

Hosted by Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology



**Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:
What is a successful multi-sectoral approach to ECD?**

2018 Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development (ECD)
Conference Highlights



Kathmandu, Nepal, Yak and Yeti Hotel 5-7 June 2018



Snapshot of conference participants

The 2018 ARNEC conference attracted

950

participants from 45 countries

30

Concurrent paper presentations

6

Minister and Vice Ministers

3

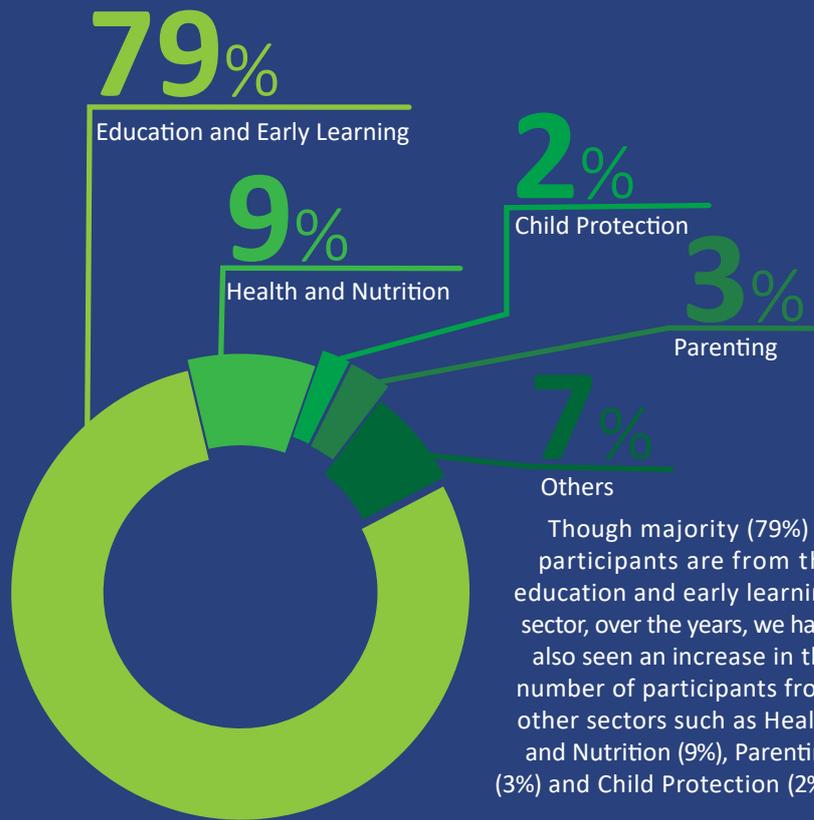
Keynote Presenters

4

Subtheme Speakers

7

Posters Presentations



Though majority (79%) of participants are from the education and early learning sector, over the years, we have also seen an increase in the number of participants from other sectors such as Health and Nutrition (9%), Parenting (3%) and Child Protection (2%).

What do the participants say?

66.7% of the participants participated in the survey responded that content presented in the conference is very helpful in relation to their scope of work while **18.5%** mentioned that it is extremely helpful.

Over **90%** of the participants would recommend the Asia Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development Conference to colleagues and professionals and

Over **81.4%** would attend the conference again themselves.

“ I was inspired by the energy, commitment and passion of people involved in ECD at different levels. The keynote addresses were outstanding - calling for rigorous research to inform evidence-based practice. At the same time, local Nepalese people that I met - including ECD practitioners at the site visits, NGO members and staff - were incredibly welcoming and warm, going out of their way to accommodate my particular area of interest (disability and inclusion). ”

Sue Philpott, South Africa

“ Attend this conference to improve your perception on a wholistic approach to Early Childhood Development. ”

Joel Denty, Solomon Islands

“ I love the big gathering of ECD specialists who came from all over the globe. I had the chance to meet and learn from them. It is a great platform for ECD workers and a very good occasion for sharing ideas and work. ”

Nasrin Akter, Bangladesh

“ It was fabulous and was most learning moment for me. Some of the key moments are: Speech of our PM about ECCD All the key notes by the specialist of ECCD. I will say that it is the learning floor to all the ECD personalities and we must attend it. ”

Reeta Tamang, Nepal



45 Countries

Participants are represented from a total of

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, Egypt, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Kingdom of Tonga, United Kingdom, United States, Republic of Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam

PROGRAM

Opening Remarks



Right Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli inaugurated the Conference. He highlighted prioritization of holistic ECD by the Government via accessible and high-quality multi-sector programmatic services.

