Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development

Holistic and Integrated Approach to Early Childhood Education and Development

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Part One—The Report

1-1 Breaking Down The Barriers: Creating Integrated Early Childhood Programs. Judith Evans

keynote address:
(a summary)

The presentation focused on the following issues:

- Holistic Child Development,
- Benefits of Early Childhood Programs,
- Principles of Child Development,
- Principles for the development of integrated programming,
- Strategies for the development of integrated services.

a. Holistic Development of Children

When working in the field of the early years of childhood and planning what is in the best interest of the child, it is essential to consider the whole child. A holistic perspective means viewing children as whole beings, whose growth and development is supported or inhibited within the context of the family, the community and the nation. During the early months, children's physical development is easily observable. What is not so evident are the ways in which the child is growing mentally, socially and emotionally, yet these dimensions are interrelated. Progress in one area affects progress in the other areas.

It is critical to pay attention simultaneously to the child's:

- Physical development (health and nutrition),
- Mental development (education and stimulation),
- Social-emotional development (affection and opportunities for social participation), and
- Spiritual development.

Within a holistic approach, it is not enough to focus only on the child's inter-related needs. The child interacts with his/her environment, the most important part being the family, however that is defined for the child. Support from the family is critical to healthy growth and development. In programming, it is important to have an understanding of the child within his/her natural environment. If the family is going to provide the best possible care for the child, then the family needs resources. Thus, it is important to know the economic conditions of the family and to have an understanding of what that means in terms of resources available to support the child's growth and development. (For example: Does the mother work outside the home? If so, who takes care of the children? Is there enough food for all members of the family? How is the food allocated?).

1 Director of the international Consultative Group on ECD.
The family lives within a wider environment, that of the community and the nation. The economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of the community and the nation have an impact on whether or not children thrive. Thus, to provide integrated programming for young children and their families, the total context within which the child lives must be taken into account in addressing the child's multiple needs.

The evaluation of single focus programs has demonstrated their ineffectiveness, for example:

- Growth monitoring that charts children's development is a waste of resources, if mothers are not educated on how to provide the child with better nutrition.

- Nutrition supplementation programs bring only short-term gains for the child, if they do not work with the family to change the family's dynamics that produced the child's malnutrition.

- Pre-school programs that try to teach a child who is hungry or who has suffered abuse at home, will not produce a child capable of learning.

Effective programs see the child as a whole, taking into consideration a child's need for a healthy body and for psychological and social support. These programs provide a variety of activities that stimulate the development of cognitive skills, imagination and creativity, and provide opportunities for children to take responsibility for themselves and their learning within the context of a social-cultural environment.

Barriers:

- The realities faced when trying to address children's needs often create barriers that lead to compartmentalizing children's growth and development.

- Examples of barriers to integration.

- The division of services along sectoral lines such as welfare, health education, social development, urban development, etc. often creates competition and one-sided programming.

- The multiplicity of the sectors involved creates multiple goals.

- The great proliferation of academic knowledge about what children need, drawn from diverse scientific disciplines, provides insights to strengthen programming, but often increases specialisms and a narrower focus.

- The allocation of funds through Ministries often distorts our thinking and guides programming, when it should be the programmatic needs of the children that guide funding.

- With scarce resources, only limited services are offered.

- There is a fear of losing autonomy when planning integrated services.
There is a lack of awareness of what others are doing.

Early childhood program models are imported from other countries (often the States and Europe) without analyzing their appropriateness to the culture, etc.

Research indicates that the following benefits strengthen the argument for investing in early childhood:

- Increased economic productivity. The High Scope Program has monitored children for 27 years, and its research suggests that for every dollar invested in early childhood programs, society receives $7 back.

- Cost savings for society. There is evidence of reduced delinquency and less likelihood of dependency on social services.

- Reduction in social and economic inequalities.

- Reduction in gender inequalities. There is evidence of more girls in India going to school following a pre-school program, and staying on to complete their education.

- Strengthened values.

- Appropriate responses to change in the social/demographic environment: e.g. through women's programs, supporting the dislocated and displaced families during difficult circumstances.

In summary, there are benefits in investing in early childhood and family education. ECCD programs strengthen the family, the community, and the policy and socio-economic structures.

b. Benefits of Early Childhood Programs.

c. Principles of Child Development.

Judith was encouraged by the work achieved in Dialogue '95 on the Principles, on their elaboration and their underpinning by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She was enthusiastic about the importance placed by the participants of this Workshop on culture, the family and the child's inner life.

She emphasized that the child's development was multi-dimensional and integral. It occurs continually, is patterned though unique, and early experiences are critical to later development. Children's early exposure to good nutrition, playthings and stimulating interaction with others has a positive impact on children's brain functions at the age of 15 years, as compared to peers who lacked this input. These effects appear to be cumulative. Thus, indications show the importance of working with children under three years and their families. In fact, the nine months from conception are of similar importance, which raises the issue of working in programs on preparation for parenthood.

d. Principles of developing an integrated approach.

There is not a single model that provides all the services, for all or even a group of children. A variety of models can be offered and strategies will differ from one
setting to another. This takes time, energy and requires much co-operation.

a. When developing new services, create an integrated framework.

India is the only country in the world with a national program beginning with prenatal women and continuing until children reach six years of age. There is a direction for development at local and national levels, due to the common understanding established in the framework.

Begin with one component, and begin with a community felt need.

b. Where there are a variety of services, bring the existing services together.

There are a number of ways, with a variety of positive and less useful approaches:

- **Coalitions**: temporary combination of parties that retain their distinctive identities. More common with advocacy groups.

- **Liaison**: connections - e.g. identification of special needs and referral to specialized services.

- **Unification**: uniformity through central planning and imposition of models. Socialist states used this strategy offering only one model to communities. There is a move away from this approach.

- **Federation**: unity while maintaining independence in internal affairs. Governments often create a task force; e.g. Malaysia had a federation of six Ministries, of which three had similar programs for children (KGs and school readiness). The task force identified the resources available and their location, and assessed the needs of the children and the families.

- **Co-operation**: working together. A bad example: In Indonesia, there were two programs for children under 5 years, both frequently using the same volunteers. One program was for mothers, focusing on stimulating children, the other focusing on nutrition and immunization. However, the volunteers had been trained to compartmentalize the programs rather than integrate them, and cater for individual needs.

- **Co-ordination**: establishing a proper relation between partners, causing them to function together. The Philippines has a very good model. Services are decentralized; communities have been mapped to identify numbers of children and where the services were adequate. The Government is informed of specific need and offers technical assistance to match community contributions. Here the community has real responsibility.

The last two forms are **key to integrated programming**, and are based on bottom-up planning, which starts with mapping needs and services.

- **Begin with parent and community participation to assess need.**

- **Develop a conceptual framework.** (Communities are more able to see the...
services. whole child; it is the specialists that divide the child up).

- Assess the existing situation.
- Determine the program elements and their viability within the current constraints.
- Select leaders with local credibility, a genuine commitment and a suitable personal style.
- Determine where the program is to be offered. (Often more successful if linked to community centers and women's work than to a school).
- Create demand and legitimacy in relation to what is currently provided.
- Define clear and open goals within the limits of the program. (There is often a tendency to neglect training and to overburden volunteers and exploit them with low or no remuneration).
- Show sensitivity to the cultural, social and interpersonal bonds that hold programs together.
- Enhance organizational capability.
- Allow adequate time and resources for planning, start up, testing and implementation.
- Plan from the beginning for growth and institutionalization of the program.
- Create monitoring and feedback mechanisms in the early stages and ensure commitment to them.
- Develop supportive national policies and regulations.

When creating a more holistic approach, the mechanisms for establishing new integrated programs are not nearly as critical as changing established mind-sets. The big challenge is to step back from our own sectoral bias and to focus on the whole child. Taking a holistic perspective on child development and providing integrated programming does not always mean providing services directly in center based programs. For the youngest children, in particular, it is important to provide support to the family. Thus programs that support parents in their parenting role and that help change the economic situation of the family are important and will ultimately have an impact on the child.

Similarly, community development (empowerment) efforts change the environment within which children are being raised. Strengthening the institutions that work with families is another strategy that can be used to support the development of quality programs.

Ultimately all of these efforts are supported or inhibited by national policy. Thus, an appropriate programming strategy is to advocate the implementation of national
policies supportive of young children and their families.

A child is born without barriers, its needs are integrated and it is we who choose to compartmentalize them into health, nutrition or education. Yet the child itself cannot isolate hunger for food from its hunger for affection or its hunger for knowledge. The same unity extends to the child's perception of the world. The child's mind is free of class, religion, color or nationality barriers, unless we wish it otherwise. It is this intrinsic strength in the unity of the child that we need to exploit, to build a better world, and for a more integrated development process.

(Alva M. Children First, New Delhi, India, 1986)

The following are topics that emerged from the plenary discussion following the keynote presentation.

1. These strategies are to be applied with women's groups, centers, home-based activities, parenting programs and so on. This is important as a very small number of children can afford or have access to center-based programs.

2. Center-based programs can act as a catalyst for developing an integrated early years policy in a community. Example: Often KG premises are closed in the afternoon and evenings, as well as during the long summer holidays. Alternative child-focused programs would benefit from these premises. Outreach work can be developed from a community center base: after school activities, summer camps, youth work, grassroots training, etc.

3. Empowerment of mothers and carers requires a change in the balance of power. It is usually presented from a patriarchal perspective. It is important to exchange and enjoy power, as it builds up self-esteem and confidence.

