

IECD attends its inaugural meeting of the UNESCO Category 2 Centres



The CEO of IECD and members of the management team attended the 6th Meeting of UNESCO Category 2 Centers on 24th March, with the topic "Together to Foresee the Future of Education Quality". The UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE) Center in Saudi Arabia hosted the webinar in partnership with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States.

The meeting is under the Patronage of His Excellency, The Minister of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr Hamad Al Sheikh, chairperson of the UNESCO RCQE. Also present were Ms Fatimah Roaiss, UNESCO RCQE Deputy Director-General, Dr Abdul Rahman bin Ibrahim Almedaires, RCQE Director-General and Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education – UNESCO.

Followed by moderators and presenters from the Regional Centre for Adult Education – Egypt, the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology – Bahrain, the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration – Ghana, Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding – South Korea, proceed by the International Centre for Higher Education Innovation – China, UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning – M Germany, and our commendable Institute of Early Childhood Development – Seychelles.

Dr Abdul Rahman bin Ibrahim Almedaires, (RCQE) Director-General, gave the welcoming remarks, noting that the education system, in general, is facing many challenges, particularly during the pandemic. He further pointed out that quality education prioritized is sustainable regionally, internationally and globally, improving our capacity to provide quality education to all of our children.

In the opening speeches by the Minister of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Assistant Director-General for Education –

Continued on page 2



Chairman's Message

It is with great pleasure that I write these introductory remarks on the launch of the first edition of the Newsletter for 2022 for the local and international community in ECCE and public in general. The spirit behind it is to highlight the milestone accomplishments, deemed relevant and noteworthy, for the IECD, our partners and the country in general. My heartfelt thanks go to the small like-minded team for taking on this project with gusto and enthusiasm. Their relentless efforts, resilience and diligence are to be applauded, in the face of adversity and the challenges.

Seychelles is considered as a world leader in ECCE! In truth, this makes IECD the first organization in the country to receive such an impressive international status. Indeed, our supportive partners, stakeholders and all those involved in ECCE, including our readership, are indeed proud of this accolade, the positive impact and visibility for our small island nation. This has come about through hard work, strong technical leadership and continuous political commitment, with a persistent drive and determination to advance development and tangible outcomes in ECCE.

We are currently taking bold steps to open our doors to the world in our capacity as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre for ECCE. We hope to keep our local and international partners and collaborators abreast of this significant development through our next newsletter. As with all beginnings, there is room to grow and improve, and we count on the support of everyone to make sure that this transition is as smooth as possible.

We hope that you will find this issue as resourceful as our last one. Read, enjoy, and by all means, do your part and contribute to the great cause of ECCE!

We would also like to thank our readership for their interest and continual support.

Captain David Savy
Chairman



From the Editor

After weeks of planning and documenting relevant information about the happenings during the year's first half, we are proud to present the 14th issue of the Children's 1st Newsletter. Features various milestone projects, activities and news of the Institute and in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), at both local and international levels, and a new addition entitled 'Chairman's Message'.

Children's 1st brings together all staff from the support and technical programmes and partners in ECCE as they reflect and analyze the accomplishments and ink their thoughts on the newsletter. As usual, we are committed to highlighting the achievements recorded in this short space of six months, with the steadfast support from the Board, partners in ECCE, external networks, sponsors and friends. Mindful of the unforeseen circumstances and challenges, the Institute has met most of its targets for this period.

We would love to hear your views and comments on this issue. Suggestions for columns for future issues, questions and clarifications for our staff and partners, reflections on an event you attended, a project/initiative in ECCE you would like to know more about, or an encouraging word for the rest of my team - we want your input! We want this to be a collective effort of IECD, and we will do our best to make it happen!

I take this opportune moment to convey my gratitude to my staff for their invaluable contribution and great team spirit, and the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Board Members for their unflinching support during the past months. Secondly, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the team at UNESCO for their patience and great collaboration whilst we diligently go through the legal process and structural changes, to operate as a fully-fledged Category 2 Centre for ECCE, consistent to the provisions of the signed agreement between the Government of Seychelles and UNESCO.

Last but not least, our dear and faithful readers for their usual positive comments and compliments on the overall quality of our newsletter and timely sharing of our progress, in line with our strategy further to advance the national and international agenda for ECCE.


Mrs Shirley Choppy
Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Early Childhood Development

Continued from page 1

UNESCO, the minister emphasized the need to connect all the centres and the mission areas as a unique opportunity to change the course to bring about quality education. The meeting followed with a representative briefing on the role of category two centres in the UNESCO Strategy 2022-2029. Furthermore, presentations continued from nine category two centres divided into three sessions, including the CEO of IECD, Mrs Shirley Choppy, who highlighted critical areas of work, key achievements, and vital future projects.



