Early Childhood Policy Review in Nepal

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Early Childhood Policy Review in Nepal
(A Study Report)

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In meeting the first goal of Education for All, “Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” the current review of the Early Childhood Policy Review is expected to be both useful and timely in identifying, documenting and sharing good practices as well as constraints and challenges in early childhood policy development and implementation in Nepal. Although early childhood is relatively a new concern and late comer in the development agenda, its progress has been extremely rapid in this country. The commitments made by the government in the international forums such as World Summit for Children, World Conference on Education for All, and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have been instrumental in developing early childhood plans and programs. Although there is no specific national policy on ECD, the policy related decisions can be found in various national plans and policy documents. This study has reviewed the national plans and programs as well as early childhood related policies mentioned in the relevant documents. Involvement of various ministries, national and international non-governmental organizations, UN agencies-UNESCO and UNICEF and private sector have contributed in the expansion of early childhood services in Nepal.

The ECD review in the Nepalese context is a part of the regional early childhood policy initiative sponsored by UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (APRBE) and UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), Bangkok Thailand.

The review of relevant literature, consultation meetings with the high level officials at the central level and case studies conducted in the three districts-Tanahu, Morang and Sunsari—revealed ample information pertaining to the ECD policy, mainly on strengths and loopholes in the existing policy documents. Analysis of those information helped to suggest some important recommendations for developing early childhood policy framework especially in the areas of mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs in Nepal. The current review has also created a basis for envisioning ways to put policies into practice especially in the case of expanding quality early childhood services to the children living in disadvantaged situation and marginalized communities. I believe that this review will be highly useful for all those who are interested and involved in the care, education and development of young children in Nepal.

On behalf of CERID, I would like to express my sincere thanks to UNESCO Kathmandu for recognizing this center to undertake such an important task. We would like to express gratefulness to UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF, EAPRO, Bangkok, for providing us with their enabling support during the entire study period. Our special appreciations go to Dr. Judith Evans, regional consultant for the review, Mr. Cliff Meyers of UNICEF, EAPRO, Ms. Maki Hayashikawa of UNESCO Bangkok, Mr. Tap Raj Pant and Ms. Aliza Shrestha Dhungana of UNESCO Kathmandu for their professional contributions. Also, the review team members deserve credit for their contributions. Mr. Hem Raj Kafle’s support in editing the language is commendable. CERID is thankful to all those who participated in the consultative workshops organized for the review purpose and to all the respondents who provided valuable ideas and opinions during the field work.

Dr. Shreeram Prasad Lamichhane
Officiating Executive Director, CERID
### Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BPEP</td>
<td>Basic and Primary Education Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Child Care Centre</td>
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<td>CCWB</td>
<td>Central Child Welfare Board</td>
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<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief District Officer</td>
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<td>CERID</td>
<td>Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development</td>
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<td>CLCs</td>
<td>Community Learning Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DACAW</td>
<td>Decentralized Action for Children and Women</td>
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<td>DCWB</td>
<td>District Child Welfare Board</td>
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<td>DDCs</td>
<td>District Development Committees</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<td>ETC</td>
<td>Educational Training Center</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Rate</td>
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<td>GOs</td>
<td>Government Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>I/NGOs</td>
<td>International Non Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>IDD</td>
<td>Iodine Deficiency Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>Information, Education and Communication</td>
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<td>LDO</td>
<td>Local Development Officer</td>
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<td>LSGA</td>
<td>Local Self-Governance Act</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Management Committee</td>
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<td>MCH</td>
<td>Mother and Child Health</td>
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<td>MCHVs</td>
<td>Mother and Child Health Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Sports</td>
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<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOLD</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MWCSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCED</td>
<td>National Center for Educational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Nepal Children’s Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>Non-Formal Education</td>
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<td>NGOCC</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization Coordination Committee</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Plan of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>PABSON</td>
<td>Private and Boarding Schools Association of Nepal</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

Country Profile

Nepal is a landlocked country with the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China lying to its North, and India lying to its East, South and West. It covers an area of 147,181 Square Kilometers. The shape of the country is rectangular running from south-east to north-west with an extent of about 885 kilometers. Its breadth from north to south varies from 241 to 145 kilometers with an average of 193 kilometers. Geographically, it consists of three layers of distinct ecological zones: 1) the Himalayas, the high mountain range with snow-covered peaks that include the world’s highest mountain—Mount Everest, 2) the hill areas with lush high hills and valleys, and 3) the Terai, a strip of fertile plains. All these geographic belts of Nepal run from east to west. According to the census of 2001, Nepal has a population of 23,151,423. According to the latest estimation, the total population of the country is over 26 million.

Politically, Nepal is a democratic country with a multiparty system of government. For administrative purpose, the country is divided into 5 developmental regions, 14 zones and 75 districts with 3900 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and 58 municipalities. Municipalities and VDCs are elected lowest government bodies.

Nepal is inhabited by people of diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Socio-cultural diversity is one of the important features of the Nepalese society. Its people are categorized into a number of caste groups and ethnic communities. Power was consolidated by interlinking it with the Hindu caste system, which, though diluted, remains even today. The Brahmans were at the top with the Kshetriyas (king and warriors) just beneath them; next came the Vaishyas (merchants) and the Shudras (peasants and laborers). Beneath everyone were occupational groups, considered
“impure” and untouchable Dalits (Bennett, 2005). Generally, Nepal’s Hindu-dominated society has excluded four groups of people from the development process: Dalits or lower caste people, Indigenous people or Janajatis, Madheshi or Habitants of the plains and Women.

The Dalits as victims of discriminatory behavior are prohibited from interspersing with all other categories of the population. Consequently, it is not possible for them to be part of social activities in their locality including participation in educational activities of young children. The Hindu caste system looks upon Dalits as impure and polluting. There is a saying that Dalits should be denied access to education, wealth and governance. Such norms and values guide the social ethics from the early childhood age (Vishwakarma, 2006).

Social inclusion is a political agenda, an agenda for state transformation (Gurung, 2006). The restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 provided diverse groups space to exert their identities and rights as citizens. Various social movements—basically the women’s movement succeeded in placing questions of gender equality and justice on the national agenda and Dalits began challenging Nepal’s caste society. The Janajati movement also raised fundamental issues of fair ethnic representation and rights to languages other than Nepali, and cultures and religions other than Hinduism (Bennett, 2005). Similarly, the people of Terai origin have raised their voices for equal rights.

Since 1990 efforts have been made to increase the access of marginalized segments of the population. Most of the donor agencies have stressed on spending the funds for the promotion of women, children and people living in disadvantaged situations. In the case of extending early care and education services INGOs such as Save the Children US and Norway, Action Aid, Plan International were involved in providing ECCE services since early 80s, but their coverage was limited. As the target populations of these organizations are the poorest of the poor, they are playing a crucial role in dealing with the problem of including the traditionally excluded groups.

The national census 2001 noted 102 social groups and recorded 92 languages out of which more than a dozen are in active use among a significant size of the population sections (each having more than one hundred thousand people).

The country is an agro-based economy with per capita income of about $370 (HDR, 2004). It is mostly rural and poor, with 31% people living below the poverty line. The current life expectancy rate is about 63 years — male 62.9 and female 63.7(CBS 2003, projection for 2006).

**Context of the Review**

In Nepal, there is no provision of compulsory education. There is no rights based educational provision in place yet. Basic and primary education is free. Although early childhood care and education is included as a part of basic education, in most cases, it is not free. The free basic and primary education connotes free tuition fee and free textbooks. However, schools are free to raise donation from the community and the parents to meet development and maintenance cost
of the schools. In many instances, the donation contributions are enforced by the schools. The issue of such donation vis a vis free school education up to basic and primary level persists.

The national literacy rate is reported to have reached 54 percent. But the female literacy rate is only 43 percent. Special incentives and scholarship programs have been launched for the children belonging to backward and disadvantaged communities and family backgrounds including ethnic minorities, Dalits and girls. Primary education has been made free for all children in Nepal since 1975. Textbooks have been provided free of cost to all children in primary grades since 1979. As a result, the net enrolment of primary school children reached to 87.4 percent in 2006.

The population of children below 6 years of age comprises more than 18 percent of the total population. Among them about half the children (9.77% of total population) fall under the age group of 3 to 6 years.

The under-5 child mortality rate is as high as 61 per 1000 live births (Ministry of Health and Population, New Era, and Macro International Inc., 2007). On the top of this, those who survive also suffer from various ailments, diseases and deformities. The incidence of morbidity is very high and it directly affects the psycho-social and physical development of children. It is estimated that 50 percent of under-five children suffer from severe or moderate level of malnutrition. Among them the rate of the proportion of protein energy malnutrition (PEM) is very high. A large number of children suffer from Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD) and Iron Deficiency Anemia. It is no wonder, therefore, that during the critical growing phase, majority of the children in Nepal suffer from either lack of food or inappropriate feeding, unhygienic state of the physical environment, and lack of basic services including early childhood care and education (ECCE).

The entrance to the formal schooling i.e. entrance to grade I in Nepal begins only from 6 years of age. However, it is estimated that 30 - 40 percent of those who attend grade I are less than 6 years old (Action Plan, 1992, quoted in Evans, 1992, p.13). The children in the age group 3-5 years either attend school with their elder siblings or the latter also stay at home. This has resulted in phenomenal increase in enrolment comprising of under-age children in grade I which, in turn, accounts for a high rate of drop-out and repetition (UNICEF, 1994). In the recent years, the entry age to formal primary education has been reduced to 5 years of age.

The Ministry of Education, under its Basic and Primary Education Program in 1997, started to take initiatives to open pre-primary classes in order to separate the under age children from Grade I and improve the teaching and learning situation in Grade I. Initially, the emphasis and primary goal of establishing pre-primary classes was on separating the young children from Grade I and the development of young children was the secondary concern. However, the inclusion of Early Childhood Care and Education as the first goal of EFA has brought about change in this concept. The focus has been shifted from separating the under aged children from Grade I to the development of children at ECD programs. The concepts and practices regarding Early Childhood Development and Pre-primary education are emerging as important developments, but they are still not part of the formal national education structure.
A review of the ECD services available in Nepal shows that most of the programs are targeted to the children in the age bracket of 3 to 5 years. Most of these programs are skewed towards the aspect of psycho-social development or lean toward the education and cognitive development parts with no or very little inputs on health and nutrition. Services for the development of children from conception to three years of age are to a large extent being looked after by the Ministry of Health through its maternal and child health programs. However, the services provided by the Ministry of Health lack the early stimulation components required for psycho-social and emotional development of children. In the present organizational structure, although pre-school education is being undertaken by the Ministry of Education, the development of children aged 3 to 5 are not formally included in any ministry. Educating children aged 3 to 5 has not been included in the education structure. As a result, the government’s investment has not yet been made for this level of education.

The country has set a target to provide ECD services to 80 percent of children aged 3 – 5 by the year 2015. Similarly, it has targeted to have 80 percent of new entrants at Grade 1 with ECD exposure by 2015. The EFA National Plan of Action and the EFA Core Document 2004-2009 programs in Nepal have made commitments to expand and improve ECD provisions throughout the country in order to achieve the goal.

Objectives of the Review

The main objective of the review was to support and assist the country in meeting the first goal of Education for All, “Expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” by identifying, documenting and sharing good practices as well as constraints and challenges in early childhood policy development and implementation in Nepal.

In light of the above mentioned overall objective, the specific objectives of the review were as follows:

- to identify ECD policy stipulated in national laws, regulations and development plans
- to examine the relevance of the policy to programs and practices in line with the Mid-decade assessment of EFA
- to identify policy gaps in mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs
- to suggest strategic measures for the development of ECD policy framework.
Expected Outcomes

- Compilation of existing ECD related policies.
- Building capacity in preparing a policy framework to improve early childhood services and provisions.
- Developing a policy knowledge and resource base to function as reference for policy makers, including justification and foundation for early childhood.
- Sharing experiences and perspectives in policy development and implementation among relevant organizations responsible for implementing early childhood services/provisions (GOs, I/NGOs, Private sector institutions).

Scope of the Review

Policy review includes all sectoral (Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Local Development and concerned I/NGOs) and cross-sectoral activities and age spans (0 to 5).

- The review also covers constitution, legislature, parliament or executive order and plans, series of government decisions as national policy.
- Opinions, views and expectations of various national level policy makers, government officials, political leaders, I/NGO personnel as well as relevant stakeholders at the district and local level have been included in the review process.
- The review includes all previously established sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and strategies.
- It tries to identify major policy and coordination gaps, conflicts and duplications, set priorities among policy areas, and establish key strategies and standards.

Themes and Issues to Review

- Involvement of local government bodies in ECD (review of the policy on decentralization, delegation of authority and financing and monitoring system)
- Streamline ECD program in the education structure (public/ private)
- Provisions for and gaps in inter-sectoral coordination
- Expanding ECD services to the children living in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
- Status of sustainability of ECD programs and policy gaps
- Development of human resources at various level required for implementation of quality ECD programs
Chapter Two

Methods and Procedure of the Review

Keeping in view the nature of the study, the following strategies and methods were used in this study.

Formation of Research Team and Advisory Committee

A five-member team of researchers was formed in order to conduct the study. The team included Executive Director of CERID, Researchers and other two research associates working with ECD resource centre. The team was formed in consultation with UNESCO Kathmandu. The team developed guidelines for review, developed research tools, organized central level workshops, conducted field surveys in the districts, administered interviews with the key policy level officials at the central level, established coordination with advisory committee and shared the progress of the review at different time intervals, and prepared review report.

In order to involve the relevant organizations and individuals in the review process as well as to receive necessary suggestions and guidance in undertaking the study, an advisory committee was formed. The members of the Advisory Committee included representatives from relevant ministries—MOES/DOE, MOH, MOLD and MOCWSW; UN agencies—UNESCO and UNICEF; INGOs—SC Alliance and PLAN Nepal; NGO representative—Seto Gurans National Child Development Services; and Researcher Team. The list of advisory team is presented in Annex.

The meetings of the advisory committee were held at different occasions of the project period. The first meeting was held at the outset of the project period. In this meeting the members reviewed the draft proposal developed by the researchers and used guidelines provided by UNESCO and UNICEF. The second meeting was held before the conduct of field work. The advisory committee members reviewed the sample design of the field work and research tools developed by the research team and provided necessary inputs. The third meeting was held after the field work and during the period of data analysis and interpretation. In this meeting the members reviewed the progress of the project and provided necessary inputs in data analysis.

Review of Policy Documents

In order to overview the existing status of early childhood and to identify the current policies on early childhood care and education in Nepal, an extensive review of the relevant documents were made. The documents reviewed included national development plans, EFA program documents, policy documents and research reports.
Organization of Central Level Workshops

In connection to Early Childhood Policy Review, central level consultative workshops were organized twice. The workshops were organized with the technical and financial support of UNESCO office in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The first workshop was organized after the review of relevant literature but before finalization of the research tools and conduction of field work.

The workshop was organized to share the findings of the review of related literature on ECD policies, and to identify existing policies and policy gaps in promoting mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination, and sustainability of ECD programs.

In the workshop, a paper on existing ECD policies and practices was presented and plenary session was held to discuss on the paper presented. The workshop also included group work. The participants were divided into three different groups. The groups were: (a) mainstreaming ECD programs, (b) inter-sectoral coordination among different organizations working in the field of ECD, and (c) sustainability of ECD programs.

The workshop was participated in by 30 participants representing MOES, DOE, ECD unit of DOE, MOH, MOLD, MOWCSW, INGO- Save the Children Alliance, Plan Nepal, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, ADB, DFID, and NGOs representatives, Heads of the University Departments, representatives from research centers, and representatives from service providers.

The second central level workshop was organized as a consultative workshop to share the major preliminary findings of the policy review and to collect consolidated views of the relevant stakeholders. Two presentations were made: one on the policy review major activities undertaken under the review task and the other on major findings of the review. The three aspects of the review i.e., mainstreaming, inter-sectoral cooperation and sustainability of the ECD programs were the main focuses of the workshop.

The workshop also involved group work where the participants were divided into three groups based on the organization they represent. The groups were formed as (i) Government officials, (ii) I/NGOs, and (iii) Private schools. All the groups were given questions under three topics for discussion i.e., Mainstreaming, Coordination and Sustainability of ECD program.

Along with the Honorable Minister for Education and Sports, Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports, and Director General of
Department of Education, the workshop was participated in by the high level officials from different relevant ministries, National Planning Commission, Central Child Welfare Board, UNESCO and UNICEF/ Nepal, INGOs, NGO, University Teachers and researchers. The workshop was participated in by 35 participants.

Preparation of Study Tools and Respondents

In order to collect information from different stakeholders at the central and district levels research tools were prepared. The research tools include FGD guidelines and interview schedules.

- **FGD guidelines**
  FGD guidelines were prepared to conduct discussions with teachers/facilitators and community members (representing political parties and social workers) at the district level. The themes for FGD were: inter-sectoral cooperation, sustainability and mainstreaming of ECD programs. Attempts were made to collect opinions on existing policies, identification of policy gaps and collection of suggestions for policy development on the above three areas.

- **Interview schedules**
  Unstructured interview schedules were developed to elicit information from central level officials and stakeholders at the district level.

Interview schedules for central level key informants included unstructured questions in the areas of strengths and gaps in mainstreaming public and private ECD centers in the national system, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of the ECD programs. The interview schedule focused on the need, requirements and process for mainstreaming, policy formulation and structural arrangement for mainstreaming. The coordination between ministries that are concerned with ECD for conducting different activities at the central, district and local levels was included in the guideline. The problems and solutions in the inter-sectoral coordination were also covered by the interview guideline. Similarly, it included the existing situation of coordination and ways out to solve the problems of coordination within INGOs, and between INGOs and ministries. Regarding sustainability, the interview schedule focused on the basic requirements for sustainability, policies formulation for sustainability of different types of ECD programs and importance and ways of community participation for sustainability of ECD programs. The interview schedule was used while collecting information from the relevant ministries and relevant organizations. The central level officials included Honorable member of NPC, Secretary or Joint Secretary or Under Secretary level officials from MOES, MOH, MOLD, MWCSW and Central Child Welfare Board.

Similarly, the interview schedules for district level officials included unstructured questions in the areas of mainstreaming school-based and community-based ECD centers, existing practices and need for inter-sectoral coordination, and policies to be formulated for the sustainability of community-based, school based and private school-based ECD centers. Some
of the questions were also intended to collect the perception of the stakeholders on the requirements of physical facilities (including instruction materials and curricular materials), monitoring and supervision of ECD programs and required policies for ensuring the sustainability of ECD program. The district level officials included DEO, Focal Person, DCWB Member, NGO CO, INGO and at the local level: school HT, facilitator, CMC Member of ECD, and NGO trainers.