“ ECD for all children is their fundamental right ”
 – Right Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli
 at the opening of the 2018 Conference



Honorable Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Nepal spoke of the Government’s commitment in providing a solid foundation for children and recognition of ECD as the basic rights of children.



Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, ARNEC’s Chair of the Board of Directors, spoke of the importance in jointly convening the ARNEC conference and the ECCE Policy Forum to ensure multi-sectoral approaches succeed in the region and globally to achieve the SDGs.



Ms. Jean Gough, UNICEF’s Regional Director of the South Asia Office or ROSA, spoke on the need for multi-sectoral approaches and government engagement in ECD, particularly to serve the most disadvantaged children and populations.



Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, UNESCO’s Regional Director of the Asia Pacific Bureau for Education, noted progress made in access in early learning and highlighted the importance of holistic development so children can achieve their developmental potential.

Keynote Address

Dr. Aisha Yousafzai, Associate Professor from the Harvard T.H. Chan, School of Public Health, spoke on the importance of Nurturing Care and a multi-sectoral approach to ECD informed by implementation research and fostered by partnerships to transform policies into action.

“Parents do not separate or compartmentalize their child’s needs. Therefore, a multi-sectoral approach to ECD must also respond to the holistic needs of young children”

– Dr. Yousafzai



Dr. Pia Britto, UNICEF’s Chief and Senior Advisor on ECD of the New York Headquarters, highlighted the importance of building political commitment through 6 call-to-action points endorsed by various parties to achieve ECD outcomes and delivery.

“The case on why ECD is important has never been clearer. We need to move from ‘basecamp’ to higher elevations of ‘how’ to achieve outcomes and delivery through political commitment”

– Dr. Britto



Dr. Teertha Raj Dhakal, National Planning Commission of the Government of Nepal’s Joint Secretary, spoke of Nepal’s progress and future plans on ECD. The strong political commitment and constitutional provision can be strengthened with further institutionalization of multi-sectoral plans.

“Nepal has shown significant progress in education, health, and nutrition... some of our future priorities includes, new ECD strategy with ownership from all relevant sectors and the importance of capacity building of the human resources in ECD centers.”

– Dr. Dhakal



Celebrating ARNEC’s 10-year anniversary: 2008-2018

ARNEC drives policy advocacy and generates documentation of innovative practices. It is currently driven by Vision 2020 to advance ECD with four strategic goals.

Sub-theme presentations



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Dr. Jena Derakhshani Hamadani, Scientist from Iccdr, b’s Maternal and Child Health Division, shared the importance of evidence-based multi-disciplinary approach to ECD, attending to vulnerable populations, government engagement, and awareness-building among parents and communities.



RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING

Dr. Vibha Krishnamurthy, Founder and Executive Director of Ummeed Child Development Center in India, shared how responsive caregiving can be integrated into ECD programs via culturally-appropriate ways, especially to help disadvantaged groups. Scaled-up examples from India and Pakistan were shared.



EARLY LEARNING

Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi, UNICEF’s Education Specialist and ECD Focal Point of the South Asia Office or ROSA, shared a conceptual framework for pre-primary education designed to enable quality pre-primary opportunities to all children, including the neediest, as they transition to primary education.



SAFETY & SECURITY

Dr. Maureen Samms-Vaughan, Professor of Child Health, Child Development and Behaviour at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, spoke on the importance of children’s safety and security, especially in the context of high prevalence of violence against children in South Asia, and shared cross-sectoral approaches to ensure children’s well-being.