4. There is parental pressure for preparation for school. Examples were shared of extreme competition for school selection which required more academic attainment practices in the kindergartens. Parents are also under great pressure from the media, book publishers, computer games, etc. Thus, KG teachers have pressure from the family and first grade teachers to develop children's cognitive abilities and their programs then neglect the needs of the whole child. Activities to break down this syndrome could be:

- Workshops for parents in centers on play as a curriculum, noting that many adults have either forgotten the joy and learning that comes through play, or had little experience of it themselves as children in areas of war and conflict.

- Meetings between teachers in kindergartens and schools to share their programs, inform each other and work towards continuity. If KGs are in schools, the KG framework should be the base for the school policy. Bringing families, KG and schoolteachers together should be a step towards planning for a smooth transition for children and their families from home or KG into school.

5. There are training implications for this approach. Content, methodology and
practical experience in the field need adjusting. There was the example of Bethlehem University, which has created a holistic and integrated framework for the new BA in Early Childhood Education, which includes community involvement and a practicum in community based projects as well as kindergartens and schools. These developments are being shared at various Ministry meetings.

6. In some parts of the region, NGOs and local groups are struggling for survival, due to the political and economic situation.

7. The challenge for the region is to understand the reality in different situations, define our own barriers and obstacles and work together to face and overcome them. There is a need for a simple common language to link the complex and diverse communities with the holistic approach.

1-2 Outcome of working groups and Plenary discussions:

The work in this session of the workshop focused on three main titles: The holistic and integrated approaching ECED (concept and the basic principles), The ECED Challenges in the light of the holistic and integrated approach, and mechanisms for addressing the above-mentioned challenges along with recommendations.

There were two stages of working groups. The first stage was a general discussion on the main theme. The working group reports were then collated and categorized. In the second stage, three new working groups were formed to work on the three main titles. Their reports were then discussed in plenary.

This section of the report is an attempt to document the outcome of this process, mostly in tables which contain, side by side the following topics: Original formulation of the principles (in 1995) and the challenges (in 1992), new formulations and recommendations, and their discussion in plenary.

The workshop and this report leave the door open to continue the collective thinking process, linking it to local realities.

It is crucial to note that

- What follows is only a summary of what has been achieved during the workshop, and,
- As the participants agreed, this outcome is only a step in a process which was not finalized, but left open for further work.

A Framework:

The report of the working group started by giving the following framework to help reaching a definition of the concept:

a. The holistic and integrated approach in ECED: concept and basic principles.

The holistic and integrated approach is a philosophical framework for early childhood care and development. This approach is centered on the child, is based on the Rights of the Child, and adopts the following
fundamental starting points:

First: The approach is based on non-discrimination (on the basis of gender, religion, color, Etc.) between social sectors.

Second: Curricula and policies are based on the scientific knowledge, which is constantly evolving.

Third: Training on this approach has to be adopted as an integral part of its strategy and Implementation.

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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ What is the definition of holistic?</td>
<td>■ Adopt the holistic and integrated approach as a philosophical framework for early childhood care and development.</td>
<td>■ Concepts and terms should be precisely defined and distinctly used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ integrated?</td>
<td>■ Add the &quot;empowering&quot; element to the holistic and integrated dimensions.</td>
<td>■ The use of terms and concepts should be always consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Is the holistic and integrated concept ....</td>
<td>■ The &quot;holistic&quot; and &quot;integrated&quot; dimensions should not be defined separately: the approach should be holistic and integrated in all its aspects (contrary to the attempt to attribute &quot;holistic&quot; to the child, as a whole and unified being, and &quot;integrated&quot; to the programs, which should complement each other).</td>
<td>■ The holistic and integrated approach to early childhood should not be limited to education, but encompass care and development of the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ ...A vision?</td>
<td></td>
<td>■ The Rights of the Child have to be an integral part of the approach and its applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ ...An approach?</td>
<td></td>
<td>■ It is necessary to link the holistic and integrated approach to the skills for life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ ...A philosophy?</td>
<td></td>
<td>■ The principles have to be approached dynamically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ ...Starting points?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>■ ...Framework?</td>
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The three-dimensional model: a framework for developing the holistic and integrated approach.

It may be useful to document, in this section of the report, the brief discussion of this model, following its presentation by Jacqueline Sfeir at an early stage in the workshop. Only one of the working groups interacted effectively with the model and suggested alternatives.

The presentation of the model was based on the report of Dialogue '95, where the
The holistic and integrated approach to Early Childhood Education and Development
A three dimensional model

The holistic dimension is represented by the axis of the principles, in its interaction with:

- first, the human resources, i.e. with the child on the one hand, and with all categories of people involved in early childhood, on the other,

- second, the programs.

The integrative dimension is based on the interaction between the axis of programs and the axis of human resources.

Reactions:

i. This model seems to "disappear" the child and not to show that the child is the center of the holistic and integrated approach to early childhood.

ii. It seems to establish a separation between the "holistic" and "integrative" dimensions.
iii. Two alternative models were suggested in the working group:

a. The three concentric wheels which turn around one axis: the child.

b. The intersecting circles. This model has the potential to distinguish between

   - An ideal situation, when the three circles are concentric (and it would become then similar to the previous model), and

   - The reality, where the intersections of the circles can be of varying degrees.
1.4 General observations about the holistic and integrative approach and the principles

- The expression "philosophical framework" is misplaced. It was induced from the loose usage of the word "philosophy" in the English language, where it does not necessarily mean philosophy as an academic discipline. The participants agreed to drop it in our formulations, and limit the conceptual framework to the holistic and integrative approach and to the principles, because

  If we took seriously this "philosophical framework", we would burden ourselves with the task to define and expand on the philosophical schools and theories which found our approach to early childhood, and this would require efforts which we can spare ourselves, and

  Anyone who wants to search for the philosophical grounds of our approach could find them through the analysis of the principles and their expressions in practice.

- The suggestion to add the third dimension "empowering", to the holistic and integrated approach was not afforded enough attention during the workshop. However, it should be debated as part of the collective thinking
processes that are defining the ECED principles.

- The formulation of the principles was a good attempt, adopted within an integrated vision during Dialogue 95. However, it is not a "holy" vision, and it should be seen as a process in constant development resulting from

  Progress in the scientific knowledge of childhood, and

  New challenges imposed by the reality of life and work in ECED.

- Some participants said that the formulation of the principles during Dialogue '95,

  Seemed to focus on the child as an individual, and, as a consequence, the principles tended to deal with the child's self development; is it time to point out that the child also has a role within the community, and to focus on how we prepare him/her for it?

  Seemed to focus (as did the challenges in 1992) on "education and teaching", mostly in center-based programs; shouldn’t we broaden the vision in the direction of the holistic and integrated approach?

- Others pointed out that:

  The reason to focus on childhood as a stage in itself may have been that in the past the aim was mainly to prepare the child to become a "citizen". Thus, it was necessary to stress the specificity of childhood.

  Since Dialogue '95, it became more and more important to reach out for a greater number of children through non-center-based programs.

- Others added that:

  If the principles were read with care, they would prove to focus also on the interaction between the child and his/her environment, and to be a valid guiding framework for all sorts of programs, including non-center-based.

  The process of defining the theoretical framework and the principles usually goes through a "pendular" movement, in an attempt to reform previous patterns, until a balance is found.

(4) The basic ECED principles: an up-date

At various points during the discussion of the principles in plenary, the participants made the following remarks:

i. When up-dating these principles, it is necessary to read them with all the background, as documented in the report of Dialogue '95, i.e. with

  - The "elaboration" added to clarify their meaning,
- The parallels drawn with the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- The quick attempt to read the reality in Arab societies, and
- The challenges and recommendations suggested at the time.

ii. It is necessary to read the principles as complementing each other in an integrated whole.

iii. The time available in the workshop was not sufficient to give the principles the attention they required, nor to reach new formulations that could be collectively agreed.

iv. The formulations and comments proposed in the workshop are only a contribution to the debate, which remained open among the workshop's participants and within the broader constituency. The objective is to search more in depth for the orientations that the basic principles indicate, and to translate them into challenges inspired by their encounter with the reality in Arab societies, and into programmatic elements that help to put them in practice. This process should be dynamic and in constant renewal, and could, obviously, lead to amending the principles and agreeing a new formulation, when the time is right.
A summary of ECED principles and the outcome of related discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Dialogue '95 formulation</th>
<th>Formulation suggested by the working groups</th>
<th>Outcome of the discussion in plenary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and childhood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Childhood is an integrated and independent stage of life; the child needs and has the right to live it.</td>
<td>(no change)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and childhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The child is a whole being, important in all dimensions, which are interrelated and affect each other.</td>
<td>(no change)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Childhood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Development occurs in sequential steps, which can be predicted, and these steps are characterized by stages where the child's readiness to learn is at its peak.</td>
<td>Development occurs in sequential stages which can be predicted, and are characterized by developmental steps where the child's capacity to learn is at its peak.</td>
<td>- What is important developmental &quot;stage&quot; is at its peak, and the learning during these stages? - Another formulation would be: &quot;Development occurs in sequential stages which can be predicted, and are characterized by developmental steps where the child's capacity to learn is at its peak.&quot;</td>
</tr>
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</table>
There is an inner life of the child, which emerges and flourishes especially under favorable circumstances. There is a specific nature, personal to each child, which emerges and flourishes under favorable circumstances.

The interaction of the child with people (adults and children) motivates, reinforces and encourages children in their learning process. The Child's education and development are seen as an interaction between the child's own capacities and his/her environment.