Conduction of Field Studies

Field studies were conducted in order to collect field-based experiences of different stakeholders and implementers of ECD programs at the local level. Sample districts were selected as advised by the Advisory Committee based on the availability of ECD services at the districts. Field studies were conducted in Tanahu, Morang and Sunsari districts.

Field study was taken as one of the methods of data collection for identifying existing ECD practices and policy gaps in order to review the policy on early childhood development. The main objective of the field study was to identify the existing practices of ECD programs organized by different institutions in the districts and to explore gaps in implementation of the programs with respect to mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs.

Interview with stakeholders, FGDs with facilitators/teachers, political representatives and district education personnel, observation of ECD centers were the methods used for collecting information from the field. Three-member research team was deployed to the sample districts for data collection from different stakeholders as per the objectives of the study. The research team approached DEO and prepared study plan for the districts. The study team interviewed DEO. FGDs were organized with ECD facilitators, representatives of the PABSON (Private and Boarding Schools Association of Nepal) teachers and head teachers; district education personnel including RPs and SSs. Different district-level stakeholders such as LDO, UNICEF field officer, Education Manager of Save the children US and Program Officer of Plan Nepal were also interviewed for collection of information. One community-based ECD program run by Seto Gurans National Child Development Services in Morang and one ECD centre run by a public school in Tanahu were also observed by the team.
Chapter Three
Overview of Early Childhood Development in Nepal

This chapter presents a review of various aspects of early childhood development in Nepal. Basically, it deals with the definition of early childhood development, care and education; historical development and major milestones; key organizations responsible for the implementation; implementation strategies; and current ECD policy in Nepal.

Definition of Early Childhood Development, Care and Education

Early childhood development programs in Nepal are known by various names. Early child care programs such as day care centers and child care centers; and early childhood education programs like nursery, kindergarten, pre-school and pre-primary schools fall under the early childhood development program. There has been a shift in emphasis from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and from ECCE to Early Childhood Development (ECD). ECE connotes educating the children at early childhood age, and ECCE refers to taking care of children and educating them during the absence of parents. ECD implies overall development of children. The term ECD, being more appropriate, is thus used widely.

Historical Development of Early Childhood Development

The history of Early Childhood Education in Nepal does not date back to a long time. The first Montessori school established in 1950 at Kathmandu, the capital city of the country, is considered as the first ECE School in Nepal.

The establishment of Nepal Children’s Organization (NCO) in 1962 led to the expansion of ECE services in an organized manner. This organization has established a Child Care Centre (CCC) in each district of the country. However, as the CCCs established by NCO are located at the district headquarters, they primarily serve the need of the urban or suburban residents and the children of the government officials working at district headquarters (Joshi, 1991). However, the CCCs established in the 60s and 70s do not exist any more. Most centers have been upgraded to primary and secondary schools. These days there are quite a few centers being operated under NCO.

The implementation of rural development projects in mid 1980s like Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) Projects and Small Farmers Development Project (SFDP) and their focus on the establishment of CCCCs, basically to free the mothers for their involvement in income generating activities, have helped in making available ECCE services to the children living in rural areas albeit to a limited extent.
The Ministry of Local Development initiated CCC programs under the Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) Project that established a number of ECD centers in rural areas of the country. The CCC has been conceived as an ideal child care-giving place meant for local children who are below the school-going age. The program is focused mainly on the mothers who need to engage extensively in income-generating activities, mainly household and agricultural work. The CCC program aims to save time spent by mothers and parents on child care and to develop physical and psycho-social aspects of children.

With the initiative of the Government, the Small Farmers’ Development Project under the Agricultural Development Bank has launched CCC programs. The aim of establishing CCC program under SFDP is the same as that of CCC under PCRW—to free mothers and provide environment for the overall development of small farmers’ children. A Centre is operated by an Executive Committee. The members of the committee are the women promoters of the project.

The contributions of the UN agencies, mainly UNICEF and UNESCO, INGOs and NGOs, since late 1980s and early 1990s, have been extremely significant in the development of early childhood development programs in Nepal. UNICEF and UNESCO have been extending support in the implementation of ECD programs under the aegis of the government as well as NGOs.

Save the Children/US, Save the Children Norway and Plan Nepal are the major INGOs involved in implementing and supporting ECD programs in Nepal. There are numerous NGOs involved in the implementation of ECD programs. Among them Seto Gurans National Child Development Services is a leading NGO involved in developing human resources required for running ECD programs and providing technical support to the needy organizations. The INGOs are running the ECD centers in most cases through the local NGOs or Community Based Organizations, but in some cases they are running the programs directly and independently. In most of the ECD programs run by INGOs the implementing organizations provided funds for most of the recurring expenses, such as the facilitators and helpers remuneration, training costs, and costs for materials and nutrition supplementation. The programs have also placed emphasis on forming management committees to run ECD centers. The committees, except those programs under PLAN International, are allowed to charge a reasonable monthly fee to the children attending the centers. In the programs managed by INGOs, emphasis is placed on recruiting the facilitators from the local communities. It is estimated that there are around 1079 ECD centers being run under the umbrella of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal.

Opening of pre-school education classes by private schools from early 1970s has made ECE services accessible to a large number of children in the country. Most of these programs are known as pre-primary education centers or pre-schools and as their names suggest they are a downward extension of primary schools. The involvement of the private sector has increased the access of ECD services to a large number of children in the country. However, as these centers depend solely on the fees charged to the children, they are expensive. They are confined to the urban areas and cater only to the families of a high economic status. These programs are not accessible to the majority of the children living in rural areas and belonging to poor families. It
is estimated that there are around 8000 pre-primary classes being run by private schools in the name of day care, pre-primary, nursery and kindergarten classes.

The major government initiated project has been the Shishu Kaksha (SK) Program of the Department of Education under its BPEP program started in 1997. Within a few years of time this has been one of the major projects in Nepal that has covered a large number of districts and locations. The initial goals of implementing SK program were to remove under-age children from grade I and to improve instructional practices in primary education. However, in course, its development goals have gradually shifted to preparing pre-school children to enter Grade I and, thereafter, to the overall development of children aged 3 to 5 years. The Department of Education (DOE) is playing a leading role in expanding ECD services in the country. Under its EFA program the DOE is implementing both the Community-based and school-affiliated ECD programs. There were altogether 5023 ECD centers being run at the end of Basic and Primary Education Program II (1999-2004). In the first year of EFA (2004-09) it was planned to establish 2000 more ECD centers throughout the country. By the end of 2007 there were around 17 thousand ECD centers being run under the Department of Education. The numbers of the centers are increasing every year. Along with the establishment of increased number of ECD centers, the DOE’s contribution in the development of the national ECD curriculum, training packages and networking of the organizations involved in ECD have been highly significant.

**Key Organizations Responsible for the Implementation**

In Nepal, the organizations responsible for the implementation of early childhood programs can be categorized into: (1) Government ministries, (2) UN Agencies, INGOs and NGOs, and (3) Private Sector.

Under the government ministries, the Ministries of Education, Local Development, Health, Women, Children and Social Welfare are primarily responsible. The Ministry of Education and Sports through its Department of Education is implementing a large number of early childhood development programs as a part of its EFA program components.

The MOH under its various programs especially MCH program is providing health services to the pregnant and lactating mothers and young children. It is also monitoring the nutritional status of children below three years in some districts through its extension programs.

The MOLD at the central level coordinates child development programs with other relevant ministries and INGOs. At the local level the Municipalities and VDCs are responsible in the implementation and monitoring of ECD programs.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has been created in the recent years. Its activities by now have been limited to overseeing the need of orphans, abandoned and displaced children.
Under the UN Agencies, UNICEF Nepal on one hand is supporting the government and other agencies in development and implementation of ECD programs and, on the other, it is implementing ECD programs through its regional offices. Similarly, UNESCO Kathmandu is providing support to the government and other organizations in initiating various ECD related activities. Its support to the DOE in implementing ECD program has been instrumental in the expansion of ECD services. Its major support includes preparation of ECD strategic paper, ECD curriculum, training manuals and undertaking of training programs and establishment of ECD Resource Centre at the DOE.

INGOs especially Save the Children US and Norway and Plan Nepal have been involved in expanding ECD services to children living in rural, remote and disadvantaged communities. These organizations are implementing ECD programs in coordination with the local NGOs and CBOs. Some other INGOs implementing ECD programs are Educate the Children, the World Vision, Save the Children UK and Japan, and International Child Resource Institute. There are more than hundreds of NGOs and CBOs involved in the implementation of ECD programs. But among them the leading NGO is Seto Gurans National Child Development Services.

The private sector, especially the private schools have been implementing ECD programs in the urban and sub-urban areas. Almost all private schools are providing some sort of pre-primary education. Their contribution in extending ECD services to the children living in the urban areas and belonging to better of families is significant.

**Implementation Strategies**

Based on the existing legal provisions and policy measures, the Ministry of Education and Sports and Department of Education have adopted a number of strategies to achieve the EFA ECD goal in Nepal. The major strategies adopted are presented below.

*Coordination, networking and partnership*

Both the EFA National Plan of Action (2001 – 2015) and the Core Document for EFA (2004-2009) emphasized the need for coordination, networking and partnership with communities for implementing ECD programs. This strategy was adopted to minimize the duplication of services and making optimal use of the resources available. Coordination in ECD programs is aimed at adopting an integrated approach to child development in terms of Program contents and in terms of delivery and harmony in the Program. ECD training packages, curricula and learning materials were developed to cater to local needs and address children’s diversity.

Networking of the relevant institutions were created to facilitate sharing of Program materials, knowledge and experience for optimum benefit to each other. At the central level, the Department of Education has developed a forum for networking of institutions and individuals dedicated to ECD in Nepal. All the organizations working at the national level are encouraged to become members of the ECD National Network. Similarly, at the district and VDC/municipality levels, a network of ECD service providers has been provisioned at the District Education Office. All
organizations working at the district and VDC/Municipality levels are encouraged to join the ECD Network. ECD programs undertaken or supported by local bodies, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and CBOs are harmonized through local as well as national level networks.

Partnerships with various stakeholders and relevant organizations have been sought in the implementation of the Program. A partnership policy and guidelines for the partner organizations to implement and monitor the Program and use of funds have been developed to this effect. UN agencies and INGOs are involved technically and financially in the program where the government resources are insufficient.

At the central level, a National Early Childhood Development Council has been formed under the chairpersonship of the Secretary, MOES. The members of the council include representatives from MOH, MOLD, MOWCSW and the representatives of UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs. The Director of the Department of Education is the Member Secretary of the Council.

At the district level, the District Child Development Board (DCDB) has been constituted in 35 districts under the Chairpersonship of the District Development Committee President. The Board consists of members from the concerned line agencies. DCDB is responsible to ensure community participation and coordinate with local GOs, I/NGOs and local authorities. DCDB will also contribute to raising funds and providing support to construct ECD centers.

Decentralized Management
Decentralization of authority to local bodies has been taken as a key strategy to enhance efficiency in ECD implementation and ensure sustainability of the ECD programs. Through the enactment of Local Self Governance Act the local elected bodies—VDCs and Municipalities have been delegated the authority to run ECD centers through partnerships with NGOs, CBOs and local groups and to authorize the interested bodies to run ECD centers. Guidelines have been developed to facilitate the process of decentralization and to empower local bodies to run ECD programs. VDCs and Municipalities can open and/or give approval to run ECD centers as per the local need. VDCs and municipalities have taken responsibility to approve the ECD centers in certain localities.

Assessing the existing ECD center in the district has been done by the district with the technical support from the government and financial support from the INGOs working in the area.

Different activities have been identified and assigned to ECD actors based on their expertise. And all relevant stakeholders and partners are involved in planning jointly for the consolidation and expansion of ECD services.

District Education Offices have kept the ECD records of Education facilitators, trainers, development partners and local agencies involved in ECD and resource materials etc, which are maintained by the Department of education. This information has been made accessible to all ECD partners.

An ECD centre management committee has been constituted on the chairpersonship of a parent of the centre. The members also include VDC/ Municipalities ward chairperson and the
representatives of local CBOs, the head teacher of nearby school and the parents as members. The ECD Management Committee is responsible for the designing, implementation and monitoring of the centre. It is the responsibility of the concerned management committees to generate and properly utilize the available resources. The ECD management committee is also responsible for recruitment, training, support and monitoring of the performance of the ECD workers (facilitator and helper) under transparent criteria. One of the major functions of the committee is to ensure community participation in the operation of ECD centre and to take ownership of the centre from management and financial perspectives.

Since a network of community-managed schools is in place in the country, this network will be encouraged and mobilized to run pre-primary classes or child development centers wherever feasible. The management responsibility of pre-primary classes in community schools is borne by a separate sub-committee of parents working under the overall supervision of the School Management Committee.

Community Involvement
Community participation has been fundamental for the entire process: from Program initiation to Program evaluation. Since all ECD centers and PPCs are established in the community as community-based units, communities play a key role in the implementation and monitoring of ECD programs.

The responsibility to manage and operate ECD centers rests on the local bodies, whereas pre-primary classes are the responsibility of the schools with extensive community support and participation. Both programs are being implemented on the principle of cost sharing. Schools will have to identify ways of sharing the cost if stakeholders perceive a local demand for pre-school classes. Partnership between schools and CBOs/NGOs has been encouraged.

In order to increase the parents’ awareness and involve the local community people in the management of ECD programs, various forms of parental orientation and education programs are being launched by various organizations. The DOE has been conducting parental orientation programs to make the parents aware about the importance of ECD services and need for ECD centers.

Parental education programs are being undertaken for the parents in order to deliver early childhood services to their children. INGOs such as SC/US, Plan Nepal, UNICEF, SC/Norway and World Vision have implemented this program in their respective project areas. The DOE has in the recent years developed Introductory Parental Education Package and development of a national framework for parental education is in the offing.

Parental education is conducted by ECD centers for the parents of the children enrolled in ECD centers. Similarly, some of the CLCs have also recently started to organize parental education programs for the parents of its ECD centers.
**Human Resources Development**

The following strategies have been adopted in order to fulfill the Human Resource required for implementing ECD programs. A cascade system of training ECD personnel is being implemented. Under this system at the center level, Master Trainers and Trainers are prepared. The trainers then train the facilitators.

In order to develop required human resources for launching ECD programs, a provision has been made to offer ECD as an optional subject in Secondary schools.

**Use of Communication and Mass Media**

In order to raise awareness on the importance of ECD services and the rights of the child as well as proper way of dealing with the young children among various stakeholders, the use of communication and mass media have been taken as a major strategy. Parental education and training of the facilitators have been operated through mass media by various organizations at different points of time such as Equal Access, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services and Bikalpa Gyan Tatha Bikash Kendra. Moreover, UNICEF Nepal has launched a radio program known as Bhanjyang Chautari to support the facilitators during BPEP I.

Two separate audio-visual cassettes have been developed by DOE for advocating the ECD program and supporting the ECD workers. The first cassette is targeted to the general public—basically ECD program implementers. The second cassette is targeted to the trainers and facilitators, which is focused on ECD classroom activities.

**Current ECD Policy in Nepal**


**ECD in EFA: Core Document (2004-09)**

Two types of ECD programs—school-based and community-based—will be continued and expanded. The responsibility to manage and operate ECD centers rests on the local bodies. Both programs will be guided by the common objective of holistic child development.

ECD centers will be established with program assistance in the areas with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups that include ‘D’ and ‘C’ districts classified by the NPC. Facilitate partnerships with INGOs, NGOs, and private enterprises to establish, support, and operate ECD centers and pre-primary classes.

A cross sectional linkage to cognitive development, nutrition, health and parental education will be established with other government relevant line agencies.
ECD program will be developed in line with inclusive education approach.

Comprehensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programs will be designed and disseminated through the mass media targeting the parents at rural and remote areas.

Females from the local community, with special focus on disadvantaged groups wherever possible, will be recruited as facilitators for ECD programs.

_ECD in Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA/NPA-2001-2015)_
The EFA NPA has made following provisions:

All pre-primary children will be provided at least one year of special care service that addresses both pre-school preparation needs as well as overall needs of children.

The Government will provide support for the establishment and development of ECD program. It will adopt demand driven approach with partial government support for urban and accessible areas and an approach that provides full government support and facilitation for the establishment and operation of ECD centers in the areas of deprived and disadvantaged communities.

Partnership with I/NGOs will be promoted to expand ECD programs in both quantity and quality terms.

Community-based ECD centers will receive support from all concerned ministries and other agencies. In this regard, MOES with the support of ECD council will work as a coordinating body.

By 2007 each VDC and municipality ward will have at least one to four ECD centers. VDCs and municipalities will take the responsibility to establish and operate these centers with block grants and technical support from the government. Resources will also be mobilized at the local level.

Awareness raising programs will be consolidated and expanded. A comprehensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) program will be designed and implemented.

Innovative programs will be developed and piloted. The piloting will test strategies for the promotion of community-based activities linking them with other activities such as primary teacher training, NFE and special needs education programs.

Key messages on child development will be incorporated in Non-Formal Education (NFE) program, mobile health clinics and Community Health Volunteers (CHV).

Local people will be trained as ECD facilitators and resource persons to follow an integrated approach that includes health and nutrition.
For the development of capacity appropriate institutional structure from the center to the grassroots level will be established.

Community based monitoring and supervision mechanism will be formed and additional support from the VDC, district and national level relevant agencies will be elicited.

**ECD in Basic and Primary Education Master Plan (1997-2002)**
The Plan has emphasized forming a national committee on Early Childhood Care and Education composed of members from National Planning Commission, Ministries of Education, Local Development, Women’s Development and Social Welfare, Health, and Communication. The committee is to be made responsible for formulating policies and programs for ECD.

The Plan also tried to delink the term ‘Early Childhood Education and Development’ from ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’ clearly mentioning that it will “concentrate only on the educational part of early childhood development of 4-5 age children” (p. 81). The Plan further states, “The MOE should be responsible for the ECD/ECE for children of 4+ and 5+ age group . . . [and] The Ministry of Local Development should be responsible for the programs relating to Early Childhood Care and Education” (p. 569). However, the Plan also emphasized the need for seeking assistance from different ministries wherever their assistance would be required in either case.

The Plan emphasized the need for adopting the policy of establishing ECD centers by providing partial financial support to interested Village Development Committees.

It also stressed the need for expanding the programs to raise awareness about ECD. Use of mass media is emphasized to convey the messages of ECD to the parents of rural and remote areas. Raising awareness has also been important in preparing VDC’s to initiate ECD programs.