All centres, including the IECD, emphasized that the pandemic's actual impact on learning had resulted in higher long-term challenges. They are encouraging research collaboration and mutual activities to stimulate new approaches. The need to continue the collaborative effort, not to leave anybody behind, as stated in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, to share knowledge and success stories, stimulate new approaches and innovation, and work wisely under the UNESCO umbrella.

IECD emphasized that collaboration promotes adopting the early childhood system, as other Category 2 Centers have stated, emphasizing inclusion and equality for lifelong learning.



Review of the Seychelles Framework For Early Childhood Care and Education



The 2010 UNESCO World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Moscow reaffirmed ECCE for all 0-8-year-olds. "A winning start for all" is the vision. ECCE supports health, nutrition, academic success, gender equality, employability, wages, and quality of life. Seychelles introduced its ECCE Framework in 2011. This approach encourages nationwide childcare.

The Framework helps Seychelles strengthen ECCE. A High-Level ECCE Policy Committee was formed to monitor framework implementation and stimulate sector collaboration. Governance required it. Two-year action planning started. Service delivery was commended nationally and globally for its project and program design, research, and integrated working approaches.

Global efforts are underway to increase ECCE system resilience and multi-sectoral service delivery. Our Early Childhood Care and Education Framework needs modernization.

The updated Framework would analyze children's needs using global research and strategic ideas. This plan addresses policy, programmatic, and legislative support for ECCE system-wide, in institutions, and beyond.

Consultant Dr Andre Leste has been reviewing the implementation of the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education to produce an updated national framework for ECCE. It positioned the Seychelles Framework for Early Childcare and Education (SF-ECCE) within the broader evolution of ECCE, highlighted emergent concerns and linked them to current trends.

IECD reviewed the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2011). A preliminary Review of the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2011) was formulated based on documentary analysis within the six global ECCE themes:

Governance, Access, Early Learning and Development, Families and Communities, Data Availability, and Workforce.



To achieve national consensus, IECD has developed a strategy for expanded stakeholder engagement, inviting line ministries and key people to contribute to the process and offer a balanced stakeholder viewpoint to influence decision-making about the "Revised Framework." Moreover, IECD divided the stakeholders from various organizations and ministries into six discussion groups, each representing one of the six themes above. The themes include implementation status, impediments, improvement needs, coordination, cooperation, and partnership challenges.

Six groups provided reports on six pieces. On Friday, April 29, 2022, all groups report on their small-group deliberations and participate in short discussions in a whole-group stakeholder consultation session.

Data for Enhancing Early Childhood Development Actions in Social Affairs Sector

The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs conducted a joint National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) forum on Data Management in ECCE. The event was held on Monday 21st March 2022 at the Seychelles Trading Company Conference Centre (STC).

Following the successful completion of the first phase of the Data Management Project in ECCE, which is being implemented in collaborative partnership with the Department of Social Affairs, as part of the implementation of the National Action Plan ECCE 2021-2022. The aim of the forum was to:

- 1) Build the capacity of and sensitize professionals from the Department of Social Affairs on data management.
- 2) Sharing the findings of the Situational Analysis that was conducted in this sector last year.

The Situational Analysis was principally conducted in 11 districts on Mahe and Praslin and the main informants were the Community Social Workers. The staff from Family Affairs Unit, Legal Services and Child Protection Section also had the chance to participate in focus group discussions. This undertaking took place from the 25th October to 15th November 2021.



The forum was attended by the Chairman of the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) board Captain David Savy, Principal Secretary for Social Affairs Mrs. Linda William-Melanie, Principal Secretary for Educational Development Mr. John Lesperance, Chief Executive of IECD Mrs. Shirley Choppy and personnel from IECD and social affairs department.

This then continued with a panel discussion, a brief video on harmonising data to better protect vulnerable children and a presentation of participatory certificates to a group of social workers who contributed to the findings on data management in ECCE.



Pre-Registration Sensitisation & Training of Ninth Group of Prospective Childminders



Continual upgrading and improvement in quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Seychelles, is of vital importance to the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD). In order to provide quality care, it is of utmost importance that Childminders and Assistants receive relevant training with information on how to keep children healthy and safe, as well as to learn and practice significant skills to maximize children's early learning and development.

In line with this, a ninth group of unregistered Childminders have received training on the National Childminding Standards. The Pre-Registration, Sensitization and Training Programme was launched on Saturday 02nd April 2022 and spanned over nine industrious Saturdays until 4th June 2022.

These sessions were being organized and coordinated by IECD and facilitated by specialists from various government Sectors connected to ECCE as well as other external experts. These Sectors included Ministry of Health, Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Sport and Family Affairs and Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency.

The aim of the training was to provide The home based childcare providers with knowledge and skills based on the National Childminding Standards Regulations, 2016. The twenty-three (23) participants included both practicing and prospective Childminders as well as childminders' Assistants.

