



National Action Plan (NAP) 2019 – 2020

Early Childhood Care and Education

Evaluation Report

March 2021



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DA	District Administration
DDST	Denver Development Screening Test
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
IECD	Institute of Early Childhood Development
IEM	Inborn Errors of Metabolism
IEP	Individualised Education Programme
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MLUH	Ministry of Land Use and Habitat
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAP	National Action Plan 2019-2020
NCCOM	National Coordinating Committee
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NSB	National Bureau of Statistics
PCHR	Personal Child Health Record
PO	Project Officer
PPBB	Programme Performance-Based Budgeting
RIF	Risk Indicator Framework
SA	Social Affairs Department
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Result
SELF	Seychelles Early Childhood Learning Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SF-ECCE	Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Education
SITE	Seychelles Institute Teacher Education
SOP	Standard Operational Manual
SQA	Seychelles Qualification Authority
TMR	Tracking Monitoring Reporting
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Evaluation Report

National Action Plan 2019-2020 Early Childhood Care and Education (NAP)

INTRODUCTION

There has been a global movement to position Early Childhood Care and Education at the top of national education agenda. The World Education Conference (1915) following the Moscow declaration in 2010 (Harnessing the Wealth of Nations) confirmed the urgent need to monitor, measure, and evaluate programmatic intervention in ECCE. This is reflected in SDG 4.2 to promote early learning readiness in pre-primary education. Seychelles have made tremendous strides in the development of a sustainable early childhood care and education system. It has been awarded the status of Category II Centre by UNESCO. Many of its achievements have been showcased in the First and Second Biennial Conference and the First International Conference on ECCE in which the evaluation of the three previous national action plans has been reported.

Consistent with international principles national action planning derived from the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2013) (SF-ECCE) has become one of the main strategies to accelerate the development of ECCE in Seychelles. It is a two-year plan, which dictates its urgency; it is spearheaded by a High Level ECCE Committee which denotes its national importance; it has been developed by the five Sectors, Health, Education, Social, Community, and the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), as a sector: this demands collaborative efforts. It is coordinated by IECD which indicates integrative and multi-disciplinary intentions. In the later development of the NAP, a project-based approach has been adopted that centres on meeting specific ECCE needs and anticipating innovating demands. Its imminent time-bound evaluation demonstrates implementation commitment and national accountability.

The first plan, the National Action Plan 2013-2014 ECCE, was an ambitious plan which aimed at long-term ECCE vision. Policy review, quality access, increased financial resourcing, expanded training opportunities, early detection, improved service delivery, building child-friendly communities, were the major thrusts of the plan. To some extent many issues were addressed in the plan, such as, special needs provision, risk assessment, the production of the Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF) and the ECCE Directory, parenting programme, standard day care design, and childminding services. However, deficiencies in the design of the plan limited the full trajectory of projects and programmes, although collaborative partnership had been built and ECCE sectors had been mobilised. Thirteen out of the 22 expected outcomes were achieved.

The second plan, National Action Plan 2015-2016 ECCE, sought to overcome some of those limitations by adopting a project-based approach. It was focused on the improvement of programmes and services with direct child development impact, and on the creation of an

enabling environment for quality ECCE through policy research activities. In a more compact form the action plan addressed issues such as early learning, early detection through profiling, increasing the functionality of children with special needs through the provision of special aids, child protection suitability check, quality access to community facilities and programmes, assessing parent needs, exploring child development outcome data, developing ECCE indicators for reporting and decision making, and establishing quality standards for childminding services.

Of the 22 “Expected Outcomes” 15 were considered as having met been. Early learning programmes and development profiles had been implemented, special needs intervention had been initiated, procedural requirements for suitability check of childminders was drafted, community and parental involvement had widened through day care provisions and community-based support of childminders, and policy dialogue had been generated by adopting the Risk Indicator Framework (RIF) and reviewing the administration and use of the Denver Development Screening Test (DDST). Moderate progress had been made towards the achievement of 4 “Expected Outcomes”: information sharing processes for the transition of children from day care to crèche were being explored, ground work had been completed to adopt the RIF, play activities for children enrolled in childminding establishment had commenced in one community centre, and childminding standards had been set.

However, there had been substantial limitation in the achievement of the other three “Expected Outcomes” and inhibitory factors had been discussed, notably, time limitation which had retarded the development of indicators to establish a baseline for the monitoring of the parental programme that interfered with the evaluative aspect of the project, and international input to kick start the data management project.

The third plan, National Action Plan 2017-2018 ECCE, followed a similar design with specific emphasis on service delivery and policy information addressing issues such as early learning, early detection, increasing the functionality of children with special needs through the provision of special aids, child protection suitability check, quality access to community facilities and programmes, developing ECCE indicators for reporting and decision making, and monitoring quality standards. Twenty-three out of the 39 “Expected Outcomes” have been met.

National Priorities

The fourth plan, National Action Plan 2019-2020 ECCE (NAP) forms part of the country’s priorities to sustain the continuing development of the early childhood care and education system. There is added emphasis on monitoring progress towards the holistic goal of ECCE and harnessing the predictive potential of data to implement appropriate intervention strategies. Four main Priority Areas derived from The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2011) have been pursued and 18 projects feature in the NAP, for implementation by the five sectors.

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Strengthening the policy environment through data utilisation – This is to assist in evidence-based decision. Data is collected or accessed to facilitate policy analysis and decision-making for programmatic intervention. A **Data Management Study** for the Education Sector, the **gathering of baseline data for policy development in centre-based childminding facilities**, **monitoring advocacy strategies**, and initiating a **survey of teen-age mothers to identify service needs** are the four policy-related projects.

Improving accountability and service delivery – Monitoring, reviewing and establishing quality standards is given due attention. Three projects, **post-natal maternal health**, **oral health**, and the **designing of child-friendly interviewing facilities** are directly linked to the improvement of service delivery.

Parental and community involvement - Both the identification of risks in the community, and the improvement of parental practices and community facilities have been included. The focus is on extending quality access through the **construction of day care centres**, provisions of community facilities by **improving the quality of existing playgrounds**, and renewed interest in **parenting education**.

Early stimulation – Monitoring and assessing early learning are pertinently addressed. **Tracking the learning progress** in early childhood and the **assessment of early learning readiness** of children in centre-based childminding services are the two contributory projects in the plan.

Early detection for intervention – Extending institutional screening and intervention forms part of the plan. Two projects to extend **early detection and intervention** capabilities, to **screen newborn for neonatal metabolic disorders**, and to set up **screening and recording devices for the safety and social protection of children in care institution** have been programmed in the plan.

Training and professional development – The focus is on developing training programmes and establishing qualification status for staff working with children. An **early learning training facility** which can be accessed by early childhood personnel has been set up and the **training programme for childminders** has been developed and accredited.

Eighteen projects features in the NAP for implementation by the five sectors to address those key ECCE priority areas.

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION

This evaluation intends to give some insight into the operation and performance of the of the National Action Plan for Early Childhood Care and Education (2019-2020), henceforth designated as the NAP towards the end of the two-year cycle. It also seeks to respond to the need to gain further knowledge about the status of the ECCE system in Seychelles and contribute to policy dialogue for further development. The main purpose is to provide an independent in-depth assessment of project results and outcome against planned results. The evaluation includes aspects of relevance, effectiveness, and efficacy of the NAP and provides specific recommendations for future initiatives.

Aim and Objectives

This evaluation will align the NAP with the country's aspirations for ECCE and relate sector projects to the continuing development of ECCE provisions in Seychelles. More specifically, it is intended to:

- assess achievement in relations to strategies and activities in each sector
- establish the level of implementation and relate achievements to expected outcome
- determine the impact of the NAP on ECCE within and across sectors

Key evaluation research questions have been posed:

1. To what extent is the NAP aligned to national development needs and priorities?
2. To what extent are project outcome achieved and how has the delivery of project output led to outcome-level achievement?
3. To what extent have resource inputs (funds, human capacity, time, outside expertise, management functions) affected project results?
4. What has been the impact of the NAP on the ECCE system (national, institutional, participants, technical team members, partners) in Seychelles?

The information gathered and the discussion which ensued can be used to generate policy dialogue for the sustainable development of the ECCE system and identify areas for action to inform decisions in anticipation of the next plan.

Evaluation Framework

A generic evaluation framework will be utilized (Figure 1) which will combine the result-based approach exemplified in the Toladata article (2019) with the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines updated in 2019 that would capture the following sequences: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

Outcome- The stated expected outcomes will be appraised for the level of achievement of project goal.

Output – This will be assessed through the achievement of appropriate project milestone.

Activities - The strategies developed through the project activities will be examined for their relevance and effectiveness as part of resource management.

Impact – The impact will be related to project outcome but also applied to the whole of the plan and consider some of the effects of institutional, social and leadership factors, and their possible repercussions on the ECCE system in general. This will also include the socio-political environment.

Inputs – Gauging the level of physical, financial and human resource provisions will form part of the discussion to explain some of the contextual effects on achievements.

Methodology

A range of methods will be utilized to assess results and provide explanation, and situate the evaluation in the national context. Within the NAP a detailed monitoring structure has been established. Moreover quantitative methods inherent in the implementation strategies of individual projects will form an integral part of the process. These will be combined with more descriptive data on the views and opinions from informants' perspective.

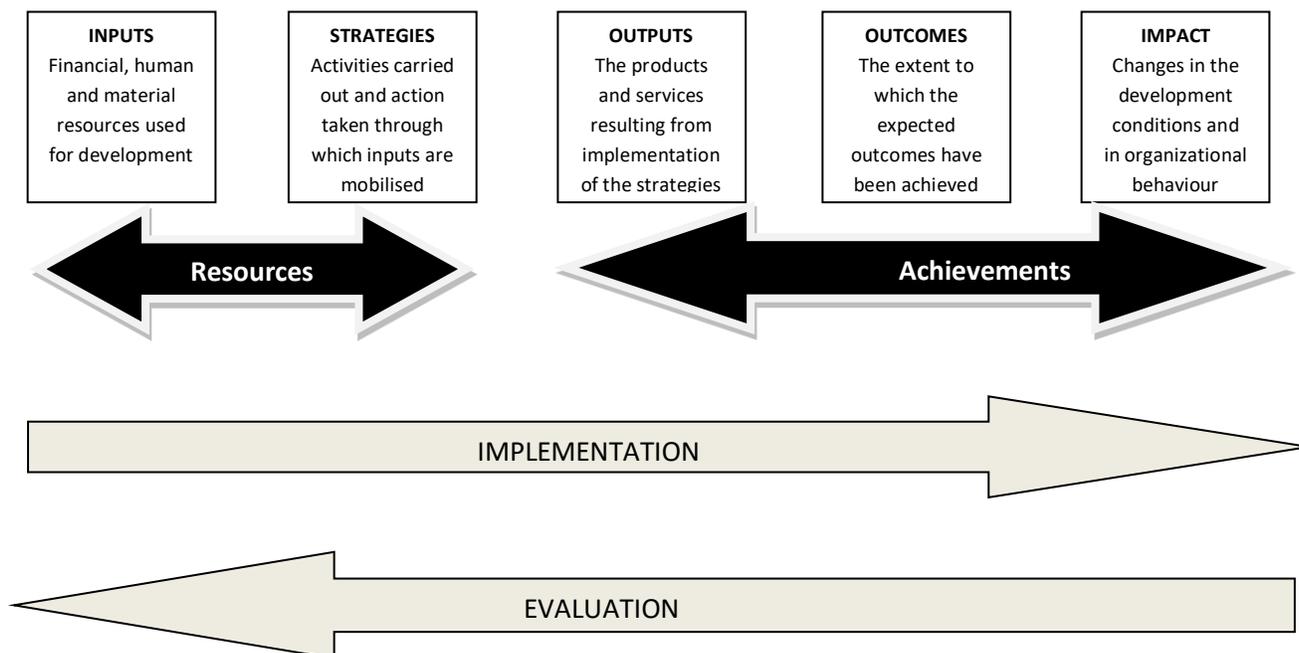


Figure 1: Evaluation Framework (Adapted from United Nations Development Programme)

Data Source

Taylor-Powell and Steele (1996) outlined three categories of data sources: existing information, information from people, and information from observation or records. Their exhaustive overview provides an array of data types that can be collected from those sources. However, caution must be exerted on the selection of information that would be pertinent to the evaluation goal. In consideration of the institutional and national implications of the evaluation this classification will facilitate the selection of types of data within those sources that would be pertinent for the special feature of the NAP. The NAP is project-based; it is implemented by a team in specific sectors; it has national and institutional implications. Therefore, the data must be judiciously selected for those loosely adapted sources.

Records or observational type data - Project documents and programme information will be collected. Moreover, through the monitoring structure of the NAP records of surveillance visits, records of progress, and the self-evaluation record of each implementing sector will be available. These *records or observational-type* data will form the basis for evaluative judgments.

People - NAP has been implemented through the Technical Team in the five ECCE Sectors as indicated above and data will be collected from them as direct participants. Also leaders at

coordinating, managing, and policy level will be included for their supervisory and directing role in the implementation of the NAP. Information from these groups of *people* will provide a rich enabling environmental context.