**Strategic Paper for Early Childhood Development in Nepal (2004)**
ECD Strategic paper has made following provisions:

- By 2007, each VDC and municipality ward will have at least one and four ECD centers respectively.

  VDCs and Municipalities will take full responsibility to establish and operate these centers with government support as well as with the resource mobilization at the local level.

  VDCs and Municipalities will collaborate with NGOs/INGOs, CBOs and other community level organizations as required.

  Private enterprises will be encouraged to run and support ECD centers.

  Community based ECD centers will receive support from all concerned ministries and other agencies. MOES, with the support of ECD council, will work as a coordinating body.
ECD in the Tenth Plan (2002 - 2007)
The tenth five year plan has mentioned ECD as the main focus to prepare children for enrolment to the primary level of education and holistic development. The plan has also emphasized to provide appropriate training to the teachers/facilitators and to organize awareness programs for parents and guardians.

- The Plan emphasized implementing appropriate early childhood development programs for the children below five years of age. Such programs will be implemented by adopting a community-based approach and will be extended to the children living in remote and rural areas.
- Communication media such as the radio and the television will be mobilized to run child-related programs for the psychological development of children as well as for their overall personality.
- Co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the child development programs run by the government, national and international non-governmental organizations and other organizations will be institutionalized.
- In order to enhance awareness about ‘Child Rights’, the non-governmental and social organizations will be mobilized to launch parental education programs.

ECD in Ten Year National Program of Action for Children and Development
This National Program of Action (POA) has emphasized putting early childhood development on a national priority level.

The POA pointed out that ‘fragmented and isolated efforts by different sectors and agencies are costly and, therefore, a coordinated and integrated approach with cross-sectoral linkages is essential” (p. 7). The POA therefore aimed to get effective inter-sectoral implementation and co-ordination as well as committed community participation.

One of the significant features of this POA is that it has included pre-primary education as a part of basic education. The Program of Action is aimed at providing universal access to basic education, which also includes pre-primary education.

The POA also emphasized systematizing pre-primary education initiated by private entrepreneurs and schools; providing pre-primary education to all under-age children enrolled in Grade 1 in government-aided schools; and encouraging and facilitating the growth of community-based pre-primary education programs.

ECD in the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) (1999)
The LSGA has given the rights to local government bodies—Village Development Committees in the case of villages and Municipalities in the case of urban localities—to establish pre-primary schools/centers with their own resources and to grant permission to establish, implement and organize such schools/centers.
**Policies with Regard to Expanding ECD Services to Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children**

It is true that there is sharp shortage of resources in poverty-ridden areas in the country. This calls for providing subsidies and support in remote areas and disadvantaged communities. The government is committed to providing basic support in all areas and additional support to disadvantaged communities. In this regard, two different modalities of support have been adopted for urban and rural areas: demand-driven approach with partial Government support for urban and accessible areas; and special support for establishment and operation of ECD centers in the areas of deprived and disadvantaged communities.

The development index developed by the National Planning Commission, which categorizes the district into four categories have been followed in the development of special policies required for disadvantaged communities. The government has developed a policy of establishing ECD centers in poor and vulnerable communities of category D and C (least developed) districts. The proxy of adult illiteracy and pupil enrolment from census data is being used as a guide for allocation of ECD centers at the district level.
Chapter Four
Theme-based Analysis and Interpretation

Theme 1: Mainstreaming Early Childhood Development Programs

Concept and Importance
Efforts were made to collect the opinion on concept of mainstreaming early childhood programs being implemented in Nepal. The stakeholders at the policy, programming and implementation levels were asked to state their views on what they mean by mainstreaming ECD programs. An analysis of the responses in this regard shows that basically the respondents at the district and local levels define mainstreaming as bringing in ECD programs in the educational structure and accepting it as the government or state’s responsibility and allocating budgetary provision for the operation of the ECD centers. However the views of the policy level officials at the MOES, MOH and MOLD were relatively different as compared to the stakeholders at the implementation level. According to the views of the high level official at the MOES, rather than bring ECD programs under education structure they should be brought under the local government bodies—VDC and Municipalities. Having budgetary provisions and policies to establish ECD centers under the VDCs and Municipalities itself is a kind of mainstreaming. One of the further arguments presented in favor of this relates to the existing policy of the government regarding the decentralization and handover of school management authority to local communities. According to this policy, within the last four years the Department of Education has already transferred more than two thousand schools to the local communities. Studies have revealed that the schools handed over to the local communities were found relatively better in terms of their operation and efficiency. So, the officials interviewed both at the MOES and MOLD have argued that bringing ECD under the education structure of the MOES contradicts with the existing policy of the government. According to their views, in order to mainstream the ECD programs the MLD should take initiative to bring out a necessary Act that ensures the mandatory provision of running a certain number of ECD programs in each VDC and Municipality. They also put emphasis on channeling the budget for ECD through local government bodies rather than directly spending by the DEOs. Moreover, they also mentioned that the Act on ECD should make it mandatory for the DDCs to allocate some funds for ECD programs and channel them to local government bodies.

Some of the respondents at the district and local levels have also pointed out that the ECD program could be mainstreamed through bringing it under the NFE programs.

Although there are some differences in the concept of mainstreaming ECD programs, all respondents from central level to the district and local levels mentioned that there is a need to mainstream the ECD programs. The respondents have given the following reasons as the important factors for mainstreaming the ECD programs.
Help to sustain the programs

Most of the respondents believed that the programs being run will be sustained after the program is brought under the structure. They have seen close relationship between mainstreaming and sustainability of the program.

Ensure budgetary provisions

Many people have expressed their beliefs that there will be allocation of regular budgetary provisions after the ECD program is brought under the mainstream.

Ensure the minimum standards

The respondents have expressed a strong belief that the mainstream will ensure minimum standards of the ECD services provided in ECD centers. They have shown their belief that there will be standard training programs for the ECD workers and basic physical facilities required for ECD centers will be available once the ECD program is brought under the mainstream.

Bring uniformity in ECD services

Currently there are major differences in the quality and operation of ECD programs being run by GOs, INGOs, NGOs and private schools. Within the government initiated programs there are differences in community-based and school-based programs. A study conducted by CERID (2004), revealed that the community-based centers were found adopting child-centered approaches, using plenty of children’s learning materials and play-way methods. However, in case of school-based ECD centers the focus was found on teaching three R’s and adopted teacher-centered approaches. Moreover, the programs being run by INGOs like Plan Nepal and Save the Children have included health and nutrition services, which are important for the holistic development of children. But programs run by the GOs lack such provisions. The respondents believed that mainstreaming the ECD programs can bring uniformity in the services.

Help to establish a regular monitoring and feedback system

Some of the respondents at district level especially DEO and ETC trainers have mentioned that mainstreaming the ECD programs would help to ensure a regular monitoring and feedback system. According to them, the District Education Offices could have a separate unit manned by trained officials only if the program is brought under DEO’s structure.
Ensure the access of vulnerable children

Some of the participants of the consultative workshops have raised the issue of expanding quality early childhood services to vulnerable and disadvantaged children living in remote and rural communities. They have also mentioned that mainstreaming of the ECD programs would help in extending the services to such children.

Existing Practices
In Nepal, ECD programs are being implemented through project and program models. A large number of community-based and school-based ECD centers are being implemented under EFA program by the DOE. The centers are being run through the DEOs. A budgetary provision for ECD programs is made by the EFA program, which is largely funded by the external donors. The centers are managed by ECD center Management Committee, which comprises of local people and parents of the children enrolled in the center. There is virtually no existence of monitoring and feedback system. The school supervisors and RPs are not responsible for monitoring the centers. They are already over-burdened by their responsibilities of monitoring the schools and organizing training programs. It reveals that they are not in a position to take further responsibility of monitoring ECD centers.

Through the enactment of the Local Self Governance Act (1999) legally the government has delegated the authority to manage and implement ECD programs to the local government bodies—VDCs and Municipalities. The local government bodies are authorized to establish ECD centers with their own resources and issue permission to establish, implement and organize such establishments. However, till now the local government bodies do not receive any direction from their line ministry in order to manage and fund the ECD programs. The budget for ECD program is available with the MOES/DOE under its EFA program, which is channeled to ECD centers through DEOs. There used to be a focal person at the DEO office to look after the ECD program along with his or her own other regular jobs. This provision was found not effective so it has already been discontinued. As ECD programs or centers are not included in the education structure, this program has not been a major responsibility of the DEOs. So there is no one official directly responsible for implementing and monitoring the ECD programs although the ECD quotas are distributed and training programs for the facilitators are organized by the DEOs.

With regard to the ECD programs being run under I/NGOs the respective organizations are implementing the programs on their own by taking approval from the local government bodies. Financial arrangements, training and other support are provided by the respective organizations implementing ECD programs. The programs being run under the aegis of I/NGOs have relatively better monitoring mechanism and feedback system. In these programs the trainers and supervisors appointed by the organizations continuously monitor the programs being run. There is lack of such provision in the programs run by the DOE. Moreover the ECD workers in the programs run by I/NGOs receive high amount of remunerations as compared to the program run by the government. The government and I/NGO initiated programs are managed by the ECD center management committees comprising local level stakeholders.
Regarding the programs being run by the private schools, the respective schools run ECD classes with the permission from the DEOs. Charging fee to the parents of the children enrolled is the only source of fund in these schools. The school authorities are responsible to manage and monitor the ECD classes. Most of the pre-primary teachers in these schools do not have access to training due to the lack of training provisions for the teachers teaching in private schools.

**Barriers to Mainstreaming**

During the FGDs and interviews at the local level as well as central level the respondents have indicated some of the barriers to mainstreaming ECD programs. Some of the major barriers indicated by the respondents are:

**Variations in the programs**

The district level officials mentioned that having three different types of ECD programs—School-based, Community-based initiated by the DOE through DEOs and privately run programs—was found as one of the barriers to mainstreaming ECD programs. There is a wide difference in the program components as well as management and remunerations provided to the ECD workers. Some of the programs run by INGOs focus on holistic development of children. So, such programs include health and nutrition components along with psycho-social development of children. But the programs run by the DOE lack such provisions. For example, under the ECD centers run by Plan Nepal the facilitators are provided Rupees 2500 as monthly remuneration but the facilitators in the ECD centers run under DOE/DEO are provided only Rupees 1000 as monthly remuneration. In case of the classes run by private schools there is even bigger gap between the schools themselves. The DEOs and district level officials of the INGOs and NGOs have pointed out the importance of having basic uniform standards in terms of the program components and the management of ECD centers. Some of the respondents have identified that even in the programs being run with the collaboration among the GO and I/NGOs, the respective I/NGOs are providing extra-remuneration for the facilitators on the top of the remunerations provided by the DEOs to make equivalent to the remunerations provided by INGO-managed centers.

**Lack of one-door system**

Having many organizations (GOs, INGOs, NGOs and Private sector) involved in the ECD program is also taken as a barrier to mainstreaming. As discussed above authority to establish and manage ECD centers is delegated to the local government bodies but the program to expand the ECD services and funds is with the MOES/DOE. According to the central level officials at the MOLD and MOWCSW initiation to mainstream ECD programs should be taken by the ministry having budgetary provisions. In this case, the MOES should include ECD within the structure of education system. However, legally the authority is delegated to local government bodies, which is under the line ministry of MOLD. Similarly the other responsible ministries are MOWCSW and MOH. There is confusion about which ministry should be responsible for mainstreaming the ECD
programs. Not having a designated ministry to implement ECD programs is taken as a barrier for mainstreaming the ECD programs.

The respondents at the district and local levels have also pointed out that due to the involvement of many organizations there has been duplication in the ECD services delivered. They argue that the DEOs should not give permission to establish new ECD centers where there already exist ECD centers.

Lack of awareness among the stakeholders at the district and local levels and political commitment on the part of the government

Most of the respondents at the district and local levels have mentioned that the parents and community people are not fully aware about the importance of ECD services and its immediate and long term benefits. As a result, the stakeholders are not being proactive to establish and run the ECD programs. Similarly although the government has given priority to expand ECD services, in the plans and policy documents no concerted efforts have been made to institutionalize the programs being run. No effort has been also made to allot certain percentage of the budget for ECD programs in the national budget.

Debate on structural model vs program model

One of the major issues confronting in the case of expanding and sustaining the ECD programs in Nepal relates to the debate between developing ECD program in a structural model or retaining it under the broader scope of program model. The development both in quality and quantitative terms so far achieved is based on the program model. The advantage of developing in a program model is that it can get special attention and funds for the development of the program. The disadvantaged part is that the program will run as long as the program is continued. The development of Child Care Centers during late 80s and early 90s under the PCRW and Small Farmers projects were the good examples in this regard. Hundreds of child care centers established during that time could not continue after the project period although emphasis was put to sustain the centers basically due to the lack of structural provisions. The expansion of ECD services from less than 10 percent GER in 2000 to more than 41 percent GER in 2007 again relates to the development of ECD under the program model. The program is being expanded without basic structure like institutionalized training institutions, regular funds flow, supervision and monitoring mechanisms, etc. Without the availability of such structural provisions, it is more likely that the centers established under the EFA program will discontinue after the termination of the EFA program. Many participants in the central level workshops have raised this issue and advocated for mainstreaming ECD programs in order to sustain the centers established.

Requirements for Mainstreaming

The respondents at the district and local levels as well as the participant at the central level workshops have identified various points as the basic requirements for mainstreaming the ECD programs.
Uniformity in ECD programs

Most of the respondents at the district and local levels mentioned that the uniformity in the ECD program components and service delivery mechanism is a pre-requisite for mainstreaeming ECD programs. DEOs and NGO representatives mentioned that the curriculum developed by the DOE should be made mandatory for all the organizations including private schools to follow in order to bring uniformity in ECD programs. Similarly, the ECD facilitators and NGO representatives have also suggested developing a kit box of ECD related materials and distributing it to all the ECD centers for bringing uniformity in ECD program services. Some other district level respondents have also further suggested to at least one model ECD center in each VDC and let that center disseminate ECD related information and coordinate with other ECD centers for ensuring the uniformity in the ECD programs. In order to ensure uniformity, some of the respondents at the district and local levels have also indicated the need for developing common operation guidelines of ECD centers.

Uniformity in training programs

Most of the ECD workers working under the government and I/NGO initiated programs receive about two-week-long basic training. However, there is no uniformity in the contents and modality of the training programs being conducted by different organizations. Moreover, there is no authorized body to provide accreditation and ensure the quality and relevance of the training programs being run. In this context the trainers and school supervisors have mentioned that there is a need to develop a standard training package that includes basic components required for the holistic development of children. The respondents have also emphasized in making it mandatory for all organizations including private schools to use while organizing training programs for their ECD workers.

Countrywide advocacy program

The respondents at the district and local levels have pointed out the need for making aware about the benefits of ECD services to all the stakeholders from central level policy makers to district and local level stakeholders including parents. They further emphasized including the need for holistic development of children through ECD programs.

Mapping of ECD centers

Many respondents at the district level including representatives of political parties and ECD trainers mentioned that the existing system of establishing ECD centers through quota system is not effective. In order to address the duplication to the program and services and to ensure the equal distribution of the service and to reach the services to the needy population it is important
to conduct a mapping of the need for ECD centers in every district. Based on the mapping and demand of the local people the new ECD centers should be established.

Allocate budget

The central level officials at the MOLD and MOWCSW as well as the district level officials interviewed have mentioned that the government should allocate certain budget for ECD in its annual national budget. They also opined that the DDC at the district level and VDC at the local level also include ECD as one of their priority areas and include certain budget in their total annual budget. According to most of them, budget crunch is not a problem but the problem lies on the awareness and realization among the relevant authorities to give priority to ECD programs.

Availability of buildings and required physical facilities

Having ECD centers’ own land and standard building that include basic required physical facilities is considered one of the major requirements for mainstreaming ECD programs. A similar finding was also presented in the research report conducted by CERID in 2003 (CERID, 2003).

Theme 2: Inter-sectoral coordination

Concept and Importance

Inter-sectoral coordination is a process of establishing relationship with the persons working within and among institutions for the cause of common goal. Different GOs, INGOs, UN agencies, NGOs and private sectors are involved in the development of young children in Nepal. Their roles have not been defined so far. So, it is also important to define the role of each of the organizations for proper coordination among them. It is because of the lack of awareness and conceptual clarity and hence no importance given to ECD programs. As reported by the INGO respondents, since there are different organizations conducting different ECD programs on their own way, coordination between the government and INGOs is also needed. The need and importance of coordination between/among institutions can be presented as follows:

Institutional growth of the program

Participants of the central level workshop agreed that inter-sectoral coordination is a healthy condition for effective programming of early childhood programs. Cooperation among the ECD service providing institutions creates an inspiring environment for running the program successfully. Coordination is also necessary for institutional growth of the ECD programs.
Minimizing duplication of the program

Coordination between the ECD organizations will be helpful for minimizing the duplication of the program in the field and more people could be benefited.

Making monitoring and evaluation more functional

As NGO representatives in second national workshop expressed, monitoring and evaluation is lacking in every program and ECD is no exception. Coordination is also required in monitoring. As reported by the FGD participants in Morang district, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services monitors 35 ECD centers (out of 585 centers of the government). Participants of FGD in this district also claimed that government officials did not try to bring improvement in the inter-sectoral coordination of ECD program. DEO is the one that should come strongly in coordination matter including monitoring of the centers. So, the need is there to establish a system of effective coordination for making monitoring and evaluation functional.

Developing a culture of sharing

Respondents of the sample districts opined that there is a need of strong coordination in different levels between central, district and VDC levels. They also agreed that coordination at the central level is not effective in comparison to district and local levels. There is need of central-level coordination. A program cannot be effective until there is coordination at the central level. Some of the respondents of central level interview also agreed that lacking of coordination has been the reality within officials of the same ministry. It was also pointed out by the respondents (central level key officials) that there is a lack of culture of sharing in most of the governmental and non-governmental organizations. Possessing and holding any new information is regarded as holding power to control or influence others. Having a formal coordination mechanism can help change this attitude.

Existing Practices

Various committees and boards (governmental and non-governmental) are also directly or indirectly involved in ECD programs. These agencies include Central Child Welfare Board, District Child Welfare Board, NGOCCs, Nepal ECD forum, ECD Network, ECD Management Committees, etc. Central level key officials argued about a great need to have a structural and functional coordination between and among various ministries, organizations and committees. Workshop participants expressed that although there is a provision of Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) as inter-ministry level coordination unit, no adequate provision for the representation of the people from different ECD service providing institutions was made. There is also a provision for the coordination at the district level (Coordination among District Level agencies (DEO/ DDC/ NGOs) by the Chairperson of DDC. Some of the participants at the workshop expressed that existing provision was reported well but it is not functional. It was also discussed that existing
EMIS/SIP do not address ECD issues. In such a situation inter-sectoral coordination cannot be effective.