The training encompassed components of Health (including Public, Dental and child Health), Child's Rights and Protection, Nutrition, Family & Community Engagement, Early Learning & Interaction, Safety & Physical Environment, Administration and Staffing. It also included sessions on the Employment Act, Employment Contract and Childminding Service Agreements. The participants expressed that they found the training extremely beneficial and relevant and attested that they are indeed looking forward to implement their new-found knowledge and experiences in their future endeavors as Childminders.

Consequently, the group of 22 participants received their Certificate of Attendance for the Pre-registration, Sensitisation and Training Programme in a prestigious ceremony held on Saturday 9th July 2022. IECD organised and hosted the event at the Savoy Resort Seychelles.

Captain David Savy, the Chairman of the IECD Board, officially launched the event, described it as a milestone achievement for the IECD, as it unswervingly provided training to, and empowered childcare providers to meet the increasing demands for essential services in the communities.

The Institute also took the opportunity to share a token of appreciation with the facilitators who had readily supported the training program throughout.

Childminders mainly animated the Ceremony, including testimony by a registered Childminder, Ms. Daniella Savy, a Vote of Thanks by the only male participant Mr Gabriel Victor, and an excellent musical presentation by registered Childminder and renowned local artist Mrs. Veronique Hollanda. All the participants present beamed proudly upon their new achievement as IECD welcomed them to the next phase of successfully registering their childminding service.



Assessment of Early Learning Readiness 2021: Dissemination of Findings



As part of the significant activities for the year 2022, a national ECCE Forum organized for Saturday, May 7th, 2021, for one of the essential highlights in regards to the dissemination of the Assessment of Early Learning Readiness of children aged 3 to 4 to be enrolled in crèche and preschool of the year 2022 nationally. Children from all childcare types were assessed from registered and unregistered settings.

A brief historical overview of the Assessment shows that recent early childhood care and education advances have emphasized assessing young children's growth and learning (ECCE). The National Standards on Childminding Regulation, 2016 focuses on early learning and monitoring children's progress, among other quality standards. The SI44 focuses on high-quality childcare programs that give young children opportunities to explore, discover, and continue learning later. This project started assessing the early learning readiness of children in registered home-based services in 2019, which provided a baseline and then in 2020, included children in registered centre-based services.

No statistics are available about the early learning readiness of children who attend childcare services that are not registered. The previous research did not include this specific population in its scope. There is no evidence to suggest that unregistered providers engage in early learning and stimulation activities. This year's study evaluates the early learning readiness of children aged three to four enrolled in registered and unregistered childcare services to determine whether they are ready to attend crèche or preschool in 2022. The results will help judge policy and planning initiatives to enhance children's healthy development further. In addition, it hopes to contribute to developing initiatives to improve practices in

childcare settings in Seychelles. The administration of the Assessment ran from September 2021 to November 2021. The institute had to organize parents whose children were not in a registered service to enroll for the Assessment. Four hundred sixty-five children from the unregistered services enrolled for the Assessment, where 1195 children took part. The contracted consultant, Mr. Egbert Benstrong, then analyzed the data. In the National ECCE Forum, Mr. Benstrong made an excellent analysis of the results briefly described as follows:

The Assessment's three hypotheses were:

- There is no difference between the genders regarding their preparedness level.
- There is no correlation between the children's attendance at a particular kind of childcare and their degree of preparedness.
- There is no correlation between parents' involvement and the child's preparation.

Eighty per cent of the parents were between the ages of 20 and 39, and eighty-one per cent of them were couples, of whom twenty-six per cent were married. It also demonstrated that 95.7 per cent had completed secondary school or a higher level of education, with 54.7 per cent having completed post-secondary education. It is also important to note that 75.7 per cent of them work full-time jobs, and 54.6 per cent have a household income between 6,000 and 11,000 SCR.

The assessment results revealed that 83.3 of the children were on target regarding their readiness for crèche or preschool in 2022. Of those children, 84.6 per cent of those who attended centre-based services, 82.8 per cent of those who attended registered home-based services, and 82.2 per cent of those who attended unregistered

childcare services were on target. Compared to previous years' results, it is fascinating to see how similarly male and female candidates scored. There was a success rate of 84.3 among the female students and 82.7 among the male students.

In conclusion, it is essential to point out that the national benchmark for the degree of preparation for crèche or preschool education in registered and unregistered childcare services is 83 per cent as of 2021. This benchmark will take effect in 2021. In conclusion, regarding the predetermined hypotheses, the results show no significant difference in the performance levels of girls and boys, nor is there a substantial difference between the three different kinds of care services.

It also makes it abundantly evident that there is no significant trend, toward a positive correlation between high levels of parent involvement, and high levels of proficiency and those who are on target.