Existing information - Documentation associated with the NAP, such as the previous plans and evaluation reports, the ECCE framework, legal instruments, guidelines, will be catalogued to embellish the national context of the plan. In addition, historical documents tracing the development of ECCE in Seychelles including proceedings of conferences in ECCE hosted by Seychelles will be gathered for background information. These *existing* documents will provide a backdrop and possible reference points for the evaluation.

Data collection

The evaluation will involve the collection of mostly qualitative data although quantitative information will also be selected. The qualitative data should help to provide a substantial set of evidence to assess outcomes of the NAP, judge the effectiveness of strategies, determine the efficiency in resource management, and rate the quality of output. Numerical information will be used to support interpretation from the more descriptive data.

Qualitative data will be collected from relevant documents, questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. The compilation of all project documents will be undertaken and this will include project reports, project plans, progress reports, monitoring reports, specific programmes. For members of sector technical team who participated in project implementation, a questionnaire will be used to solicit their experiences in the implementation of the projects to substantiate outcome achievements. Moreover, questionnaire data will be collected to provide proxy measures of impact which may be related to possible institutional, professional, management and technical changes. These will be embellished with consultative data from leaders and managers.

Quantitative information will be selected within sector projects to further explain results. As part of project implementation strategies in the NAP, data has been collected from tests, mini-surveys, observational checklists. These will be used to sharpen result outcome and trace project trajectory.

Data capture and analysis

Data will be collected and captured by the consultant. There will be negotiation with stakeholders in the compilation of those existing documents. Also, information from interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. For a large part qualitative analysis of data will provide the main focus for analysis. However, quantitative information within projects will also be subjected to analysis where appropriate.

Document analysis

This will be the main analytic focus for two main types of documents: project documents and policy documents. As has been noted previous the NAP makes provisions for sectors to produce reports and documentation of evidence. Also through surveillance visits reports are produced by IECD to support implementation and assess progress. Moreover, all policy documents relating

to the ECCE system and institutional framework will be reviewed. These documents will be subjected to content analysis to study trends, patterns, themes and tendencies.

Project documents- Documentation from self-evaluation report for each project will be scrutinized and coded in relation to the level of achievement of the expected outcome by considering effects on the targeted population, progress against output achievement, relevance of to the needs of the target group, management of resources or the policy environment within which the project has been implemented.

Policy documents- National frameworks, legislative instruments, and policy documents will be analysed to establish the link between international declarations and national aspirations. The documents will be content analysed to provide evidence of relevance of priorities, effectiveness of policy implementation and for effectiveness and sustainability features of the ECCE system in Seychelles. This analysis will be directed to answering the question on whether the NAP meets the country's aspirations for the development of ECCE.

Quantitative analysis

The self-reported evaluation contains data tables and other numerical information which will be extracted and analysed to sharpen outcome results. Data tables will be reproduced and organized to link to themes and concerns emerging from the document review and qualitative interview that would measure level of desired outcome, level of output and that would assess spin-offs. This will be triangulated with project document analysis to confirm achievement of expected outcome and the status of performance indicators.

Qualitative analysis of interview data

Thematic analysis of the interview data will provide the basis for impact assessment. These data will be triangulated with information from projects documents to link with outcome achievement measures. It is anticipated that topics relating to technical strategies, communication pathways, working style, knowledge extension will emerge

Report

Background information and methodological consideration are outlined in the first two sections. From the analytic process the main findings follow. The report concludes with an overall evaluation judgment and a set of recommendations based on the findings that would identify priority issues and make suggestions for scaling-up or further action.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings are based on the key research questions in relation to the evaluation framework. Thus they determine context relevance, assess resource input efficiency, gauge project quality, define outcome-level achievements, describe the effectiveness of strategic activities, and illustrate impact effects.

Relevance

National action planning forms part of the national drive to place early childhood development at the forefront of the country’s priorities. NAP has been implemented as a strategy to accelerate the development of ECCE across sectors. In order to gauge how responsive NAP has been to national priorities two sets of data source was used: questionnaire responses from the ECCE Technical Team and consultative information from Senior Officials.

The ECCE Technical Team Members were asked to rate the degree to which the projects were in line with the SF-ECCE and the needs of their sector, and the relevance of NAP in sustaining or improving ECCE in their sector (department or unit) (Table 1, column 1). The ratings on a five-point scale were as follows: ‘Extremely relevant’=5, ‘Somewhat relevant’=4, ‘Somewhat irrelevant’= 3, ‘Irrelevant for most part’=2, and ‘Not relevant at all’=1. The results have been shown in Table 1 column 2 that represents a high level of relevance.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents rating relevance of the NAP

	Extremely relevant %	Somewhat relevant %	Irrelevant for most part %
To what degree are the projects in line with The Seychelles Framework for ECCE	92.6	3.7	3.7
To what degree are the projects relevant to the development needs of ECCE in your sector or department, section, unit	92.6	3.7	3.7
To what degree has the implementation of the project/projects relevant in sustaining or improving the quality of ECCE in your sector, or department, section or unit?	70.4	25.9	3.7

All but one Technical Team Members rated the NAP as ‘Extremely relevant’ in the implementation of the SF-ECCE and in meeting the development needs of ECCE. One can assume that strong involvement of sector teams in the design of the plan ensured full alignment with national development framework to meet the developmental needs of early childhood. Technical Team members relate this relevance to the overall vision and objectives of the SF ECCE advocating for “the holistic development of children and the empowerment of ECCE practitioners”, “a winning start for all children”; “catering for the wellbeing of children from birth to 7⁺ years”; promoting “lifelong learning”; and accelerating “early detection”.

However, at the level of impact just under three-quarters of the members rated the NAP as extremely relevant “in sustaining or improving the quality of ECCE”. Some issues related mainly to efficiency in project implementation may have weakened relevance of planned outputs. On the positive side, relevance has been related to improving aspects of child development, such as, “literacy and numeracy” and “child health”. On the negative side the degree of relevance have been compromised as some projects were still ongoing and others were preparatory steps “to lay the “foundation” for quality improvement. Efficiency in project implementation and impact assessment will be discussed later.

Just the same, those positive results were reinforced through the consultative forum of High Level Officials from ECCE Line Ministries. For the Health Sector the NAP through IECD is a platform used to select projects which would add value to community health services programme which are aligned to the strategic plan of the ministry and the plan of government. Similarly for the Social Service the NAP is integrated in the ministry’s plan and complements services for

family and children whilst providing a more focused outlook on early childhood. The NAP allows The Department of Local Government to better understand the need for early childhood awareness in programme implementation and the provision of local facilities. IECD maintains a strong link between the NAP, PPBB, the strategic plan of the Institute and the SF-ECCE.

‘The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education’ has five main themes, and priority areas emerged as national concerns: policy alignment, family and community support, early detection and intervention, early stimulation, improved service delivery. These themes have been embellished through consultative outcomes of international conferences hosted by Seychelles where there have been recognition of the diagnostic research model adopted, the emphasis on critical early learning period, the use of big data for programmatic intervention. The NAP contributed to the establishment of standards and ECCE indicators, and the provision of innovative early childhood facilities and programmes. Through the NAP early learning readiness and ECCE awareness have been monitored.

It is clear from these results that the NAP succeeded in responding to national development priorities. This is reflected in the high level confirmation of the necessity to develop and sustain ECCE. There is also substantial evidence of the strong commitment of sectors in interpreting the priorities of the SF ECCE in the selection and implementation of projects. The NAP represents a useful model of action planning intended to pursue national and international ECCE agenda.

Project Outcome

The NAP is a two-year plan to increase ECCE focus in the different sectors and propel the sectors to initiate or extend actions and strategies that would lead to improved provision and services for ECCE children and their parents. The sectors incorporated within their plans actions relating to the national priorities. Within the plans outcomes derived from project expectations had been set. The results presented in this section are intended to assess achievements in terms of expected outcomes or the level of progress towards the expected outcomes for the implementing ECCE Sector. Within that context factors which have inhibited or facilitated achievement of expected outcome have also been identified.

Three types of indicators have been used to provide a measure of progress towards the expected outcomes: the perception of Sector Technical Teams of the level of achievement, confirmatory documentation, and more direct quantitative data. Technical Team Members were presented with the title of their sector projects and related outcome statement for which they had to opt for a judgement response. The rating options were as follows: “Exceeded expectation”, “Met expectation”, “Moderately did not meet expectation”, and “Substantially did not meet expectation”. The discussion arising from the data was matched with documentary evidence and numerical information to make an evaluative judgment.

Education Sector

Project 1: Tracking, Monitoring, and Reporting (TMR) of pupils' progress and attainment from Crèche to Primary Two

The intention of this project was to construct an effective computerized system for monitoring learning progress of children in the early years. It was anticipated that attainment in reading and mathematics would be closely followed and differentiated support would be provided for the four categories of children: those with high attainment record but making slow progress; those with high attainment record and progressing well; those with low attainment record but making reasonable progress; and those with low attainment record making little progress.

However, this rather complex and technologically demanding design was extensively modified to a much simpler one in which progress was monitored for children who were below target with programmed intervention to raise the level of achievement of those pupils. A monitoring system using an EXCEL Template was devised, teachers in the appropriate classes were trained to use this template, and recordings were made on a termly basis. These were compiled to trace children's progress in reading and mathematical literacy for all pupils attending primary and crèche education.

An intervention plan which included Individualised Education Programme (IEP) was devised in consultation with teachers for each class. One of the participatory characteristic of this project is that all Technical Team Members (12 members including the Chair) were actively involved in the project and carried out regular visits to schools to monitor the implementation of the intervention programme and organize conferencing sessions with the teachers and management of the school to discuss the intervention measures, the plan in place and the performance of pupils who were below target. One of the limitations of the intervention programme was the delayed specialist input and the inconsistencies across classes in implementing the IEPs.

This has been a useful but challenging project to initiate a monitoring mechanism to accelerate differentiated support. However, the ICT component had to be abandoned due to lack of technological clarity for computerization. Just the same, the effort of remodeling and pursuing the implementation of the project has met with some success.

Monitoring strategy – It has been possible to gauge the progress of over 5000 children and through the intervention improvement in performance has been recorded. Thus this project has provided a strategy to identify children with certain difficulties and to fashion appropriate intervention.

Participatory approach – In most projects in the NAP, it has not always been possible to involve the whole team in a participatory effort in contributing to the project. One of the characteristics of this project is the involvement of all Technical Team Members in carrying out classroom observation, the partnership with additional needs specialist and the involvement of head teachers and senior teachers in case study conferencing. Thus there is participation at classroom level, senior management levels and central level.

Programme development- One of the difficulties encountered in schools that has remained problematic is differentiated teaching in the classroom. Through this project, individualised learning programmes have resurfaced and utilised to increase performance of children with certain learning difficulties. This project has provided an initial start for further reflection and development of intervention programmes for reading and mathematical literacy.

Training – Comprehensive training sessions on formative assessment were provided, test batteries were reviewed and the teaching of reading was revisited.

In Table 2, information on the tracking of pupil performance for the expected outcome and the two performance indicators have been presented. It can be seen that the expected outcome has been rated as moderately not achieved and the performance indicators have been partly achieved.

Table 2: Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Achievement
A robust tracking, monitoring and reporting mechanism in place at early childhood level for all State Schools		Moderately did not meet expectation
	1. Overall proportion of children performing at the expected level from Crèche to Primary Two	Partially achieved
	2. Overall proportion of children progressing in terms of performance	Partially achieved

The assumption has been that by the end of the project cycle a comprehensive and effectively technologically sound functioning system would have been set up that would allow the continuous collection of performance data on children. The documented evidence departs from that as it has been found that the system that was set up has been rather limited in its range of application. Nevertheless some moderate progress has been made to remodel a simpler monitoring structure.

In spite of these challenges some tangible data-driven results have been partly achieved as rated for the performance indicators. A baseline to measure performance has been set and quarterly records show a percentage of children making progress.

This project has got the potential to expand and become more effective especially in the refining of specialized programme and the training of teachers in the implementation of the intervention. Since a fairly comprehensive structure has been set up to include all the schools there would be a need to strengthen its functioning and the communication links which has been developed.

Project 2: Use of Early Childhood Training Room for service providers and practitioners

This project was to facilitate training access to early childhood service providers inclusive of day care personnel, pre-service and in-service teachers, and teacher assistants through a model early learning training room as part of the teacher training provision. The room would be specifically furnished, and equipped with developmentally appropriate educational resources and furnishings. The intention is to promote the importance of children’s learning through play involving practical work using the educational resources, and to build the capacity of early childhood professionals.

In effect, this project featured in the previous plan and administrative challenges such as room allocation, funding, contractual arrangements, and procurement procedures resulted in moderately missing the expected outcome. However, a well-designed, appropriately equipped training room was formally inaugurated. This project is more concerned with the utilisation of the room by early childhood professional to promote the play aspect of early learning.