In order to maintain coordination among Village Level agencies (VDC/ ECD Centre Management Committee, Local level NGOs/CBOs)), Council guidelines have given mandate to VDC/ Municipality to formulate network and committee. With respect to networking at the local level, SCUS is promoting VDC level network. Moreover, SC/N is promoting Ilaka wise network.

According to the NGO representatives of Morang district, ECD centers are conducted not in demand of the communities but in their own initiative. However, there were 35 centers that were being run in community’s initiation. It is due to the lack of coordination between different organizations that the problem of sustainability and conceptual clarity existed.

UNICEF people of the Morang district said that there was duplication in ECD program. Plan and World Vision’s program were duplicated in one of the VDCs of Morang. But donor agencies were not concerned about it. So, government is the one that should pay attention in this regard; for which coordination between the government, INGOs and NGOs is required; for which, a full-fledged ECD section at the district might serve this purpose.

NGO representatives and facilitators in FGD expressed that during distribution of Quota of ECD centers from DEO, some quotas of ECD centers were held by Municipality that was unknown to community. As they reported, disadvantaged community does not have easy access to ECD program. For example, the poor community did not claim matching fund that was resulted into non-establishment of ECD centers in poor and remote areas. However, as reported by the trainers, the district and local level network helped to communicate information regarding quota distribution for the community. It was regarded as one of the progresses made in this direction.

Respondents (NGO representatives, DEO officials and facilitators) of Sunsari district also agreed that no uniformity was found in the district with respect to ECD services provided to children. For example, in the ECD program conducted by the private schools, the eight years completers join grade one. Completers of community-based ECD program join Nursery class in private school and grade one in public school. It is evident from the above discussion that conceptual clarity on ECD programs and its importance should be disseminated broadly to almost all the stake holders ranging from parents to policy makers.

The DACAW focal person at Sunsari district pointed out the lack of coordination in local and national level. However, as expressed by the resource person (RP), there is good coordination between INGOs and DEO. In this context, the DEO should lead the coordination process.

The DACAW officer at DDC, Sunsari, said that the community demands the program at DEO and then DACAW supports the community. For this purpose, the DACAW officer expressed the need of ECD section in the district under DEO with the involvement of a focal person more responsible and accountable. DEO and RP of Sunsari district expressed the difficulty of taking
care of the 400 centers of the districts by a single focal person, who is also responsible for looking after other regular educational programs of the office. So far, the RPs were monitoring the centers. But it was impossible to monitor all the centers.

Variation was also observed in the districts with respect to organizing training programs for the facilitators. For example, DEO used to hire technical persons from Seto Gurans National Child Development Services for training. Plan Nepal has separate system of organizing training according to its need. It conducts training through DEO and Seto Gurans National Child Development Services.

MOH has a strong cadre of MCHVs in all the VDCs, and their involvement in health programs is not a regular job. They are volunteers but have been well-trained over the years. As suggested by the MOH personnel, since they are used in delivering health services, they can also be recruited for ECD services as facilitators by providing them necessary training.

Barriers to Inter-sectoral Coordination

Although, it is evident from the existing practices that there is provision of different committees between or among different institutions at the central and local levels, proper functioning of these committees and boards is lacking.

Problem of coordinating training program

Lack of ECD trainer was one of the main problems in coordinating the training programs in the districts. Although everything including training is mentioned in the guidelines, it was not found implemented. NGO persons claimed that, if the sole responsibility of training is given to DEO, quality might not be maintained in the sense that DEO alone cannot manage trained resources as per the need of the district. According to the LDO, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services is the main organization to conduct ECD training in Morang district in coordination with DEO. It was reported that training differs from one district to another. DEO should work in collaboration with the ECD training providing institutes in providing training for the purpose of quality improvement in the training.

Problem of improper representation in committees

Another barrier in coordination was reported as exclusion of teacher representatives in the district level committee working in the field of early childhood development. Problem of representation from different sectors like NGOs, INGOs, other ECD service providing institutions, experts and stakeholders has been the barrier for proper growth of the programs. The FGD participants, teachers and facilitators, emphasized the need of including the representative of PABSON, teachers and facilitators in district level committee working for ECD section.
Duplication of the program

Duplication of the program was reported as one of the barriers in the implementation of ECD programs in the country. Majority of district level stakeholders realized that there was lack of coordination among the Government, INGOs, NGOs and other local bodies with respect to planning and implementing ECD programs. Since UNICEF, Save the Children Norway and Seto Gurans National Child Development Services were involved in running ECD centers, lack of proper coordination among them has resulted into duplication of the program. Of the many groups working in the field of child welfare activities, District Child Welfare Committee, Women Development Section and mother groups were found actively involved in the implementation of ECD programs.

Lack of one-door system for the allocation of budget

The DACAW information officer of Sunsari district mentioned that not allocating certain budget for ECD centers has been one of the barriers in the effective implementation of the ECD program at the district. The DACAW information officer emphasized on the need of bringing all the ECD organizations under one umbrella in the form of a board or a committee in order to coordinate all ECD service providing institutions.

Lack of ownership of the program

The community is not ready to take the ownership of the program. In such a situation a coordinating mechanism is always required. Coordinating ECD centers within a VDC or ward of the municipality has also been a problem. Facilitators of all the three districts agreed that school-based ECD centers are run under the supervision and ownership of the school. However, community-based ECD centers do not have institution to look after them. According to FGD participants of Sunsari district, the outstanding school in the community should coordinate the community-based ECD centers.

Variation in support received by ECD centers

Some of the community-based ECD centers are being facilitated by NGOs and INGOs. These centers have received additional facilities on top of the government support. As reported by DEO officials, this practice has resulted into lack of motivation for other such ECD centers.

Requirements for Inter-sectoral Coordination

Based on the responses of key central level officials, central level workshop participants, district level respondents, the following requirements are identified for effective inter-sectoral coordination among the institutions providing ECD services.
Central level coordination mechanism

The coordination mechanism established at the central level need to be extended to the village level. As suggested by the participants of the first central level workshop, a Council has to be made with a high profile person either headed by a Minister. Participants of second national level workshop also suggested for the establishment of central-level ECD council under the chairpersonship of the Ministry of MOES for the coordination of organizations involved in the promotion of ECD. The responsibility of the Council should be to make policies and to recommend for working areas and practices. It was also suggested that more members from NGOs, ECD Experts, Professionals, DDC Association VDC Association should represent the higher council. The member secretary also should be the secretary of MOES. The members of the council should include the secretary of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Development and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and the stakeholders.

Some of them also opined for making a separate ministry, though it was radical, to render services to the children from 0-8. Reason for their argument was that such a ministry or national level organization can bring integrated policy including health issues, education and development issues. FGD participants of Morang district suggested that an executive post should be created at the national level to look after ECD activities. People appointed as ex-officio members in the council at the national level do not necessarily feel their responsibility.

Another option opined by central level workshop participants was the formation of a council under the chairpersonship of the National Planning Commission (NPC) to bring all the organizations affiliated to ECD programs under one umbrella.

Inter-sectoral coordination at the district level

Coordination at the local level is a must in order to implement the program effectively. Participants of both the national workshops and NGO participants at the districts agreed for the provision of district council where there should be representation from different sectors of society. Majority of the respondents of Tanahu district and DACAW officer of Sunsari district opined that the DDC should take responsibility of making coordination among the organizations in the district. The DDC chairperson should chair the council. The vice-chairperson should be the CDO and the DEO should be appointed as the member-secretary of the district ECD council. Local Development Officer, Ward Development Officer and the Public Health Officer should be appointed as members. LDO, chair of NGOCC, UNICEF representative and trainers of Seto Gurans National Child Development Services in Tanahu strongly advocated for the development of district level monitoring system coordinated by district education office through district networking.

Coordination committees at the VDC level

ECD committee should be formed in each VDC with the involvement of Mothers’ Groups, forest consumer groups and other CBOs at the local level. As facilitators, teachers, trainers and
NGO representatives observed, the VDC chairperson should chair the coordinating committee. As decentralization Act has made the provision of monitoring, management of the resource, creating linkage and empower mechanism to be built up at local level, a task force at the VDC level should be formed coordinating with the district level networking group.

The VDC should allocate certain percentage of the local development budget to ECD activities. The FGD participants emphasized the involvement of local level institutions like VDC, CBOs and INGOs in the district level committees managed for coordinating ECD activities.

**Coordination between/among GOs, I/NGOs**

The NGO that is conducting the programs of INGOs felt the lack of coordination between the INGOs and policy makers (central level). A clear-cut policy should be there to clarify the need of support from INGOs. As mentioned in strategic action plan, the government also should define the role of NGOs, INGOs and CBOs in developing ECD programs. The plan has mentioned that the supports that could be managed by INGOs are infrastructure development or provision of ECD material, training, or other logistic supports such as provision of equipment and vehicles for operating ECD related activities. CBOs and VDCs should manage and operating ECD centers (CERID, 1999).

In order to maintain coordination among GOs, INGOs and NGOs, there is a national ECD Network which is not functional. Representation of INGO and NGO in ECD related committees at the national and district level will be helpful in maintaining coordination between government and institutions. The national level council can play the role of national ECD network and it will be helpful to ensure uniformity of the program.

**Support of the NGOs and INGOS to community**

Respondents of the FGD, the facilitators, expressed that community-based ECD centers need support of NGOs and INGOs for their effective implementation. Strategic action plan has also emphasized the importance of the coordination of NGOs and INGOs in the implementation of ECD program in the community. The experiences of the NGOs and the INGOS in the area of ECD could be drawn upon and utilized in different areas such as raising awareness, supervision and monitoring of the ECD programs, etc. Cooperation of NGOs and INGOs is needed by the community until it (the community) is capable to take up those responsibilities.

**ECD cell/section under concerned ministry**

Participants of the central level workshop also opined that each ministry should make the provision of ECD unit or cell to look after the programs for early childhood stage. This will help in the networking and coordination of ECD programs organized under different ministries.
Formulation and implementation of new terms of reference

Participants of the central level workshop (2) suggested for the formulation of new terms of reference (TOR) for the coordination of the organizations involved in ECD program. Once the new TOR is formulated it will help in the planning and programming of the ECD activities.

Regular monitoring and supervision

Government officials in second national workshop agreed for the supervision of ECD program on a tri-monthly and half yearly basis by the government, which helps in the coordination of ECD activities. A strong recommendation was made to incorporate 5 years Plan for ECD and Mandatory budgetary allocation for this program as well. This committee should monitor quality of ECD services and provide support as per the need of the program.

Collaborative efforts in making policy decisions

Coordination is also required in policy decision. All the institutions and organizations working for ECD should have collaborative efforts in making policy decisions. Government officials in second national workshop argued for one-door policy system. This type of collaborative effort will motivate the stakeholders in implementing ECD programs more effectively and hence uniformity in the program will be maintained.

Political commitment and representation

The LDOs of both the districts, Tanahu and Morang, suggested for the political representation in the coordination committee. Representatives of Plan Nepal said that such attempt will be helpful in developing policies on human resources and physical development of ECD centre. This will help in meeting the target of establishing 74000 ECD centers in the country by 2015.

Broad representation in ECD committees

According to central level workshop participants, there should be a provision of including DCWB, VDC Association and DDC Association as members to district committee for Networking of ECD activities. To make this network more functional, operational plan and procedure should be developed or TOR should be prepared for proper working of the institution.

Identification of potential organizations

District Education Office has to design, implement and monitor the ECD programs and identify the potential organization such as Seto Gurans National Child Development Services to organize
training programs for facilitators. The DEO should coordinate with the INGOs activities and identify potential areas useful for promoting ECD activities. In case of access of ECD program in remote areas, there should be a system of getting permission from DEO to conduct ECD program in the community. Such compulsion of taking permission should be made because DEO has all the data including NER of the district and the centre could be established in a required place.

**Appointment of responsible person at DEO**

SCF/US also emphasized the need of appointing a person at DEO to look after the ECD activities in the district. However, there is only the focal person who, laden with other responsibility (apart from ECD), cannot take care of ECD programs. The DEO officials and NGO representatives of Morang district suggested for making the focal person of DEO more active and responsible for coordinating ECD activities in the district. But the NGO was of the view that different ECD cells at DEO, CDO and VDC should be established to look after the ECD activities in different levels.

**Effective coordination for meeting the needs of disadvantaged people**

Establishing a system of coordination at the district is an essential requirement for extending ECD facilities in remote areas also for reaching the disadvantaged group. The donors and local NGOs working in remote areas should be identified so that the expertise of the local NGOs could be utilized, as suggested by DEO officials and participants of FGD organized at the sample districts. District level coordination mechanism may be instrumental in establishing coordination among district level organizations for the cause of people with vulnerable condition.

**Provision of basket funding for the management of financial resources**

LDO, DEO and NGO (Seto Gurans) representatives opined that there should be a system of basket funding for the management of financial resources of ECD. All the ministries working for children’s development should collect money in this basket. This basket funding system demands proper coordination mechanism at the district and national level.

**Networking of the organizations may be the base for functional coordination**

Central level key officials strongly recommended that NGOs/ CBOs and professionals (both facilitator and trainer) at the district level should be in network and share knowledge for proper implementation and promotion of ECD services. Networking of the organizations may be the base for functional coordination among the agencies at the district and local community level. Collaboration between the ECD institutions and organizations may be helpful in developing the
The training package so that uniform training package could be developed and used. NGOs and INGOs could also cooperate with community in providing training.

Theme 3: Sustainability of ECD program

Concept and Importance
In Nepal ECD programs are new developments. Nevertheless, many good achievements are made. A significant number of ECD centers are established, rapid expansion in enrolment of children to ECD centers achieved, many innovative programs, features and materials developed.

- Communities are encouraged to establish and run ECD centers with matching grant provided by the government and with the support of UNICEF Nepal.
- Schools are encouraged to open ECD centers with the same support as for the community based ECD centers.
- NGOs and INGOs are encouraged to open and run various modes of ECD centers in pilot form or in long-term basis.
- Private schools are encouraged to open and run ECD classes such as nursery and kindergarten.
- Curriculum for ECD is developed, training programs conducted and materials developed.

These developments are however still small when compared to the EFA ECD goal and the targets set by the NPA. Moreover, there are growing concerns shown by the people working in the area regarding sustainability of the programs and the provisions set up including the ECD centers, the training provisions, the material development provisions etc.

The concerns relate to the fact that many good efforts are in the form of programs or pilots. Many of the programs are run with support of INGOs or donors. Such programs bring development, but they are not sustainable; they cease after the supports are stopped. For example, PCRW program that provided work opportunity for the mothers and child care and education for the children created much interest and participation. However, as the support for the program expired the provisions simply ceased and the programs stopped. Obviously, the benefit, the experience, and the ideas are not adequate to sustain a program considered successful and well-demanded.

It is not only the visible or the direct inputs that are important but also the supporting as well as the cooperating system that are important for continuation of a program.

Sustenance relates not only to operating a program for some time but continuation of it with the envisaged drive, spirit and demands. Obviously, it is not only the physical part of ECD development that is of sustainability concern but also the management, participation and commitment of the people. The national workshop on ECD for analyzing the situation and policy gaps represented
by different stakeholders discussed and identified following aspects as very important for sustainability of ECD programs. These aspects include:

- physical facilities/materials, and environment
- curriculum guidelines,
- development of human resources (capacity building) — facilitator/trainer’s facility,
- financing
- monitoring and supervision, and
- participation and ownership.

**Barriers to Sustainability**
The group pointed out that in the current circumstances it is rather challenging to sustain the programs and provisions related to the aspects listed above.

Several factors are pointed out as the reasons behind the challenge –

- Lack of proper understanding.
- Lack of basic requirements norms,
- Legal framework including regulations,
- Awareness about the needs, scope and potential regarding ECD provisions among politicians and potential stakeholders
- Availability of child-friendly materials and appropriate programs.

Lack of awareness and proper understanding is one of the main reasons why people’s participation is often limited to utilization of the provision rather than full participation with contributions to develop and sustain comprehensive ECD programs.

Lack of appropriate training for facilitators is another important factor that has posed challenge for sustainability of ECD programs. It has been observed that the resource persons often lacked motivation to make ECD programs lively and attractive and to draw attention and cooperation of parents. There is no provision of specific training to the facilitators in this regard. Also there is lack of professional support or follow-up programs for the facilitators to help them when they feel need for professional support.

Lack of policy, norms and standards for development and proper management of the centre, system for their monitoring and services of the facilitators is another important aspect that has caused poor quality of ECD provisions in many cases. Monitoring and supervision of the program are reported only in the case of the ECD centers supported by I/NGO, even such services are limited to a minimum extent compared to the needs. In the case of the community run ECD
centers, there is no monitoring system, whereas in the case of the school based ECD centers the government monitoring system is not effective. Poor quality in turn fails to attract parents.

Lack of adequate financing is the most important constraint for the sustainable development of ECD centers in the country. In the current situation, the ECD centers run by community or by schools with government support are very poorly funded compared to the I/NGO supported ECD centers, or the ECD centers run by private institutions. The number of ECD centers run with the support of I/NGOs are very small and they always have the risk of discontinuation of the support. Similarly, the ECD centers run by private institutions are very small in number mostly catering to the families that can afford, which is again very small in proportion and scope for extension. Majority of the ECD centers established are run by community or government supported community schools, and the scope for expansion under EFA program also lies there. However, due to lack of funding they cannot develop or maintain basic facilities. They face difficulty in management, have unmotivated facilitators due to poor incentives, and lack fund in purchasing materials.

In order to meet this challenge, compulsory parental education program and awareness program to all the stakeholders are suggested.

Minimum of primary scale as salary of the facilitators and monitory provision for instruction materials are the areas to be addressed by the policy.

Existing Practices
Although there is a gross concern for sustenance of ECD centers in Nepal, there are some innovative approaches taken for sustenance of the centers. In one such case, the mothers, NGO supporting the ECD program and the facilitator jointly agreed to the following points:

- NGOs provide support for the materials and for the uniform for the children when they are in the ECD centers. They also provided soft mats for the children in the ECD classes.
- The facilitators agreed to change the dress of the children with the uniform when they come to ECD and when they go back, clean the uniform on regular basis, and keep them safe
- The facilitators also agreed to make materials for the children using local resources such as dolls, wall chart, demonstration material, etc.
- Parents, particularly mothers, agreed to support the resource person on regular basis, they made turn of 2-3 mothers attending the school to help the resource person in her duty including helping to change the ECD dress, looking after the children in case of sickness, helping the children in toilet and taking part in supporting the children in their ECD activities
- The mothers also agreed to bring food for the children. Often they brought flour, vegetables and dry cooked food for the children. They prepared the food and distributed to the children, fed them where necessary. They also cleaned the dishes.
- The mothers also helped the return of the children back home.
The arrangement has helped the ECD center run better even though it lacked adequate funding. The collective effort of the parents and the resource person has ensured safe environment, food, organized activities and instructional materials to some extent.