A summary of ECED principles and the outcome of related discussion (cont. 2)

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The child's education is seen as the interaction between the child and the environment including, in particular, other people and knowledge.</td>
<td>developing the child’s cultural identity as well as his/her mother tongue and social values is important for a balanced and integrated development.</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developing the child's cultural identity, his/her mother tongue and his/her social values, is central to the child's healthy and integrated development.

(* the original formulation in Arabic translates literally: "...and his/her own (local) values..."

- Other formulation considered to be the "...among the import...functional to the..."
- The child's health to the cultural identity holistic and integrated
- We should not for complementing each
- Who defines society negative... They shape rights and the right
- Let's not claim to definers.

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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>The child's way of perceiving reality is holistic and does not identify/perceive the difference between various disciplines. He/she learns in an integrated way.</td>
<td>The starting point of the child’s teaching and education is what he/she can do and can achieve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

A summary of ECED principles and the outcome of related discussion (cont. 3)
The child’s social up bringing is based on ensuring a balance between his/her personal freedom and responsibility within the socio-cultural setting.

- The general tendency to mean education and "education" and "we mean education.

- There is a problem: The child can achieve" to learn how to write the time is right?

- There was a reminder principle is to encourage child can do, and be about what he/she

A summary of ECED principles and the outcome of related discussion (cont. 4)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Raise the child to develop self-discipline, which ensures personal freedom with responsibility within the socio-economic* setting. (* The Arabic formulation says &quot;socio-cultural&quot;)</td>
<td>(no change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The general tendency for formula order to cope with freedom and prevalences.

- There discipline become discipline and discipline acknowledge surveillances.

- The change "whole" and observing within within with the child’s discipline.

- Others divided into two the other.

- Some principles of "self-
A summary of ECED principles and the outcome of related discussion (cont. 5)

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Valuing intrinsic motivation, which results in child-initiated, self-directed activity, is of central importance for the development of the different aspects of the child's personality.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- The great principle suggested by the working groups was that the child who lives in difficult circumstances needs appropriate psychological and societal support, in order to develop his/her inherent skills and capacities, which helps him/her to survive and to overcome difficulties and traumas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New principle</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Children have an in-built resilience, and develop coping strategies and survival skills, when living in especially difficult circumstances. They require appropriate psychosocial support to maintain and strengthen these skills, and to overcome long term traumatic effects.</td>
<td>The child who lives in difficult circumstances needs appropriate psychological and societal support, in order to develop his/her inherent skills and capacities, which helps him/her to survive and to overcome difficulties and traumas.</td>
<td>- The great principle suggested by the working groups was that the child who lives in difficult circumstances needs appropriate psychological and societal support, in order to develop his/her inherent skills and capacities, which helps him/her to survive and to overcome difficulties and traumas.</td>
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b. The ECED Challenges in the light of the holistic and integrated approach: Challenges related to Policy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original formulation</th>
<th>The formulation collated from working group reports</th>
<th>Discussion in plenary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992 work shop</td>
<td></td>
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1. **Define the philosophical framework for early childhood programs**

   1. Define a philosophical framework consistent with the holistic and integrated approach, knowing that such a framework
      a. is in constant movement, and
      b. interacts with the social, religious, economic, cultural and political factors, which have an impact on early childhood.

   2. Identify the national and international policies, and deal with them in a way that strengthens the holistic and integrated approach to early childhood in the various sectors.

   3. Work towards a national policy that protects the early childhood sector and regulates it in a holistic and integrated framework.

2. **Elaborate a coherent and comprehensive pedagogical perspective on pre-school education, linked to the subsequent stages of education**

   4. Design a coherent holistic and integrated approach to early childhood that develops skills for life.

   5. Consider the early childhood stage as linked to the following stages, because all stages constitute an integrated whole.

   6. Interact with the prevalent schooling systems and their practices in order to encourage them to adopt a holistic and integrated approach, to the extent that it is used in early childhood programs.

   - After a discussion over the meaning of the expression “agreed to drop this expression in the formulation:
     - defining the holistic and integrated approach on formulating the basic principles as implementation.

   - It was noted that some national and international policies have a holistic and integrative approach. Thereafter, their positive components, and try to “neglect” these components.

   - The word "design" is not clear: use "formulation" instead.

   - Talking about "skills for life" means to developing the child's cognitive, emotional, and social skills rather than on success in school, or on being a successful adult.

   - Replace "to the extent" by "in the same way".

   - Why don't we accept that the following stages of education are more "holistic and integrated" than early childhood programs?

**ECED Challenges (cont. 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 1992 formulation</th>
<th>The formulation collated from working group reports</th>
<th>Discussion in plenary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
3. Disseminate and generate quality early learning programs serving the greatest possible number of children.

4. Support early childhood institutions, and develop appropriate funding policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Strengthen the existing qualitative programs, develop new ones, and promote and disseminate them, in order to accommodate the greatest number possible of children, focusing on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. having programs appropriate for different age categories in early childhood,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. strengthening and developing the programs that target the child from birth,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. strengthening and developing non-center-based programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Add: "...qualitative and varied programs.
- The word "accommodate" indicates that programs. Replace it by "reach out to".
- What have we done with the aim of unit during the workshop to be bold and adopt.
- Why only "from birth"? We should start.
- Replace or add to non-center-based "all".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Support initiatives in early childhood with funding policies which separate between funding and implementing, and which cover:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. funding through government budgets,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. self-financing, in order to ensure sustainability and a margin of autonomy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. external funding that strengthens the holistic and integrated approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We should separate "general support" for special challenge: e.g. support when launch programming, training, etc.
- Why not total self-financing?
  * In order to affirm that it is the duty fund early childhood, and
  * because total self-financing is not pr

| c. Mechanisms for addressing the above-mentioned Challenges along with Recommendations. |

*Methodological observations*

i. Several times, the participants recommended that the mechanisms should be specifically related to the challenges and the principles, in order to establish the links between these elements and their coherence. However, time did not allow doing this during the workshop. In the following table, the report writers made an initial attempt to refer every mechanism to the relevant challenges or principles.

ii. Some participants noted that most suggestions were in reality general recommendations that still needed further steps to be translated into truly practical mechanisms.

iii. Others suggested that we should limit ourselves to discuss the approach, the principles and the challenges at the regional level, and that their translation into mechanisms should be left to the local contexts.
# Mechanisms for addressing ECED challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mechanisms suggested by the working group</th>
<th>Discussion in plenary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>1. Strengthen the role of NGOs in developing the ECED sector.</td>
<td>- There is a need for mechanisms to deal with the resistance of directors and planning with the contradicting visions of those who participate in the decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Establish co-ordination and co-operation among the largest number of organizations working in ECED (governmental, private and non-governmental).</td>
<td>- Co-ordination works only when focusing on specific purposes, essentially on lobby policies inspired by the holistic and integrated approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Support the institutions that adopt the holistic and integrated approach, through the promotion and dissemination of their experience, and its assimilation by others.</td>
<td>- We have to study various experiences in co-ordination and networking, for example the Rights Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- We have to return to the categorization of various forms of co-operation included in the presentation by Judith Evans, study them and explore what can be implemented in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Mechanisms for addressing ECED challenges (cont.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mechanisms suggested by the working group</th>
<th>Discussion in plenary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>4. Include the principles of the holistic and integrated approach in the curricula of existing training programs in ECED.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Adopt a policy of multi-purpose in-service training, in order to cover all ECED workers, including directors, administrators and educators (professionals and assistants), and conform the training to clear standards (through monitoring, evaluation...)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Establish specific training programs for parents and for the community to strengthen partnerships.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. In training, link between direct field experience and the theoretical framework, the latter should be specific to the local needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Include early primary school teachers in ECED programs and workshops, in order to expose them to the holistic and integrated approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Work towards formal recognition by the relevant authorities of the long term training programs in ECED carried out by NGOs.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Mechanisms suggested by the working group</td>
<td>Discussion in plenary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>9. Introduce health initiatives and activities in ECED programs, ensuring that they cover the entire health needs of the child.</td>
<td>- Why single out health? Health programs are only one of many in the holistic and sequential evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>10. Establish collectively the characteristics and standards of ECED programs, relating them to the local reality.</td>
<td>- Standards should be based on all components of the approach. Replace &quot;relating into consideration&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>11. Enrich existing programs with services that reach the children in their natural environment.</td>
<td>- This mechanism is meant to translate &quot;outreach&quot;: reaching children where they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td>12. Work towards the rehabilitation of the parents' role, as essential partners in caring for the child.</td>
<td>- No. 12 is a too general, and needs to be translated into mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td>13. Use the mother tongue in programming and implementation.</td>
<td>- Additions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td>14. Document pioneering activities and experiences, in order to produce materials for learning, dissemination and evaluation.</td>
<td>a. Apply appropriate standards to buildings and equipment of ECED institutions, to develop their capacities, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Child/m2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Amenities (kitchen, bathrooms, toilets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Courtyards and space for creative activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Establish ECED specific cultural programs and broadcast them through the audio media, in order to disseminate the information to the largest numbers of parents and parents that cannot be reached through other programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mechanisms for addressing ECED challenges (cont. 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mechanisms suggested by the working group</th>
<th>Discussion in plenary</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Funding  | 15. Create mechanisms for self-financing, in order to ensure the sustainability of the development of ECED programs.  
16. Rely on local resources as one of the sources of funding.  
17. Train local leaders on methods of raising and pooling resources. | - Replace the category title "funding" by "resources. |
| Other    | 18. Raise the community's awareness of the holistic approach.  
20. Carry out research and studies that strengthen the holistic approach.  
21. Make the research and studies available to all who work for better childhood. | - We have to establish realistic objectives, consistent with existing relationships and the local community.  
- Establish a closer link between the academic work (people and research) and the programming and in implementation. |
1-3 Examples of ongoing programs in ECED that gravitate towards the holistic and integrated approach (Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, UNICEF regional office, and concluding remarks)

**Yemen:**

The Yemeni experience in rebuilding kindergartens in the South illustrates one method of achieving “integration”. It aimed at “gathering” efforts and “bonding them together” in order to reach a unified goal. This initiative started when various organizations collaborated to rebuild and renovate kindergartens, within the “educational program for kindergartens”. Participating parties were parents, local philanthropic organizations, UNICEF, Dutch embassy, Swedish Save the Children – Radda Barnen The latter provided the bulk of the support.