International ECCE Conference: Building resilient and sustainable Early Childhood Care and Education systems



The Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), Mrs Shirley Choppy was recently invited to partake in the Closing Conference of the Project titled "Building resilient and sustainable Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) systems" in Dubai, UAE, following the fruitful collaboration between the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE) and the IECD. The conference aimed to establish links between Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policies, their dynamics and implementation within an

equitable, quality and innovative educational ecosystem, exchange knowledge by sharing best practices, and discuss perspectives. Mrs Choppy's presence has contributed to collective and robust advocacy in support of policies enabling quality ECCE and enhancing children's wellbeing from the very early years.

The high-level conference, co-convened by Dubai Cares and IBE-UNESCO, was held at the Dubai Cares Pavilion in Expo 2020, and was attended by Ministers, Experts in

Continued on page 10

SANDRA ADONIS



Grand Anse, Mahé
"The sessions were great, and I want to thank the IECD Staff."

SHABELAH ESTHER



Anse Aux Pins
"The training was fantastic. I learned a lot, which will also help me in my work."

WINSEL JULIENNE



Cascade
"The training was good, and I learned a lot about how to take care of small children as well as providing an effective service."

JUDANE PAYET



Perseverance
"I am happy to have learned the required standards to offer childminding services."

LUCIA LARUE



Baie Ste Anne, Praslin
"Each training session provided me with interesting information relevant to running a childminding service."

CYNDY MOREL



Grand Anse
"The sessions have enhanced my knowledge and have been very helpful"

SUZY SULTAN



Mont Fleuri
"The sessions gave me the knowledge and skills required to offer quality childminding service".

MARIE, LUCE SAMSOODIN



Anse Royale
"The training was very fruitful. It has helped me to better understand the wellbeing of children and the importance of the different standards"

RAPHAELLA ALCINDOR



Perseverance
"Everything covered in the sessions was interesting, and the information was well presented."

ELEEN ETIENNE



Anse Aux Pins
"The training was very fruitful and informative. I have managed to acquire more knowledge in relation to the standards for childminding service."

JANICE LABICHE



Anse Aux Pins
"I have found all the training sessions interesting, and I have really enjoyed them".

Congratulations to the 9th group of prospective childminders for completing their Pre-Registration and Sensitisation Training Programme in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) with IECD

MERLINE RIGODON



Port Glaud
"I have found the training very interesting and very lively. I have also gained a lot of knowledge that will help me to provide a better service"

GABRIEL VICTOR



St Louis
"I have found the sessions very enriching, and it has been a new experience for me"

MARIE-ANGE PAYET



Anse Aux Pins
"The training has enhanced my knowledge, and I have found it very helpful".

ANNIE CAMILLE



Mont Fleuri
"The training was interesting. It will help me improve in my daily practice."

SHARIFA EUGENIE



Mont Fleuri
"The training was very useful and interesting. Keep it up IECD team. Thank you very much for the opportunity."

SAMANTHA LABICHE



Anse Aux Pins
"The training was good. It has given me a lot of knowledge on how to take care of children."

VALENTINA MARIE



Anse Aux Pins
"I really enjoyed all the training sessions, it was very educational, and the information was well presented. The facilitators were very nice and understanding. Looking forward to more training in the future."

VALERIE PIERRE



Perseverance
"The training itself was very clear and easy to understand. The training is important. I certainly was not aware of all the mandatory standards to run this said business"

GEORGIA SALUM



Mont Buxton
"The training was very informative. All necessary knowledge was provided in a professional way."

PERUSHKA BARALLON



Grand Anse, Mahé
"I have found the training to be very interesting, and I look forward to more training in the future."

VERONIQUE THOMAS



Port Glaud
"All the sessions were interesting. It has helped me to understand how to operate a childminding facility. Also, to understand all the standards required to operate my establishment. Now I am in a better position to offer a childminding service."



ECCE and Curriculum, Civil Society representatives and Senior Officials from a few countries involved in the above project, namely Eswatini, Lao PDR and Cameroon. Seychelles was part of this initiative and provided technical assistance in ECCE to its counterpart, Cameroon. The IBE-UNESCO and Cameroon expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Seychelles IECD for its technical leadership role, support and guidance in this endeavour. These participating countries were officially presented with ECCE Toolkit by the IBE-UNESCO to provide concrete support and assistance to policymakers, professionals and inspectors in formulating and implementing an effective ECCE system.