Parental involvement in routine basis was observed in many community based ECD centers. Similarly, food management for the children was observed in many community ECD centers. The government support to community based ECD centers and school based ECD centers included promotion fund (about Rs. 25,000) and a small incentive for the resource person (Rs. 1000 per month). The support was provided on the basis of matching fixed fund and regular fund generated by the community, it was anticipated that the community would generate at least equal amount of fund. It was thought that with a minimum amount of fixed fund of Rs. 50,000 deposited in a financial institution or bank would generate about Rs. 5000 per year to support the ECD centers. Similarly, the regular fund raised together with Rs.1000 per month would make an incentive of Rs. 2000 per month for the resource person. In many ECD centers community generated matching fund and was also supported by I/NGOs in creating a fixed fund of even Rs. 100,000. But regular fund was not forthcoming. In most of the cases the community could not even raise the minimum fixed matching fund. In community based ECD centers, getting the regular support of Rs. 1000 was difficult due to lack of good rapport with the DEO office, people who could go to DEO office to get the money, and lack of sensitivity as well as cooperation of the DEO office staff to the community people and resource person who go to collect the money. Very often, the resource person and the community people don’t want to go again to DEO office because of the unfriendly treatment they face.

School-based ECD centers are in better situation regarding utilization of the government support because the school head teacher and other teachers who are used to the system get the regular support. Even when they do not get the fund in time, the schools being part of the system can run with confidence. Besides, unlike in the community based ECD centers where a resource person is designated, most of the school-based ECD centers are found run as ECD classes by the regular primary school teacher. The government support comes as extra incentives for the teachers who run the ECD classes. This is one of the reasons why school-based ECD centers are better sustained. However, when considering comprehensive aspect of sustaining ECD program, they lack both practice and scope for parental involvement. Also, the ECD classes are run like the downward extension of primary school instead of ECD centers.

Obviously, the community based ECD centers lacked systemic basis for sustenance in terms of infrastructure such as a permanent designated building as well as salaried teachers. They are vulnerable in terms of resource persons who are not appointed to a system, rather they are people designated by the community. They are vulnerable in terms of space and building, which is simply a place provided temporarily by people or the community trusts or offices. However, as mentioned earlier, community-based ECD centers have the scope and potential for parental involvements and they are run in a way that ensures safe caring environment for the children.
It is also to be noted that the community-based ECD centers need support of NGOs or other community-based organizations that are competent in terms of articulating the needs of the children, the concepts and imaginations needed for running a good ECD center, and an attitude and sensitivity to commit towards developing ECD center in a collaborating way.

Private institutions running ECD centers are different from the community-based or school-based ECD centers. They are providing service based on parental demands and their willingness to pay for the service. Their financial sustenance is based on the fee paid by the parents. Their programs, the infrastructure, and the materials largely depended on the knowledge and initiatives of the institutions and are influenced by visible attractions—good dress, impressive programs involving children, English language, and success to put the children in reputed schools.

Requirements for Sustainability
There are many dimensions to sustain an ECD center, which include:

- appropriate policy,
- system with structure of policy implementation,
- ECD centers with appropriate infrastructure,
- training and professional support for preparing facilitators and keeping them well functioning,
- financial provisions for salary, materials, logistics, development and maintenance,
- linkage and use of other services such as health, nutrition, and educational provisions
- collaborations- inter ministerial, NGOs, CBOs, INGOs, UN organizations, local bodies, parents, community.

The most important aspect of sustaining ECD provision in a country is the vision for its development and how the development is facilitated and supported by the government. Appropriate government ECD policies, therefore, form the most important requirement for sustainability. In order to identify the fundamental government policies that are required to sustain ECD centers, central level workshops were held in Kathmandu. The main objective of the workshops was to identify existing ECD policies with the focus on mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs. Some of the important suggestions generated in the workshop regarding sustenance of the ECD centers are as follows:

- The Government should continue the policy of providing grants to the community in the form of fixed matching fund and regular incentive grants for the facilitator. This policy has been helpful to promote community participation in the sense that both the government and the community participate in contributing to establishment and operation of the ECD centers. The grant amount however should be reviewed and increased commensurate with the changed economic conditions e.g., low interest rate for the endowment of the
fixed fund created. The interest rate was 10% when the policy was first envisioned, now it is less than 5%.

- There should be continuation for the policy of community ownership of ECD centers. However, many communities could not generate matching fund or provide extra support for the facilitators because of their own poor economic conditions. Consequently, poor communities could not benefit from the provision. There should be a policy for government support based on the socio-economic conditions. The support should come in an integrated mode whereby the parents in future can support and sustain the ECD centers.

- The basis of ECD policy should be to protect the child rights, right to protective environment, right to education, health care and growth. This should be the basis of ECD curriculum, teacher training, infrastructure development, monitoring and supervision. Such policy would help sustain different aspects of ECD programs in a comprehensive way.

It was pointed out that there should be budget commitment by the government for sustaining ECD centers. For this the government can make a system of basket funding and local fund generation. The money allocated for the basket fund could be utilized in ECD activities. The system of generating local fund will help the community people to take initiatives of ECD development locally. Funds could be generated by the organizations through various ways including small amount of fees that the parents can contribute. Funds could also be raised by conducting community advocacy and fund raising programs for ECD. Such activities will arouse a feeling of responsibility and ownership of the community people, which will ultimately help sustain ECD programs locally.

The responsibility of ECD should be included in the Local Self-governance Act, which will make the local people more responsible in its sustainability. The government, donors as well as the community need to be committed in increasing the ECD resources.

The other important suggestion was to include ECD in the School Sector Reform (SSR) program initiated by the government. The SSR should give an insight into the linkage of ECD in school structure. Moreover, the MOES and the policy documents should ensure that ECD is the right of every child. In this line it was suggested that ECD should be listed as priority in SSR and also developed under ECD Act.

Moreover, the best practices of the ECD program conducted in different districts should be applied for its sustainability.

Quality of ECD provision is highly emphasized as fundamental to sustainability. In order to enhance quality, good physical infrastructure is necessary. Technical support is equally important in maintaining the quality. Training to the facilitators and teachers is required for quality improvement. Monitoring and evaluation further contributes in bringing quality improvement of ECD program.
It was pointed out that various agencies and organizations are undertaking programs and activities related to ECD. For example the Ministry of Health has child nutrition and health program run through its health posts all over the country. A huge number of trained health workers are involved in this program. Similarly, the program of the Women, Child and Social Welfare has programs for the protections of child rights. They could be mobilized to support ECD programs. UNICEF Nepal, PLAN Nepal and Save the Children Alliance have programs to support health, education and overall development of children. There is a scope for coordinated collaboration to make ECD program in Nepal effective and sustainable. For this, there is a need for high level coordinating body and policy and directives for collaboration and coordination based on national needs.
Chapter Five

Findings and Recommendations of the Review

Findings

Findings of this policy review study are based on the responses received from the respondents during field study in the three sampled districts, central level workshops and opinions of the central level officials of different government organizations. The findings of this study are presented as follows:

Mainstreaming ECD Programs

- Majority of the respondents expressed that mainstreaming is related to incorporating ECD in their own objectives and including it in the structure of education.
- It was accepted that ECD should be considered a right of the child and the responsibility of the state.
- The stakeholders suggested covering the 0-5 age group of the child for ECD programs.
- According to the respondents the need of mainstreaming is justified by the reasons of record keeping and better management of the ECD centers, increasing access to children, ensuring child rights, making ECD a pre-requisite for holistic development, promoting the quality of life and increasing community responsibility.
- As duplication of ECD program was reported, adoption of one-door system for proper utilization of resources and uniformity in implementation, fixing of the certain requirement by the government was suggested to meet the standard of ECD centre as a basis for mainstreaming of ECD programs.
- Some of the major problems for mainstreaming ECD programs as identified by the respondents were: (1) differences in the duration of ECD programs conducted in school-based, community-based and privately run pre-primary schools, (2) reluctance among the private schools to use child-centered and holistic development based ECD curriculum, and (3) lack of localized curriculum.
- The following policy provisions were suggested by the respondents with respect to mainstreaming ECD programs:
  - Establishment of ECD council as a short-term provision and ECD ministry as a long-term provision.
  - Upgrading the ECD Section of DOE to Central Status or Departmental Status as NCED.
  - Categorization of ECD centers on the basis of geographical and political division and flexible provision of providing support according to local needs.
  - Undertaking a mapping of ECD Centers and their needs, raising awareness of the local people on the importance of ECD and proper way of management of ECD programs and developing ownership framework for ECD Center.
- Allocation of budget adopting conditional grant policy for the financial resources required for the ECD centers.
- Allocation of certain percentage of the VDC/municipality’s budget to ECD centers.
- Advocacy and protection of the child rights.
- Recruit volunteer child health workers working under the MCH programs as ECD workers by providing them necessary ECD related training.
- Provision of training to ECD workers/facilitators including training guidelines and training centre in each district.
- Monitoring of the management and daily operation of ECD center activities by VDC and community people at the local level, and technical monitoring by qualified and experienced personnel from DOE and DEOs.

**Inter-sectoral Coordination**

- Importance of inter-sectoral coordination has been emphasized in many plans and programs.
- Various efforts have been made to have inter-sectoral coordination among the relevant organizations. Formation of CCWB, National ECD Network, District Child Welfare Board are some of the examples in this regard.
- However, it was found that the existing provision of Central Child welfare Board (CCWB) as central level coordination body does not have adequate provision for the representations from different ECD service providing institutions.
- ECD Council guidelines have given authority to VDCs and Municipalities to formulate networking committees.
- Similarly, National ECD Network required for coordination among GOs, INGOs and NGOs, was not found effective in ensuring functional coordination among the relevant organizations.
- Existing EMIS and SIP have not included ECD programs and not addressed ECD-related issues.
- There was a lack of functional coordination among the organizations involved in child care, education and development programs at the local level.

- The following policy provisions were suggested by the respondents with respect to inter-sectoral coordination:
  - Making a provision of the Council or central level board headed either by the Prime Minister or Member of the National Planning Commission.
  - Developing an integrated policy to address health, education and development issues for younger children.
  - Having a provision of including representatives from major ECD related organizations in DCWB as its members.
- Incorporating ECD programs in 5 years Plan.
- Having budget allocation for ECD in national budget.
- Establishing a separate section of ECD at DEO to look after the overall ECD activities of the district.
- Making a provision of including VDC, VEC, local level NGOs/CBOs representatives in ECD Centre Management Committee.

Sustainability of ECD Program

- The central level workshop respondents reported that existing provision of ECD programs does not make the program sustainable.
- Some of the major problems related to sustainability of ECD programs as reported by the respondents were: lack of practical policy, gaps in ECD and primary education, programs being based on donors’ money, lack of community ownership of the programs, supply driven instead of demand driven approach in establishing ECD centers, lack of child-friendly environment and approaches in ECD centers, and lack of adequate physical facilities and children’s learning materials in ECD centers.
- Monitoring of ECD centers was found relatively more effective in the centers run by NGOs and INGOs. But most of the ECD centers being run under the DOE were found operating without any monitoring system in place. This has affected the proper functioning of the centers.
- The remuneration given to the ECD facilitators were considered low and the facilitators were found having low motivation towards their job. They were found less qualified and lacked adequate training and proper feedback mechanisms. Such a situation has been reported as the problem for sustainability of ECD programs.
- It was estimated that about twenty to thirty percent of the trained facilitators have left their job due to low incentives.
- It was found that the Community-based ECD centers were having problems of low participation of the community people and lack of adequate funds. Similarly, school-based ECD programs were having problems of less attention given by the school head teachers and teachers, adoption of teaching of three R’s and teacher centered teaching methods.
- In spite of low attention given by the school authorities and formal teaching methods adopted in ECD centers in school based programs, it was found that school-based ECD centers are more likely to sustain due to the availability of school classrooms for ECD, better children’s regularity in the centers and absence of monthly tuition fees.
- As there was low number of children in ECD centers being run under the DOE and DEOs, it was found important to launch mass awareness program targeting to increase children’s enrolment in ECD centers by organizing campaign like ‘Welcome to School Program’.
- Participants of the central level workshops and central level officials in their interview mentioned the following basic requirements for making the program sustainable:
- Environment of the ECD centre: Internal and external environment
- Contents of the ECD program: Knowledge, skills and attitude
- Community as well as parental involvement in the management of the centre

The following policy provisions were suggested by the respondents in order to make the programs sustainable:

- A long term national policy, plan and strategy for the development of ECD programs in the country.
- Technical and financial support by the government to the community-based ECD centers for the development of physical infrastructure.
- Flexibility in the support by the government ranging from 50-50 policy to 80 percent support of the government and 20 percent support of the school or community for the development of physical facilities required for the ECD centre.
- Provision of the guidelines based on holistic development of the child in school-based ECD centers.
- Allocation of budget for ECD in national budget.
- Strong monitoring and supervision system.
- Developing physical infrastructure of ECD centers with basic requirements and supply of kit boxes for making child-friendly environment in the centers.
- Awareness raising advocacy programs to the stakeholders for making them realize the need and importance of ECD programs for young children.
- Establishment of ECD training centers at the central as well as district levels.
- Establishment of monitoring system at the district, VDC and local community levels.
- In order to increase the motivation of the facilitators and retain them in their job the following policy provisions were suggested:
  - review remuneration of the facilitators,
  - make provision for moral and academic up-gradation of the facilitators
  - upgrade social status of the facilitators
  - provide funds for instruction materials
- Establishment of a child club at the village level for protecting child rights.
- Specific mechanism to be developed for monitoring ECD programs at the district and local level.
- Development and implementation of Code of Conduct that includes:
  - Safety at the centre,
  - Teaching-learning materials required for children,
- Teaching-learning in joyful manner,
- Health and nutrition services, and
- No ethnic and racial discrimination.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the review some of the major recommendations with respect to the major themes of the review are presented below.

**Mainstreaming**

1. ECD should be taken as a medium of ensuring child rights by the state. So, as stated in the CRC, the state should take all necessary measures to provide ECD services to all children irrespective of their family background.

2. ECD programs should not be limited to children aged 3 to 5. They should cover the age bracket from conception to at least 5 years of age. So necessary programs should be developed and implemented for the children below three years of age.

3. For the purpose of mainstreaming ECD centers let relevant ministries prepare draft policy and forward it to the parliament for developing ECD related Act and legal provisions. It is important to identify the nodal ministry and define the roles and responsibilities of each relevant ministry.

4. The four relevant ministries—MOES, MOLD, MOH and MWCSW—should coordinate and formulate necessary policies for mainstreaming the ECD programs. There are two alternatives—one is to include ECD in the structure of education; and the other is to devise a legal provision under the MOLD that makes it mandatory for the VDCs and Municipalities to implement ECD programs within their jurisdictions.

5. In order to implement “demand-based” ECD center implementation scheme, there is a need to launch advocacy and awareness raising programs in the backward communities.

6. Revise the current national ECD curriculum and make adequate provision for developing local curriculum based on local needs.

7. Certain policy provisions should be made to mainstream ECD programs.

8. Having a high level council for ECD chaired by highly level official like Prime Minister can help to mainstream the ECD programs.

9. Need to allocate certain budget for ECD in the national budget.

**Inter-sectoral Coordination**

1. Undertaking of ECD center mapping would help identify coverage of ECD programs by geographical regions as well as ethnic and disadvantaged groups. This is believed to be useful for developing appropriate policies targeted to the children living in disadvantaged
communities. This will also help to reduce the duplication of the programs being implemented by different organizations and eventually help to develop plans for coordination at the local level.

2. Inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms should be established at different levels—central, district, VDC/Municipality and local community.

3. Functional coordination should be established among the Government ministries and their line agencies, UN organizations, NGOs and INGOs.

4. The existing sector-based isolated programs such as health, nutrition and education programs should be brought under an integrated ECD program.

5. Make provision to include representations in the coordination committee from wider sector of relevant organizations.

6. Make provision to include ECD programs and issues in EMIS and SIP.

**Sustainability of ECD Program**

1. Emphasis should be placed on mobilizing, involving and ensuring local participation in the planning and implementation of ECD programs. Effective implementation of the program can not be ensured without the participation of the local community people.

2. Develop advocacy programs to make relevant stakeholders aware of the importance and benefits of ECD program.

3. Linking ECD programs with the MCH programs of the MOH can be a good strategy for ensuring the health and nutrition services as well as sustainability of the program.

4. Need to prepare the community people to take ownership of the ECD programs.

5. The sustainability of the program largely depends on the quality of the services. For ensuring the quality of the services it is important to take the following measures:
   - Develop norms and a framework for facilitators’ training in order to ensure the quality of the training programs.
   - Strictly enforce the mandatory requirement of training before joining the job as ECD workers.
   - Develop national training curricula for ECD workers at various levels.
   - Build infrastructure necessary for running the ECD centers.
   - Develop a minimum standard and norms of the ECD center and make provisions to maintain those norms and standards.
   - Develop and implement a Code of Conduct including for quality assurance of the program.
   - Revisit incentives provided to the ECD worker specially the facilitators and provide them minimum required remuneration. Make provisions to upgrade the ECD workers’ moral and academic background.
   - Develop effective monitoring mechanisms at the district and VDC/local levels.
Chapter Six

Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Way Forward

Best Practices

Decentralization is a major strategy of the Government of Nepal. Delegation of the authority of establishing, implementing and monitoring ECD centers to elected local government bodies is considered a best practice which was started even before the community handover of the public schools.

Networking and partnership with I/NGOs in the implementation of ECD programs is taken as one of the successful strategies in expanding the services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of the services at the local community level.

Giving priority to ECD in the national plans and programs has to a large extent supported in putting emphasis for its expansion.

Involvement of CBOs like Mother’s Group and Forest Consumers Committee was found highly successful in mobilizing local community in the management of ECD centers. This practice can be replicated in other parts of the country.

Lessons Learned

Raising awareness among the people about the importance of ECD services and its benefits at the local level including parents were found highly instrumental in ensuring the participation of local people in the program.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the ECD program it is important to move from program approach to structural approach of development.