Those various parties collaborated to organize a large number of projects and activities to upgrade the kindergartens: either to support what they actually do, or to add new components to existing services. The aim was to develop a more holistic and integrated structure. Such projects included the following:

- Organizing workshops for KG supervisors and their deputies. The theme was ‘towards rebuilding kindergartens’.
- Organizing training workshops for KG teachers in educational toys made from materials available from the local environment.
- Organizing workshop “towards better childhood”.
- Organizing several CTC workshops.
- Conducting meetings for parents (mothers and fathers).

**Palestine:**

It was evident that current programming for early childhood in Palestine was offering a variety of programs designed to address the whole range of children’s needs. It was also evident that there were additional initiatives that complemented existing services and were related to them. The four centers represented in this workshop have been networking with one another to render their services more holistic and integrated.

The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education conducts the following projects:

- Working with parents.
- Involving fathers.
- Training and follow-up in KGs.
- Programs for mothers.
- A new project: “play and learn” (in collaboration with the National Authority).
Empowering women: research about women and with women.

Developing programs for transition to from KGs to elementary schools.

Integrating the disabled in children’s programs

Early Childhood Resource Center - Jerusalem conducts the following projects:

- Training of teachers.
- Training with parents.
- Production of resources.
- Counseling in the field.

Akka Women’s Organization conducts the following projects:

- Dental care clinic.
- Loans for mothers.
- Counseling and education.

Center for Educational Development “Al Tuffah” (Gaza) conducts the following projects:

- Setting up KGs.
- Training of KG staff.
- Developing specialized workshops for KG staff (using materials from the local environment).
- Project “the guide-mother”, to advise new mothers (work is ongoing to develop the project to evolve into a training center).

Lebanon:

The experience of Lebanon in the field of early childhood education and development reflects some components of the holistic and integrative approach in programs. For, in addition to the presence of specialized centers that care for the child directly, there are programs with an integrative dimension which focus on working with the family, with the community, the cultural environment and surrounding institutions. Projects in Saida, in Ghassan Kanafani and Najdeh, provide illustrations:

a. Networking among institutions and setting up an active network: the experience of Saida

Institutions that care for childhood in the Saida region – South Lebanon, and work with both Lebanese and Palestinian communities created an active partnership. This
structure includes 30 institutions that work in the health and education sectors. This network started in 1993 with a set of activities in the health field that brought together various institutions that are interested in childhood. Evidence of its effectiveness was shown in the rapid meeting of needs of children and their families after the Israeli attack and massacres, especially that which took place in Qana.

The network succeeded through internal co-operation and co-ordination with the governor to cover a significant number of children at risk. There were relief activities as well as cultural, health education, and recreational programs for children. Special programs were implemented for the disabled.

b. Inclusion of disabled children – the experience of Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation:

Including disabled children alongside other children on an equal basis is an important factor of integration in early childhood programs. In Ghassan Kanafani’s center, for example, several mentally disabled children were included in the program and in children’s activities in 1986. Blind children were included on an equal basis among other children in 1995. Afterwards, UNRWA started including disabled children in the regular school system.

c. “Najdeh”: The experience of Najdeh illustrates that its children’s program is moving towards holism and integration. The program started extra-curricular activities to meet several needs of the surrounding community. These activities include:

- Working with all the family members of the child attending the KG,
- Literacy classes for the community/parents,
- A focus on programs targeting fathers,
- Job placement assistance for the mother or the father of the child when necessary,
- Setting up a vocational training program, examining the conditions of the child.

Egypt:

The holistic approach to childhood programs promotes planning for growth through multiple sectors i.e. towards integration.

An overview:

The general situation of early childhood programs is summarized as follows:

The state covers children from birth till two years from the medical care perspective. A significant development of those services was observed nation-wide. The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is considered to be a supporting factor. These services include health education and immunization campaigns with media coverage (TV and newspapers).
The government set a specific objective with regard to the well being of children. The target is to decrease under-five mortality rate to 40 per 1000 (live births) by the year 2000. [1993 rates were 85 per 1000 live births.]

Children between 2 and 4 years [the dark period] are not adequately covered by services. There is insufficient official interest and there are no specific ongoing services targeting the family. The unavailability of nurseries for children of that age constitutes a hardship for working mothers.

Children between 4 to 6 years of age are covered by both governmental and non-governmental services. There are KGs and nurseries run by the state, NGOs or religious organizations.

There is an accelerating growth of KGs and nurseries. However, the working conditions of teachers are inappropriate: the wages are low, and the teacher’s commitment to her career is short term. She perceives her profession as a transition towards another job with better pay.

A local experience – Upper Egypt Association:

The experience of the Upper Egypt association illustrates the inter-sectoral scope of services, which result in integrative programming. Work started with medical care then was expanded to cover health education and community meetings – especially with mothers. The health worker built relationships with members of the community at their homes and implemented health education programs within a community setting. Education was extended to include nutrition, general knowledge, training of nursery teachers, and to formulate strategies to achieve complementarity between the school and the home. The income generation project for women is still in process of formulation. Its perceived advantages are increase in income and consequently the nutrition of family members. However, on the other hand, the child looses maternal care.
UNICEF launched a new project in a cartoon video entitled “Better Parenting Initiative”. The project is multi-sectoral: educational and medical. The project consists of the following components:

- Episodes of cartoon each lasting 10 minutes.
- A training manual for each episode.
- The episodes cover the growth and development of the child from conception stage till 7 years. They are entitled as follows:
  - Episode 1: fetal development and care of the pregnant woman.
  - Episode 2: development of the infant during the first year.
  - Episode 3: development of the child from 1 to 2 years.
  - Episode 4: development of the child from 2 to 3 years.
  - Episode 5: development of the child from 3 to 5 years.
  - Episode 6: development of the child from 5 to 7 years.

A summary of UNICEF’s program: “an initiative for better parenting”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>content</th>
<th>applications</th>
<th>target group</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project addresses the basic principles of child care and development and provides general information about various aspect of development: mental, biological, social, and emotional. There are general knowledge that assist caregivers of the child to monitor growth and contribute to the child’s mental, social, and emotional development through education.</td>
<td>Applications: The project can be applied as follows: As a source of general knowledge during training workshops for professionals and paraprofessionals who work in KGs; Portions of the episodes can be disseminated in the media: radio, and TV A resource for designing posters and for preparing pamphlets.</td>
<td>Target audience: The project is addressed to the parents: fathers and mothers, future mothers, supervisors, and teachers, and trainees in child care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

concluding remarks: Following the presentations, Julia Gilkes volunteered the following summary, charting the progress made in ECED since 1992, and finding in it true cause for celebration: networking has become a living reality, and a host of indicators illustrate the development of a holistic and integrated approach in the partners' field
Programs for children:
Programs have increased their care for children at home, children with disabilities and children living in difficult circumstances. A new approach, for example, is to work with children in hospitals, to play with them and stimulate them. The issue of girls dropping out of center-based programs is receiving more attention.

Programs with parents:
Projects have been developed to reach not only mothers, but also fathers. Others focus on the needs of the mother and the child taken together, of mothers at work and care for their babies. Women's empowerment through ECED programs has emerged as a theme in its own right.

Programs in the community:
An increase of public information and awareness programs can be observed, as well as a greater reliance on local resources.

Training:
We have been surprised by examples of significant changes in the curricula of academic institutions, training centers and in-service training programs, reaching out to trainers, teachers and parents.

Networking:
There were encouraging examples of networking from Palestine and Lebanon. What happened in Lebanon in response to the Israeli invasion, and particularly to the Qana massacre, was impressive. The network in Saida in particular quickly mobilized to respond to the needs and sufferings of families and young children, caused by the massive displacement, offering shelter, health care and food, and organizing recreational activities for children. The pooling of resources was facilitated by established networking practices and made a huge difference.

Groupings and forums:
It was rewarding to hear plans and attempts by participants in previous workshops, to establish local groupings and increase networking, in spite of the difficulties in communications, the distances, the political and technical barriers, etc.

Newsletters:
New local newsletters have been launched: we have seen some of them during the workshop. They target teachers and other workers with children, parents, decision-makers, etc. They will feed good material into the regional newsletter An-Nada.

Resources:
The exhibition during the workshop showed also a broadening of the holistic and integrative approach by covering many fields: disability, children's rights, gender, communicating with children and participation of children, resources targeting parents and fathers, video films and resources on training, creativity, cultural heritage, etc.

Media:
Produced by the regional UNICEF in Amman, the video film "Better Parenting Initiative" has many benefits because of its flexibility: every Arab country can chose what is relevant and appropriate, and use it in TV programs.