During this conference, Mrs Choppy met with the Programme Manager of Dubai Cares to explore collaboration and initiatives relating to ECCE, in its capacity as a new Category 2 Centre for ECCE under the auspices of UNESCO, as well as opportunities for staff training and development. She also accepted an invitation from an organization responsible for ECCE in

Australia to collaborate on an innovative project that promotes play and knowledge sharing, meaningfully influencing the wellbeing and holistic development of young children, and fostering quality ECCE in the early years. Finally, the CEO of IECD met with the Director for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO to discuss the upcoming World Conference on ECCE and the leading role of IECD as a Category 2 Centre for ECCE. This conference will further increase the visibility of Seychelles, and IECD on a regional and international level.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Institute, Mrs. Choppy thanked the IBE-UNESCO for this great opportunity to partake in the project and successful outcome of the conference. She also wished all the countries involved in the project much success in implementing their newly resilient ECCE system and expressed her desire to continue with this partnership with IECD for the benefit of the children on the continent.

IECD meets with Registered Childminders

This year the first general meeting for Registered Childminders was held on the 12th and 19th March on Mahe and Praslin respectively. As per usual practice amongst other Agenda items IECD invites partners to share pertinent information to the registered Childminders.

Mrs. Lirae Quatre, an Employment Officer made a presentation focused on the applicability of the Employment Act and the Health and Safety in the workplace Regulations, in childminding facilities. This included the Principles of health, workplace hazards in the kitchen plus the preventative measures and legal provisions relating to hazards in the kitchen. The other point of focus was the overview of Employment Legislation, which entailed the types and particulars of an Employment Contract. The disciplinary procedures, measures and proceedings in the workplace was also discussed amongst other topics. On his part, Mr. Bernard Adonis, Legal Counsel, also made a few valuable contribution to complement the presentation. He highlighted the central roles of the registered Childminders,

the benefits of the national standards, reasons why it is important to abide to the laws set out by the Government.

Mrs. Choppy updated the registered Childminders on the proposed amendments to be made to the existing IECD Act, 2014, for submission to Cabinet for approval and subsequently endorsed by the National Assembly. This included an increase in the approved quota, regulation of



Centre Based Childcare services by IECD and enforcement of the Category 2 Centre Agreement with UNESCO to name a few.

The meeting also provided Childminders with new information regarding the upcoming Pre-registration and Sensitization training updates on the Financial Assistance,

the relocation and new contact number of IECD and the distribution of the Covid-19 resources donated by the NECCE Trust Fund. The Childminders were also advised to forward the list of children registered in their childminding services and the details of the children going to crèche. This information will assist the IECD in compiling a list of all children who is eligible to participate in the Early Learning Readiness Assessment 2022.

The group of Childminders on Praslin also benefitted from an overview of the procedures and proceedings of the IECD Appeals board. The Chairperson of the Appeals Board, Ms. Michelle Marguerite, presented this.

Overall, the meeting was very informative and interactive. The Childminders got the opportunity to share their views, concerns and contributions in regards to their childminding service. The turnout for the meeting was very good and it ended on a positive note.

Courtesy visit to new Ministers in ECCE



On April 1st, a group of IECD officials headed by the IECD Chairman, Capt. David Savy, accompanied by the CEO, Mrs Shirley Choppy, Director of Programme Coordination & Research, Mrs. Marie-France Barra, and Consultant, Andre Leste, paid a courtesy visit to the new Honorable Ministers in ECCE. Mrs. Peggy Vidot, Minister of Health and Mrs. Marie-Celine Zialor, Minister for Youth, Sports, and Family (MYSF). Members of the National Council for Children and the Chairperson of the Technical Team in Health assisted the visits.

The goals were to exchange information regarding the role of IECD (as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre for ECCE) and ECCE sectors, the ECCE resilient system and its pillars of best practice, highlight national milestone accomplishments, and identify opportunities for

specific measures and activities to enhance services and programmes. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen collaboration with the two Ministries for the benefit of young children, their families, our country and advance the national agenda for ECCE forward.

The Ministers showed great interest in collaborating on ideas that would increase and improve health-related services for young children and community-level action. In addition, the Ministers reaffirmed their Ministry's further collaboration and commitment to establishing initiatives to empower and safeguard children and those with special needs and their families.



New Monitoring Mechanism for Home-based Childminding Standards

During the 4th Quarter of 2021, the Regulatory affairs team conducted a situational analysis of the formal inspection instrument in place in the Section. The study aimed to determine whether the device and the corresponding analytic tools were still relevant for proper monitoring and evaluation of Standard implementation in registered childminding services.

Consequently, the research team identified a need to review the measuring tools. The Team, with the assistance of external consultant Dr Andre Leste, started the development of a new monitoring tool to better establish the level of compliance in terms of standard implementation. Included was the adoption of a new observation checklist (amongst others) which formed the basis for monitoring and assuring the quality of registered childminding services.

A pilot study by IECD observed the staff in 11 childminding establishments from 5 regions, including islands, established four compliance levels: 'Not Compliant' 0%, 'Comply to a limited extent up to 74%', 'Mostly Compliant' 75%-99% and 'Fully Compliant' 100%. It additionally formulated new indicators for reporting purposes.