Table 3: Training Room – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
The Early Childhood Training Room is an established place to which all early childhood caregiver in-service and pre-service teachers can have access for initial and on-going teacher training		Met expectation
	(i) Overall proportion of the participants making sound use of knowledge and skills gained from the training	achieved
	(ii) Level of satisfaction of ECCE personnel using the training room	achieved
	(iii) Number of ECCE personnel using the room as per the established purpose	achieved

It is evident from the information in Table 3 that the project has been quite effective in achieving the intended results. A study was designed to capture data through unobtrusive observation of logbook entries and through a survey of users. The results indicated that, on average, the room was in use at least 10 times a week. Training activities for teachers and early childhood care workers include practical teaching and learning activities, observation of children in play setting, organisation of play centres, and micro-teaching. It was concluded that the room proved to be very effective for the delivery of courses and for learners to benefit from hands-on activities as the following comments suggest:

We welcome the idea of using the hands-on that we do not have at our current school. (ECCE Teacher)

I enjoyed the facilities. Look forward to using these materials for assignments/reports/ general planning of lesson. (Trainee Teacher)

Health Sector

Project 1: Setting up a Day Lounge for Nursing Mothers with baby in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) as part of postnatal care

The main purpose of this project is to reduce the stress on mothers visiting babies in Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU) and to provide physical comfort and psychological support for mothers to bond with their babies, participate in decision making, breastfeed with skin to skin contact, and prepare for their babies discharge. It was initiated in the previous plan but it encountered major obstacles and its realization within the timeframe of the plan had been very much affected by delayed financial resource input and formal procedural administrative processes. However, in the present plan the project has been successfully implemented, facility and strategic level action consisted of preparation of room and appropriate furniture, development of promotional material and sensitization of service providers.

The sensitive caring value of this project to enhance the delivery of maternal and child health services cannot be overstated. It was reported that annually, out of an average of 1600 babies that are born in Seychelles, around 60 babies are born prematurely which necessitates additional care in NICU and prolonged length of stay in hospital for the baby while the mother is discharged but needs a special comfortable place to rest during her daily visit. During preliminary interview with mothers on their daily visits all of them expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation with statements such as “it is uncomfortable to sit on the bench”; “people look at me all the time”. The setting up of the lounge will address the issue of privacy, comfort, emotional and psychological care and this is in line with the patient-centered care vision of the Department of Health.

A perusal of Table 4 provides some convincing evidence of the success of the project. All four expected outcome have been met and the four performance indicators have been achieved.

Table 4: Day Lounge for Nursing Mothers – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-equipped day lounge available responding to parent needs 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff sensitised about the room and parents supported to use it effectively 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mothers knowledgeable about proper use of facilities 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mothers using the facilities effectively 		Met expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of mothers knowledgeable about proper use of facilities 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of staff satisfied with the benefit and use of the facility 	Partly achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of mothers satisfied with the facility 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of mothers making use of the room 	Achieved

Increasing quality of care facilities – A floor plan design was negotiated; major renovation was undertaken; furnishings and equipment were appropriated. The lounge was set up as secure comfortable place rest place, with dining, storage facilities, and electrical utilities.

Gaining resourcing support- Effective communication channel with senior managers had been opened to negotiate infrastructural arrangements and financial input. Moreover, interaction with external agents through project advocacy such as presentation and site visit has led to increased funding especially for furnishing and equipment provisions.

Raising awareness - A guide for using the mother’s lounge was developed. Three meetings were conducted by the maternity ward manager to sensitize midwives, health care assistants and ward cleaners on use of the room according to the guide. The aim was to ensure the facility is effectively used and appropriately maintained. Unfortunately, responsive views of service providers has not been produced thus this performance indicator has only been partly achieved.

Improving service delivery – The results of the individual interviews of 18 mothers and a father visiting their babies on a daily basis revealed overall satisfaction. The following statements are encouraging: the lounge is “comfortable”; one can relax in a private environment”, there is

“adequate storage for food”. The accompanied father expressed his gratefulness for a place that his partner can rest during this difficult and uncertain time and an environment for them to “discuss things in private”. Suggestions were also made to include media facilities.

Project 2: Implementing the Tooth Brushing Programme for children in crèche

The main aim of this project is to improve oral health practices of children in three government pre-schools, Belombre, Au Cap and Grand Anse Mahé as part of wider initiative of the Dental Health Services. A pre-post pilot study design was implemented by a cadre of dental therapists, dental surgery technicians and crèche teachers. However, the project also reached out to parents and the programmatic actions consisted of dental therapists, with the support of teachers, carrying out pre-established protocol tooth brushing sessions 3 days a week during lunchtime for 39 weeks; dental therapists also delivered school-based dental education session to crèche teaching staff and sensitized parents of the piloted children on individual or group basis. Changes in plaque score for the children were recorded and parental and teacher attitudes were assessed through a survey.

Table 5: Tooth Brushing Programme – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved oral hygiene among crèche year two children of the piloted schools 		Exceeded expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased dental health awareness of teachers and parents of targeted children 		Exceeded expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of crèche year two children with low plaque scores 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of parents and teachers of crèche year two children with positive attitude to oral health 	Achieved

This project is being implemented as part of the renewed effort of the Oral Health Services Division to develop more intensified programmes and interventions targeting particular risk factors. Past dental surveys conducted in Seychelles in 2005 and 2010 found that the mean dental health measure for six year old children in the country seems to have plateaued over the recent years and is comparable to the mean score of children in marginalized populations and less developed countries. Dental clinical examination in this study results raised concerns in relation to children oral health status. Of the 84 children examined, only 35.71% were deemed to be caries free. For the remainder 64.29% mean decayed teeth measure was very high - that would indicate the lack of intervention. The project addresses issues from different angles, those of the clinician, the teachers and the parents and is relevant to the needs of the target group and to policy direction of the Oral Health Services Division.

The results in Table 5 confirm the high level of achievement of the project. The two outcomes exceeded expectation as set out in the NAP and the two performance indicators were achieved with considerable success as an additional indicator of the dental health status of children was also included.

Recruitment – One of the crucial aspects of this project was to secure the participation of substantial number of dental and health personnel. Building a committed team of dental therapists, dental technicians, officers from the Dental Public Health Division is a significant achievement. From the results the project it is clear that the team has collaborated and remained steadfast to complete the project.

Effective intervention – The project has achieved its intended objective. A comprehensive tooth brushing programme was implemented. Three days a week for 39 weeks, the dental staff reported to the designated crèche during lunch time to facilitate and ensure that the tooth brushing sessions were implemented in accordance with pre-established protocol. Data was collected consistently on a termly basis to measure the plaque scores for the children participating in the pilot study. Competent analysis at the end of the project period revealed that the overall plaque score has been reduced by about half of the baseline score.

Technical strategy – The project demonstrate a model that addresses the promotional drive for oral hygiene programme in school. A technical strategy that combines an elegantly designed pre-post research study, the competent management of numerical data and clear analytical method need to be commended. The model can be expanded and utilized to enhance oral health provisions in schools.

School interface- The school is the key stakeholder for this project. From its inception it has been necessary to devise strategies to gain the commitment of the school and, in particular, the crèche teachers. Interactions with school managers and oral health education sessions individually or in groups with teachers have led to increased involvement of school thus adding to the credit of the project.

Parental involvement – The role of the parent in supporting the programme has been highlighted. Home oral hygiene practice was assessed, parents were sensitized and their views on the programme were sought. About three-quarters of the parents acknowledged that the tooth brushing activity made an impact on the oral hygiene routine of their family.

Project 3: Introduction of the Universal Neonatal Screening for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM)

The focus of the project is on early detection and intervention that would reduce infant morbidity and mortality by screening all babies shortly after birth, for a list of potentially life threatening conditions that are treatable (or controllable). Since these conditions, known as, Inborn Errors of Metabolism, although rare, are not clinically evident in the new-born period, a universal screening is recommended as part of the public health programme. One of the main challenges encountered in the previous plan to commence project activities was associated with the financial resources needed to obtain the specialized equipment which are central to the design and processes of the screening programme. However with successful procurement of the equipment in this plan other constraints surfaced - apparent management and communication bottleneck severely affected the success of this promising project.

Table 6 creates a dismal picture of the situation, the expected outcome has not been met and none of the performance indicators have been realised. The two main achievements are the

setting up of the equipment, the procurement of reagents that has not been documented, and the anecdotal unsubstantiated report of the training of laboratory technicians.

This is a missed opportunity and a major gap in the early detection strategies for ECCE. Delay in the diagnosis and treatment of the conditions associated with EMI can lead to significant adverse outcomes, including severe neuropsychological dysfunction, intellectual disability and death. It has been reported that although each disorder is individually rare, their cumulative incidence is relatively high, around 1 in 1500 to 1 in 5000 live births. It would have been reassuring to have relevant information for Seychelles.

Table 6: IEM Screening - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early diagnosis of Inborn Errors of Metabolism conditions and appropriate intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children screened with Inborn Errors of Metabolism conditions 	Did not meet expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children screened positive for any of the six IEM conditions 	Not Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children referred for early intervention 	Not Achieved
		Not achieved

Project 4: Introduction of the Personal Child Health Record (PCHR) Booklet

The Personal Child Health Record (PCHR) seeks to revolutionise the current Child Health Card by producing a more comprehensive, user-friendly and modern document which contains records of a child's growth, development, relevant tests, important milestones and other health-related information for that child. A booklet has been designed with specialist assistance and modified accordingly with inputs from health stakeholders, and the content and usage has been preliminarily tested by proposed users.

Table 7: PCHR Booklet – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive and standardised Personal Child Health Record being effectively used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderately did not meet expectation 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of booklets designed, printed and disseminated for pilot 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents issued with the PCHR and level of usage of PCHR 	Partly Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from PCHR for key child health and development indicators 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of professionals trained and sensitized 	Partly achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents/caregivers sensitized 	Partly achieved

This project is being implemented at a time where there is increased interest in usage and management of child development data and the Health Sector is in the process of establishing an information system to improve availability of data. The creation of the PCHR will provide an opportunity to update the current growth chart which now only includes data on weight for age and was designed for the Seychellois population. It will be replaced with the WHO growth chart

to ensure the inclusion of all other anthropometric parameters not initially included to actually monitor the child's growth over time. Several child health indicators will be updated to enable standardisation across the sector.

In spite of the management challenges encountered at the initial stage of the implementation of the project much effort has been exerted by the Project Officer and a degree of progress has been made as evidenced in Table 7. The expected outcome was not fully met and only one of the four performance indicator have been achieved. However some significant progress has been made and two main achievement results can be discussed.

Development strategy – Institutional and collaborative action complemented one another in the development of the booklet. At the institutional level this consisted of desk analysis of local documentation and international literature. It also included stakeholders' consultation with other health professionals. One of the major challenge in designing the booklet was the adoption of a suitable prototype – this was facilitated by an external specialist who produced in-kind a working draft for further in-house consultative actions.

Communication with parents - One of the ultimate beneficiaries of the project is the parent. The PCHR gives recognition to the key role of parents in the health and care of their child and is very much in line with the ethos of health and care professionals working openly with parents. Interactions with parents through a pilot study have opened the communication channel with parents. Forty-nine mothers from the post natal maternity unit were surveyed through a questionnaire on the content and usage and effectiveness of the booklet usage after a trial period of three months. The results would be quite promising.

Local Government Sector

Project 1: Expansion of Day Care Centre Provision for children

The Day Care Project is aimed at expanding institutional facilities for children aged 0-3 years to provide early learning experiences and day care services in an environment that fosters the holistic development of the child. Day Care Centres are being constructed or facilities renovated to meet the developmental and educational needs of children and the social needs of parents. The project generally includes the construction of three purpose-built Day Care Centres (Grand Anse Praslin, Anse Aux Pins and Takamaka). The intention to build the three day care centres formed part of the previous plan, unfortunately, construction could not be realised within the projected timeframe due to contractual, administrative and financial issues. However, the project remains vital given the gap in service provision since the present centres are not meeting mandatory, administration, and infrastructural standards.

As part of the previous plan, a Standard Day Care Centre Building Design which takes into consideration site and community issues, interior design and space, external design and play elements, architectural design and child-friendly facilities has been drawn up. This well-researched document which has been authenticated by international and local experts is meant to be used as a guide “to support the development of facilities that are child and family oriented, environmentally safe and secure, that would promote healthy growth, that are aesthetically

pleasing, functional in their design, and are cost effective to operate.” This model has been used effectively to construct the three new day care centres and the level of achievement is reflected in Table 8.

Infrastructural accomplishment – The construction of three modern day care centre establishments have been successfully completed with potential enrolment of 40 (Takamaka), 50 (Anse Aux Pins) and 80 (Grand Anse Praslin) children. The day care centres have been meticulously built in accordance with the planned prototype albeit a challenge to contractor expertise. In addition the model has been used to purposefully adapt and convert another building thus increasing further day care centre facilities to accommodate about another 40 children.

Table 8: Day Care Centre Provision – Level of Achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded access for children (0 -3 years) to innovative facilities to meetings the needs of the community 		Moderately did not meet expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of Day Care Centres built in compliance with standards for physical infrastructural design, external design and outdoor elements, child and family friendly facilities, staffing/ 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children using the service per caption area 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders collaboration and satisfaction (Participating Agencies, Community Personnel, Targeted Parents) 	Partly achieved

Organisation Interface - As one of the key project stakeholder, Local Government Department had to link with a range of government and even private agencies. From the inception of the project IECD who set out the day care vision was involved. There was a range of interaction with Technical Team Members, internal Project Officers, Planning Authority and Construction Firms which led to increased involvement across and within government ministries. It is to the credit of the team work effort of the Local Government and the linkage with other agents that the construction of purpose-built, modern day care centres has been made possible.