Partnership for a Better Childhood:
Since 1994, we have had many experiences and encounters involving various partners: local and regional NGOs, government departments, UN and international organizations, academic institutions, local municipalities, local community initiatives, parents, etc.
So, our meeting today should be a celebration of our togetherness. We should mark it in our own Arab way, when we celebrate a wedding, or the birth of a child. Let's have a "zalghouta"!

1.4 Communications and the World Wide Web: enhancing provision of information about the “Arab Experience”, - Ellen Ilfeld: presentation and discussion

Partnership between ARC and the (International) Consultative Group on ECCD.

Ellen Ilfeld, Director of Communications. (in the ICG secretariat)

presentation:

The presentation consisted of three parts: The first addressed the linkages between the international consultative group and ARC, the second part provided an overview of the world wide web technology, the third part involved an introduction to the ECCD web site.

a. The Consultative Group (CG) and its links to ARC:

The CG is an international consortium of donor agencies, foundations and NGOs working to promote quality programming for young children, from conception to eight years, and their families. Agencies such as UNICEF, SCF-US, the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the World Bank meet with Field Representatives from networks of ECCD professionals in different regions across the world, once or twice each year.

The goals of the CG were described by Judith yesterday, but I want to emphasize our advocacy role, the promotion of networking, collaboration and information sharing, and most importantly our work on gathering information, synthesizing it and disseminating this knowledge about ECCD to donors, field officers, practitioners, policy makers, governments, international organizations, etc.

CG looks at research and practice, pulls together principles and ideas to describe what people are learning and doing - but does not prescribe what people should do.

A primary tool for accomplishing the goals is the newsletter, called the Coordinator’s Notebook. It is an 80-page journal, published bi-annually, still only in English. There are plans for translation into other languages. Each Notebook focuses on one theme, e.g. Education for All, Child-rearing Practices, The Role of Men in the lives of young children.

There have been notices about ARC activities in the Notebook, but our aim now is to develop a closer partnership with ARC to learn from, and share information and experiences from the Arab world. ARC has been networking across this region and working towards articulating an Arab perspective and looking at the conditions for Arab children living in especially difficult and diverse circumstances. ARC has much to offer the CG and its partners.

This presentation focuses on the CG web site technology. Its aim is to share ECCD information across the world and across regions, e.g. Arab to Arab, Latin America to Latin America, and between regions.

b. Introduction to the World Wide

The Internet is undergoing intensive development. Although not available to most individuals, ARC is one of the groups in the Arab countries that have access to it.
Web Technology.

ARC is in a unique position to facilitate and ensure that quality information about Arab experiences is represented.

The Web is like a large library. Imagine it being built in your town. You can identify what you need in your library. Information can be grouped into a single site, or collection of sites, to increase accessibility for users. Information can be put on diskette or printed out on paper. We are working to put all CG documents and information in this library, and to bring in information or links to all other key ECCD resources on the Internet.

CG plans to provide regional 'home page' within its Website, to be produced by networks and key ECCD professionals in the region. ARC has been invited to provide documents and design a first draft home page about ECCD in the Arab world. ARC could have its own web with links to the CG site for easier access to visitors. Documents in Arabic and English would be most useful. Initially we will include English documentation, until ARC develops the technical expertise to code Arabic documents, to facilitate both options. There are discussions with UNESCO to include "Towards a Fair Start for Children" which is available also in Arabic.

ARC and its partners will be able to share their work 'South to South' with colleagues in other regions (who are already visiting the CG site). You will have an opportunity to educate donor agencies and others about Arab experiences and efforts. CG wants to make these experiences more visible to people considering ECCD internationally.

The focus is on international ECCD, rather than on a particular group or network. We try to give a good overview of the types of information available. Each item on the home page leads (or will lead) to a whole section or set of materials on the topic mentioned. For example, under 'Regional Pages and Networks', the visitor will find a list of the regions, together with their resources and information about their networks. By clicking on 'the Arab Countries' selection, the visitor will be taken to the proposed Arab Home Page (perhaps in English and Arabic), in which ARC would guide the design. From that Home Page links will be included to documents about Arab ECCD stored right in this home site, and also Internet links will be included to other related web sites.

The CG Home Page has 20,000 pages on different topics. Sections are underlined which require a click from the mouse to boot up immediately.

The address for the Website is: http://www.ecdgroup.com

The e-mail address is : info@ecdgroup.com

Another advantage of this technology is that you can discuss and exchange opinions on the Internet. It has interactive potential through its 'Conference Room and the Children's House'. People from NGO's and grassroots workers do e-mail in to CG for information. We can put them in touch with each other or help them boot up the page on the Web to read directly.

General discussion:

The discussion revolved about issues and concerns raised by the participants.
a. Overload of information

Even if access is not practical yet, it is desirable to have an influence over what goes in 'the library'. Think of this period as preparation time. It is important to consider how to synthesize our knowledge into formats that make it easy to read, understand and use. The goal is to be selective, not to fill the 'library' with bulk materials. For example, local, national and regional newsletters can be put on the ARC site. It is a challenge to devise frameworks and formats for the information to make it easy to find and to use. ARC and partners are very busy people but time must be made to collect information and learn the techniques of linking to the Internet. CG information can be put on disk and sent to ARC to put it onto the database, until more partners have the technology.

b. Cost

The cost of access is still high. It requires a fairly powerful computer (486 or faster with 16 megabytes of RAM preferred), a phone line, a fairly high speed modem (14.4 bis or faster), and an account with a service provider (who usually offers a local phone number for access, so that your time on the Internet is not costing long distance rates).

Most universities provide access, as do many international organizations. They may be able to provide e-mail and/or Internet accounts for a reasonable price. Donors are very interested in funding this type of technology for local networks of NGOs. Local businessmen may be interested in supporting NGOs starting up this type of facility. Technology is moving fast, so costs will be reduced, similar to the progress of telephone, fax and computer.

It is important to think creatively to obtain access to e-mail and the Internet. These are two different tools, and at this moment in time, e-mail is more important for the Arab region. There is much documentation in Arabic, which could be exchanged through e-mail.

Translation is expensive and difficult. We have experimented with automatic translation by computer that offers a draft to be refined. The most important aspect is the Arabic documentation and the exchange of information to develop a library. It is a challenge in the Arab region to share, produce and respond to documentation. As the region gradually masters these techniques, we have the responsibility to redress the imbalance in information sharing dominated by the west/north.

Pooling resources with other people or groups to share a single machine and access account can be a way forward.

Beirut has an 'Internet Cafe', organized by a business entrepreneur, as a club to be used by the public. It would be useful to seek out other 'cafes' or clubs, or encourage their development.

UNICEF, Save the Children US and other country offices of similar organizations may provide access to their systems (either for free or a reasonable fee).

There is information on the World Wide Web in many languages, including
English, French, Spanish, Russian, Scandinavian languages and some Arabic. It is up to Arab groups such as ARC to pull together key materials in Arabic and make sure that CG are able to include these materials or link to them for Arabic readers. At the moment English is the first language on the CG site. Latin America region is preparing a site in Spanish. A 2-3-page primer of all papers will be translated into key languages and then the original language paper will be available. Important papers will be included in Arabic, e.g. Towards a Fair Start by Robert Myers. Arab partners should link with ARC for translation into English as well as submitting the original Arabic version of their documents onto the Net.

1-5 The Newsletter: Qatr an-Nada

Some copies of the first pilot issue of the newsletter ‘Nada’ were provided to participants for preliminary evaluation. The ICRG has studied the newsletter project and outlined its form, content, target group, distribution and feedback mechanism.

Ghanem Bibi presented the pilot issue and described it as follows: ‘it is purely experimental, and it does not reflect all the aspirations of ICRG members but presents the main topics and allows the chance for a realistic and collective review not only to the content and form of the issue but to the extent to which the expectations of ICRG members have been met.

Some of the difficulties faced during the production of the first pilot issue included getting news and local experiences in the form of reports, features and interviews, also it was difficult to access pictures and illustrations. Other difficulties included - as in any other project in its early stages - those related to mechanics and facilities of editing, production and distribution.

The general discussion following the above presentation reiterated the following points:

The need to supply the newsletter with information and resources periodically and on an ongoing basis.

The importance of writing to the newsletter either through filling the feedback on an issue and returning it, or through letters to the editor, or comments, or suggestions for resources to translate or to summarize, or through posing questions, or enriching the glossary of the newsletter and ECED with technical terms that are used in various sectors, or disciplines ECED.

During the discussion, Nabila reminded the participants of the target group and the need to increase the scope of outreach. Maryam gave as an illustration that Dar Al Tifl can easily collect one hundred subscription and distribute 250. She stressed on the importance of specifying local focal points (for subscription, reaching the target group, and getting feedback). Najib stressed on the need for focal points in each country.

However, the discussion did not address details of implementation, namely: what
constitute a focal point? Specification of tasks, the responsibilities that could be or should be agreed on? What is the degree of flexibility in specifying the amount of local subscriptions? Who bears what portion of the expected costs? How would the collection process of the feedback be organized? Etc.

Regarding the name of the newsletter, Jacqueline reminded other participants that the name that was agreed upon was Qatr Nada not Nada. This issue however was not resolved, and there was a need to get back to the minutes of ‘Dialogue 96’.

Other newsletters: In addition to Nada, ‘Sada’ – a newsletter about rehabilitation of the disabled and primary health care, and ‘Sawa’ newsletter, published by Toufoula Center in Nazareth.

