacy opportunities. The findings revealed that a majority of adolescent pregnancies were unintended, with factors such as poor contraceptive knowledge, family breakdown, and poverty contributing to early and unintended pregnancies. Recommendations included the development of comprehensive programs addressing





multiple determinants and ensuring access to accurate sexual and reproductive health information and services for adolescent parents. Additionally, stakeholders proposed establishing youth-friendly desks for reporting mistreatment during childbirth and providing psychosocial support for distressed pregnant and parenting adolescents.

### **Stakeholders meeting organized by Matters Childhood in Collaboration with AfECN**

The Stakeholders Forum, hosted by Matters Childhood in partnership with AfECN on October 5th at Double Tree by Hilton, marked a significant collaboration focused on advancing the play agenda in Early Childhood Development (ECD). Matters Childhood, dedicated to the '3Cs' - Child, Caregiver, and Community, spearheaded discussions alongside key stakeholders such as ECD Network for Kenya, Little Rock, Nyota Care, and more. Notably, the 'Cheza Clinics,' a mobile play initiative, took center stage, recognized for its innovation in enhancing child stimulation.



The session emphasized the vital roles of policymakers, curriculum developers, and church organizations in championing play. ECD Network for Kenya shared initiatives, including strengthening caregiving with the University of South California and SWAP Kenya, promoting models like Kidogo Early Years, and hosting webinars to disseminate best practices. The collaborative efforts were further cemented during group discussions, outlining potential areas for collaboration. The meeting concluded with an invitation to visit Little Rock on November 15, 2023, encapsulating the spirit of collaboration and commitment to advancing early childhood play initiatives.

## **UPCOMING WEBINARS**

### **ECD Network for Kenya Dissemination Series 2023-2024**

**Governance on ECD**

When: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Where: [Register Here](#)

**Financing on ECD**

When: April 2024

Where: [Register Here](#)

**Policy on ECD**

When: June 2024

Where: [Register Here](#)

**Multi-sectoral dissemination on ECD**

When: August 2024

Where: [Register Here](#)

**Methodology**

When: October 2024

Where: [Register Here](#)

Sign up for webinar updates

Join the movement! Follow us on social media and join the conversation on [ECD Dissemination series](#).



**ECDNeK's goal is to contribute to inclusive and equitable quality Early Childhood Development opportunities for children 0-8years in Kenya**

**The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)**

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