It is evidenced from the above analysis and the information in Table 8 that the original timescale could not be adhered to. Protracted approval procedures, contractor dispute, the complexities of the project management process have retarded project completion. Therefore service delivery and community participation could not be assessed: the second Performance Indicator has not been ‘Achieved’ and the third Performance Indicator has only been ‘Partially achieved’.

Project 2: Providing Community-Based Outdoor Play Facilities

This is a community project with the aim of promoting the use of safe and child friendly district playgrounds. In the district of Takamaka a new playground has been constructed with appropriate facilities serving a small community of 40 households. In the district of Perseverance 2, the existing defunct playground has been relocated and a modern extensive playground has

been built to serve the large population of about 4,000 inhabitants. In Pointe Larue and Grande Anse District (Praslin) major refurbishment of the existing playground has been undertaken to benefit about 800 children in day care, childminding, pre-schooling, and early primary establishment. Playgrounds in Anse Royale and Perseverance 1 underwent substantial up grading and regular play and learning activities have been organized in collaboration with schools, sports organisations, and community groups.

The achievements of this project can be discussed by taking into consideration the information in Table 9.

Table 9: Provision of Community-Based Outdoor Facilities – Level of Achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child and family friendly district playgrounds being appropriately used 		Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of district playground renovated to agreed standards 	Partly achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children accessing district playgrounds 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of organised activities in the district playgrounds 	Partly achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of stakeholders and partners involved in the project, and their views 	Achieved

Infrastructural provisions- The construction, upgrading and refurbishment of playgrounds have been quite successful. Monitoring visits have been carried out to ensure that appropriate furniture and toys have been provided and conditions of hygienic, safety and comfort are maintained. Thirteen playgrounds have been made accessible to children and their parents. Although design standards and equipment standard quality cannot be assessed, the project resulted in strengthening infrastructural facilities for children and families.

Programme Implementation – There has been considerable effort to link the infrastructural facilities to the beneficiaries and programme implementation. A range of activities targeting community, school or care institutions have been organized. Three-hundred children from 3 main regions have made use of the playground at Pointe Larue and Baie Lazare. More information is needed to assess the views of users.

Collaborative Interchange – Although Local Government is the responsible planning and organizing agency, diversified interactions with other organisations has led to diverse project inputs. There has been the involvement of a funding agency. Private sponsors have donated toys and equipment. The District Administration in the district has been fully engaged in organising playground manifestation.

Effective implementation of this project has been marred by management procedures. This was compounded by contractor dispute which led to construction delays. However, an effort has been made to pursue the provision of infrastructural facilities and to establish programmatic linkages with administrative structures in the districts.

Social Affairs Sector

Project 1: The effectiveness of Parenting Education ante-natal and post-delivery sessions held from 2013 to 2018

The aim of this project was to evaluate the efficacy of the Antenatal and Postnatal Parenting Education Programme which had been operational since 2013 by retrospectively assessing the life situation of participants and that of their children. A comparative survey model was implemented on a sample 400 parents who had either participated fully or partially in the programme and a control group of non-participants who had children of the same age as those of the participating parents. Participants responded to questions on knowledge and skills acquired through the programme, their experience of the programme, and their current child rearing practices. Non-participants responded to the latter only. Contact details of parents were recorded and individual interviews were carried out in the home. There was substantial evidence to show that participants recalled about two-thirds of the topics covered in the programme, almost all of them admitted that they “enjoyed” the sessions, and they would “recommend the sessions to others”. Comparative data indicated that parents who followed the programme were better prepared for parenthood and were able to create a nurturing environment for their children.

Table 10: Parenting Programme - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
• Efficacy and effectiveness of the programme	• Level of knowledge and skills of parents	Achieved
	• Percentage of parents who attended all sessions	Achieved
	• Parent perception of the programme and the facilitators	Partly achieved
	• Midwives perception of the programme	Not achieved

Apart from project outcome results as depicted in Table 10, two main achievements can be noted:

Strategy document - The adoption of the antenatal and post-delivery manual has given a tremendous boost to the project. Moreover, accompanying illustrated training manual has been a source of guidance and knowledge for facilitators. The manual has become a strategic document in the parenting programme. It complements the standard ante-natal classes by placing greater emphasis on the psychological needs and impact of pregnancy on the couple, and on the stresses associated with child birth and child rearing.

Collaborative partnership - one of the main achievements of the project is the consolidation of the collaborative partnership. There has been successful collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs launching and managing the project, the Ministry of Health coordinating data collection and the Ministry of Education facilitating sampling procedures. This has led to increased involvement of professionals and it is to the credit of the project in contributing to the Maternal Child Health Programme.

Project 2: Upgrading interviewing facilities to provide a safe, supportive and comfortable waiting and interview room for child service users (2-8 years)

The project has two components: the introduction of a waiting room and the adequate provision of three interview rooms. A comfortable, aesthetically pleasing waiting room, reasonably equipped with child-friendly materials such as toys, books, magazines, colouring books and coloured pencils has been set up. The refurbishment of the interview rooms to provide safe spaces and to improve rapport between children and practitioners has also taken place. The room contains materials and objects such as glove puppets, dolls, block toys, and crayons and pencils which can be used as tools to obtaining information from children.

Table 11: Upgrading Waiting Room and Interviewing Facilities - Level of Achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-equipped and user friendly waiting area and interview rooms 		Substantially did not meet expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive interactive sessions between social workers, other professional users and young clients 		Substantially did not meet expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of social workers and other professional users on the effectiveness of the rooms 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of satisfaction/appreciation on use of the facilities by service users (clients) 	Not achieved

This is a sensitive, subtle project within the mandate of the Social Affairs Sector to uphold the principle of children rights in the context of programme and service delivery. It is clear from the information in Table 11 that limited progress has been made for successful project completion. Funding and human resource issues retarded project implementation.

Project 3: Monitoring Standards in Children Homes

This Child Protection Project is aimed at safeguarding children residing in homes. Two homes Foyer de Nazareth and Foyer de la Providence have been identified and three standards relating to security measures, staff training and practices, and record keeping procedures are being monitored. The project has been designed to introduce electronic surveillance devices to enhance the data gathering process. This necessitated negotiations with surveillance firms, telecommunication companies, and donor agencies. This presented challenging obstacles in the development of this project: a before- and- after- model had to be introduced to strengthen project design to measure change and a data analyst had to be recruited to manage the large volume of data that had been anticipated. The project is intended to benefit about 50 children and 20 members of staff in the two homes. Unfortunately, the implementation timeframe has been very much affected and only moderate progress has been made.

Effective Partnership – The project demanded different layers of partnership arrangements which have in term raised the level of awareness of a wide range of stakeholders on child protection issues. At the institutional level, the staff of those caring residential homes was made to reflect on their child protection responsibilities and the nature of their practice. Externally, technological

partners contributed to the provision of innovative use of their system in a child care environment. The transformation of the electronic information into monitoring data brought in the data management level expertise. Partners were acquired on their involvement and their specific contribution and human resource support.

Table 12: Monitoring standards in children's home – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff complying to child protection standard in a safe, secure and protective environment for children in care 		Substantially did not meet expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of compliance to the standards 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of child protection issues 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved practice in the care and protection of children 	Not achieved

Establishing monitoring structure – The Social Affairs Sector was supported to set up a database, to review the standards framework and to develop the list of indicators which would provide information about the quality of the child protection practice and the expected effectiveness of the planned training programme in improving the quality of the service. Decision will have to be made about the processing of the data to demonstrate possible change in practice in a secure setting and in improved conditions.

This project could not be implemented within the planned timeframe. However, it has ground breaking potential in scrutinizing service provision in children homes. Up-scaled implementation can be anticipated in future planning.

Project 4: Survey on the Level of Care and Welfare of Children Born to Teenage Mothers

Mandated to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, the Social Affairs Sector intended to undertake this project to evaluate the wellbeing of children born from teenage mothers, assess

Table 13: Teenage Mothers - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about the status of children and their mothers for a sample of teenage mothers Suggestions and recommendations of the needs of teenage mothers for policy decision 		Substantially did not meet expectation
		Substantially did not meet expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children targeted and their state of well being 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of participants most at risk 	Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested intervention strategies 	Not achieved

their needs, and inform policy. As it can be seen from Table 13 none of the outcomes have met expectation and none of the performance indicators have been achieved. Financial and administrative constraints obstructed progress in the realisation of the project. However, with renewed funding arrangement and the recruitment of a consultant it can be included in the next plan.

Institute of Early Childhood Development

Project 1: Establishing Structures and Procedures for Data Collection Based on Early Childhood Development (ECD) Indicators for the Education Sector Data Management

The main purpose of this project is to strengthen the policy environment for ECCE in the Education Sector for decision-making and reporting, through readily available data. Following a pilot study and subsequent situational analysis to explore the type of information which is currently collected, an Indicator Framework was developed. This framework based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is capturing internationally comparable educational statistics for systematic collection of data for monitoring and reporting.

Similar project has been implemented in the Health Sector and with this project the capacity for to reinforce and sustain the ECCE system in Seychelles will be reinforced. The SABER Seychelles country report had a low rating for data system indicator. This well-developed project is crucial for Seychelles to have credible data in ECCE and to be on par with other countries when comparing the country's Early Childhood Development system against evidence based global standards using detailed information on ECCE. Moreover, it will enable Seychelles to earmark areas in Early Childhood that need immediate attention, and identify opportunities for further development.

Table 14: Data Management Project – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised data collection procedures in the Education Sector to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting of ECCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children enrolled in Early Childhood Programmes 	Exceeded expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher/pupil ratio 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class size 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's performance in cognitive assessments 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff qualifications/ experience/training/professional development 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff turnover 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher absenteeism 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and availability of resources 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental involvement 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross enrolment Ratio in ECCE 	Achieved

The success of this project can be viewed from information in Table 14. It can be seen that the outcome has been overreached and two key performance indicators assessing cognitive performance and enrolment ratio have been added to the original plan. Moreover some key achievement features can be expanded on.

Technical strategies – The data management model which has been developed for the Health Sector has been adapted and embellished to derive specific education indicators. A situational analysis has provided information on current data collected in the primary schools on pupils (welfare, attendance, behaviour), teachers (teaching, monitoring, planning), and assessment. Also

through the analysis, data collection processes related issues such as teamwork, support, efficiency, parent motivation and teaching emerged as having “positive attributes” and “add value to the schools’ operation”. The definition and drafting of an Indicator Dictionary in line with international standards is being trial tested for implementation.

Professional engagement – A crucial component of the project was the schools’ involvement in the data collection process. In order to solicit school engagement a diffusion approach was used: the project was presented to senior school staff, Head Teachers, Early Childhood Coordinators, and Crèche Teachers; a documentary review of all available information collected at Early Childhood level was made; and a template was prepared to engage the school to collect the relevant data for the situational analysis. This was followed by training, sensitization and briefing of school leaders to roll out the trialing of the Indicator Dictionary with monitoring support.

Collaborative endeavours – Effective teamwork and collaboration is the hallmark of this project. The IECD Team linked with the EMIS Section to operationalize the project. Senior school managers and administration collaborated with the Technical IECD Team and EMIS to provide the relevant information. A Core Team of education experts joined The Technical Team to develop the Indicator Framework. Finally through a data management forum wider sharing of information with other partners was achieved. Thus this multi-layered collaborative style contributed immensely to the successful implementation of the project.

Project 2: Has the knowledge and understanding of ECCE issues been sustained as a result of enhanced advocacy strategies and campaigns?

Sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns form part of the advocacy strategies of IECD in promoting ECCE and enhancing understanding of the holistic development of children. This project through a national survey seeks to monitor ECCE knowledge and understanding of ECCE issues of targeted groups of professionals from Health, Education, Social Affairs, and sampled groups of other professionals, at policy, management and technical level, and community members from the 23 districts of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. Information was collected from over 800 participants.

This advocacy survey is conducted every two years and has become an additional tool to gauge the views of the Seychellois society on ECCE, emphasise the crucial stage of early childhood in the development of children, and promote policy dialogue. Following the results of the first survey which placed the knowledge level at 60%, specialist views were sought through a forum to engage the audience in a discussion on the level of knowledge of ECCE amongst professionals. It was observed that there was a need to intensify training on some aspects of early childhood provisions as well as sensitise specific groups and the wider community on issues of accountability, child abuse, legal issues, and the general welfare of the child. The knowledge level recorded for the second survey was astoundingly high (88%).

The achievement level for the survey in this project is summarised in Table 15. It can be observed that the first and third expected outcomes have moderately not been met whereas the

second expected outcome has been met satisfactorily. Consequently, the performance indicator has only been partially met. However, further explanation is needed to outline the success of the project and comment on the challenges.

Monitoring Strategies – A robust replicable monitoring structure has been established. The tools have been developed to assess four indices of understanding of ECCE issues; health and safety, education, parental and community links, child and social protection, and policy. A sampling design has been utilised which takes into consideration pertinent sub-groups of professionals. Factor analysis was used to confirm the measurement indices and Rasch Model was applied to generate levels of performance on the ECCE indices.