ARC has started to establish a database and information service to document the human and material resources relevant to ARC’s program.

The database's aim is not only to serve the direct needs of ARC's work, but also to organize and maintain a relational system, which ensures that the information is shared by partners and by other database operators.

The process is still at its first phase:

- Gathering the information,
- Establishing a system for organizing its electronic storage and retrieval, and
- Inputting and updating the data.

The second phase will focus on:

- Establishing mechanisms to make the information accessible in electronic and hard copy forms, and
- Producing and circulating resource lists and bibliographies, as requested by the programs.

The database and information service will also help produce Al-Mawared, a circular reflecting ARC's activities, and occasional news sheets to inform ARC's partners of developments relevant to the collective work.

The participants’ comments focused on the need to avoid, from the start piling up information which can be of no use to anyone, and wasting time on endless entries which cannot be retrieved, later on, in a useful way. They pointed out that no ideal database models really existed. We should first find out, in the most specific way, the exact information that we - ARC - and partners, needed to have, and other
interested people or organizations would like to obtain from ARC. Only then we can start dealing with the technical aspects of the database i.e. designing the appropriate format and relational systems that would serve our purpose.

A form was distributed to be filled by the participants. It asked for detailed information about themselves and their work, as well as comments about the form itself: Did it serve the purpose? Was it well designed? Did it ask the right questions? etc.

The form included questions about:


**Age Group:** - Infancy: 0-3 years. - Early childhood: 3-8 years. - Pre-adolescence: 8-12 years. - Adolescence: 12-18 years. - Adulthood: 18 +.

**Professional Status:** - Director, manager. - Trainer. - Lecturer. - University dean. - Advisor consultant. - Other (specify).

**Languages you can work in:** - Arabic. - English. - French. - Other (specify).

**Resources that you have written, translated etc.**

**ARC events you have participated in:**

**Other relevant events that you have participated in:**

Do you use the Internet?

Do you have access to E-mail?

**Resources in Arabic you have information of:**

**Future projects:**

**Other interests, activities:**

After filling the form, a discussion followed about the questionnaire's format and content. The main remarks were the following:

- The questionnaire should have specified whether the answers to the questions should be given by participants as individuals or on behalf of their organizations.

- It would have been preferable to send the form to the participants before they came to the workshop, in order to give them enough time to prepare detailed answers, or to consult their records.
The space allocated to certain fields was insufficient, e.g. for resources published, events attended, etc.

The form should ask more information about the educational background of individuals.

The information about events and projects in which the participants were involved was vague and could be irrelevant. Specific information should be requested about

- The implementing organizations,
- The practical output of each event or project,
- Whether the area of work was rural or urban.
- The section about future projects should also have more details concerning the specific fields or areas of work.

Under areas of work, it was suggested that 'special education' should form a separate section as it covered various fields.

Other areas of work should be included, such as 'training of health workers', 'community education and work', 'resource development', 'working with parents', etc.

It was suggested that four different forms should be prepared rather than one, each one about

- Individuals: information about each participant.
- Organizations: information about each participant's organization and the relevant events and projects implemented by that organization.
- Publications: resource materials published by the individuals or the organization.
- Projects: past, present or future.

The discussion concluded that both the format and content of the questionnaire needed to be re-designed to gather the right and precise information needed for ARC's database.
Part 2—The ECED Regional Program - The Process

2.1 The Beginnings:

ARC provides a central structure that sustains a regional program of work in childhood. It has taken on the task of making things happen. It facilitates collective processes through regional workshops and the production of Arabic resources in all areas related to childhood. ARC has three such programs: Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), Children’s Rights, and the Arab Child-to-Child Program (CTC).

ARC’s interest in producing appropriate Arabic resources for early childhood programs in the region resulted in a discussion of the following topics:

- Methodological and philosophical approaches to early childhood education which would be reflected by such resources, and
- Strategies that would be needed to improve services.

When ARC organized the first interdisciplinary workshop in 1991, to define the needs for Arabic resources in various fields of development work: PHC, disability, rational use of drugs, early childhood, etc., the smaller group of early childhood professionals who were present took over the responsibility for carrying their own discussion further. They went away to form the core group, who was to become later the Regional Consultative Resource Group (RCRG) of the ECED program.

Launching the idea

After long deliberations, the core group amended radically the proposed agenda of a regional workshop, which was to be convened by ARC in 1992. The workshop was attended by people working for or with children in six different countries in the Arab region. The group comprised a multi-focal and multi-sectoral mix of field practitioners, academicians and program planners, representing various local contexts.

Issues and strategies were discussed, the focus being on the young child and early childhood education. Participants shared their experiences and put their heads together to agree ideas for improving the situation of Arab children. Out of a basket of rich experiences and knowledge, the group visualized 'the way forward' in terms of policy, resources, community awareness and participation, and human resource development. This set of ideas has since been referred to as the 'Challenges in Early Childhood Education'.

Enhancing the way forward

Building on these ideas and challenges, ARC and its partners soon realised the need for a more holistic approach to early childhood. The mechanisms to reach children from the time they are born was as important as providing care and education to children in pre-school or kindergarten. The focus naturally shifted to parents, resulting in a workshop in December 1994 on ‘Partnership With Parents And The Community’, under the theme 'Partnerships for a Better Childhood'. This brought together field workers, funding partners, policy makers and other professionals who discussed ideas on learning how to involve parents and the community in reaching out to
Enriching the process

Over time, the RCRG became a slightly more formal gathering of people from various Arab countries, who shared a vision for THE CHILD. With an on-going exchange of ideas between ARC’s program of workshops and resources and the concerns and experiences of RCRG members, a long-term plan began to emerge.

The first annual consultative workshop, referred to as Dialogue ’95, was then designed to be a dialogue among partners, who envisaged to work on the long term aim of ensuring ‘A Fair Start for the Arab Child’. The group decided to target the year 2000 to launch a new strategy, elaborated and refined through further work on the challenges and strategies defined in 1992.

One of the challenges identified in 1992 was to establish a clear conceptual basis for the collective vision. In Dialogue ’95, the basic principles of child development were studied and discussed, correlated to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and adapted to suit Arab society. This meant identifying and analyzing existing practices, and suggesting a framework to take up the challenges of making ECED in the region more holistic and integrated.

Evolving strategies

A year later, Dialogue ’96 concentrated on developing networking mechanisms that would lead to a broader exchange of experiences and interaction of ideas, which would enhance the emerging policies and programs. One of the major components of networking was the launching of a regional newsletter on ECED, and the workshop carried the group through the process of planning and producing such a newsletter.

Endorsing the basics of ECED:

The workshop covered by this report, held in February 1997, signaled a renewed endorsement of the principles, with a holistic and integrated approach to early childhood policies and programs. The emphasis was on highlighting the holistic and integrated concepts, and reiterating that the early childhood should encompass care for the child from conception, through birth, to at least 8 years of age.

Emerging trends

The hasty presentation of ECED country programs during the workshop illustrated the emerging trends that are moving the practice towards a more holistic and integrated approach. Community programs and kindergartens had shifted from the emphasis on education to an approach encompassing various aspects of care and development of the child in many community settings.

Evaluation

The next step in the process would be the need to evaluate and redesign programs to give all children in the region a Fair Start For A Better Life.

The first workshop brought together people from different countries and disciplines. They shared their varied experience and knowledge of children in the Arab region. It was a dynamic group, and the workshop design reflected its multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural composition. Activities included general discussions, group work, creative drama, art work, project presentation with video films and resource material, and most important, exchange of field experiences.

Discussions, arguments and activities were passionate and led to participatory
Dynamics of collective thinking

Picking up common challenges in succession

decision making. This was a first time experience for many of the participants, especially the Palestinians from the occupied areas, who had been feeling isolated and alone in their struggle to develop meaningful programs. Thinking together, and developing action plans together were exciting and stimulating processes. They set a trend for future workshops.

i. At the end of a hard, and at time confrontational itinerary, the group attending the first workshop was able to produce the set of challenges for reaching out to children in the Arab region. These challenges have remained ever since as a framework for subsequent workshops, as well as for policy making and programming. This process of collective thinking gave the impetus to the group to move forward in developing policies and mechanisms for better childcare and education.

ii. Thoughts on early childhood were changing. The world of academicians and policy makers were talking more about quality care for children, and not just preschool education. The focus had shifted to children from birth, and to the role of the family in childcare. Consequently, the RCRG decided to tackle one of the most important priorities: the involvement of parents and the community in ECED.

Local training was carried out. "Working with parents" was introduced in the curricula of training programs and institutions. ARC produced an adapted Arabic edition of the manual published by the British National Children's Bureau, titled Working with Fathers and Mothers.

This process culminated in the regional workshop organized in December 1994. The emphasis was on partnership with parents for better childcare. This was a significant milestone. For the first time, the participants started thinking about children below the age of 3 years who remained at home and were not in pre-school institutions.

iii. In 1995, the RCRG felt it was time to address another priority: formulate a conceptual framework and the guiding principles of ECED and link them up with the reality in the region. Dialogue 95 was organized for this purpose. Many of the participants who had taken part in the earlier two workshops were there, to ensure the continuity of the basic framework, while working with new partners and orienting them through the collective and inclusive thought processes.

Here again, a long, hard and heated debate was the way to reach a consensus on the re-formulation of established principles, and the addition of specific ones, to make them meaningful to the Arab context. The report of Dialogue '95 not only categorized the principles and provided an explanatory background, but also linked them to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and initiated a comparative, though anecdotal account of the reality in the Arab region against the ideal situation promoted by those principles.

