



# The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya Newsletter 1st Issue 2024



## To Our Esteemed Readers,

I am delighted to share with you the latest insights and initiatives from the ECD Network for Kenya in this 1<sup>st</sup> edition of our newsletter. As we continue to navigate the dynamic landscape of early childhood development, we remain committed to fostering positive change and promoting the well-being of children and families across our communities. This newsletter highlights our recent engagements, partnerships, and contributions towards creating a brighter

future for the next generation. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our shared mission.

In this newsletter, you will find updates on the various activities ECD Network for Kenya has engaged in the recent past. First, the newsletter highlights on the introductory meeting between the ECD Network members and the Director Programmes and Committees Council of Governors, our series of webinars as well as our participation in key events and conferences, such as the East African Regional Early Childhood Conference and the #ECDE stakeholders' consultative meeting on Home Based Childcare in Kisumu County. These engagements have provided valuable opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders, share best practices, and advocate for policies that enhance the quality of early childhood care and education.

Additionally, we are excited to showcase the impact of our collaborative #Msingi Bora initiative, which focuses on healthy parenting practices. Through this initiative, we aim to empower parents with knowledge and skills to be responsive to their children's developmental needs using five key messages. Our commitment to promoting positive parenting skills and providing essential support to families remains at the forefront of our efforts. Thank you for joining us on this journey towards a brighter future for every child.

Warm regards,

**Dr. Teresa Mwoma,**

**National Coordinator ECDNeK**

# NEWS

## **Introductory meeting between the ECD Network for Kenya Members and the Director of Committees and Programs at the Council of Governors**

The Director of Committees and Programs at the Council of Governors (COG) had the opportunity to attend the East Africa Regional Conference in Tanzania. During his visit, he visited the ECDNeK's exhibition booth, where he gained deeper insights into what the ECD Network for Kenya does and sparked discussions aimed at revitalizing their collaboration and partnership efforts. As a result, the Director extended a cordial invitation to ECDNeK and its organizational members, marking a significant stride towards fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. The subsequent meeting, held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at COG's Delta House offices in Westlands, served as a pivotal platform for ECDNeK's members



Figure 1: ECDNeK connects with COG

to showcase their programs, implementation areas, and to explore potential collaboration avenues with COG. Fruitful deliberations ensued, shedding light on various areas where collaboration between COG and ECDNeK could be bolstered, particularly in addressing critical concerns within the ECD sector.

Notably, there was consensus to enhance the capacity of County Governments to ensure that they effectively fulfill their roles as early childhood development duty bearers. A shared commitment to advocating for ECD across all platforms was reaffirmed, with proposals such as compiling a Compendium on Early Childhood Development initiatives from different counties to disseminate ECD best practices. Participants emphasized the significance of collective efforts in championing ECD matters, with a vision for ECDNeK serving as a robust lobbying platform for ECD initiatives and policies. Furthermore, the theme of capacity building emerged prominently, prompting a call to augment the COG secretariat's understanding of ECD. Such enhancement would facilitate knowledge dissemination across all 47 counties, ensuring





Figure 2: ECDNeK connecting with COG

comprehensive efforts in addressing children's issues. Participants underscored the necessity of adopting a holistic approach to safeguarding children's needs, thereby ensuring no child is overlooked in the pursuit of ECD goals.

## The ECD Network for Kenya Webinar Series:

The ECD Network for Kenya initiated Webinar Series 2024-2025 to highlight the milestones achieved within the ECD sector and strengthen collaboration and coordination while uniting voices, sharing knowledge among ECD actors and catalyzing action to ensure every child receives the best possible start in life. The first webinar was held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 focusing on Governance in early childhood development in Kenya. **Join us for the upcoming webinar on Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration in Early Childhood Development scheduled for 14th May 2024, Time: GMT+3:00 Nairobi. Register in advance for this webinar:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XyQEEzt9Ta2i2Z4c-CiyUA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XyQEEzt9Ta2i2Z4c-CiyUA)



**QUARTERLY WEBINAR SERIES**

ECD Network for Kenya has planned for Webinar Series 2024 - 2025 to highlight the strides achieved within the ECD sector and strengthen collaboration and coordination while uniting voices, sharing knowledge among ECD actors and catalyzing action to ensure every child receives the best possible start in life.

We have aligned key speakers to contribute on these series

Save the dates:

**Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration in Early Childhood Development - 14th May 2024 3PM (GMT+3:00) Nairobi**

Policy in ECD in Kenya - August

Financing in ECD in Kenya - November

Previous webinar:  
Governance in ECD in Kenya - 13th Feb 2024 - [click here for more info](#)

*Click here to register*  
<https://ecdnetworkforkenya.org/>

Look out for more info: <https://ecdnetworkforkenya.org/>

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## **The East Africa Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development**

ECDNeK actively participated in the vibrant four-day East African Regional Early Childhood Conference (EARC) in Dar Es Salaam Tanzania from 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024, engaging in panel presentations, roundtable discussions, and showcasing programs and interventions from both ECDNeK and member organizations at the exhibition booth. We also took part in various side events including National Advocacy Partners (NAPs) and the Mathematica side event, reinforcing our commitment to advancing early childhood development in collaboration with researchers, policymakers, and international development organizations. The conference highlighted shared dedication towards enhancing early childhood development across the region.