The new monitoring mechanism was launched for a full rollout in January 2022 and successfully implemented by relevant Officers. Nonetheless, further reviews and expected adjustments upon enacting the new ECD Bill 2022.



IECD Team participates in the Results-based Management training workshops

The Result Based Management Framework focused on increasing the performance of the Public Sector by ensuring accountability, transparency and result-based delivery from all public entities and public servants. Establishing and measuring the link between a public servant's role and its relation to the overall MDA's respective objectives is fundamental to the success of this programme.

The official launch of the Framework was held on Monday 21st March 2022 by the President of the Republic, followed by compulsory capacity development training for all MDAs, co-organised by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service Bureau.

First Phase of Training

The first group of MDAs, of which IECD was part, attended the first phase of the training on 23rd and 24th March 2022 at The Guy Morel Institute (TGMI) and the International Conference Centre Seychelles, respectively. Based on 'Strategic Planning', topics covered were:

- Strategic Planning overview and Portfolio planning
- Strategy Formulation
- Long, medium and short-term planning instruments
- Key preparation steps and mandatory contents of a sectorial strategic plan
- Strategic analysis
- Resource Allocation
- Priority setting and mapping the Results Framework and KPI Setting
- Risk assessment and mitigation

The Director of Regulatory Affairs, Director of Programme Coordination & Research, and Human Resource & Budget Management Officer attended the training. In a debriefing session after the training, the team felt that the activity was highly enriching and exciting, and the documents (including the generic templates) obtained were helpful in the strategic planning process.

Second Phase of Training

The second phase of the training was on 'Budget Preparation and Performance Management Readiness' held 20th and 21st April at the Guy Morel Institute (TGMI). The contents relates to:

- Overview of Budgeting
- Developing Programme Structure
- Budget Preparation
- Performance Management

The Chief Executive Officer, Director Regulatory Affairs, Director Programme Coordination & Research, and Human Resource & Budget Management Officer participated in the two-day training.

The team concluded that the sessions were very informative and found the topic of 'zero-based budgeting' most engaging. The knowledge acquired has facilitated the Internal RBM Committee's work on the strategic planning results framework (both higher and lower level templates) and the Medium Term Expenditure Strategy (MTES) preparation. The strategic Framework informed the latter. Work is progressing well to conclude the formulation of the strategic plan document.

The Institute received assistance from a 'think-tank' (staff and external partners with experience and expertise in the ECCE sub-sector) put together for this purpose. Although time-consuming with challenges beyond its control, the Institute has successfully concluded the due process of instructions and guidance provided by the relevant authorities. It was indeed a worthwhile experience for everyone.

The Board has commended the team and expressed appreciation for the highly technical and excellent work undertaken, and the donors for sponsoring the strategic planning retreat.

IECD receives the Director of UNESCO's Regional Office



Representatives from the Board, the CEO and the Secretary-General - Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO had the privilege to meet with Professor Hubert Gijzen, the Regional Director & Representative of UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, on 18 May 2022. The primary purpose of the Regional Director's visit was to learn more about IECD, its achievements, the ECCE system, the best practice pillars in place, and its transformation into a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO, with the support and commitment of the Government.

Mrs Choppy provided a historical background of the Institute's journey as a legal entity and institutional anchor, from a humble beginning to a recognized international centre for ECCE. She also shared her eventful route and memorable experience setting up the Institute of Early Childhood Development, with the support of a dedicated 'think-tank' with experience and expertise in education and early childhood development, legal and diplomacy, and research. The process was comprehensive and challenging. It included initial application, feasibility study, approval by UNESCO Executive Board and final endorsement by the UNESCO General Conference. In addition, Mrs Choppy spoke about the excellent working relationship, steadfast support and technical assistance of its international partners, the UNESCO HQ, the International Bureau of Education, World Bank, and SEED Institute in Singapore, among others.

The Regional Director, Professor Hubert Gijzen, congratulated the IECD Team on the milestone achievement, and said that IECD, as a Category II Centre, is expected to assist other countries in the region, sub-region and beyond with the development of Early Childhood in their respective countries. He further highlighted IECD's crucial role and ECCE in lifelong learning. Additionally, Professor Gijzen made a few practical suggestions that IECD has programmes (including education for

sustainable development at ECCE and ones directly beneficial to mothers) and activities organized for the continent and beyond.

He stressed that the focus should not only be on the child's development but also on building caregivers' capacity to educate the children and the much-needed guidance and support for mothers, especially teenage mothers, in the education of their young children. He continued that UNESCO supports Seychelles IECD to engage significantly in projects and initiatives and share its expertise in ECCE. And its wealth resides with its extended family of partners situated in Category II Centres, which promote UNESCO's objectives and programmes.