Thematic panel discussions

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Moderated by Ms. Sara Dang, from Save the Children and ARNEC Steering Committee Member, the panel discussion centered on the importance of addressing stunting and hunger in the region, as well as efforts to incorporate early stimulation into health and nutrition efforts.



Panelists included (from left to right):
Mr. Som Bahadur Syangtan, Ms. Karma Dyenka,
Mr. Aaron Merchen, Dr. Harriett Torlesse

RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING

Moderated by Mr. Sven Coppens, from Plan International and ARNEC Steering Committee Member, the panel discussed importance of and issues in strengthening responsive caregiving skills. It highlighted the need for coordinated trickle-down and bottom-up efforts to strengthen implementation.



Panelists included (from left to right):
Dr. Dipu Shakya, Ms. Le Thi Bich Hanh,
Ms. Silvia Devina, Ms. Jessica Staines,
Dr. Mdm. Vu Thi Kim Hoa (supported by Dr. Friday Nwaigwe)

SAFETY & SECURITY

Moderated by Ms. Melissa Kelly, ChildFund International's Director for Child Development and Protection and ARNEC Steering Committee Member, the panel discussed the importance of child protection, approaches and partnerships needed to make change, and provided recommendations to generate investment and strengthen implementations.



Panelists included (from left to right):
Ms. Monisha Diwan, Dr. Nishat Fatima Rahman,
Ms. Jackie Bennett, Ms. Marcela Donaal

“Parents are children’s first teachers. We need to engage caregivers - including fathers - and understand their values, hopes, aspirations, in addition to involving them across different sectors”
— from the Safety & Security Thematic Panel

Pre-conference study visit and workshops

STUDY VISITS

Two study visits were conducted. **Group A** visited the **Shree Chandi Adarsha Saral Secondary School** in Lalitpur. **Group B** visited the **Vidyarthi Niketan Ma. Vi school** in Bhaktapur. The objective of the study visit is to provide participants with the opportunity to see an actual Early Childhood Services in Nepal and learn from these centres.



WORKSHOPS

Education Diplomacy: Advancing ECD through leadership, advocacy and diplomatic action

Ms. Diane Whitehead, Executive Director of ACEI

Ms. Yvette Gatilao Murphy, Director of Global Advocacy and Director of the Center of Education Diplomacy

Science of ECD Seminar: Brain Development and Nurturing Care

Dr. Kausar Waqar, Senior Instructor, Human Development Programme, AKU

Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Director of the Human Development Programme and Associate Professor for Department of Community Health Sciences, AKU, Karachi, Pakistan

Learning through Play

Ms. Ferdousi Khanom, Senior Lecturer, BIED, BRAC University

Dr. Nishat F. Rahman, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of ECD Academic Programme and the Center for Psychosocial well-being, BIED, BRAC University



Partnership sessions

PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION & PARTNERSHIPS IN ECD

Moderated by Dr. Cliff Meyers, ARNEC Board of Director, the panel shared global and regional trends of private sector engagement in ECD and demonstrated promising approaches - including use of technologies and focus on the first 1,000 days- through country experiences in Bangladesh, China, and India.



Panelists included (from left to right): Ms. Kinnari Pandya, Mr. Abhishek Gopalka, Mr. Mashook Mujib Chowdhury, Dr. Maggie Koong

EMERGING NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS & INITIATIVES FOR ECD

Moderated by Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, ARNEC's Chair of the Board of Directors, speakers of this session shared various initiatives in the region to convene ECD professionals in exchanging insights in tackling issues impacting children and families in their communities.



Panelists included (from left to right): Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal (Facilitated in translation), Hon. Ms. Satya Pahadi, Mr. Temesia Manuel Tuicaumia, Ms. Mahmuda Akhter, Ms. Soana Kaitapu, Mr. Roger Neugebauer

Conference sponsors & partners

We are grateful for all financial and technical contributions of our partners in making the 2018 conference a success.



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



China Development Research Foundation (CDRF)



Open Society Foundations (OSF)



Plan International



Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF)



Seto Gurans National Child Development Services



ChildFund International



Save the Children



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

The Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) extends its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Government of Nepal, for hosting the 2018 Regional ECD Conference!