Table 15: Advocacy Survey – Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92% or more of the targeted population showing understanding of ECCE issues 		Moderately did not meet expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visibility of ECCE and sensitisation on issues among the population, across all sectors 		Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructive dialogue on ways to improve and increase visibility of the advocacy campaign across the different sectors 		Not achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall proportion (92% or more) of targeted audience exerting sound knowledge of ECCE issues from the different sectors and showing a high level of understanding on the importance of early childhood development and the need for every child to develop holistically 	Partially achieved

Government public interface - Professionals were involved as key stakeholders in the survey. Careful consideration was given to professionals and Technical Team Members in the ECCE Sectors. At the same time, childminders and parents and other professionals such as the police, financial and other service establishments were selected. There was also an online component of the survey which targeted policy makers. Additionally, two enumeration areas consisting of six household were selected for each of the district. This necessitated partnering with the National Bureau of Statistics (NSB). The media have also extensively used to pass on information to the public and sensitise them through TV Spots and on the IECD Website. These targeted activities have led to extensive involvement of government officials and the public in the project.

Capacity building – One of IECD’s achievements is the use of research for monitoring the ECCE system and in the process the institution takes a leading role in training researchers and research support staff. The data collectors had the opportunity to interact with the questionnaire and to produce a field report. Data enterers were trained on the appropriate database and participated in the cleaning sessions. This project helped to strengthen capacity in data collection, data entry and data management.

Challenges – Although the project was completed in spite of human resource constraints, there were challenges to meet the timeframe and also achieve the expected outcome. One of those difficulties is concerned with data collection: Fieldwork in the community needs to be planned

well in advance for the data collectors to locate participating households. The other problematic area refers to the poor response rate: there was some reluctance from participants in the community and policy makers to fill in the questionnaire. This significantly influenced the outcome of the survey.

However, despite the challenges in the field the project has achieved some success and attention may need to be given the following issues:

- timing of the survey
- updating of maps to better locate households
- reviewing of instruments to reduce bulk
- selecting enumeration areas

Project 3: The development of an Accredited Pre-registration and Sensitisation Training Programme for Non-registered Home-based Childminders on the National Standards for Childminding Services

Through this project a comprehensive training programme in child care and development has been produced. A consultative model has been implemented through institutional partnership and by reaching out to a cadre of child care workers. Policy level and programmatic activities have included job analysis, establishing the structure of the plan, development of unit outline and validation of the programme. The course will be offered on a part-time and full-time basis and will benefit practicing childminders, school leavers and other individuals aspiring to become childminders or work in a child care environment. The programme aims to develop the skills and competencies necessary for a child care worker and provide essential knowledge in child development, early learning and teaching strategies to stimulate the children, cater for their rapid development needs and enhance their developmental experiences.

Table 16: Programme Accreditation - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2020, the pre-registration and sensitization training programme for home-based Childminders have been revised, accredited and validated by SQA and ready for implementation by SITE in 2021 		Met expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of practicing non-registered Childminders who completed the Pre-registration and sensitization training programme at Certificate level 	NA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of potential Childminders (currently in employment) who completed the Pre-registration and sensitization training programme at Certificate level 	NA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of registered Childminders enrolled on the bridging programme, so that they can be accredited with a Certificate 	NA

As Seychelles continues to develop its ECCE system, enlarging its human resource capacity must remain relevant in the pursuit of excellence. Research have shown that well qualified child care providers are of crucial important in ECCE and that children who attend high-quality child

care services are better prepared to be successful in school and in future careers. Since 2015, IECD has been coordinating the pre-registration and sensitization training programme for childminders. However, with the establishment of standards and the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2020, the review of the programme is necessary and the official recognition of childminders as professionals becomes eminent.

The achievement and challenges can be discussed in relation to Table 16. It is obvious that the expected outcome has been achieved. However, the performance indicators seemed to have surpassed the expected outcome. Although there is a weakness in the design it does not detract from the success of the project with considerable achievement in using the consultative model and promoting a qualification framework for child care workers.

Consultation and Partnership – Although IECD is the prime mover of the project the training institution SITE is one of the key stakeholder and the development of the programme has been carried in partnership with management and some development input from IECD and professional specialism from SITE. Moreover, interactions with a range of organisations such as sensitisation meetings with SQA and teacher trainers, job analysis workshop with childminders and high level dialogue with senior officials have taken place. This has led to good working relationship and collaborative partnership.

Effective marketing – Having developed a new accredited programme one of the challenges which will be faced with its implementation is the recruitment of participants. A communication plan is included which will target different groups of the participants. For example, RPL for experienced child care workers, part-time arrangements will be made for those in employment, media advertisement for public interest. One of the effective strategies which has been adopted is to establish a new pathway and study option for students completing secondary or post-secondary schooling. These strategies have been widely discussed and vetted by recruiting organisations and are considered a significant achievement of this project.

Project 4: An Assessment of the Provision of Services in Day Care Centres to develop quality standards

The aim of this project is to establish the quality status of services being provided in all Day Care Centres in Seychelles by carrying out an assessment of day care provision. The research method was exhaustively utilised through international consultation and a national survey. The observational assessment of the 25 Day Care Centres was benchmarked against the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards and focused on 5 broad areas, such as educational framework, physical environment, health and safety and nutrition, staff-child interaction, and curriculum. The survey which was to examine the characteristics of the day care centres and gain the views of parents provides information on day care leaders and operation, infrastructural facilities, and parent and community engagement.

This project will have an effect in improving the quality of service provision in all day care centres in Seychelles. As day care centre regulation transit from the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to IECD, quality standards will be developed. The

project addresses the issues relating to standards from different perspectives facilities, day care workers, parents, children and is in line with international best practice increasing the effectiveness of the project activities. It will act as a strong foundation to improve service delivery.

It can be seen from Table 17 that the project has been very successful. The three expected outcome have been met and the four performance indicators have been achieved. Significant achievement overall can be noted.

Table 17: Assessing Service Provision - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools for measuring quality of services being provided in Day Care Centres 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to monitor quality of services being provided in all Day Care Centres 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators and other requirements for the development of National Standards for Day Care Centres 		Met expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of operators and assistants and their personal information, qualifications and experiences 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Day Care Centres providing family oriented programme and relationship-based care 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Day Care Centres demonstrating an understanding of integrated learning approach in Early Childhood Development 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of parents satisfied with the quality of services provided by Day Care Centres 	Achieved

Effective research strategies - The two research studies complemented one another and have been instrumental in the formulation of a reviewed framework for monitoring the quality of services. The observational study identified gaps in various indicators such as group size, staff qualification, the state of the infrastructural, indoor and outdoor space requirements, supervision, staff-children communication, relationship with parents.

Communication – From the inception of the project consultation at policy and technical level have enriched the project. This has led to exhaustive discussion about the technicalities of standards development and observational techniques. The project has initiated a national dialogue and stakeholder engagement and has formed the bridge between the existing regulatory document and the new framework.

Project 5: Development of Quality Standards for the provision of services in Day Care Centres

This project is a follow-up of day care services and the formulation of a framework for standards development. Twelve standards have been developed through a multi-organisational team working on the physical and environmental, safety and security, health and nutrition, child protection and early learning, and interaction and community engagement. The review of the results of baseline assessment, the specialist role of the agencies and organisation, the specialist inputs required and the components of the standards drafted provided were technical level

activities carried out. Although the project has been validated by a wide range of stakeholders operational guidelines need to be completed. Nevertheless, the project is on track for High Level approval and legislative consultation.

There is a national drive to improve the quality of childminding provisions. For home-based childminding establishments, policy research have been undertaken, quality standards have been established, regulation processes have been completed and standards are being implemented and monitored. In anticipation of the transfer of regulatory authority from The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to The Institute of Early Childhood Development for child care centre (centre-based childminding), this project is crucial in response to the need of quality standards for sustaining and enhancing the ECCE system.

Table 18: Quality Standards - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum quality standards developed and to be legislated for registration and training 		Met expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational guidelines which provide practical recommendations for the daily operation of day care services developed 		Met expectation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The perception of Day Care Operators on the set standards 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The perception of parents on the new standards 	Achieved

The achievement status of the project can be assessed from Table 18. The two expected outcomes have been met and the two performance indicators have been achieved. This project has been quite instructive for its capacity building potential using a multi-agency approach.

Recruitment – One of the challenges of this project is to gain the commitment of a wide range of specialists to work cooperatively on the components of the project. Thus key government and agency personnel were recruited to form a Multi-Agency Technical Working Group to lead the development of the national standards. Coordination and integration of the work of that technical team was directed by IECD providing the institutional platform.

Technical Strategy – The project enlarged on the previous interagency approach that was adopted for the development of the home-based childminding standards to devise multiple levels of consultation and support: individual sectors, whole team working meetings, and wider stakeholder’s participation. Thus through IECD a range of activities which include writing clinics to refine the standards statements, group discussion to gain consensus and harmonise the standards statements, and a validation workshop with all concerned parties and public audiences. This multi-agency strategy has proved very effective in the production of the standards framework.

Policy Interaction - One of the ultimate policy goals of this project is to assure quality standards in the provision of day care services. Policy discussions have taken place between the MEHRD which have the regulatory function and IECD which will be regulating the service in future. Specific dissemination sessions have been organised for teachers and school leaders. Policy

dialogue has been initiated with senior managers to ensure consistency and enable a smooth transition.

Project 6: Assessment of Early Learning Readiness of Children in Home-based Childminding Services

The aim of this project is to determine early learning readiness for crèche education in home-based childminding services by undertaking a comprehensive study to determine the quality of services offered by home-based childminders in the early stages of operations. One hundred and seventy children aged 3-4 years old were assessed for literacy and numeracy and their performance level was established. Also 67 childminders participated in the study and 150 parents responded to the questionnaire. The results showed that 88 percent of the children had reached the proficiency level to commence crèche education and that the childminders were implementing the early learning programme quite effectively.

This project is in line with the implementation of the standard on Early Learning for home-based childminding services. The Early Learning standard is based on the Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF) and it aims to promote early stimulation as well as literacy, numeracy and motor skills development of children in the childminding setting. Thus this project is relevant in providing baseline information which will help develop strategies to enhance practices in childminding services in regards to the implementation of early learning. The project is not only focused on the skills of the child but also on factors such as childminder training and home environment that could have an impact on early learning readiness. More detailed analysis is anticipated.

Table 19: Assessment of early learning - Level of achievement

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Achievement
• Tool for assessing the readiness of children in childminding services available		Met expectation
• Baseline to monitor readiness in childminding services defined		Met expectation
• Baseline to monitor the implementation of the early learning programme by Childminders (as per Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF))		Met expectation
	• Percentage of children and the level of readiness for crèche schooling	Achieved
	• Number of registered childminders implementing the early learning programme (as per Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF))	Achieved

Table 19 provides some convincing evidence of the success of the project. The three outcomes have been met and the two performance indicators have been achieved. Moreover, further achievement indicators can be noted.

Effective Technical Strategy – Effective measures of early learning readiness for numeracy and literacy have been developed and statistically established through Rasch Scaling Model. This assessment tool will be very useful to monitor early learning strategies used by childminders and can provide comparable data from other early childhood care establishments.

Training programme – The project will also provide useful information on the early learning programme and the training of childminders. After having successfully established National Standards for Childminding Services and enacted the legal procedures, IECD embarked on a training programme to build the capacity of home-based childminders and prepare them for registration. With the change in training format this project can be extended to provide a tool to monitor and refine the new training programme.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the NAP is explored by considering some of the factors which have helped or hindered implementation, the communication mechanism within sector which would facilitate implementation, coordination of the plan, partnership arrangements, monitoring structure, and beneficiaries’ participation.

Implementation

Team members were asked to what extent they felt that a range of factors (Table 20 column 1) helped or hindered the implementation of the NAP in their sectors. The ratings were as follows: “Greatly helped” = 5, “Helped”=4, “Somewhat helped”=3, “Hindered”=2, “Greatly hindered”=1. The first two ratings and last three were collapsed and the responses of members who rated the factor as helping or greatly helping project implementation have been presented in Table 2 (column 2).

Table 20: Percentage of respondents rating ‘Greatly helped’ or ‘Helped’ implementation NAP

	%
Design and development of projects	80.0
Activities of strategy	76.9
Work environment	63.0
Work procedures	60.0
Sector policy	59.3

Two categories of responses can be selected from those figures. The first category refers to the development and planning of the projects where more than three quarters of the members acknowledged that the design, planned activities and strategies adopted helped or greatly helped in the effective implementation of the NAP. In the second category team members were responding to work conditions with about one-third of them admitting that the work environment (63.0%) and procedures at work (60%), ‘Sector policy’ (59.3%) helped or greatly helped project implementation.

Results from the first two responses would suggest that the preparatory stage of sector projects contribute greatly to effective implementation. Team members would like the design to be “clear” and “realistic” and the strategies “understandable”, “providing specific direction”. Some of the hindrances specified were the lack of “specificity” in the attainment of key milestone in the project timeline and “unrelated activities”. This issue can be illustrated from the elegant pre-post design and well set out activities of the Tooth Brushing Project to the technically complex design in the Monitoring Project that had to be revised in mid-course and was difficult to achieve coherent outputs. More attention may need to be given at the design and planning stage of sector projects.

Nevertheless, the conditions within the sector can be quite a hindrance to about one-third of team members. This would seem to suggest that the commitment of the sector to NAP at policy and practical level need to be firm and consistent. Although the alignment of sector policy with the NAP has been emphasised, there is enough evidence to assume that there may be inconsistencies in the attentiveness of sectors to project within the NAP. Whilst team members in some sectors find the working environment and conditions “conducive” “convenient” and “supportive”, others describe their environment as “poor” and “stressful”. This seems to be mostly related to “work overload”, and “other commitments”. The support of team members by sector leaders will be discussed later as we address the communication mechanism in sectors. However, there are enough discrepancies between sectors in the conditions in which the NAP is implemented that would need to be explored further. Just the same, it seems to be affecting a significant minority of team members.