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2 It is interesting to note that, as the workshop was attended by representatives of a number of international NGOs, "partnership" was at times interpreted to mean co-operation with funding organizations!
iv. The next logical step in the process was to strengthen networking between communities, so that people could share ideas, experiences and resources, and partake in the benefits of the "collective thought processes". Dialogue '96 saw the emergence of a regional newsletter, as a prime tool of outreach. Furthermore, in addition to being an opportunity to include new participants into the common journey, the workshop was also a milestone in practicing new forms of collective work on a specific product, i.e. in planning, writing and producing a trial issue of the newsletter.

v. In 1997, the emphasis shifted to the concept of holistic and integrated approach to child development, to ensure that the children had the full benefit of integrated programs. Therefore, the principles and challenges had to be revisited and updated. A workshop to address this task was convened in February 1997.

This workshop turned out to be a far more complex exercise than was envisaged. Every policy, principle, challenge and mechanism was debated upon by every participant, first in groups, later collated by a small team, and then finally accepted by all the participants. The process was slow and sometimes tedious, but at the end of the exercise, all the participants were satisfied that the democratic process had resulted into collective ownership of thoughts and challenges. The workshop design reflected all that would be needed in comprehensive childcare: co-operation between partners, co-ordination, patience, good interpersonal skills and multidisciplinary information.

One of the important components of developing this commonality was the sharing of work experiences, resulting in an up-date of the regional map of programs. It was also a frame of reference for program implementers on their progress towards a holistic approach. It was rewarding for everyone to see one old-timer go on forever listing the new fields of work covered by the programs represented in the workshop, and how varied they were compared to the first encounters.

vi. Along this journey, and as perspectives on early childhood world-wide are also changing, there is now awareness within the network that strategies of dissemination and advocacy need to be renewed continuously, in order to give the Arab child a fair start, and to make children in the Arab countries more visible to our own policy makers and to the rest of the world. “The Way Forward Towards a Fair Start for the Arab Child by the Year 2000” was the target established at the start of the journey. The current 4-5 year plan, which includes production of working manuals, networking, training, working with parents, influencing policy, etc., will continue to be the flexible instrument to pursue this goal.

Challenged sometimes as being a powerful and exclusive decision-making body within the collective processes, the RCRG has nevertheless been recognized and accepted as the core needed to manage the open and divergent method of functioning, and keep it on course. The sequence of challenges addressed so far, as well as the way forward to the year 2000, are charted collectively by the RCRG.

In order to allow it to really be the collective owner, on behalf of the growing network, of both the thought processes and the program, ARC organized for the
Bringing on board new participants

RCRG to have also extensive discussions on its structure, composition, responsibilities and membership issues. A special workshop was convened in April 1996 for this purpose, as well as for programming purposes. The current wisdom is to leave the RCRG as an informal federation of members until there was a need for a more formal structure.

Each workshop included a significant number of new participants. Interesting activities were used to help participants get acquainted with each other and with their work:

- In 1994, multiple role plays were used to tell the story of community participation from a child/parents perspective, as well as to introduce the participants to each other and their link to the issue of partnership.

- Dialogue '95 began with participants being given pieces of a jigsaw puzzle: when assembled, the puzzle provided basic information about the participants and their work and represented a map of ECED programs in the region.

- Dialogue '96 used the spiral of history of the regional program: participants designed symbols to represent them, and placed them at the key stages of the development of the program that they took part in. The product was a living history, produced by activating the collective memory of the group.

But the process is more complex and demanding, and goes beyond introductory exercises. Throughout this case study, references are made to mechanisms used to allow everybody to acquire the information they needed and be empowered to fully participate in the thinking processes, at the risk of slowing down these processes and causing frustrations.

Building a common language

In all the workshops, the richness of the Arab language and the use of different technical words were at times confusing and misleading. Lengthy discussions are caused by the need to agree a precise understanding of concepts and terms in Arabic. Though frustrating, and not only for the interpreters and the non-Arabic speakers, these discussions have often the advantage of refining thought processes, and bringing out into the open assumed understandings or misunderstandings.

The group is becoming more and more familiar with the democratic way of functioning, and is working together to find a common language and vocabulary to negotiate the principles and conceptual framework, in formulations that would be meaningful to the Arab culture. The workshops have also been an opportunity to develop a glossary: a working draft is in circulation, and ARC is mandated to bring the project to fruition in the near future.

2-3 Case study 2: documenting processes and progress: Developing collective responsibility for documentation of Regional events on ECED

a. Concept.

The 1992 ECED Workshop, *Challenges and Initiatives in Early Childhood Education*, was a watershed for ARC's early childhood program. It began the journey from focusing initially on resource development for the Arab world, to becoming also a facilitator of the vital exchange of Arab experience and knowledge in ECED in the region. It was at this workshop that the concept of active,
participatory meetings was developed, encouraging and respecting the expression of varied opinions, and working collectively towards consensus on important issues. The concept also included documenting the processes and outcomes of the meetings, so that they can be shared by participants and other colleagues in the region, and the publication of reports, in Arabic and English, to reach the widest audience.

In a region that already enjoys a rich oral tradition, documenting the events is a unique contribution to sharing the practice and learning from the field, particularly when there is an opportunity to be active collectively in the process of documentation itself.

As the ECED workshops and dialogues developed over a period of five years, their documentation helped orientate and define the directions that ARC partners had agreed as a list of challenges and initiatives in 1992. Regional events were opportunities to revisit and update the challenges, and enrich and extend the initiatives inspired by them. The reports of these events became important working tools for partners in their country programs, as well as for use in subsequent workshops and dialogues.

Such tools are particularly important for new participants. They provide an instant access to

- The history and developments of the vision of a "better start for young Arab children", looking ahead to the year 2000, and

- The collective approach and thought processes underpinning this vision.

They are also used to enlarge the circle of participants, not only through the accumulation of written documentation of their experiences, but also through fostering

- The exchange of local and national resource materials, and

- Field visits across the region to experience projects through first hand discussion and observation.

Four colleagues shared the production of the report of this first workshop: two Arabic speakers, one English speaker and a multi-lingual colleague supporting the English account. During the workshop itself, a small number of participants recorded the proceedings and their outcomes and the four report writers met before traveling to plan its content and design.

It was a heavy responsibility on the report writers' shoulders to

- Understand the diverse recordings, such as flip chart diagrams and feedback, and hastily scribbled accounts of group work, and

- Extract the essence of the sometimes-furious debate that achieved the consensus on the framework 'Early Childhood Education: Challenges for the
The report writers then traveled to their own countries and began writing the report in their own time, working alone and contacting each other mostly by telephone. At that time easy access to fax machines was not common. Two writers working and living in the same country, one Arab, the other English, took the greater responsibility for producing the report in English, sending drafts to the other two colleagues, and thus refining it over a period of months. Two facilitators leading drama activities added special contributions. It was a very demanding and challenging process, requiring trust, and patience, and energy, with a touch of humor.

We still remember the excitement of working co-operatively on the report. Ideas flowed, with rich memories of the workshop's proceedings and climate. We struggled to be faithful to the recorded notes, but inevitably our own views, understandings and projections began to surface. They needed gentle pruning, in order to produce as accurate an account as possible, on behalf of the creative and pioneering spirit demonstrated by the participants attending the workshop. It was good to know that there was backup from ARC in editing the final account. Inevitably, there was also some criticism from participants reading the report later that not all views expressed had been recorded or that some issues had been neglected.

The production of the report of this workshop was again a major challenge. The material collected during the workshop was extensive and had been produced by a greater number of participants, who volunteered to record the entire group work and plenary sessions in both languages.

At the end of the workshop, late into the night, a small work force entered the documentation reports directly into three computers, working in pairs to facilitate speedy transcription from flip charts and the recorders' notebooks, in Arabic and English, onto hard disks and diskettes to be used by the key writers in their own countries. This was our first experience of the usefulness of laptop PCs, as well as of a more broadly shared responsibility in collating and making sense of the recorders' notes, particularly of the creative and illustrated representations on flip charts.

The scene is the foyer at the bottom of some steps leading into a ballroom in the hotel in Larnaca.

Three computers are in place with pairs of workers, one to read the information from flip charts and notebooks whilst the other typed it into the computer. Couples changed places as they tired or needed a break. It was very late at night and the floor was covered with paper of all sizes and shapes color coded for different groups, and coded by day and session. Old coffee cups and bottles of water littered the place. Other participants replenished the refreshments as needed.

Hotel staff passed by, bemused by these strange ECED people who had intrigued them by drama and dance activities, and strange diagrams and pictures illustrating different visions of partnership which had covered the walls. Now they were

The 1994 workshop:  "Partnerships for a Better Childhood."
working feverishly at midnight, like ants preparing an anthill, laughing, talking excitedly, yawning and occasionally playing games on the computer whilst waiting for the next section. As material was transferred to hard disks and diskettes, the original recordings were carefully rolled up to be taken to ARC’s office for reference in future editing.

In the early hours of the morning, the group completed the work and celebrated by a great round of hugs and kisses, strolled on the starlight beach, ate ice cream, or collapsed exhausted into bed, knowing that they were to travel and return to work the next day.

The next task was for the main writers to go away with the diskettes and work further on the report.

The major responsibility for producing the Report was again on the shoulders of three people, with backup in editing, translation and production by ARC. In 1994, the key writers were now in touch more easily by fax machines in their homes to facilitate instant communication and feedback.