Affiliating ECD centers to formal schools has both positive and negative impact on ECD programs. The positive impact is that the availability of classrooms for ECD program can help sustain the program. Similarly, as the ECD children usually come along with their elder brother and sisters, they were found regularly attending the centers as compared to the children in community-based ECD centers. The negative part is that the school authorities give low priority to ECD programs as their concerns ultimately go to higher grades. Moreover, as the formal school classroom teaching learning activities are more formal and structured the teachers and facilitators tend to adopt the same methods in ECD center that are against the child-friendly approach.

The existing policy on ECD is basically focused on expanding the services to as many children as possible. It has advocated for community participation and for raising the awareness level of the
parents and community people by organizing parental education and advocacy programs through
the use of mass media.

Although most of the policy documents have emphasized to establish coordination and networking
among the different ministries and INGOs and NGOs involved in ECD, no concerted efforts
have been made to coordinate the activities of the relevant ministries and other organizations.

The policy on ECD should be developed with the participation of different relevant ministries
and other agencies. In order to implement the policy into practice, the policy should be reflected
in the government’s Act and regulations.

For the sustainability of the program it is important to maintain a satisfactory level of the quality
of the services.

**Way Forward**

Undertaking of the ECD policy review was a big step forward in analyzing the achievements
made and identifying the gaps in the areas of ECD in Nepal. The involvement of different
stakeholders at different occasions like discussion sessions, workshops and interviews provided
opportunity to bring relevant officials together to discuss on the important issues of early childhood
development. However, the review should not stop at providing some recommendations based
on the review findings. In order to move from recommendations to policy formulation and
actions, it is important to undertake the following strategies even after the completion of the
current policy review:

- Develop action research project where some of the policy recommendations will be tried
  out.
- Form networking groups and disseminate the report to ECD networking group already
  in existence.
- Disseminate the review report at Central and Regional level meetings/workshops/seminars.
- Disseminate the report to members of parliament and political parties.
- Prepare a summary report in Nepali language and circulate it widely.
- Disseminate the report to journalists.
- Link with EFA MDA activities and update in a regular manner.
- Work with the relevant ministry or the board to develop policy related documents including
  ECD Act and regulations.
References


Appendix A
Research Tools

CERID-UNESCO
Policy Review on Early Childhood Development

Interview Questions

Member of Planning Commission (1)
MOES authorities (2),
DG and D of DOE(2),
ECD unit of DOE(2),
Relevant joint Secretaries of MOES, MOH, MOLD, MOWCSW(4)

Name of Interviewee…………………………………………………Designation…………………………
Office …………………………………………………………………………………………………………

A. Mainstreaming ECD programs

1. What does ‘mainstreaming of ECD’ mean?
2. Why mainstreaming of ECD program is needed?
3. How can public and private ECD centers be brought in the streamline?
5. What sort of structural arrangement is needed?
6. What sorts of policies need to be formulated for mainstreaming ECD services?
7. What policy provisions should be made to ensure the implementation of government-prescribed curriculum guidelines?
8. How do the public and private ECD teachers/facilitators implement the National Curriculum?
9. How can the government play a crucial role in developing a standard training package?

B. Inter-sectoral Coordination

1. Is there any provision for inter-sectoral coordination with respect to implementation and extension of ECD programs?
2. What are the existing practices for inter-sectoral coordination in relation to ECD services?
3. Why do we need inter-sectoral coordination for delivering ECD services?
4. What should be done to systematize partnership with the non-public sector with respect to resource mobilization?
5. How are different sectors of the government (Ministries and local bodies) coordinated for the development and implementation of ECD policy?
6. How are governmental, non-governmental, and international resources mobilized in order to materialize ECD policy in practice?
7. How could coordination between the ECD policy makers such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women and Children be made in formulation and implementation of policies on ECD?
8. What should be the policies of the government in mobilizing CBOs/NGOs/INGOs in providing ECD services in rural and remote areas?
9. How could coordination between the policy makers and INGOs be established in the implementation of ECD policies?
10. What sort of legal provision do you suggest for proper coordination among institutions providing services to early age children?

### Roles and Responsibilities for inter-sectoral coordination

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<th>Sector/institution</th>
<th>Existing practices</th>
<th>Need of inter-sectoral coordination</th>
<th>Policy formulation and implications</th>
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<td>Coordination among GOs, INGOs and NGOs</td>
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<td>Coordination among District Level agencies (DEO/DDC/ NGOs)</td>
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<td>Coordination among Village Level agencies (VDC/ ECD Centre Management Committee, Local level NGOs/CBOs)</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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C. Sustainability of ECD program

1. Is the progress made in the expansion of ECD centers satisfactory?
2. What policies should be formulated for the sustainability of ECD centers, especially community-based ECD centers?
3. What policies should be formulated to increase community participation in ECD programs?
4. Although the government has focused on community-based ECD centers, what are the reasons for increasing the number of school-based ECD centers in the country?
5. Although efforts have been made by the government in increasing the number of community-based ECD centers, the number of school-based ECD centre is increasing instead. What are the reasons for such change?
6. What are the basic requirements for the sustainability of the ECD program?
7. What improvements are needed for the assurance of quality service through ECD programs with respect to—
   a. Physical facilities,
   b. Instruction materials,
   c. Training of the teachers,
   d. Facilitator’s salary, etc.,
   e. Curriculum guidelines,
   f. Financing of ECD program, and
g. Monitoring and supervision
8. What is the existing situation of sustainability of ECD program?
9. What are the problems for the sustainability of ECD programs?
10. What sorts of policies are required for ensuring the sustainability of ECD programs?

D. Other policy related practices/aspects

1. Do you think there is a need of specific policy for the development of ECD programs? If yes, what should be the reason for making specific ECD policy?
2. What legal provision have you identified for ECD policy?
3. Does the decentralization Act of the country address the need of 0 to 3 and 4-6 groups of children? If not what should be done?

4. How far have the Decentralization Acts of the country been effective in increasing the community ownership of the ECD centers?

5. Is there adequate provision for the delegation of powers as per the need of ECD centers? What sort of power should be delegated to them?

6. What should be done to extend ECD services in rural and remote areas of the country?

7. What are the reasons for the gaps of disadvantaged people in access to ECCE/ECD? (Matching fund, monthly fee, Tiffin, etc.)

8. How could coordination between the policy makers and ECD program organizing board be established?

9. How could a good relationship between the policy makers and INGOs be established in formulation and implementation of ECD policies?

10. What supports are necessary for every child to realize his/her right to survival, to protection, and to care that will ensure his/her optimal development?

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Focus Group Discussion Guidelines

Teachers/facilitators
Community Members (representing political parties and social worker)

District:…………………………..             Date of FGD…………………….

Participants of FGD

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Themes for Focus Group Discussion

A. Mainstreaming ECD programs

1. Meaning of ‘mainstreaming of ECD’
2. Need of mainstreaming of ECD program
3. Pros and cons of school-based and community-based ECD centers
4. Mainstreaming public and private ECD centers in the national system
5. Existing structure for delivering ECD services at the district level
6. Need of structural arrangement
7. Need of specific policy for the development of ECD programs
8. Policies to be formulated for mainstreaming ECD services

B. Inter-sectoral Coordination

(ECD service providers, government bodies at the district level, NGOs, INGOs and CBOs)

1. Existing practices for inter-sectoral coordination in relation to ECD services
2. Partnership with the non-public sector with respect to resource mobilization
3. Need of inter-sectoral coordination for delivering ECD services
4. Most feasible and effective way of promoting inter-sectoral coordination
5. Policies to be formulated for the delivery of ECD services
6. Coordination among ECD service providers

C. Sustainability of ECD program

1. Basic requirements for the sustainability of ECD program
2. Existing situation of sustainability of ECD program
3. Improvements needed for the assurance of quality service through ECD programs with respect to
   a. Physical facilities,
   b. Instruction materials,
   c. Training of the teachers,
   d. Facilitator’s salary, etc.
   e. Curriculum guidelines
   f. Financing of ECD program
   g. Monitoring and supervision
4. Problems for the sustainability of ECD programs
5. Required policies for ensuring the sustainability of ECD programs

D. Other policy related practices/aspects

1. Need addressed by Decentralization Act of the country for 0 to 3 and 4-6 groups of children
2. Expanding ECD services to the children living in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
3. Reasons for the gap of disadvantaged people in access to ECCE
4. Delegation of powers as per the need of ECD centers
5. Participation of children in ECD program
6. Number of ECD graduate children in grade one of the community school
7. Benefit from ECD program for Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children
8. supports necessary for every child to realize his/her right to survival, protection, and care that will ensure his/her optimal development

UNESCO/CERID
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Interview Schedule for Central Level Officials
(Representatives of the Ministries, UN Organizations, NGOs and INGOs)

Name of Interviewee……………………………………Designation…………………………
Office
.................................................................................................................................

A. Mainstreaming ECD programs
1. Do you think there is a need to mainstream the ECD programs, if yes why?
   If no, why?
2. What do you think are the minimum requirements for mainstreaming ECD programs?
3. How can we move towards mainstreaming ECD programs in Nepal?
4. What will be its implications on educational structure, finance and human resources required for ECD programs?
5. What sort of policy provisions should be made for this purpose?
6. What sort of structural arrangement is needed to materialize the purpose of mainstreaming ECD programs?

B. Inter-sectoral Coordination at the Central, District and Local Levels

Inter-ministerial Coordination

1. What is the importance of inter-ministerial coordination? (MOLD, MOES, MOCWSW, MOH)
2. What has been done so far in order to coordinate the activities of different ministries responsible for child development?
3. What and where are the main bottlenecks in having inter-ministerial coordination?
4. How can we have functional inter-ministerial coordination?
5. Who should take initiation?
6. Do you have any other comments and suggestions regarding inter-ministerial coordination?
7. How can coordination be established at the district and local levels?

Coordination between INGOs?

1. Has there been any effort to coordinate the ECD-related activities being undertaken by different INGOs?
2. Do you think it is necessary to have such coordination?
3. What would be the benefits of the coordination?
4. How can we ensure the coordination?
5. Who should take the initiation in this regard?
6. How can coordination be established at the district and local levels?

Coordination between INGOs and Ministries

1. Has there been any sort of coordination established between your organization/ministry and INGOs/ministries?
   If yes, what sort of benefits did you find or experience in having such coordination?
   If not, do you think it important to have coordination between your organization/ministry and INGOs/ministries?
   Please explain why:
2. How can coordination be ensured?
3. Who should take the initiation in this regard?
4. What sorts of policy decisions are required?
5. How can coordination be established at the district and local levels?

C. Sustainability of ECD program

1. What are the basic requirements to address the problems of the sustainability of ECD program?
2. What policies should be formulated for the sustainability of community-based ECD centers?
3. What policies should be formulated for the sustainability of school based ECD centers?
4. What policies should be formulated for the sustainability of private school based ECD centers?
5. Who should take the responsibility for sustaining the ECD programs being implemented?
6. How can we ensure the sustainability of the programs?
7. What policies should be formulated to increase community participation in ECD programs?
8. What improvements are needed for the sustainability of ECD services with respect to Monitoring and supervision of ECD programs?
9. What sorts of policies are required for ensuring the sustainability of ECD program?
Appendix B

Central Level Consultative Workshop Reports

First Consultative Workshop Report

A central level workshop on Early Childhood Policy Review was organized on April 30, 2007 for sharing the modalities of the policy review and collecting necessary information regarding ECD policies in Nepal. The participants of the workshop were affiliated to different ECD–related institutions. Persons affiliated to government offices, NGOs, INGOs and schools had participation at the workshop.

Objectives

The main objective of the central level workshop was to identify existing ECD policies with the focus on mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

1. to identify existing policies and policy gaps in the process of streamlining ECD programs in the education structure
2. to identify existing policies and policy gaps in promoting inter-sectoral coordination in providing services to early age children
3. to share experiences and perspectives in policy development and implementation among relevant organizations responsible for implementing early childhood services and provisions (GOs, I/NGOs, Private sector institutions).

Themes and issues of the policy review

1. Mainstreaming ECD program in the education structure (public/ private)
2. Provisions for and gaps in inter-sectoral coordination
3. Expanding ECD services to the children living in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
4. Involvement of local government bodies in ECD (review of the policy on decentralization, delegation of authority and financing and monitoring system)
5. Status of sustainability of ECD programs and policy gaps
6. Development of human resources at various levels required for implementation of quality ECD programs
Procedure

The workshop started with the briefing on the study “Early Childhood Development Policy” made by Dr. Kishor Shrestha. He highlighted the major focus of the study: Mainstreaming, Inter-sectoral Coordination and Sustainability. Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya, Executive Director, CERID presented a brief history of ECD in Nepal. He talked about the inclusion of ECD in EFA National Plan of Action. Ms. Devina Pradhanang, chief of ECD Section at Department of Education discussed the government’s policies and practices regarding ECD. She emphasized on the community ownership of ECD program for its sustainability. Dr. Prem Narayan Aryal presented the objectives of the workshop.

The plenary session was opened for discussion and sharing policy provisions. After some queries from the participants, they were divided into three different groups as a) Mainstreaming ECD practices, b) Sharing practices in related to effective coordination among different organizations working in the field of ECD, and c) Sustainability of ECD programs. Participants were from the following areas:

Participants

Contents of the Workshop

- MOES representatives,
- DG of DOE,
- ECD unit of DOE,
- Relevant joint Secretaries of MOES, MOH, MOLD, MOWCSW
- INGO- Save the Children Alliance, Plan Nepal, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, ADB, NGOs representatives,
- Heads of the University Department
- Representative from research centers
- Representation from service providers
- Review of the policy on decentralization, delegation of authority and financing and monitoring system
- Mainstreaming ECD program in the education structure (public/ private)
- Provisions for and gaps in inter-sectoral coordination
- Expanding ECD services Status of sustainability of ECD programs and policy gaps

The results of the group-wise discussions were presented in a plenary and shared in the whole group. The outcomes of the workshop are presented in the following paragraphs:

Mainstreaming ECD programs

One of the major themes of discussion was the understanding of the concept of mainstreaming in relation to ECD policies and practices. The participants of the group agreed that mainstreaming is related to incorporating ECD in their own objectives. So the government should include it in the educational structure. It is state’s responsibility to mainstream it. The government should concentrate on 0-5 years of children as ECD age group. The group realized the need of mainstreaming ECD program for increasing access to children, ensuring child rights, making
ECD as pre-requisite to holistic development, promoting the quality of life and increasing community responsibility.

Different institutions are involved to provide services to the young children. There are different governmental and non-governmental committees and organizations providing services directly and indirectly to ECD programs. They are Central Child Welfare Board, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, INGOs, NGOs, UN Organizations, District-level Child Welfare Board, District-level Government Officials, ECD Focal Person at DEO, District-level NGOs, ECD Management Committee, etc.

Existing structure for the delivering of ECD services was not reported by the participants as active and effective. In the structure, most important are reported to be National ECD Council, ECD Section in Department of Education, District ECD Committee, Provision of Focal Person in DEO and ECD Management Committee at ECD center. For effective delivery of ECD services, the group suggested for the establishment of ECD council as short term provision and ECD ministry as long term provision. The group further suggested ECD Section of DOE to provide either Central Status or Departmental Status as NCED.

Policy-related theme was also put forth for the discussion in the group. The group suggested some major policies to be formulated for mainstreaming ECD services. They are:

- **Conditional grant policy**: this policy will be helpful to promote community participation in the sense that conditions will be fixed from both sides and the government will provide grants for the successful implementation of ECD programs.
- **Ownership framework for ECD Center**: it is seen that ECD centers are run and managed by the community people. However, Socio-economic condition of the community has been the barrier for collecting support to run the program. A policy should be developed so that community will be encouraged to take ownership of ECD centers.
- **Mapping of possible ECD Center/commitment of the local people to run ECD Center**: The existing practice is that District Education Office publishes notice for distributing ECD program quotas to different VDCs. The government does not have any mapping of ECD centers. In such a situation, the only way is to distribute quotas as per the demand of the people who are aware about the availability of ECD provisions. People from remote and backward areas cannot follow the notice that resulted into unbalanced distribution of ECD programs.
- **Protection of the child rights**: Child rights have been a sensitive matter. Who is there to safeguard the child right? A mechanism should be developed to make the concerned authorities responsible for the protection of the child rights.
- **Monitoring of ECD center**: two types of monitoring systems are suggested. They are: (1) Monitoring of the management and operation of ECD centers by VDC/local community; and (2) Technical monitoring by DOE and DEO.
Inter-sectoral Coordination

An attempt was made to identify existing practices of inter-sectoral coordination for proper functioning of ECD programs. Participants provided different suggestions for inter-sectoral coordination among the organizations involved in the implementation of ECD programs.

It was reported that although there is CCWB and Child Welfare Council, there is no adequate provision for the representation of the people from different ECD service providing institutions. It was suggested that more members from NGOs, ECD Experts, Professionals and DDC Association should represent the Child Welfare Council. As suggested by the participants, the Council has to be made high profile either headed by the Prime Minister or Member of the National Planning Commission. The Council should be involved in making policies. The participants also suggested having a separate ministry to look after the ECD programs. According to their views as there is a provision to establish 74 thousand ECD centers by 2015 it would require having a separate ministry to manage those centers. Such a ministry or national level organization can bring integrated policy including health issues, education and development issues.

In order to maintain coordination among GOs, INGOs and NGOs, there is a national ECD Network which is not functional. To make this network more functional, Operational Plan and Procedure should be developed or TOR should be prepared for proper working of the institution. Representation of NGO and INGO in the Council should be assured.

There is a provision for the coordination at the district level coordination among district level agencies (DEO/ DDC/ NGOs). Existing provision is considered a good start but it is not functioning well. There should be a provision of including DCWB, VDC Association as members to the District Level Coordination Committee. Existing EMIS/SIP do not address ECD issues. There is a strong need to incorporate ECD program activities in these documents. A strong recommendation was made to incorporate 5 years Plan for ECD and mandatory budgetary allocation for this program as well. This committee should monitor quality and provide support as per the need of the program.

In order to maintain coordination among village level agencies (VDC, ECD Centre Management Committee, Local level NGOs and CBOs), Council guidelines have given mandate to VDC/ Municipality to formulate network and committee. With respect to networking at the local level, SC/US is promoting VDC-level network. Moreover, SC/N is promoting Ilaka-wise network. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that NGOs, CBOs and professionals (both facilitator and trainer) should be included in network. The group further suggested devising provisions to encourage and involve corporate sector in this field.

Sustainability of ECD programs

Sustainability of ECD programs has been a major concern in Nepal. Existing situation for sustainability is not satisfactory. Need and importance was felt to make the program sustainable. Private schools
have made the program more commercial rather than concentrating on welfare of children.