Communication

Effective communication is a contributory factor in successful project implementation. Projects in the NAP are implemented by Project Officers within Sectors and in order to examine communication links, Technical Teams were presented with five project communication aspects (Table 21, column 1) and asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the communication channel within their sector in the implementation of the NAP. The response options were coded as follows: “Very dissatisfied”=1, “Dissatisfied” = 2, “Reasonable satisfied” = 3, “Very satisfied”=4, “Extremely satisfied”=5. To facilitate analysis, the first two and last three options were collapsed and the percentage of satisfied responses (code 1, 2 and 3) has been presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Percentage of respondents satisfied with selected communication channel

	%
Feedback from Project Officer to issues and problems	88.0
Feedback from Technical Chair Person	96.0
Circulation of internal communication	92.6
Communication with leaders in your sector	65.4
Communication of strategic information from leaders in your sector	64.0

Comparison of the results outlines two main communication effectiveness issues. The majority of respondents expressed their satisfaction with the communication channels within the technical team structure such as feedback from project officers (88%), feedback from Chair (96%) and internal communication (93%). However, only two-thirds of the respondents were satisfied with the effectiveness of the channel of communication with their leaders (65%) and from their leaders (64%).

The functioning of the ECCE Technical Team in the sectors will be discussed later. At this stage it is clear from those results that team members within the sectors on the whole have developed high communication effectiveness amongst them. Some of the comments are very favourable to the kind of relationship that has developed between the Chair, team members and project officers. Chair persons were described as “proactive”, “responsive” “timely”. The communication effectiveness with regards to Project Officers revolves around their willingness

to “share information” “give regular feedback” to have “open discussion” on project and “asks for suggestions and clarifications”. The use of multi-media in providing information is considered as effective when “circulating pertinent documents”, reporting on relevant administrative and implementation matters with the effective use of internet and email.

Similarly, effective communication with leaders in project implementation has been greatly appreciated. One of the communication aspects is accessibility: Team members recognised that they have “ample opportunity” to meet with their leaders; the leaders were “always available”; leaders were “present in meetings”. Another component of communication effectiveness refers to engagement of the leaders: showing “interest” in sector projects, providing “support”, having “meaningful discussion” with team members, “attending meetings”, reporting on the “status of projects”, “giving project update”, and following “progress”.

Such views are to a large extent attune to those of senior managers in ECCE line ministries. However due to the extent and functions of those organisations the support structure varies. For example the senior manager of IECD is also the Chair of Technical Team. Thus, there is a direct everyday communication link. For the Education and Social Affairs Sector the link is through senior management and departmental meetings with specific ECCE agenda where the progress of projects are reported and supportive resources are discussed. The Local Government structure is highly organised where the projects are discussed and supported at all levels from departmental management to senior management level. Unfortunately, it was not possible to establish the communication pathways between the Technical Team and senior managers in the Health Sector and this has some bearing on the level of dissatisfaction of technical team members in that sector in communicating with senior managers.

It can be deduced from the figures in Table 21 that at least one third of respondents were ‘Dissatisfied or ‘Very dissatisfied’ when it concerns communication with leaders. A cross tabulation confirms that this is predominantly in the Health Sector where respondents accentuated the poor communication with leaders. Team members admitted that it was “difficult to get through” to the leaders that “there is a need to establish proper pathway”; there was “no feedback from High Level Meeting”, that leaders “need to be more involved”. Furthermore, information from senior management confirmed the communication breakdown. From further high level interdepartmental consultation to clarify this situation, it became apparent that although the Health Sector is providing a whole range of ECCE services, the integration of the NAP within the Sector need to addressed.

Interaction with leaders can only be rated with medium effectiveness. Whilst all leaders agreed that the NAP is in line with the plan of their sectors or departments as noted in the previous section (page 8), there are gaps in the communication structure that would need attention.

Partnership

Partnership effectiveness was assessed by asking Technical Team Members to rate the quality of six selected aspects (Table 22, column1) of the partnership arrangement in the implementation of the project or projects in their your sector. The response options were as follows:

“Excellent”= 5, “Good”=4, “Reasonable”= 3, “Hardly sufficient”=2, “Insufficient”=1. The first three and last two categories were collapsed and the percentage of respondents who chose the “Excellent”, “Good” or “Reasonable” options have been presented in Table 21 as indicators of high effectiveness.

The figures in Table 22 provide a favourable picture of effective partnership arrangements. All technical team personnel agreed that there was ‘Clarity of roles’ and ‘Common feeling of accomplishment’ – this would denote a high level of engagement. Furthermore, the large majority of respondents (96%) rated positively the decision making, information sharing and conflict management aspects - that would suggest a high level of agreement. Although the percentage figure for ‘Timely accomplishment of tasks’ was slightly lower (88%) it does not detract substantially from the overall ratings.

Table 22: Percentage of respondents with high effectiveness ratings of partnership arrangements

	%
Clarity of roles	100.0
Common feeling of accomplishment	100.0
Agreeing on decision making procedures	96.0
Sharing information	96.0
Managing conflict	95.8
Timely accomplishment of tasks	87.5

Partnership arrangements in the implementation of the NAP were multi-layered. Not only was there a specific coordinating committee set up at the national level but technical teams made different partnership arrangements depending on the nature of the project and the organisational characteristics of the sector. For example a participatory approach has been developed within the Education Sector where all team members were actively engaged in field activities for the Tracking Monitoring Project. At IECD, structural linkages have been formed between the sections and the technical team for mutual support and enriching inputs. In some sectors, the technical expertise from within is exploited such as in the building of day care centres implemented by the Local Government Sector and the implementation of the Tooth Brushing Project in the Health Sector. On the other hand, supportive alliances are sought: this is particularly so in the acquisition of equipment for the IEM Project, the PCHR Project, the Children’s Home Project, refurbishment requirements for the Training Room Project and the Day Lounge Project. Furthermore, the recruitment of other professionals and the collaboration with experts such as in the Education Indicator Project, the Advocacy Survey, Pre-registration Training for Childminders, Day Care Centre Assessment, Early Learning Readiness have enlarged and strengthened partnerships. Only 2 out of the 27 respondents made slightly weak comments about timing by referring to “some delays” and “rushed tasks”. However, there is no doubt from those encouraging findings that very effective partnership arrangements have been experienced by all sectors.

Beneficiaries

The effectiveness of the NAP can also be illustrated by some indicators relating to the beneficiaries. Through the NAP in the Tracking Project the learning performance of about 1,300 children in schools have been monitored, individualised educational intervention has been

introduced and 17 teachers have undergone training in remediating learning difficulties. Early learning readiness of about 200 children in childminding services has been assessed and the early stimulation programme implemented by over 60 childminders has been evaluated. Twenty-five day care operators have been sensitised on the renewed standards for Day Care Centres. More than 80 children have participated in the tooth brushing programme and improvement in oral hygiene has been recorded. In the same project about 50 parents also participated and positive changes in tooth brushing habit and attitude to oral hygiene have been reported. Also, 10 teachers were actively engaged in the project. Twenty mothers and a father benefitted from the implementation of the NICU Day Lounge Project. At community level the playground projects reached about 350 children and families, and four advanced standard day care centre facilities have been constructed in the community. Furthermore, a series of knowledge management and policy-related products were generated – this includes ante-natal and post-delivery manual, measurement instruments for indicator framework in education, public advocacy information, accredited training programme for childcare workers. Moreover, projects in the NAP have influenced national level discussion on ECCE and contributed to policy dialogue to sustain and improve the early childhood care and education system.

Efficiency

Efficiency in the management of the NAP has been discussed under four headings: technical team, coordination, monitoring, and financing. The NAP is being implemented by sector ECCE teams and coordinated and monitored by the IECD. However the source of finance for the NAP varies considerably.

Technical Team

Several indicators were selected to assess the functioning of the Technical Team. Opinion of the Technical Team was sought on team cohesion, sector preparedness and incentive. Technical Team Members were asked to rate the extent to which the team members working together, the readiness of the sector to undertake the projects, and the incentive given to the team facilitated or hindered the implementation of the NAP. The response options were: “Greatly helped”, “Helped”, “Somewhat helped”, “Hindered”, and “Greatly hindered”. The percentages of respondents choosing the five options have been presented in Table 23.

Table 23: Percentage of respondents rating selected conditions as helping or hindering implementation of NAP

	Greatly helped %	Helped %	Somewhat helped %	Hindered %	Greatly hindered %
Team members	40.7	44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0
Sector readiness	22.2	29.6	25.5	18.5	3.7
Incentive system	28.0	24.0	12.0	20.0	16.0

It is fairly clear that members felt that working together as a team has to a large extent been instrumental in the implementation of the NAP in their sector – this is a strong indication of group cohesiveness. This also emerges from the comments accompanying the ratings which outlined three main characteristics of the ECCE Teams: *facilitative interaction* – respondents emphasised “collaboration”, “sharing tasks” and information, “participation and feedback”, and “team work”; *constructive task performance* – conducive “task allocation”, actively engaged” in

“implementation”; *collegial environment* – ‘understanding role’, ‘supportive and cooperative’, providing specialised ‘input’. It can be noted from the results in Table 23 that none of the respondents chose the ‘Greatly hindered’ and ‘Hindered’ options, and only two negative attitudinal comments were noted.

The pattern of responses related to ‘Sector readiness’ and ‘Incentive system’ was quite different from those for ‘Team members’. On the one hand, only about half of respondents rated ‘Sector readiness’ (51.8%) and ‘Incentive system’ (52%) as a factor that helped or greatly helped the implementation of projects in their sectors. On the other hand, about one-quarter of respondents acknowledged that ‘Sector readiness’ (22.2%), and one-third of respondents (36%) that ‘Incentive system’ hindered or greatly hindered project implementation.

Further cross tabulation analysis was necessary to clarify the situation where it was reported that the readiness of the sector and the incentive system were factors which hindered the implementation of the NAP. The response options were coded as follows: “Greatly helped”=5, “Helped” =4’, “Somewhat helped”=3, “Hindered”= 2, “Greatly helped”= 1. The first three and last two options were collapsed to form two response categories “Hindered” and “Helped”. The number of responses defined by sectors has been presented in Table 24a and 24b.

Table 24a Number of respondents indicating ‘Sector readiness’ as a factor hindering or helping the implementation of the NAP

Sector	Helped	Hindered	Total
Education	5	0	5
Health	4	5	9
LG	5	0	5
SA	3	1	4
IECD	4	0	4
Total	21	6	27

Table 24b Number of respondents indicating ‘Incentive system’ a factor hindering or helping the implementation of the NAP

Sector	Helped	Hindered	Total
Education	5	0	5
Health	2	6	8
LG	3	2	5
SA	2	1	3
IECD	4	0	4
Total	16	9	25

Hindrance in the implementation of the NAP associated with sector readiness was acknowledged by one member out of the four in the Social Affairs Sector and five members out of nine in the Health Sector. Members from the Health Sector noted “lack of support from management”, “lack of commitment from higher officials”, “ECCE not forming part” of the sector deliberation. Concerning incentives six out of eight members, two out of five, and one out of three in the Health, Local Government and Social Affairs Sectors, respectively claimed that the ‘Incentive system’ hindered the implementation of the NAP. Reference was made not only to inadequate support but also to lack of financial incentive. From consultative information, it became apparent that the implementation of the IEM and the Day Lounge Projects in the Health Sector has been greatly affected by the weak focal link between senior management and the Technical Team. The financial issue will be addressed later. For now, it is becoming evident that the two indicators (sector readiness and incentive system) may be referring to the motivational impetus of the Sector with regards to the role of the NAP in promoting ECCE at the national level.

Another key factor in the functioning of the Technical Team is the Technical Team Meeting. The efficiency with which Technical Team Meetings were convened was assessed by using a four-

point scale to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with 11 statements of quality set out in Table 6 (column 1). The response options were coded as follows: “Strongly agree”=4, “Agree”=3, “Disagree”=2, “Strongly disagree”=1. The percentage of respondents rating each statement and the mean value which was calculated has been presented in Table 23.

Table 25: Percentage of respondents rating statements for quality of meetings

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
	%	%	%	%	
The goals of the meeting were clear to me	70.4	25.9	3.7	0.0	3.7
Discussion at the meeting was productive	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	3.7
Most attendees participated in meeting discussion	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	3.6
The meeting was well organized	59.3	40.7	0.0	0.0	3.6
Decisions were made collectively	55.6	44.4	0.0	7.4	3.6
Leadership during the meeting provided clear direction	54.2	45.8	0.0	0.0	3.5
The meeting objectives were met	51.9	40.7	0.0	7.4	3.4
	Average Mean				3.6

These results show that the average mean ranged from 3.4 to 3.7. This can be considered to be a very high score. When the statements are studied individually it can be seen that there are three main aspects of the meetings which have been rated. The first two items (mean 3.7) relate to the usefulness of the meeting: More than two-thirds of respondents “Strongly agreed” with the two statements (70.4% and 66.7%, respectively). The second set of items with average mean score of 3.6 may be denoting the level of engagement: More than half (55.6%, 59.3% and 55.6%, respectively) of respondents chose the “Strongly agreed” option. The statement before last (mean 3.5) refers to chairing of meeting and the last statement to achievement of meeting objectives: About half (54.2% and 51.9%, respectively) of respondents “Strongly Agreed” with those. On the whole, the figures presented in Table 25 are very high.

