

EDUCATION



The First International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education



From fragile to resilient systems: What does it take?

Following the success of the First International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, the IECD in collaboration with the Unesco-IBE is pleased to present you with a series of articles relating on early childhood care and education.

The articles, written by the international experts who attended the conference to share their knowledge, good practices and experiences, touch on various subjects which have a direct relation with or affect ECCE. The first article from Dr Mmantseta Marope is based on her keynote address at the opening ceremony of the conference. The article highlights the building of resilient systems for Early Childhood Care and Education.

Dr Marope's keynote address focused on the theme of the conference which was: *Building Resilient ECCE Systems*. Having led the first World Congress on Early Childhood Care and Education which was held in Moscow, the Russian Federation in 2010, Dr Marope took this landmark event as her starting point. She recalled commitments that Unesco member

states made to equitably provide quality ECCE services to ensure holistic early childhood development of all children. This commitment, she highlighted, is captured in the *Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation: Harnessing the Wealth of Nations*. Dr Marope also recalled the decisive leadership demonstrable in the then Right Honorable Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles, Danny Faure's closing speech of the World Congress. He undertook to go back home and lead by example. And indeed he did! Thanks to his deliberate, unflinching and exemplary leadership the Republic of Seychelles has clearly transitioned from a fragile to a resilient ECCE system.

Using the concept of fragility as applied to states, Dr Marope went on to identify key characteristics of fragility and those of resilience. Using the analogy of 'fragile states' she concluded that too many countries have fragile ECCE systems, and this jeopardises holistic early development of their children. The underdevelopment of children in the early years, she further asserted, risks countries' potential to develop hu-

man resources that can steer future development at the individual, family, community, country and global levels. Even further, it denies countries, the possibility of human capital accumulation over time. She pointed out that the challenge of fragile ECCE systems is more formidable, though not limited to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, West Asia and South Asia.

She underscored that it is therefore no small achievement that as a Sub-Saharan Africa country, the Republic of Seychelles has transitioned to a resilient ECCE system. This is evident in the fact that on most of the indicators of holistic early childhood development, the Republic of Seychelles resembles very advanced countries such as Sweden. Dr Marope went on to identify key enablers that explain the success registered by the Republic of Seychelles. Key among the many given were: (i) visionary, decisive, committed, benevolent and unwavering national and global political leadership, (ii) sense of urgency, time efficient, effective and decisive action by the political leadership, (iii) effective and consequential participation in global dialogue on

ECCE, (iv) political stability, (v) strong and stable technical leadership, capable of giving effect to global, regional and national normative instruments, (vi) readiness and facility to learn from diverse sources, and confidence to act while learning, (vii) confidence, accountability and transparency to subject the national ECCE system to periodic external reviews, (viii) institutionalization of working methods and culture of work marked by collaboration, and (ix) elevated coordination, strategic positioning of ECCE, and the rallying of national resources.

Dr Marope concluded with a strong appeal to partner countries to consider the example of the Republic of Seychelles, and to put their ECCE services on a path toward resilient systems.

A contribution from the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD)

Special commendation and our gratitude to Dr Mmantseta Marope for her unwavering commitment and support for the designation of Seychelles as a 'Best Practice Hub' for Early Childhood Care and Education. (February 2017)



Biography

Dr Mmantseta Marope assumed the role of director of the Unesco International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, Switzerland on July 15, 2014. She holds a Ph.D. in Education from Pennsylvania State University, and a BA and a CCE from the University of Botswana and Swaziland. Within Unesco, she has held several director positions at the headquarters in Paris including the director of the Division for Basic to Higher Education and Learning. Prior to Unesco, her experience includes 10 years at the World Bank, 11 years university teaching, two years as executive secretary of ERNESA (Educational Research Network in Eastern and Southern Africa), and extensive consultancy and advisory services to Ministries of Education, Regional Economic Communities, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), bilateral and multilateral agencies, and education research networks.

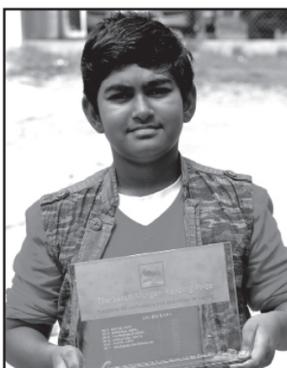


Dr Marope addressing delegates at the conference



World Book Day 2017

VISP marks World Book Day



On Thursday March 2, Vijay International School Praslin (VISP) celebrated World Book Day. Students came to school dressed as their favourite book character or word and took part in several activities designed to promote reading and literacy throughout the day. There were shared reads, a fancy dress parade, spelling bee competitions, speeches from local writers and other exciting challenges planned throughout the day.

The day was also celebrated with a special whole-school assembly where the staff team performed 'Alice in Wonderland' and various prizes and certificates were awarded to those who had demonstrated excellent reading throughout the school.

Celebrations for World Book Day continued into the evening as VISP hosted a 'Books and Blankets' event,

open to the local community. Children who attended were invited to choose reading rooms to visit, where staff and parent volunteers were on hand to read their favourite short stories and book excerpts to the children. This was held in the cosy ambience of lamplight and students were invited to bring along their own cushions and blankets. Face-painting, a build-a-bookmark station and food stalls were also available.

The day was a huge success and Vijay International School welcomes families and children to come and help us celebrate next year.

The accompanying photos show highlights of the event.

Contributed