Figure 3: National Coordinators from National Networks

Following the EARC Conference, ECDNeK will take the lead in coordinating partners to advocate for increased funding and bridge the gap between national and county-level plans for early childhood development (ECD). This advocacy effort will focus on monitoring ECD budget allocations continuously and providing capacity-building opportunities for policymakers and duty-bearers at both national and county levels. Ensuring multisectoral collaboration is vital, with each department allocating funds specifically for ECD programs. “There is need for synergy of all initiatives focusing on children issues in Kenya.”

## **The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Meets Delegates from Kenya During the EAR Conference**

The CS Labour and Social Protection met the ECD stakeholders’ during the EAR Conference where she reiterated that her office was keen to work with all stakeholders to enhance quality service provision in ECD. This collaborative platform not only facilitated discussions among stakeholders but also provided insights into the active involvement of the Council of Governors, underscoring the significance of multi-sectoral collaboration in advancing ECD initiatives in Kenya.



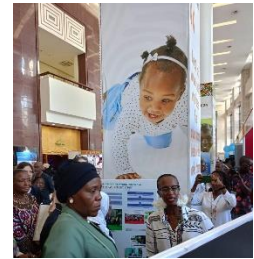
Figure 4: left: CS Labour & Social Protection, middle: ECDNeK Board Chair, left: Dr. Makeba WHO

## **The ECD Network for Kenya Show cases their work during the EAR Conference**



*Figure 6: The union of Tz press interviewing Dr. Mwoma*

During the EARC Conference, ECDNeK was granted a booth to showcase the strides it was making in regard to Early Childhood Development where 103 participants visited the booth. Accompanied by the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary Labour and Social Protection, the Tanzanian Minister of Community Development, Gender, Women & Special Groups Dr. Dorothy Gwajima had the opportunity to visit the booth where she reiterated that “there is need for the national networks to conduct cross



*Figure 5: Minister Tz visiting the ECDNeK Booth*

learnings amongst each other and cascade the work being done in their countries." The union of Tanzania press clubs interviewed Dr. Mwoma on the state of ECD in Kenya and particularly child protection acts in Kenya. She shared more about the network and the work being done.

## **Prisons Reforms Working Group National Symposium**



*Figure 7: Prison reforms group photo*

ECDNeK recently participated in the Prisons Reforms Working Group Symposium, themed “Harnessing Collaborations towards the Realization of Correctional Services,” held on April 17th, 2024, at Pride Inn Azure. The symposium brought together a diverse array of stakeholders with the objectives aimed to foster strategic partnerships to advance the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) reform agenda in a coordinated, efficient,

and consultative manner, building the visibility and strategic positioning of the Prisons Reforms Working Group (PRWG) and identifying areas of mutual interest to strengthen the reform agenda. The event catalyzed collaboration, innovation, and collective action toward realizing meaningful reforms in correctional services. Part of the discussions addressed the issue of children accompanying their mothers in prisons, with an emphasis on providing quality care for children below four years old. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of research to understand the needs of these children and develop robust exit strategies for their transition back into the community. By addressing these concerns and implementing appropriate measures, stakeholders aimed to safeguard the rights and well-being of children accompanying incarcerated mothers, promoting their healthy development and successful

integration into society. The symposium underscored the commitment and dedication demonstrated by all stakeholders, highlighting the potential for transformative change and improved outcomes for incarcerated individuals, their families, and society as a whole.

**Abstract Review – East Africa Regional Childhood Conference**

The ECD Network for Kenya participated and offered expertise in the reviewing of abstracts submitted for the East Africa Regional Childhood conference, themed ***“Investing in Early Childhood: Building Human Capital Along the Life Course”***. The review happened in Nairobi Kenya from 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Double Tree Hilton. AfECN convened a team of experts drawn from different countries in Eastern Africa. In attendance during the abstract review were scholars/researchers/academia from Kenya, Botswana, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Uganda.



Figure 8: scholars/researchers/academia from Kenya, Botswana, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

**MSINGI BORA PARENTING RCT STUDY**



Figure 9: Programs coordinator training CHP

In an endeavor to strengthen responsive caregiving component of the nurturing care, University of Southern California Dornsife (Center for Economic and Social Research) in partnerships with ECD Network for Kenya and Safe Waters and AIDS Project are implementing a *Msingi Bora* project that is an ECD program delivered by Community Health Practitioners through community group meetings for mothers, fathers, caregivers and the young

children. This project sensitizes parents on five essential messages for parenting that aim to educate parents on the importance of providing diverse diets for their children, promoting proper handwashing techniques, stimulating children with a variety of play items, engaging in communication by actively listening, watching, and talking with their children, and demonstrating love and respect through positive parenting skills. In a recent training, they worked with community health practitioners in Kisumu West, to showcase traditional games that children use to engage in playful learning. The event was a precursor to similar engagements planned for Vihiga and Hamisi, underscoring the commitment to holistic child development in diverse communities.