These findings would suggest a high level of efficacy of the Technical Team Meeting as perceived by members. All team members perceived the meeting as useful with clear objectives. There is a strong sense of active participation when members engage in productive discussion and make decisions collaboratively. Only one member disagreed with the leadership of the meeting and three members perceived that meeting objectives had not been met. Regular planned working meetings are essential for the efficient functioning of the Technical Team.

This is further confirmed by some of the qualitative information collected from individual team members. Technical Team Members maintain a strong focus on ECCE within and outside their specialism. Thus there are “common goals”, a “common vision”, “common understanding” and a wider perspective of ECCE issues. The teams generate a sense of “collectivity” through their sharing of “ideas”, “accomplishments”, “experiences”, through “open discussion”, “collective decision making” and “team work”. There is a supportive atmosphere where there is “guidance”, “mutual support”, “responsiveness” and capacity building. One member wrote: “I have learnt a lot from the technical team, each person has own experience and capacity to share”. In all sectors, the chairs were commended for their knowledge and dynamism, for their “great work” and for “giving clear directives. There is also the affective element where team members describe the teams as committed “working with their hearts”, where there is a “willingness to go the extra mile”, members “valuing each other”. The message here is that the technical team has

become the powerhouse for successful implementation of the NAP and their salient role in project implementation need to be recognised and supported by their organisation.

Coordination

Coordinating mechanism is a key factor in the successful implementation of the NAP and IECD as the institutional anchor for ECCE is overall responsible for the NAP. Coordinating processes were examined by studying IECD’s role in the development, implementation and monitoring of the NAP. This was explored by asking Technical Team Members to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with IECD in coordinating the NAP - the response options were “Extremely satisfied”, “Very satisfied”, “Reasonably satisfied”, “Dissatisfied”, and “Very dissatisfied”.

Table 26: Percentage of respondents rating level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with IECD coordinating NAP and mean score

	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Reasonably satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean
Development	12.0	56.0	24.0	8.0	0.0	3.7
Monitoring	20.0	44.0	20.0	16.0	0.0	3.6
Implementation	8.0	48.0	32.0	8.0	4.0	3.4
					Average mean	3.6

The results in Table 26 provide positive indication of efficient coordination of the NAP. The mean value ranges from 3.4 to 3.7. The large majority of respondents were at least reasonably satisfied with the coordination of the development, monitoring (88%) and implementation (84%) of the NAP. There is substantial evidence to qualify IECD’s role as the: “motivator” that initiates planning actions and follows through; facilitator that provides professional “advice”, “guidance”, and “consultation”; as the regulator that organises “systematic” consultative forum, workshops and meetings and set standards to ensure that the plan is developed “in line with ECCE priorities in the relevant sector” as an advocate that publicises sector plans and links with appropriate authorities for support. Furthermore, IECD has a monitoring role for “tracking” and reviewing progress, and leveraging adjustments. One of the methods for monitoring the plan is through the surveillance visits.

Surveillance

Team members were also asked to rate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with four components of the surveillance visits (Table 27, column 1). The ratings were coded as follows: “Extremely satisfied” =5, “Very satisfied”=4, “Reasonably satisfied”=3, “Dissatisfied”=2, and “Very dissatisfied”=1. The percentage of respondents, their rating options and the mean value has been presented in Table 27.

According to the findings the mean value is 3.7 reflecting a fairly high level of satisfaction. More than half of the respondents were extremely or very satisfied with surveillance processes such as monitoring project management (55.5%), tracking project output and outcome (62.9%), monitoring adjustment to the plan (65.4%) and providing methodological support (53.8%). In contrast the figures for the dissatisfaction level represent one participant who may need more technical support in project implementation.

However, it can be noted that the higher level of satisfaction (mean 3.8) is concerned with adjusting the plan. Illustrative remarks from participants support these findings. The surveillance visits became a checkpoint for sector team to connect project activities with project implementation and consider the necessary “adjustment”, “modification”, “revision” in operationalising the plan. Collegial and professional interaction is noted as technical team members affectively recognise the “input”, “insight” and “knowledge” brought to the surveillance sessions. These are indications that the adaptive measures suggested through the surveillance visits have been very effective in “moving the project forward.”

Table 27: Percentage of respondents rating their satisfaction with surveillance visits and mean value

	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Reasonably satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
Monitoring project management	14.8	40.7	40.7	0.0	3.7	3.6
Tracking project output and outcome	22.2	40.7	29.6	3.7	3.7	3.7
Monitoring overall adjustment and alignment to the original plan	23.1	42.3	30.8	0.0	3.8	3.8
Methodological support	19.2	34.6	42.3	0.0	3.9	3.7
					Average mean	3.7

Nevertheless, it can be seen from Table 27 that there is about one-third of participants - ‘Monitoring project management’, 40.7%; ‘Tracking project output and outcome’, 29.6%; ‘Monitoring overall adjustment and alignment to the original plan’, 30.8%; ‘Methodological support’- who are only reasonably satisfied with the surveillance visits. This would suggest that there are some reservations. Most of the critique is associated with the intensity of the sessions which can be intimidating. This has been described as “critical”, “overpowering”, “pressurised at times”, with “high expectation” and a “top down approach”,. This could be discussed further. Perhaps a more flexible approach may need to be considered.

Finance

Efficient financial resourcing of the NAP has been evaluated from the perspective of the Technical Team and the views of senior officials. Numeric data and qualitative comments from team members have been linked with consultative information from sector heads to gain some understanding in funding the implementation of projects.

Table 28: Percentage of respondents rating funding arrangement as hindering implementation

Sector	%
Education	00
Health	55.6
Local Government	0.0
Social Affairs	75
IECD	0.0
Technical Team	29.6

Team members were asked to rate the extent to which funding arrangements helped or hindered the implementation of the NAP. The five response options were coded as follows: “Greatly helped”=5, “Helped”=4, “Somewhat helped”=3, “Hindered”=2. “Greatly hindered”=1.

From these results it is evident that there were inconsistencies in funding the NAP. Almost one-third of respondents (29.6%) claimed that the funding arrangements hindered or greatly hindered the implementation of the NAP. Thus, it can be assumed that funding was successful in three out of the five sectors where none of the respondents claimed that it was a hindrance. Successful funding was linked with planned allocation “streamlined” within the budget for the sector. Just the same, there were references to procedural complications to access the funds and the need for strong sponsorship alliances for additional funding. At the same time, it can be seen that more than half of team members in the Health Sector (55.6%) and three-quarters in the Social Affairs Sector (75%) reported that funding arrangements was a hindrance. Funds were not initially available, more elaborate “project expenditure” processes had to be undertaken, and interested donors had to be sought and convinced. It becomes quite apparent that funding the NAP has become quite complex.

Consultative information provides added insight: Funding for the NAP is multi-layered and quite complex. Central Government Funds are allocated to sectors for ECCE programmes and activities as part of the strategic plan for the sector. However, this budget precedes the development of the proposed NAP. Therefore, specific funding for the NAP has been derived from that central budget, and extra or additional financial resources are sought from donor agencies linked to ECCE or external sponsors interested in ECCE. This situation has added complexity to the efficient allocation and use of funds and has at times limited or hindered the implementation process. There is a need to review allocation mechanism of donor agencies and engage the Financial Sector at the national level.

Impact

The NAP was conceived as a means of initiating action that would extend on the previous plan and show enhanced qualitative changes at the level of the sectors but also at a more general level. As part of the wider scope of the ECCE Framework, it can be viewed as a way of focusing on ECCE policies and programmes, detailing best practices and promoting positive attitudes to the importance of the holistic development of children.

The Technical Team Members were asked to give their opinion on the level of impact of the NAP with reference to five selected aspects (Table 29, column1). The proposed options were coded as follows: “Very high impact” = 5, “High impact” = 4, “Reasonable impact” = 3, “Little impact” = 2, “No impact” = 1. The percentage of respondents choosing impact options and the calculated mean value have been presented in Table 29.

The average impact rating ranges from 3.8 to 4.3. Also three categories of impact can be considered. The first refers to general knowledge of ECCE where a large majority of respondents rated very highly or highly the impact of the NAP in ‘Increasing knowledge of ECCE’ (88.5%) and ‘Raising awareness of the importance of ECCE’ (84.6%). The second category is concerned with specific strategies which have been developed through the implementation of the NAP. About three-quarters of the members have very high or high ratings for the impact the NAP had in ‘Developing technical strategies’ (72.2%). For the last category, the NAP’s influence on

policy and programme development has been addressed. About three quarters and two-thirds of team members, respectively, had very high or high ratings for the NAP’s role in ‘Informing policy and practice’ (72.2%) and ‘Developing programme’ (66%). These findings would indicate an overall fairly high level of impact of the NAP.

Knowledge - It can be deduced that the NAP has had positive impact in increasing knowledge of ECCE. The impact is at three levels. Firstly, team members enthusiastically described their enriching experience at sector level where they enthused that the “NAP highlights the importance of ECCE in the sectors” where the implementation of the projects lead to “in-depth knowledge in different aspects of ECCE”. Secondly, the knowledge and awareness is extended to key stakeholders such as teachers, childminders, health workers or other participating professionals. Thirdly, the NAP has helped to raise national “consciousness” as the public are better informed about ECCE from dissemination of “tangible” project results, from “reports in the media”, and political recognition at higher government level. It is satisfying to note that increased knowledge has been a direct consequence of project implementation. Just the same, it is clear that general awareness of ECCE and the importance of ECCE in holistic provisions has been very much recognised and is personally acknowledged by Technical Team Members.

Technical Strategies – The positive impact associated with the development of technical strategies has taken different form, namely the use of the diagnostic monitoring model, field methodologies and logistics, and the multi-agency approach. For example, the pre-post research design has been successfully adopted for the Tooth Brushing Programme, and the research development model has been adapted in the Day Care Centre Project to develop standards.

Table 29: Percentage of respondents rating level of impact

	Very high Impact	High impact	Reasonable impact	Little impact	No impact	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
Increasing knowledge of ECCE	50.0	38.5	7.7	0.0	3.8	4.3
Raising awareness of the importance of ECCE	50.0	34.6	11.5	0.0	3.8	4.2
Developing technical strategies	28.0	44.0	24.0	0.0	4.0	4.0
Informing policy and practice	28.0	44.0	24.0	0.0	4.0	3.9
Developing programme	16.0	60.0	16.0	8.0	0.0	3.8
					Average mean	4.0

Instrumentation, practical data management and data collection procedures have been exploited to develop Education Indicators. The survey method has been applied to measure the level of ECCE knowledge to evaluate project outcome. The implementation of projects in the NAP has had impacts through a combination of research, developmental and monitoring activities.

Informing policy and practice -The NAP succeeded to target positive policy and influence practice through projects involving the monitoring of child protection standards in children homes and instituting enhanced provisions for neonatal nursing mothers. Another example is related to the policy shift which resulted in an established quality assured training programme for child care workers and the proposed legislative renewal of standards for day care centres. An important inclusion in the transitory process of children from child care facilities to pre-school is the institutional measure of early learning readiness of children. Infrastructural investment in

standardised day care facilities has revolutionised day care provisions leading to improved child development programmes. Through the implementation of successful projects there is distinct recognition of the NAP’s fundamental influence on the policy environment for ECCE.

Collaboration

The impact of the NAP on the collaborative working style has been explored by asking Technical Team Members to rate the effectiveness of the leadership role of IECD in collaborating with the sectors. Team members were presented with 9 statements (Table 30 column 1) and the response options were coded as follows: “Excellent”=5, “Very good”=4, Good=3, Fair=2, Poor=1.

The results in Table 30 provide positive indication of effective collaboration. The average mean value (3.7) is fairly high. The mean figure for the first three statements relating to empowering the technical team (mean=4.0), communicating the vision to high level officials (mean=3.9), developing a common language (mean=3.9) reflects the representational role of IECD in its collaborative actions. The next two statements concerning team motivation and team cohesion (mean = 3.7) describe the quality of the working relationship, and the last three statements - ‘Respecting the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners’ (mean=3.6), ‘Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently’ (mean=3.5), ‘Resolving conflict amongst partners’ (mean=3.5) – can be associated with the participatory approach which characterises the professional interaction.