The participants had identified the following basic requirements for making the program sustainable:

- Environment of the ECD centre: Internal and external environment
- Contents of the ECD program: Knowledge, skills and attitude
- Management of the Centre: Parents’ involvement in the management of the centre

The group identified some problems for the sustainability of ECD programs such as lack of practical policy, differences in management and environment of ECD center and primary grades, most of the ECD programs being based on donor’s money and lack of ownership of the centers among the local community. The group further suggested some practical measures to be included in the policy for ensuring the sustainability of ECD program:

- National policy, plan and strategy
- National budget allocation for minimum standard
- Strong monitoring and supervision system
- Infrastructure of ECD
- Regulation and requirement
- Training unit
- National-level ECD training centre
- Awareness for all stakeholders
- Establishment of National ECD indicators
- Legal structure of ECD
- Establishment of monitoring system in DEO and in VDC
- Specified institutional arrangement for ECD purpose

Different aspects of sustainability were assessed and suggestions were provided for proper expansion of ECD programs. Physical infrastructure of ECD centers were found not child-friendly and very few materials are supplied to these centers. Major problems faced by ECD centers are lack of proper ECD concept and lack of play materials. Suggestions with respect to physical infrastructure of ECD centers were preparation of basic requirements, regulation, awareness towards ECD programs and supply of kit box for making child-friendly environment in the centre.

Curriculum guidelines are not available in the centre and they are not in practice. Policy provisions for solving this problem were suggested as localizing guidelines, training for all concerned and availability of curriculum in all the ECD centers. Similarly, there are problems in the field of
developing human resources (capacity building). Lack of awareness for value of ECD among politicians and stakeholders is the main barrier for the development of sustainable programs. In order to meet this challenge, compulsory parental education program and awareness program to all the stakeholders were suggested.

Facilitators’ training is also an important factor for the sustainability of ECD programs. Existing situation observed in this aspect were lack of motivation, lack of follow up and no provision of effective and adequate training to the facilitators. Problems identified were inadequate incentives to the facilitators, improper management of the centre and ineffective monitoring of the centre. Policy provisions for solving these problems were suggested as salary review, moral and academic up-gradation and social status of the facilitators.

Financing was also one of the major constraints for the sustainable development of ECD centers in the country. Existing situation revealed that there was a big gap between public ECD centers and I/NGO supported ECD centers and between centers run by public and private institutions. Major problems identified were difficulty in managing management cost, very poor incentive to the facilitators and lack of fund in purchasing materials for ECD centers. Increasing the remuneration of the facilitators and having a provision of funds for instruction materials were the areas suggested to be included in the policy.

Monitoring and supervision of the program were also the problems responsible for the sustainable development of ECD programs. Existing practice in this field was reported to be limited monitoring of the centers. Monitoring by NGO and INGO was found limited and inadequate. Problems identified in this sector were that there was no monitoring system on one hand and, on the other hand, the government monitoring system was not effective. Policy provision suggested in this aspect was development of specific mechanism for monitoring ECD programs.

List of Participants

1. Mr. Arjun Bahadur Bhandari, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports
2. Mr. Janardan Nepal, Director General, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
3. Mr. Lava Prasad Tripathi, Ministry of Education and Sport, Keshar Mahal
4. Ms. Gopini Pandey, Save the Children Alliance, Save the Children Norway,
5. Mr. Sadananda Kandel, Plan Nepal, Sanepa Lalitpur
6. Ms. Agatha Thapa, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services
7. Ms. Devina Pradhanang, Head, ECD Section, Department of Education
8. Mr. Tapa Raj Panta, UNESCO Kathmandu, Lalitpur
10. Ms. Ram Badan Joshi, Milanchowk, Kathmandu
11. Ms. Lalita Shrestha, Baphal, Kathmandu
12. Ms. Krishna Sundari Shrestha, Bhimsensthan
13. Ms. Sanu Amatya, PABSON Office, Lazimpat
14. Mr. Laxmi Bhakta Basukala, ETC/ Nepal, DilliBazar
15. Ms. Komal Badan Malla, Lalitpur
16. Dr. Prakash Man Shrestha, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
17. Mr. Hem Raj Pujara, ECD, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
18. Mr. Anil Sharma, ECD, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
19. Mr. Hari Lamsal, Planning Commission, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
20. Ms. Udaya Laxmi Pradhanang, Save the Children, Maharajgunj
21. Coordinator, ECD Program, Bal Mandir, Naxal, Kathmandu
22. Program Officer, World Vision, Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu
23. Prem Bhakta Maharjan, CLC, Bungmati, Lalitpur
24. Mr. Karna Bahadur Shahi, NPABSON, Putalisadak, Kedar Kunja, Kathmandu
25. Mr. Shupravat Bhandari, Parents’ Association, Nepal, Pulchwok, Lalitpur
26. Mr. Keshav Puri, Parents’ Association, Nepal, Pulchwok, Lalitpur
27. Representative, Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare
28. Program Manager, Save the Children Japan, Baluwatar, Kathmandu
29. Prof. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya
30. Dr. Prem Narayan Aryal
31. Dr. Kishor Shrestha
32. Ms. Renu Thapa
33. Ms. Uttara Bajracharya

**Second Consultative Workshop Report**

A one-day consultative workshop on “Early Childhood Policy Review” was organized in connection to the policy review on November 22, 2007. UNESCO/Nepal financially and technically supported the workshop. The workshop was participated in by governmental, non-governmental and international non-governmental organizations involved in ECD. Private schools representatives and educationists also had participation in the workshop. A total of 37 participants took part in the workshop. (See Appendix for the list of participants).
Objectives of the workshop

- To share the major preliminary findings of the review
- To collect consolidated views of the relevant stakeholders

Procedure

At the beginning of the workshop two presentations were made on the policy review. The first presentation was made by Dr. Kishor Shrestha, the coordinator of the review project. Dr. Shrestha shed light on the major activities undertaken in the process of review. He said that the review has been conducted following the guidelines provided by UNESCO and UNICEF. An advisory committee comprising representatives from MOES, DOE, MOH, MOLD, MOCWSW, UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children Alliance, PLAN Nepal and CERID was formed to provide suggestions to the policy review team. The review focused on three aspects: mainstreaming of the ECD programs, inter-sectoral coordination of organizations involved in ECD programs and the sustainability of the ECD programs. Dr. Shrestha also highlighted the objectives of the policy review.

The second presentation was made by Dr. Prem Aryal who highlighted the major findings of the review. His findings were concentrated on the three aspects of the review i.e., mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of the ECD programs. He presented the views and opinions of the respondents of the study. The findings related to the requirements for mainstreaming and issues related to mainstreaming were also presented in the workshop. Under inter-sectoral coordination Dr. Aryal presented the situation of such coordination lacking for the development of ECD activities and programs. He also made policy suggestions for the improvement in this sector. The requirements for sustainability of the ECD programs were also highlighted.

Comments and Suggestions on Presentation of Findings

Participants of the workshop made comments on the findings that were presented in the workshop. The government representatives gave emphasis on the sustainability of ECD program. They pointed out the need of mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of the ECD program. It was suggested that the blanket approach of funding the programs would not be effective in
sustaining the programs. Support should be provided according to the need of the programs. It was mentioned that as the programs developed in participation with the local bodies were found effective and sustainable their (local body) role should be highlighted while developing ECD policies. The program implementation process should be started from the local bodies so that they will feel their responsibility towards the program, which ultimately would help in the sustainability of the program. The responsibility of coordination among different ministries should be taken by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The Ministry of Women and Children has developed the child protection act, which will be presented at the parliament for approval. Important legal provisions for the development of ECD could be included in this act.

The INGO group suggested including the review of ECD as a regular phenomenon. A policy to expand quality early childhood development services to disadvantaged children need to be included in the review. In case of sustainability of ECD programs the best practices of the ECD programs conducted in different parts of the country should be reviewed. The review should include the good modalities used by the Department of Education in ECD. The policy review should also address the issues of extending ECD services to children below and above the age group 3 to 5. The INGO participants suggested for the formation of a policy development committee for the implementation of ECD policies. The committee should have representation from the local level as well.

Educationists suggested focus on the impact of enrolment in ECD in grade I while formulating the ECD policies. The Mid-decade Assessment (MDA) shows that there is a drastic increase in ECD enrolment as well as in the gross intake rate. They also said that as the ECD is developing with the involvement and support of NGOs/INGOs and government’s policies on ECD one should think of the ways of taking it to the right direction. The reasons behind the effective implementation of the ECD programs conducted by NGOs and INGOs should be reviewed and included in the ECD policies. The effectiveness of the school and community-based ECD centers should be checked. Educationists also pointed out that Health and Nutrition that are necessary for the holistic development of children need to be adequately addressed in the policy review. In case of sustainability of ECD program the students graduated with ECD as major subject from higher education institutions should be given appropriate remuneration.

**Group Work**

The participants of the workshop were divided into three groups. The groups were formed as (i) Government officials, (ii) I/NGOs, and (iii) Private schools. All the groups were given questions
under three topics i.e., Mainstreaming, Coordination and Sustainability of ECD program for discussion. The following were the questions given for group discussion to all the groups:

**Mainstreaming**
1. How can we move towards mainstreaming ECD programs in Nepal?
2. What will be its implications on educational structure, finance and human resources required for ECD programs?
3. What sort of policy provisions should be made for this purpose?

**Inter-sectoral Coordination**
1. How can we have functional inter-ministerial coordination?
2. How can coordination be established at the district and local levels?
3. What sorts of policy decisions are required?

**Sustainability**
1. How can we ensure the sustainability of the ECD programs?
2. What sorts of policies are required for ensuring the sustainability of ECD program?

After the group work the participants made their presentations.

**Government Officials Group Presentation**

**Group Members**
1. Mr. Rajan Khanal
2. Ms. Devina Pradhanang
3. Mr. Hari Lamsal
4. Ms. Sheila Verghese
5. Ms. Ritu Sharma
6. Mr. Surya Pandit
7. Mr. Raghu Adhikari
8. Mr. Bishnu Prasad Gauli
9. Mr. Khum Kanta Acharya

The Government Officials Group highlighted the government efforts for the mainstreaming of the ECD program. In this connection they said that there has been National Children’s Policy and Act for the children aged 0-8 years has been developed, which will be presented in the parliament for approval. Likewise, the Family Act is also in the process of formulation. There are two types of programs (Community-based and School-based) on ECD being conducted by the government. Both the programs are necessary for Nepal. The community-based program has been effective where schools are in far distance. School-based ECD centers are functioning well because the resources of the school are utilized in its development. Highlighting the government’s responsibility towards mainstreaming of ECD program the group emphasized on the formation of a council under the chairpersonship of the National Planning Commission (NPC)
to bring all the organizations affiliated to ECD programs under one umbrella. The group also pointed out the need of financial commitment from the government for the development of ECD program in the country. There should be commitment also made by the grassroots level such as VDC and municipalities, which play a significant role in the implementation of the ECD program.

The group suggested for the formulation of new terms of reference (TOR) for the coordination of the organizations involved in ECD program. Once the new TOR is formulated, it will help in the planning and programming of the ECD activities. Then there will be coordination of all the ECD organizations in implementing the programs. This will further help in making the ECD program more relevant.

The government official group emphasized the financial aspect for the sustainability of the ECD program. In this connection, they suggested for making budget commitment by the government. Moreover, the government should make a system of basket funding and local fund generation. The money allocated for the basket fund could be utilized in ECD activities. The system of generating local fund will make the local people devoted in making the ECD development locally. This will further arouse a feeling of responsibility and ownership in them, which will ultimately help in the sustainability of ECD program.

**NGO/INGO Group Presentation**

**Group members**

1. Mr. Padam Jung Thapa
2. Ms. Udaya Laxmi Pradhanang
3. Ms. Babita Darlami
4. Mr. Purushottam Acharya

The INGO Group giving importance of mainstreaming of ECD program suggested including ECD in the School Sector Reform (SSR) of the government. The SSR should give an insight into the inclusion of ECD in school structure. Moreover, the MOES and the policy documents should ensure that ECD is the right of every child. Another aspect for mainstreaming as pointed out by this group was on developing a minimum standard of ECD so that there will be uniformity in the program. The curriculum for ECD program also should be developed, which should be made mandatory for all the organizations implementing ECD program. There should be inclusion of ECD also in NFE program. The importance of ECD for the holistic development of children should be included in the NFE courses. A component of parenting awareness program also should be included in the ECD program for the mainstreaming. One of the ways of mainstreaming the ECD programs is to document the best practices of various organizations on ECD. Such documentation will help to implement the ECD programs viable for the disadvantaged children. There is also need of structural change in the central and district levels for the mainstreaming of ECD programs. This group emphasized on the formulation of ECD Act for mainstreaming.
The group suggested for the central-level ECD council under the chairpersonship of the MOES for the coordination of organizations involved in the promotion of ECD. The member secretary also should be the secretary of MOES. The members of the council should include the secretary of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Development and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and the stakeholders. Likewise, there should be a district council where there should be representation from different sector of society. District Development Committee chairperson should be the chairman of the council. The vice-chairperson should be the CDO and the DEO should be appointed as the member-secretary of the district ECD council. Local Development Officer, Ward Development Officer and the public health officer should be appointed as members.

The group pointed out that ECD as the responsibility of the state so it should think of its sustainability. The government should make financial commitment for its sustainability. The responsibility of ECD should be included in the Local Self-governance Act, which will make the local people more responsible in its sustainability. The government, donors as well as the community need to be committed in increasing the ECD resources. Moreover, the best practices of the ECD program conducted in different districts should be applied for its sustainability.

_Private Schools Group Presentation_

Group members
1. Mr. B N Sharma, Vice-president, PABSON
2. Ms. Sanu Amatya
3. Mr. Narendra Bhandari
4. Mr. Ritu Raj Sapkota
5. Ms. Pushpa Singh
6. Dr. Pradeep Gautam
7. Ms. Ram Badan Joshi
8. Ms. Lalita Shrestha
9. Ms. Krishna Sundari Shrestha
10. Mr. Yubaraj Katuwal
The group suggested that all the organizations should consider 3-5 as the target group for providing ECD services. If the age group 3-8 is included, then it will be difficult in mainstreaming as it will include a large number of children. The ECD program should focus on the training and curriculum. Training on ECD package development should be provided. Different institutes should be established to provide training. The training norms and the trainees should be identified. Both the GOs and INGOs need to be involved in providing training. This will help in the mainstreaming of the program. At present there is lack of uniformity in operation and resources of ECD. So mainstreaming is necessary in order to remove discrepancies existing in ECD programs. The government has developed the ECD curriculum but due to the dissemination problem it is not used by all the organizations conducting ECD program. If dissemination is made, then the curriculum could be mainstreamed. The group suggested for the holistic development of children. If all the organizations conducting ECD program focus on the holistic development of children then mainstreaming of ECD program is possible. The holistic development includes cognitive and physical development. The suitable environment for children is also included under the holistic development. In school there should be inter-related structure created. The inter-related structure in school should include skills, health and facilitation.

Another suggestion for the mainstreaming was about the establishment of ECD Council at the central level. The Council should include representatives from MOES, MOWCSW, Ministry of Local Development and Ministry of Health. But MOES should play the lead role in this regard. The group suggested formation of a local level committee in VDC and municipality that relate to village education plan experts.

Finance plays an important role in the mainstreaming of ECD program. In this context the group suggested regular operation of the budget allocated for ECD. The budget could be regularly operated if parents pay the children’s fee regularly and community also supports financially. The government support is needed for the professional development of the ECD facilitators. Monitoring is necessary for the mainstreaming because it helps in maintaining the quality of ECD programs. The monitoring should be done from the central level.

The group suggested for the formulation of ECD Act, which should be viable for both the private and public schools. But the regulations could be different for such schools. The management of such schools may differ. So, autonomy in management should be provided while mainstreaming the schools conducting ECD programs.

Regarding the coordination of ECD program the group suggested the establishment of ECD cells in the ministries that have programs on ECD. This will help in the networking and coordination of ECD programs organized under different ministries. ECD experts should be appointed in the Village Education Committee and National Council for ECD. The supervision of ECD program on a quarterly and half yearly basis by the government helps in the coordination of ECD activities. Coordination is also required in having policy decisions. There should be one-door policy system. All the institutions and organizations working for ECD should have collaborative efforts in making policy decisions. There should be collaboration between the ECD institutions and organizations in
developing the training package so that uniform training package could be used. Coordination is also necessary for the establishment of institutions. If coordination is made between the ECD organizations then there will not be duplication of the program in the field and more people could be benefited. Monitoring and evaluation is lacking in every program and ECD is no exception. So, coordination is required for undertaking the monitoring and evaluation in real terms.

The group came with different suggestions for the sustainability of ECD program. It emphasized on quality for the sustainability. In order to ensure the quality, appropriate physical infrastructure is most important. Technical support is equally important in maintaining the quality. Training to the facilitators and teachers is required for quality improvement. Monitoring and evaluation further contributes in bringing qualitative improvement of ECD program. Another important aspect for the sustainability of ECD program is finance. Resources should be generated by the organizations conducting ECD program. Children’s fee also helps to generate fund. The government should provide funds for the organizations conducting ECD programs. Funds could also be generated in the community level by making community people aware about the benefits of ECD programs.

The group suggested for giving priority to ECD in SSR and developing the ECD Act. These two will help in the mainstreaming, coordination and sustainability of ECD program.

**Concluding Remarks**

There were remarks made by different people on the policy review towards the end of the workshop. In this context, the chief guest of the concluding session, Hon’ble Minister for Education and Sports, Mr. Pradeep Nepal suggested the review teams to provide the hard copy of the review report including the report of the workshop to the ministry for its implementation. Mr. Nepal further said that the involvement of community has proved instrumental in successful implementation of development programs. For example, the community-owned forest is flourishing whereas the government-owned forestry is going towards devastation. Likewise, the community-owned schools are functioning well due to its good management. As a result the private schools of the rural areas are shifting towards urban areas. Attentions should be made on community development while developing curriculum. He emphasized on the importance of giving responsibility to the local communities for the successful implementation of ECD programs.