A hidden and much appreciated element in this approach is the quiet support of wives, mothers and other family members of the report writers. Refreshments and loving encouragement were crucial in sustaining the workers throughout the day and into the night to reach deadlines for publication.

This Report was more complex and demanding:

- The 1992 Challenges were updated, and new elements in early childhood programs had emerged. There was now an orientation towards "care and development" of young children, including the under threes, and children in the early grades of school, in addition to their "education", perceived mostly in kindergartens and centers.

- The personal work of the writers in their own country bases had also become more demanding, with higher commitments and new programs taking place in a context of political transition. Fitting in 'other' work meant using up more precious free and family time.

- ARC in turn had begun investigating other complementary programs such as Child-to-Child, and their resource development was advancing at a steady pace.

- And, at the same time as writing up the reports, the writers and the Regional Consultative Resource Group (RCRG) were planning the next follow up workshop, or dialogue, as it came to be known.

For the work on the Conceptual Framework and the ECED Principles in Dialogue '95, the same process continued.

But after Dialogue '96, which produced the trial issue of the Newsletter, it became clear that the responsibility for producing reports must become even more truly a collective one. More colleagues committed themselves to writing up specific
c. A new chapter in collective documentation:

The collective production of items for the Newsletter was itself a good model to develop in 1997. A major novelty in working on the newsletter was that specific sections and articles were drafted during the workshop itself, though refining the drafts would be completed more efficiently later in the country base. This offered more and new participants the opportunity of writing in pairs or individually, resulting in a truly regional scope, with contributions from authors from Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine.

Members of ARC and the RCRG, and other interested participants met at the beginning of the workshop to discuss the need and strategies for more collective responsibility in preparing the actual report to be produced at the end of the workshop. The report would again be very comprehensive, covering the following contents:

- Experiences and information from the field
- Introductory and keynote presentations
- Collective outcomes of group work on the Principles, Challenges and Strategies
- Revisiting and updating the 1992 Challenges with the holistic integrated approach
- Human resources and training updates
- Resource materials update
- Newsletter review
- The list of participants: addresses, contact numbers, etc., and for the database: work experience, resource materials, etc.

The group agreed that it would be very useful to document the challenges and the actual experience of producing collectively the workshop's report, for the benefit of the participants and the wider readership following its publication. As the process was quite unique and we were learning more with each experience, it was felt that others might want to try the model and build upon it in their own way.

In addition, there are now small focal groups in each country working together on country newsletters, and on reports within their own programs. This approach could offer new opportunities for those working and living with young children to present their own experiences, share lessons learned in successful or even disastrous initiatives, and foster co-operation, participation, bridge-building and networking across the region.

The process adopted built on the previous experience and included the following steps:
i. A core planning group from ARC, RCRG and new participants met daily to plan, review and adapt the agenda.

ii. Each day, facilitators and recorders were selected for each plenary session and group work meeting: men and women, from all countries, new members and regular participants from previous events, comfortable in Arabic and/or English.

iii. Two new ARC staff from the Beirut office were responsible for collecting all recordings, flip charts, overhead transparencies, etc., at the end of sessions, and for checking and reminding people of their writing commitments at the end of the day. Those documents were coded according to date and session for future use.

iv. Following a particularly demanding session of group and plenary work on Principles, Challenges and Strategies, there was a feeling of confusion and unresolved issues amongst the larger group. There was a need for some order and clarification of the issues raised. It was important to determine where consensus was reached or dissension still existed, in order to facilitate a deeper discussion to resolve pending issues, and either reach consensus, or agree to put them on hold for future workshops. As in previous workshops, a small drafting committee of regular and new participants agreed to work during the rest period, or in parallel with another activity, to arrange and prepare a comprehensive account on what progress was being made on these key issues. The outcome of this work, which attempted effectively to collate, categorize and cross-check the working group reports, was then used to lead the discussions into a clear direction, and to reach provisional conclusions.

v. As in all previous events and report writing experiences, there has been a very balanced division of labor between women and men. The more familiar picture of men leading and facilitating with women acting as secretaries and recorders is quite alien to the ARC process. There was also a commitment to sharing roles and responsibilities with new participants, ensuring that they were encouraged and supported to take the lead, and to carry out responsibilities for all aspects of the process. The process is one of inclusion regardless of gender, status or experience.

vi. The final planning meeting before traveling was quite different in 1997. All documentation was available in Arabic and English. All sections for the content of the report were allocated to 10 named writers, from ARC, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt. ARC Beirut would receive first drafts and carry out the editing process.

vii. Later in 1997, we will evaluate this attempt to be more collective and inclusive, obtaining feedback from writers, editors and the readership.
Appendix I

Background and objectives.

In 1992, a regional event was convened to explore the challenges facing early childhood education in Arab societies. The participants put in common their knowledge of important initiatives in this field. The workshop produced what has been known since as the "1992 challenges"3.

Towards the end of 1994, another regional workshop (in Larnaca) addressed one of the challenges: "Community Awareness and Participation". The report/document was titled "Partnerships for a Better Childhood"4, and had a special focus on community awareness and participation.

In 1995, a consultative meeting defined the basic principles in early childhood education and development (ECED) in the Arab world, and paved the way for proposing a three-dimensional model of the holistic/integrative concept5.

We are pleased today to convene a regional workshop, to be held on 15 - 18 February 1997, to address another fundamental challenge of the "1992 Challenges", which is:

"Elaborate a coherent and comprehensive pedagogical perspective on pre-school education, linked to the subsequent stages of education"

Since 1992, the formulation of this challenge has been broadened and developed by the cumulative work of successive workshops. It now covers not only "pre-school education", but also all other aspects of early childhood education and development in a holistic approach, based on the reality in our societies.

The main objectives of the February workshop are:

1. To discuss further the holistic/integrative concept in ECED.

2. To link the holistic/integrative concept with the "1992 Challenges" and the "1995 Principles", and update these challenges and principles.

3. To extract the broad lines of the holistic/integrative concept that could serve as a tool to diagnose the reality of early childhood in our societies, and to define the type, form and content of diagnostic outputs (the descriptive reports).

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5 ECED in the Arab World: Concepts, Principles and Programme. A working tool: documentation and proposals of a regional
4. To consider the impact of the concept and of the conclusions derived from the workshop on the “five year plan”.

We invited Dr Robert Myers and/or Dr Judith Evans from the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development to deliver a keynote address to the workshop. In a previous publication, Dr Myers proposed a holistic approach to programming in ECD, based on research material, challenges and priorities in developing countries, and aiming at providing children with a fair start at the initial stages of their life.

Dr Jacqueline Sfeir will also make a general presentation linking the progress made since 1992 to the theme of the workshop.

The two presentations will establish the framework for the work and discussions in the working groups (WGs). It is hoped that the participants will

* debate the holistic/integrative concept and compare it to the reality in the field;

* refine the definition of needs in human and material resources to strengthen the holistic/integrative approach;

* discuss the impact of the above on the activities and projects covered by the five-year plan;

* suggest ways to transform the practices and address the challenges prevalent in Arab countries, according to the holistic/integrative approach.

**Expected outcome of the WGs.**

1. Re-define the relevant challenges of the 1992 list.

2. Propose the broad lines and major items to be used as a tool for the production of the descriptive reports, which will prepare the way for the proposed regional conference in the year 2000.

3. Collect views inspired by the workshop's discussions regarding the projected guide/manual "Working with Children".

4. Make recommendations for the follow up and evaluation of the newsletter, based on the experimentation with the first/trial issue.

Produce a statement on the "holistic/integrative concept" in our societies, if such a statement is deemed useful.

**The participants.**

This invitation has been addressed to

- persons who participated in previous workshops,

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- workers involved in training, teaching and programming, and
- Program directors and decision-makers in institutions.

The number of participants will be limited (no more than 40), in order to ensure a
good quality of sharing and interaction. It is important to provide space for an in-
depth and detailed examination of all agenda items, in interaction with the approach
and the five-year plan.

**Proposed Agenda**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday 14 February 1997:</strong></td>
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<td>■ Arrival and registration.</td>
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<td>■ Finalise preparations</td>
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<td><strong>Saturday 15:</strong></td>
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<td>■ Working groups (WGs): prepare queries, questions and observations,</td>
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<td>Challenges&quot; and &quot;1995 Principles&quot;</td>
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<td>■ Discussion in plenary: WG reports and updating of challenges and principles</td>
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<td><strong>p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>■ Discussion in plenary: using the keynote presentation and the three-</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>dimensional model, establish a general framework for the ‘descriptive reports’.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>■ WGs: the principal components of the descriptive reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday 16:</strong></td>
<td><strong>am</strong></td>
<td>■ Discussion in plenary: WG reports; discussion and recommendations.</td>
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<td>■ Discussion in plenary: impact of the workshop's outputs on the five-year plan</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>■ WGs: suggestions to amend the five year plan, inspired by the integrative /holistic approach.</td>
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<td><strong>p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>■ Discussion in plenary: agree the amendments to the five-year plan, with a</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>focus on the newsletter and the manual/guide &quot;Working with Children&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>■ Visit the exhibition</td>
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<td>■ Documenting the workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday 17:</strong></td>
<td><strong>am</strong></td>
<td>■ WGs: documenting the workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>p.m.</strong></td>
<td>■ Discussion in plenary: review of the workshop's draft report and other</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>documentation;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>■ Evaluation and closing.</td>
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</tbody>
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### Appendix 2

**ECED Workshop, February 97, Larnaca, Cyprus:**

**Participants’ List**

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