In conclusion, Professor Gijzen recommended the following:

- That IECD has programmes organized for the East African Region and SIDS in ECCE.
- That IECD requests UNESCO's technical assistance and support in establishing another Category II Centre.
- That UNESCO assist to organize an official visit and scoping mission to another well-established Category II Centre for the team at IECD during the setup process.

This meeting provided an opportunity for fruitful discussions, a boost to cooperation and an active contribution to the overall strategy of UNESCO and SDG 4.2.



Auditing provision in Centre-Based Childcare Services (Day Care Centres) : Feedback Session



The Institute of Early Childhood Development in partnership with key external partners, held a Feedback Session on Friday 29th July, with the Day Care Operators who participated in the second phase of the Day Care Audit 2022.

The objective was to share findings and discuss their main strengths and areas for improvement. This was done in a one-on-one session with 10 Day Care Operators closely followed by Questions and Answers.

Present at the session were Vice Chairperson of IECD Board, Mrs. Sonia Mancienne, the CEO of IECD Mrs. Shirley Choppy and Senior Compliance Officer at IECD, Mrs. Samantha Jules. External partners were representatives from Health, Mrs. Stephanie Desnousse, Mrs. Fiona Paulin, and Mrs. Monia Course representing Public Health. Also in attendance were Mrs. Marie Agnes Ally from Social Services, Mr. Terrence Arnephy from SFRSA, Mrs. Meliza Belle representing Planning Authority and Mrs. Marie-Claire Leon representing the IECD.

The audit in Day Care Centres is part of the National Action Plan ECCE 2021 - 2022 which is being coordinated by the Regulatory Affairs Section at IECD. It follows an external assessment carried out in 27 registered Day Care Centres in Seychelles in 2019, with the assistance of the SEED Institute in Singapore. Several recommendations were made, including the development of new standards, which aim to raise the quality of service and overall ECCE provision in Day Care Centres.

Speaking after the session, the Vice Chairperson of the IECD Board, Mrs. Sonia Mancienne said the audit is a great

initiative and has enabled IECD to build work relationships and network with Day Care Operators, in preparation for the eventual migration of the regulatory role from the Ministry of Education to IECD. Secondly, she described her experience as extremely enriching and worthwhile as her team has obtained useful information and data on the level of service provision and implementation status of standards examined, as well as pinpoint areas for further improvement.

She applauded the multi-sectoral team, Day Care Operators, and the IECD for the great teamwork and spirit, collaboration, and partnership, which will ultimately benefit the young children and their families in childcare services.



President Ramkalawan holds talks with the Head of UNESCO

On Monday 14th February 2022 and whilst on mission in Paris (France) The President of the Seychelles Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan held talks with the Director General of UNESCO Mrs. Audrey Azoulay at the UNESCO Headquarters.

During their discussions, President Ramkalawan conveyed to Mrs Azoulay the sincere appreciation of the people of Seychelles for the longstanding support provided to Seychelles by UNESCO. The meeting was also an opportunity to highlight our Nation as a Category 2 Centre of UNESCO – The Seychelles Institute of Early Childhood Development.

The Government has approved the IECD as a national chapter of UNESCO through the signing of an agreement between Seychelles and UNESCO in 2021. Preparations are underway to establish IECD as a Category 2 Centre for ECCE under the auspices of UNESCO, and it is expected to be operational in 2023.



Cabinet of Ministers approves the new Early Childhood Development Bill (2022)

In collaboration with the Attorney General's (AG's) Office, the Institute has completed an extremely delicate and challenging task of undertaking a comprehensive review of the IECD Act 2014. The AG and CEO of IECD presented the new Early Childhood Development Bill to and approved by Cabinet of Ministers in April 2022. The team also met with the Bills Committee of the National Assembly in July 2022. The Bill comprises new provisions to improve the ECCE provision and system further, to include IECD as a Category 2 Centre for ECCE under the auspices of UNESCO, in line with the international obligations of UNESCO Category 2 Centres. The Board wishes to thank Mrs. Choppy for painstakingly led the review process, Ms. Amelie Nourice from AG's Office,

Mr. Selby Dora, Mrs. Nathalie Moustache and relevant partners for their invaluable contribution and support.

Following cabinet approval of the Framework on National Standards for Day Care Centres in 2021, work is ongoing on the drafting of a new regulation in collaboration with AG's Office. The regulation will eventually replace the existing S1 44 (Non-formal Early Childhood Education Centre) Regulations 2005 under the Ministry of Education. In addition, with the new ECD Bill 2022, a review of S1 49 (IECD National Standards on Childminding) Regulation 2016 is imminent to align it with the new provisions being proposed. Work is underway and a draft is expected before the end of 2022.