Table 30: Percentage of respondents rating effectiveness of collaboration

	Excellent %	Very Good %	Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Mean
Empowering members of the Technical Team involved in the partnership	11.5	46.2	26.9	7.7	7.7	4.0
Communicating the vision of the collaboration with high level officials	24.0	60.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	3.9
Working to develop a common language across sectors	26.9	42.3	23.1	7.7	--	3.9
Inspiring or motivating the Technical Team	15.4	50.0	26.9	--	7.7	3.7
Working to develop a common language within sectors	19.2	38.5	34.6	7.7	--	3.7
Creating an environment where the differences of opinion can be voiced	23.1	34.6	26.9	15.4	3.8	3.6
Respecting the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners	19.2	34.6	26.9	19.2	--	3.5
Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently	15.4	34.6	34.6	15.4	--	3.5
Resolving conflict amongst partners	11.5	26.9	38.5	19.2	--	3.2

These results confirm the main gist of the open statements made by team members. The pivotal role of IECD in the collaboration was given prominence as increasing focus on ECCE to “provide what is best for children”, promoting the “same goals” aimed at the development and “welfare of children”, and instituting a “common agenda” for all sectors, and establishing the structural linkage of sectors with high level decision making bodies. Collective team work was identified as the facilitative process to “build partnership” and “friendship”, and channels of “communication”. Much emphasis was placed on the mutual “enriching” exchanges: sharing of ideas, gaining further “insight”, enhancing skills and knowledge. The strengthening of human relations through the promotion of professional values was also well defined where the “opinion

of all team members are valued”, where there is “respect for views and ideas that are different”. The NAP has become a binding document for ECCE sectors. It is multi-sectoral and participatory. It promotes a multi-level approach and strengthens collaborative efforts to integrate ECCE within and across sectors.

Decision-making in the collaborative work environment was further explored by asking Technical Team Members to rate their level of satisfaction with six aspects (Table 31, column 1) of collaborative decision-making. The coded response options were ‘Very satisfied’=4, ‘Reasonably satisfied’=3, ‘Dissatisfied’=2, ‘Very dissatisfied’=1.

Table 31: Percentage of respondents rating collaborative decision-making

	Very satisfied	Reasonably satisfied	Dissatisfied	Strongly dissatisfied	Mean
	%	%	%	%	
Team members plan together in decision-making	66.7	33.3	--	--	3.6
Open communication among team members in decision-making	66.7	33.3	--	--	3.6
Team members cooperating in decision-making	66.7	33.3	--	--	3.6
Coordination of decision-making among team members	57.7	38.5	3.8	--	3.5
Shared responsibilities for decision-making	59.3	40.7	--	--	3.5
All team members concerns considered in decision-making	55.6	44.4	--	--	3.5
					Average mean 3.6

The results in Table 31 show that the average satisfaction level was very high (mean=3.6). In effect all respondents (100%) were at least reasonably satisfied with the planning, communication, cooperative, sharing, and concerns consideration components of the collaborative decision-making. Only one respondent was dissatisfied with the ‘Coordination of decision-making among team members’ (3.8%). On closer examination two dimensions of the collaborative decision-making can be discerned. The process itself when ‘Team members plan together’, where there is open communication among the members, and when team members cooperate in making decision (mean=3.6) and the interaction when there is coordination, shared responsibilities and collective involvement (mean=3.5) The overall impression is the participatory approach which has been adopted in the implementation of the NAP has nurtured the collaborative decision-making process and that Technical Team Members recognise the value of the shared process and the leadership role of IECD in that process. Some of the illustrative statements capture the essence of collective decision making as viewed by team members:

- There is team work, open discussion and collective decision making.*
- It provides opportunities for shared decision for innovation through mutual respect*
- It helps in taking decisions as a group rather than individually.*

Capacity building

The capacity building potential through activities and actions in the implementation of the NAP was examined by presenting 9 statements of impact (Table 32, column 1) to the Technical Team Members. They were asked to indicate if the NAP had had a negative influence, no influence, a somewhat positive influence or a positive influence. The percentage of members who reported a ‘Positive influence’ has been recorded in Table 32.

For the first five statements, it can be seen that about two-thirds of members said that the implementation of the plan had positively influenced them in, communicating their work (69%), improving their work practice (69%), making ECCE provisions (65.4%), reflecting on ECCE (65.4%). At the same time, more than half of the members acknowledged the positive influence of the NAP in self-assessment (60%), for validation processes (60%), in planning (56.0%), mentoring (53.8%), and in carrying out research (53.8%). Through these results two main areas of impact can be identified: professional work in promoting ECCE through the NAP and professional development through the implementation of the NAP. They provide further substantial evidence of the extent that the NAP has had in building the capacity of ECCE workers

Table 32: Percentage of respondents rating influence of NAP

	Positive influence
	%
Communicating what you are doing	69.2
Practices within your work	69.2
making ECCE provisions	65.4
Reflection on ECCE	65.4
Self-assessment	60.0
Validation processes	60.0
Planning	56.0
Mentoring	53.8
Research	53.8

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

The NAP has become a binding document for ECCE sectors. It provides strategic directions for selected key priority areas in SF- ECCE. A wide array of projects as an integral part of the plan has been designed and this has provided a rich field of experience that has shaped the responsibilities of participating sectors and expanded their roles in ECCE provisions.

An evaluation of the NAP has been carried out using a generic model to assess relevance, outcome, efficiency and impact. Three main methods have been used to make judgment about the achievements of the NAP in a manner that is congruent with the multi-sectoral approach and the promotion of ECCE nationally as espoused in SF- ECCE: questionnaire instrument, consultative information and document review.

Project implementation

The level of implementation of the projects are summarised under the six thematic areas.

1. Policy research and data system

Research methodology has been utilised to give policy direction in the development of ECCE. Five research projects have been designed to promote evidence-based decision making and develop measures to improve ECCE provision: “*Survey on the Level of Care and Welfare of Children Born to Teenage Mothers*”; “*Establishing structures and procedures for data collection based on Early Childhood Development (ECD) indicators for the Education Sector*”; evaluating the level of *knowledge and understanding of ECCE issues as a result of enhanced advocacy strategies and campaigns*; assessing the *provision of services in Day Care Centres to develop quality standards*; and *developing the standards*. Unfortunately management and funding difficulties affected the planned survey on teenage mothers. However, the previous model for

ECD Indicators in the Health Sector has been successfully adapted for the Education Sector and the project outcome exceeded expectation as additional key indicators relating to cognitive development and enrollment ratio have been constructed. On the other hand, the outcome for the Advocacy Survey encountered methodological limitation and was somewhat below target. Just the same, both case study and survey research have been intensively undertaken to assess current status of standards implementation in day care centres and to produce a comprehensive renewed quality standard product for day care centre operation.

2. Accountability and service delivery

The NAP has been a relevant vehicle to drive the improvement of service delivery and accountability in ECCE. This is targeted in five projects: “*Setting up a resting day lounge for nursing mothers with baby in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) as part of the postnatal care*”; “*Implementing the Tooth Brushing Programme for children in crèche*”; “*Introduction of the Personal Child Health Record (PCHR) Booklet*”; “*Upgrading interviewing facilities to provide a safe, supportive and comfortable waiting and interview room for child service users (2-8 years)*”; “*Monitoring Standards in Children Homes*”. The Day Lounge Project exemplifies supportive caring service delivery initiative which is sensitive to the needs of mothers with babies in NICU whilst a good practice model has been adopted in the Tooth Brushing Project. Despite the initial delay in deciding on a format for the PCHR booklet at the early conceptual stage, during the project’s implementation opportune external technical support ensured the production of an effective PCHR booklet prototype. Due to time limitation the testing phase could not be completed. Regrettably, the last two projects met with management difficulties and human resource limitations which interfered with project implementation.

3. Community Parental Involvement

With the increasing focus on the 0-3 age group, the need to cater for working mothers, and the necessity to involve parents in the development of their children two community projects (*Local Government Sector*) have been extended to provide quality access to day care and playground facilities: “*Expansion of Day Care Centre Provision for children*”; “*Providing Community-Based Outdoor Play Facilities*”. The first project supported the construction of *four standard day care centre facilities* in the community, although due to timing, the operational status is yet to be determined. The Playground Project has met with some success as a range of regional playgrounds facilities have been renovated, refurbished, and equipped. Moreover, socio-educational activities have been organised for children and parents in some of the playgrounds. Good practice and experiences in establishing outdoor play facilities can be replicated in other regions.

4. Training Professional Development

Two projects: “*The development of an Accredited Pre-registration and Sensitisation Training Programme for Non-registered Home-based Childminders on the National Standards for Childminding Services*”; “*Use of Early Childhood Training Room for service providers and practitioners*” were related to training early childhood professionals. Strong partnership

arrangement between IECD and SITE has resulted in the creation of a nationally accredited training programme to be widely implemented for childcare workers. Investment in providing a purpose built, newly-equipped training facility in the second project has become a valuable resource for training diverse groups of early childhood workers such as teachers, childminders, and student teachers to reinforce the play-based approach in early learning

5. Early Detection and Intervention

The necessity for early detection which would lead to early intervention cannot be overemphasized in the development of children and after the procurement of equipment and materials an attempt has been made to initiate the project: “*Introduction of the Universal Neonatal Screening for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM)*”. Unfortunately, the operationalisation of this project was thwarted by communication problems and transfer of information which retarded its implementation.

6. Early Learning

Concentrated attention to the crucial importance of early learning has given rise to two projects “*Assessment of Early Learning Readiness of Children in Home-based Childminding Services*”; and “*Tracking, monitoring of pupils’ progress and attainment from Crèche to Primary Two*”. The first project was an application of the model developed in the previous plan to test children’s learning readiness as they enter pre-school. This is a very successful project which has helped to refine the measuring instruments and assessment methodology to become institutionalised as a baseline for monitoring learning achievement at early childhood level in school. As a follow-up, in the second project, a functional cooperative and networking structure has been built for longitudinal measurement of children’s performance to develop interventions to improve the status of children with learning difficulties. The thrust of this project has been weakened by the difficulty in overcoming the initial technologically cumbersome design.

Achievement of Expected Outcomes

The evaluation of project implementation based on the integrated qualitative-quantitative analysis method has shown that two-thirds of the targeted outcomes have been achieved. Of the **30** “Expected Outcomes” in the NAP, **20** have met expectation with **three** outcomes overreaching expectation. Moderate progress has been made towards the achievement of **four** “Expected Outcomes”. However, there has been substantial limitation in the achievement of the other **6** “Expected Outcomes”.

Effectiveness

The NAP effectiveness can be illustrated from the wide range of beneficiaries: children, teachers, childcare workers and parents in schools, childminding institution, and the community. Accumulated evidence attests to its effectiveness. However, it has been found that project preparation and sector policy can have an influence on effective project implementation. Moreover, smooth communication channels with and from leaders has a positive effect on project outcome. Strong and flexible partnership arrangements nationally and even

internationally have emerged as a dynamic factor in the success of projects in the NAP. It is evident from the data collected that the NAP has achieved a high level of effectiveness.

Efficiency

At sector level the ECCE Technical Team has demonstrated a high level of functioning through project activities and the engagement of senior managers has an influence on the motivational force of the team. At the system level, a versatile efficient coordinating structure through IECD, with a facilitative supportive monitoring role reinforced the delivery capacity of the sectors. However, financial resourcing of the NAP may need streamlining across sectors and from central source.

Impact

The NAP has had considerable impact within and across ECCE sectors. It has increased knowledge and understanding of ECCE within sectors and has encouraged reflection on the ECCE; it has had positive learning responses for members of the technical teams; and has brought into prominence essential research and monitoring skills. Through the collaborative working style sectors have shared experiences, exchanged knowledge, and consolidated the relationship with IECD. It has had substantive impact on programme development; it has prompted the development of intensive training sessions for ECCE practitioners; it has led to improved ECCE provisions and generated relevant policy discussion for improved service delivery.

Recommendation

1. Weaknesses in project implementation due to poor design fit have been noted, it may be necessary to pay more attention to the conceptualisation and preparatory stage of projects to ensure design coherence. There need to be firm linkages between outcome and performance indicators. The performance indicators must be objectively verifiable and the expected outcome must be measurable and specifically expressed.
2. The Technical Team has four major responsibilities: develop sectoral action plans, collaborate with IECD and other relevant organisations to implement the plan, carry out monitoring activities, and produce progress and evaluation reports. Added to those the Chair coordinates the implementation of the plan, organises capacity building sessions and manages the budget. There need to be clear recognition that the exigencies of the above functions place added pressure on the professional role of individuals delivering ECCE services within the sectors and an incentive system must be given due consideration.
3. Communication channel between the Technical Team and senior managers need to be smooth with a two-way flow for effective interaction. Although all senior managers are in agreement with the relevant fit of the NAP in their organisation, the structural characteristic of some organisations may inadvertently obstruct communication pathways. There is a need for senior managers to ensure that the NAP becomes an integral part of ECCE provision in their organisation.

4. Accessing adequate finance has been limiting project implementation in some sectors. However within the SF-ECCE, financial supporting structure specifically for ECCE had been proposed. Just the same ECCE has been underrepresented by the Financial Sector. Financial advocacy plan for ECCE need to be developed and specific budgetary provisions need to be made for the implementation of the NAP.

CONCLUSION

Through this evaluation, convincing and decisive evidence have been gathered to demonstrate that the objectives of the NAP are important for the development of ECCE provision in Seychelles. Through the implementation of the plan, sectoral projects and programmes have been designed and most of them have been successfully completed, collaboration within and between sectors have been strengthened, partnership across sectors and with external agencies have been enhanced. Moreover, there is ample evidence throughout the analysis to show that the project-based approach of the NAP has been instrumental in yielding formidable results.

The NAP has been a very relevant vehicle for sustaining and improving the ECCE system in Seychelles. The projects adequately target and promotes positive policy and institutional measures to improve service delivery and learning programmes for early childhood children and their parents. The NAP's investment in building evidence base indicators and current status of childminding centres has become a valuable resource for the community, national governments but also for international partners to develop interventions and quality standards to improve ECCE provision.

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