### **Malezi Mema Elimu Bora Project Stakeholders Inception Meeting**

ECDNeK participated in the Malezi Mema Elimu Bora Project stakeholder's inception meeting at the Desmond Tutu Hotel and Conference Center, organized by Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS SP). The project's focus was to foster robust parental involvement and enhance child participation for improved safety and learning outcomes. Phase 1 prioritized empowering parents, teachers, and stakeholders to boost school attendance, learning motivation, positive behavior, social skills, and academic achievement among learners. Through a comprehensive whole-school approach that entailed skillful parent training, teacher development, and life skills. Not only has parental engagement flourished, but the educational landscape has also undergone a transformative shift, highlighting the pivotal role of collaborative and supportive education methods. ICS SP is now gearing up to expand the MAMEB project to phase 2, targeting 3000 learners across 5 schools. The project is scheduled to run from January 2024 to September 2026.



### **Nurturing Care Technical Working group**

The ECD Network for Kenya, a member of the Nurturing Care Technical Working Group hosted by the Ministry of Health, participated in a workshop alongside stakeholders from diverse organizations to discuss crucial aspects of early childhood development (ECD). Dr. Janette Karimi, Head of Division for Newborn and Child Health at the Ministry of Health, underscored the significance of multisectoral collaboration in advancing Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development (NCfECD). She highlighted the necessity of engaging all sectors in a multifaceted approach to ECD, acknowledging the efforts of stakeholders such as NCCs, MoH, and MoE-ECD in finalizing the Integrated ECD policy.



The discussion underscored the holistic nature of early childhood development (ECD), emphasizing that it begins even before conception and necessitates comprehensive interventions. The Ministry of Health (MoH) reaffirmed its commitment to implementing ECD interventions across all counties. Ms. Emis Njeru, Director of ECD at the Ministry of Education, emphasized the impact of nutrition deficiencies on children's development and academic performance. She advocated for the development of guidelines to ensure the provision of nutritious meals, promoting consistency nationwide.



The event attracted participation from a range of organizations including ChildFund, Aga Khan University, UNICEF, Lwala Community Alliance, PATH, The Aga Khan Foundation, Nairobi County, National Council for Children Services, Division of Neonatal and Child Health, and Ministry of Education, showcasing a collaborative effort towards realizing the goals of ECD in 2024, designated as the year of ECD. Additionally, the meeting successfully

documented the process of developing the national nurturing care advocacy strategy.

### **ECD Network for Kenya participates in the Global Schools forum**



To understand various child-level outcomes and their measurement methodologies, GSF enlisted the participation of ECDNeK's Programs Coordinator, Ms. Sally Moraa, for a panel presentation during their organized convening. Sally presented on the utilization of Bayley's assessment tool to gauge the cognitive development of children. Through this presentation, attendees gained insights into the significance of employing such tools to effectively measure and monitor the cognitive growth of children, ensuring that children are developmentally on track.

### **ECD Network for Kenya participates in Review of IECD Policy Workshop**

The Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Finalization Workshop held from March 4th to 8th, 2024, at Ole Ken Hotel in Nakuru County was a collaborative effort led by the National Council for Children Services (NCCS) and the Ministry of Health, with support from UNICEF, Ministry of Education, Directorate of Children Services, and Civil Society Organizations. ECDNeK's expertise in early childhood development enriched discussions, leading to the refinement of critical policy sections. This gathering facilitated the development of a structured timeline, activities, and financial matrix for the policy. Moving forward, the focus is on finalizing the policy, incorporating stakeholder feedback, aligning with national priorities, and preparing for official endorsement. ECDNeK plans to leverage its platforms for further advocacy and collaboration to promote early childhood development in Kenya.



### **ECD Network for Kenya participates in the Consultative meeting on the Kisumu County Early Childhood Framework**

ECDNeK joined other stakeholders in the #ECDE consultative meeting focused on Home Based Childcare (HBCC) in Kisumu County. HBCC focuses on non-parental child care provided within either the child's home or the caregiver's home, contrasting with center-based care. In Kenya, approximately 2.8 million children benefit from HBCC, driven by its affordability, cultural alignment, and accessibility for parents.



## **GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

Join our vibrant community as an individual or organizational member and gain access to up-to-date trends on early childhood development. As a member, you'll enjoy networking opportunities like the upcoming 6th National ECD Stakeholders Conference, workshops, and more. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on shaping the future of ECD. Don't miss out – [join us today!](#)

*Join us in spreading the word! Share this newsletter with your contacts and network. We look forward to connecting with you!*

***Editorial Team:***

*Chief Editor – Dr. Teresa Mwoma*

*Racheal Makena – Partnerships & Programs manager*

*Sally Moraa – Programs Coordinator*

*Judith Mueni – Communication Officer*

*King Maina – Finance Officer*

*Nelias Gitahi – Programs Officer*

*Fred Okeyo – Programs Intern*

*Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya*

*Hosted by Kenyatta University*

*Email: [info@ecdnetworkforkenya.org](mailto:info@ecdnetworkforkenya.org)*

*Tel: +254706186131*

*Website: <https://ecdnetworkforkenya.org/>*

*Social media: <https://linktr.ee/ECDNeK>*