Review of the Seychelles ECCE Terminology Directory

The IECD will soon publish the second Edition of the Seychelles Terminology Directory on Early Childhood Care and Education 2022. The aim of the project is to review and update the existing Terminology Directory (2015) and to ensure consistency and clarity in official ECCE documents nationally. It will also provide a reference guide to all professional, practitioners, caregivers, parents and other partners in early childhood development.

A validation workshop was held in line with phase 3 of the Implementation plan, which took place on Monday 27th June 2022 at Care House. The idea of the workshop was to

bring together the different sectors in ECCE, to review on progress of their respective sector-based terminologies. A final consultation and validation will be undertaken in due course, ahead of the launch later in the year.

The review commenced in 2021 and the publication will be made available for all partners and stakeholders in ECCE, more particularly for parents of newborn children.

President of Early Childhood Development Association from Malta meets with IECD Board and Management

It was a real privilege for the Board and Management to meet with Dr. Anna Baldacchino in March 2022. Dr. Baldacchino has extensive experience and knowledge in early childhood care and education and is the President of the Early Childhood Development Association of Malta. She requested the visit to share her experiences, the work she is doing in ECCE in Malta and more importantly to learn more about the Institute, its mandate and achievements in ECCE.

The CEO, together with the Project Officers, presented an overview of IECD's mandate, its achievements, and current projects that all sections are undertaking through the National Action Plan for ECCE 2021-2022, more importantly, the recent recognition of IECD as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre.

She then talked about the ECCE System in MALTA and gave an enriching extract of her research findings,



focused on the emergent curriculum. Additionally, both parties highlighted areas for cooperation and exchange. It was a fruitful visit and the Institute looks forward to collaborating with Dr. Baldacchino and her association on matters relating to ECCE.

She then talked about the ECCE System in MALTA and gave an enriching extract of her research findings, focused on the emergent curriculum. Additionally, both parties highlighted areas for future cooperation and exchange. It was a fruitful visit and the Institute looks forward to collaborating with Dr. Baldacchino and her association on matters relating to ECCE.

Minister's second visit to IECD

On the 25th of April 2022, the Chairman, CEO and Staff met with the Minister for Education, Dr Justin Valentin, during a visit to the Head Office of the Institute. The objective was primarily for him to see the new physical location of the offices of the Institute, now located on the 3rd Floor of the Espace Building. The IECD offices had to move from Le Chantier Mall building following the fire incident there. Whilst going through the various sections and units, the Minister briefly chatted with the staff about their activities. He shared some ideas on collaborative research projects, among others.



He met the Chairman and CEO to discuss achievements, follow-up actions, and plans for the future. The discussion focused on findings of a comprehensive exercise undertaken in February/March 2022 by a special committee tasked by the IECD Board, the meeting with Minister convened by the Board and the measures put in place to address a few areas discussed and agreed upon, that may potentially affect the Institute's operations and impede its progress.

The Minister pledged his support to the realization of the approved measures and plans of the Institute. He expressed his overall satisfaction with the facility and progress made, and wished the team success in its endeavours.



My experience, working as the new manager of Child Care Centre in Glacis, so far is very satisfying. Sometimes I feel like a child again by acting silly, playing with dolls, chasing birds, dancing with kids' favourite rhymes and giving the loudest cheers. A day at the centre goes by rapidly as we nurture and keep the children safe and happy. I'm like the mother of the crowd. I cuddle, I sing and read to them. I even understand their language.

As I look around, I see those innocent and dependent little children who always come for comfort and a kiss to wipe away their tears. At times, they are too noisy and later on too quiet. I am overall happy. The parents express their appreciation as I share with them photos and videos of our daily activities.

NOTE: Ms. Marvel Simeon, Child Care Manager, contributed the above. The Institute is exceedingly proud of her achievement in ECCE.

**Childcare's Corner :
Testimony**

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Upcoming Main Activities

1. Data Management Pilot Studies in Social Affairs and Education Sector
2. Audit in Centre-based Childcare Centres (Phase 2, 2022)
3. First Sensitisation Session for Parents in Early Stimulation, Learning and Education
4. 4th Edition of Assessment of Early Learning Readiness in Registered and Unregistered Childcare Settings
5. Graduation of the first Group of Registered Childminders - (Accredited Course: Childcare and Development)
6. Enactment of Early Childhood Development Act (new Act 2022) and Sensitisation Campaign
7. Launch of Early Learning Programme (ELP) for Home-based Childcare Services & Terminology Directory in ECCE
8. Review existing IECD National Standards on Childminding Regulation (2016)
9. Implement the Pre-Registration & Sensitisation Training Programme and Basic Paediatric First Aid Training
10. Evaluate the National Action Plan ECCE 2021-2022 (Phase 1, 2022)
11. World Conference on ECCE led by UNESCO Category 2 Centres (CEO-IECD appointed by UNESCO on the Conference Programme Committee)