The Secretary of Ministry of Education and Sports, Mr. Balananda Paudel said that ECD centers should be established in school as well as in the community. He raised a question over ambitious targets of establishing a large number of ECD centers in the national plans. It is very difficult to meet the target of establishing such number of ECD centers by the end of 2015. He also made it clear that it is not that ECD is given less priority by not including it in the School Sector Reform. He expressed his happiness for the networking created to voice in favor of the voiceless children.
The Director General of Department of Education, Mr. Janardan Nepal, highlighting the ECD activities of the Department, said that a 2-year curriculum on ECD has been proposed and work on the parental education program is going on. Efforts have been made to increase the duration of the facilitator’s training. Emphasis has been given on community involvement in the development of ECD program. He further said that the Department is bringing the idea of handover of the responsibility of the development of children that of 3-4 age group to the Ministry of Education and Sports and the responsibility of children below that age to the Ministry of Health. Although the ECD centers being run by the NGOs and INGOs are limited the Department is coordinating with them in program implementation.

Mr. Purushottan Acharya, Chief, ECD Section at UNICEF Nepal said that as there exist different types of ECD programs such as school-based, community-based and ECD centers operating under private schools, which are conducting ECD activities on their own, the focus of the ECD program should be made clear. He suggested focusing on the disadvantaged group while conducting the ECD activities. The disadvantaged group should be classified by language and ethnicity and facilities should be provided accordingly. He stressed the need of coordination between the researchers and practitioners while undertaking the policy review.

Dr. Shreeram Prasad Lamichhane, the Officiating Executive Director of CERID offered a vote of thanks towards the end of the workshop.

List of Participants

**Government Organizations**

1. Mr. Balananda Poudel, Secretary, MOES, Keshar Mahal, Kathmandu
2. Mr. Janardan Nepal, Director General, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
3. Mr. Rajan Khanal, Joint Secretary, MOES, Keshar Mahal, Kathmandu
4. Mr. Mahendra P. Sta. Joint Secretary, MOWCSW, Singh Darbar, Kathmandu
5. Ms. Devina Pradhanang, Head, ECD Section, Department of Education
6. Mr. Hari Lamsal, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
7. Mr. Hem Raj Pujara, ECD, DOE, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
8. Ms. Ritu Sharma, Coordinator, MCHC, Ministry of Health, Teku, Kathmandu
9. Mr. Surya Badana Pandit, Section Officer, MOLD, Pulchok, Lalitpur
10. Mr. Bishnu Pd. Gauli, MOLD, Pulchok, Lalitpur
12. Mr. Raghu Adhikari, Child Protection Officer, CCWB, Government of Nepal, Hariharbhanw, Pulchok, Lalitpur
13. Ms. Sheila Verghese, VSO, ECD Section, DOE, Sanothimi
**INGO and UN Agencies**
1. Mr. Padam Jung Thapa, Save the Children Norway, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur
2. Ms. Udaya Lakshmi Pradhanang, Save the Children US, Maharajgunj
5. Mr. Tapa Raj Panta, UNESCO Kathmandu, Lalitpur
7. Mr. Laxmi Bhakta Basukala, ETC/ Nepal, DilliBazar

**Private Schools and Educationists**
1. Dr. Shreeram Prasad Lamichhane, Executive Director, CERID
2. Ms. Sanu Amatya, Kids Gan, Lazimpat
3. Dr. Pradip Chandra Gautam, Reader, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
4. Mr. Narendra Raj Bhandari, Parents’ Association, Nepal, Pulchowk, Lalitpur
5. Mr. B. N. Sharma, Vice President, PABSON, Kathmandu
6. Mr. Ritu Raj Sapkota, General Secretary, NPABSAN
7. Ms. Pushpa Singh, Principal, Kanti Ishwori Shishu Vidyalaya, Tripureshwar, Kathmandu
8. Mr. Yubaraj Katuwal, Coordinator, ECD Program, Nepal Children’s Organization, Bal Mandir, Kathmandu
9. Ms. Lalita Shrestha, ECD Expert, Katmandu
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Appendix C

District Case Studies

The context

Field study was taken as one of the methods of data collection for identifying existing ECD practices and policy gaps in order to review the policy on early childhood development. Three districts (Tanahu, Morang and Sunsari) were selected purposively to conduct field study and collect information on ECD programs. These districts were selected in a meeting of project advisory committee.

Objectives of field study

The main objective of the field study was to identify the existing practices of ECD programs organized by different institutions in the districts and explore gaps in implementation of the programs with respect to the themes mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD programs. Each theme covers the importance, situation, barrier and requirement of the theme.

Methods of field study

The study used interview schedules and focus group discussion (FGD) guidelines as research tools to collect information. All the tools were focused on the themes of the study: mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD program. Interview guidelines were used for individual discussion with the stakeholders. The guidelines under the heading “Mainstreaming” focused on the meaning and need of mainstreaming, ECD delivery system in the district, policy requirement for mainstreaming, government-prescribed-curriculum guidelines, and standard training package. The existing practices and need of inter-sectoral coordination, roles and responsibilities for such coordination and suggestions for the improvement in the inter-sectoral coordination between the organizations affiliated to the formulation and implementation of ECD policies were covered under the heading Inter-sectoral Coordination. The interview guidelines also included information on the sustainability of the ECD program. The existing situation of ECD program, need of policy for quality improvement, requirements for sustainability and problems of sustainability were covered by the interview guidelines.

FGDs were conducted with facilitators/teachers, political representatives and district education personnel. This tool also focused on the three themes of the study: mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of ECD program. The meaning and need of mainstreaming, pros and cons of school-based and community-based ECD centers, and the mainstreaming of public and private ECD centers were included under the theme Mainstreaming. Moreover, the delivery system of ECD services at the district level, need of structural arrangement for mainstreaming
and policy formulation for mainstreaming were covered under the theme Mainstreaming. The guidelines under the theme inter-sectoral coordination included the need of coordination, existing practices for the coordination, ways of promoting coordination and policies for the delivery of ECD services. The FGD guidelines under the theme “sustainability” were the basic requirements for sustainability, existing situation of sustainability and improvement needs for providing quality services. The problems of sustainability and the policies required for ensuring sustainability were also included in the FGD guidelines.

The study also used the observation form. This form was used for the observation of the available facilities in the ECD centers. The form helped to collect information on the place where the centre is located. Physical facilities, learning materials and children’s activities were observed. Field reports of the three districts are presented in the following sections.

Case Study: Tanahu

As reported by District Education Office, there were 273 ECD centers in Tanahu District in 2063 B.S. Among them 207 ECD centers were run with government supports, 17 with NGOs’ support and 49 by Private and Boarding Schools as pre-primary classes. Only 27 ECD centers were added in the Fiscal year 2063/2064. In total ECD centers, 79 are Community-based and 145 are School-based. As mentioned above, the case study is divided into the themes Mainstreaming, Inter-sectoral Coordination and Sustainability.

Mainstreaming

Importance
The study shows that the stakeholders emphasized the need of mainstreaming of ECD program as it is necessary for the all-round development of the children. They suggested that a countrywide advocacy program is needed to make the community and parents aware of ECD. In this regard, the respondents suggested that mainstreaming of ECD is necessary so that the government will pay attention in this sector.

Representatives of the political parties, facilitators and trainers mentioned that since distribution of ECD quotas in the district is not effective, a provision should be made for district mapping of ECD centers for their effective implementation. Such mapping will help in the mainstreaming of ECD centers. Facilitators expressed that some of the centers are being closed due to the lack of people’s awareness and their support to ECD programs. So, distribution of ECD quotas should be need-based.

Situation
The stakeholders considered ECD a very crucial part of human life but the community regard ECD only as a childcare center. The trainers of Seto Gurans, facilitators and women development officer expressed that there is lack of active participation of VDC and DDC regarding ECD program.
Barriers/Problems
One of the problems pointed out by the stakeholders in mainstreaming was the lack of training for the facilitators. DEO personnel, trainers and facilitators of Seto Gurans National Child Development Services expressed that a majority of the facilitators are not trained due to regular turnover of trained facilitators and appointment of new facilitators in their places. Since there is no any formal provision to provide training to teachers of private boarding school, they cannot impart the education that is needed for children’s holistic development. In lack of training they are giving emphasis on intellectual rather than social, emotional and physical development of children.

A clear cut instruction from the central level was lacking for the district regarding the roles and responsibilities of different ECD sectors of the district. DEO and focal person claimed that they were not receiving any clear-cut instruction from the central level about the responsibility of District Child Welfare Board and Women Development Office at the district regarding implementation of ECD programs.

Requirements
DEO, focal person and NGO representatives through their interviews, and representatives of political parties and facilitators through their FGD expressed that a policy should be made in implementing the national curriculum on ECD. This will bring uniformity in ECD curriculum, which will ultimately help in mainstreaming. Local Development Officer (LDO) ETC trainer, DEO and focal person from District Education Office suggested one model ECD center in each VDC which will coordinate all the centers around it.

ETC Trainers, school supervisors and trainers of Seto Gurans National Child Development Services were of the opinion that the government should develop ECD training package involving experts at central, and develop trainers for 75 districts. They also realized that potential NGOs, INGOS and private institutions should be promoted for providing training to the private schools. If the ECD program is mainstreamed then all the facilitators will get equal opportunity for training, which will further help to enhance in quality.

DEO personnel and ETC trainers gave emphasis on establishing a strong monitoring mechanism or providing opportunity to establish a system of regular monitoring of ECD programs. This will contribute in bringing qualitative improvement in the programs. Seto Gurans National Child Development Services representatives proudly expressed the contribution made by them in providing training to ECD facilitators and in monitoring their activities with their initiation. Regular feedback system would be instrumental in mainstreaming of ECD programs.

Inter-sectoral Coordination
Importance
Inter-sectoral coordination is necessary for the smooth operation of any developmental activity. In ECD it is important because it helps to reduce duplication of programs.
Situation
Majority of district level stakeholders realized that there was lack of coordination among government, INGOs, NGOs and other local bodies with respect to planning and implementing ECD programs. UNICEF Nepal, Save the Children Norway and Seto Gurans National Child Development Services were conducting ECD centers without proper coordination among themselves. As a result, there was duplication of the program. In lack of coordination some of the communities were having many programs whereas others had none. The District Child Welfare Board, Women Development Section and mother groups were found actively involved in the implementation of ECD programs.

During distribution of Quota from DEO, some quotas of ECD centers were held by Municipality without the knowledge of the community. The poor community did not claim matching fund that was resulted into non-establishment of ECD center in poor and remote committee. It was due to the lack of coordination that ECD centre was not established in the needy areas.

As reported by the trainers, the district and local level network helped to communicate information regarding quota distribution for the community. It was regarded as one of the progresses made in this direction. It means that inter-sectoral coordination is necessary for ECD development.

Barriers
Women were actively participating in community development activities. They were collecting funds for community development. But such funds were used in constructing temple. Funds were not utilized for ECD activities. DEO focal person interestingly made a comment regarding community participation as:

> Women group has adequate fund collected for the development of community activities but they have used a lot of money to construct temple in each ward. Constructing a temple in each ward is not only wasting money but also giving undue importance to construction activities. The group can use a small fund to establish ECD center and support it in management instead of constructing a temple in each ward.

Requirements
According to the Local Development Officer, chairperson of NGO coordination committee and women development officer coordination among parents’ committee, management committee, mothers groups and any other groups that help community to initiate ECD centers and run them more effectively are required. Such coordination should be made by the VDC at local level. Majority of the respondents opined that the DDC should take responsibility of making coordination among the organizations in the district, and District Education Office has to design, implement and monitor the ECD programs and identify the potential organization such as Seto Gurans National Child Development Services to organize training programs for facilitators. Tasks such as management of the resource, creating linkage and empowering mechanism to be built up at local level and a task force at the VDC level should be formed coordinating with the district-level networking group.
The community should be strengthened through capacity building programs including mothers’ group, clubs, parents and any other committee in order to utilize local resources for raising the funds for ECD programs.

To identify the status of community, district mapping is necessary and program should be designed as long term or short term. In local level, there are number of schools, one of the school principals should lead to form a working committee including VDC chairman, NGOs, CBOs in each VDC. According to APO of UNICEF Nepal, the coordination in implementation of policies should differ on the basis of priority. The contribution from the government to ECD services should differ from community to community based on poverty level of the community. Long-term supports from Government, NGO, and INGOs are necessary for the very poor communities. In this regard, chair of NGOCC, APO of UNICEF Nepal mentioned that this type of contribution should be for at least 5 years as regular support from ECD service providers.

The Decentralization Act has made a provision of monitoring. LDO, chairperson of NGOCC, UNICEF representative and trainers of Seto Gurans National Child Development Services strongly advocated for the development of district level monitoring system coordinated by district education office through district networking. But others opined that the DDC should take responsibility of making coordination among the organizations involved in ECD in the district for monitoring. The District Education Office should design, implement and monitor the ECD programs.

**Sustainability**

**Importance**

The study shows that both the community-based and school-based ECD centers have importance in child development. So both types of centers should exist. The variation in favor of the type of ECD centre depended upon the people directly affiliated to it. The DEO, RPs, school supervisors and facilitators of the school-based ECD centre were in favor of the significance of the school-based ECD centre whereas INGOs, facilitators of the community-based centers, parents and the community people were in support of the community-based ECD centre. Those who highlighted the importance of the school-based ECD centre said that school can also take care of children while facilitators are in the training because the teachers can work as substitute to the facilitator. But facilitators of school-based ECD programs opined that teachers are reluctant to take ECD classes in the school. One of the facilitators during discussion expressed:

| School teachers’ vision towards the facilitators should be widened. The teachers teaching in upper grades think that ECD classes are the centers only for playing and singing and do not need adequate care. The teachers, moreover, do not give due importance to ECD facilitators in the school. |  |

Similarly, it is also helpful for the children to go to the schools with their elder siblings. But those who valued the importance of the community-based ECD centers were concentrating on children’s all-round development in such centers rather than in school-based ECD centers where there are
more disturbances. They, moreover, argued that such centers are free from noise compared to the school-based centers.

**Situation**

Regarding sustainability of community-based ECD programs, the respondents (NGO representatives and some of the facilitators) emphasized on the existence of community-based ECD center. They said that children learn practical knowledge and facilitators also use holistic approach and guide them as per the need of children’s learning in such type of ECD centre. They also argued about the existing practice of private schools (institutional school). Pre-primary classes may provide good physical facilities and pay good salary for facilitators but their instructional delivery is based on rote memorization of the contents than holistic development of the children. They further argued against pre-primary teachers of private school not having any provision of training. As a result their classes are not based on the holistic development of the children.

**Barriers/Problems**

ECD centers were run through different approaches such as school–based, community-based, and pre-primary classes in private boarding school. So, there were variations observed in providing services to the ECD centers such as building facilities, learning materials, physical facilities, remuneration of facilitators, playground, etc. But a question of sustainability of such ECD programs was raised.

In this district, ECD centers were being run by government, local NGO, INGO, mother’s group and parents. It was also reported that centers run by INGOs were providing more facilities to the children like day meal, building and other physical facilities whereas centers run by community were in very poor condition. As reported by DEO, they were facing problems caused by lack of building, day meal and other material supports that are needed for the ECD children. He further reported that services provided by boarding schools were not adequate and sound for children’s holistic development. So, there is variation of services provided to the ECD children by different organizations.

Majority of the facilitators in their FGD expressed that some ECD centers could not run due to the lack of proper management, lack of fund available especially for community-based ECD center that was realized as a great challenge for the sustainability. In this context, one of the facilitators disclosed the pitiable condition of the disadvantaged community as:

Baidi Bal Bikash Kendra, situated at the south belt of Tanahu is far away from the district headquarter. There was a problem of decreasing number of children due to the lack of availability of day meal or khaja. Students would feel hungry and discontinue their stay in the center. In an average, only 30% children were present in the center. Thus sustainability is related to the facilities available to the children.

Facilitators and trainers had raised the issue of sustainability of community-based ECD programs in the sense that they do not have adequate and sufficient learning materials and building/rooms. Irregularity of facilitators and children in the ECD centers, regular turnover of facilitators, lack
of community supports, lack of adequate funds, untrained facilitators as well as lack of responsible body for monitoring and supervision of community-based ECD centers were the other problems of sustainability. They also mentioned the problems faced by the facilitators of school-run centers because of disturbances and more noise of the elder children, compulsion of implementation of formal school hour (10AM-4PM), lack of welcoming attitude towards ECD facilitators, and lack of ECD knowledge in school teachers. These problems have been the barriers for proper care and education in both types of ECD programs.

Requirements

Majority of the respondents said that physical facilities including classrooms, toilet, drinking water, playground, land and building are the basic requirements to make the ECD program sustainable. In this regard, government, local bodies of the government, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations should provide financial support to ECD centers for the development of their infrastructures.

Another basic requirement for sustainability is funding. The realization of the respondents, facilitators and trainers was that the provision of matching fund is not the practical solution for raising matching fund by the community. People from very poor community cannot afford the 50 percent of community contribution for matching fund. It is due to the lack of the matching fund that the ECD programs are not sustained in the poor communities. So the respondents strongly suggested for bearing the fund up to 90 percent by the government in such communities for a period of 3-5 years. Facilitators also raised the issue of fund raising as a problem in community-based ECD centers. If all the possibilities are blocked for fund raising, the fund raising strategies from admission and tuition fees from the children are to be implemented. One of the facilitators raised the issue of parents’ financial status to support children for their education. The following statement made by one of the facilitators is evident to the need to support ECD programs:

| Government provides scholarship for 1-5 children in the schools so that the children below five years of age are sent to grade one to get scholarship. If scholarship is provided to the ECD children of the poor family, enrolment of children in ECD classes will increase. Poor parents prefer sending their children to grade one instead of an ECD center. |

Funding is necessary for the survival of the ECD centers. In this connection the interviewees suggested making a policy provision for allocating certain amount of the development budget of the VDC for ECD programs with the contribution of community. The LDO also mentioned that DDC should be given mandate to allocate certain amount of budget at the district level for ECD building construction which must be mentioned in the operation guidelines prepared by central level ECD board. One of the important requirements for sustainable development of ECD programs as mentioned by LDO, DEO, RP and SS, facilitators and trainers is the integrated approach of community development in the sense that VDC, local organizations, government offices and community have to contribute certain fund from the total development budget for ECD that should be mentioned as a policy provision. For this purpose there should be a provision of basket money for ECD program. Development workers at the local level should allocate certain amount
of budget for ECD programs. For example, since DDC receives budget for irrigation, bridge and road construction, health program, certain budget should be allocated for ECD from the development budget. The percentage of contribution by community, DDC and VDC has to be clearly mentioned in the policy. In this regard, allocation of budget for ECD program must be highlighted on guidelines to DDC, VDC, and other local bodies.

Almost all the respondents argued that the basic requirement for the sustainability of ECD program is motivation of the facilitators. For this, remuneration of the facilitators should be raised in the sense that existing remuneration has been one of the de-motivating factors. They also proposed to make the provision of helper in order to assist the facilitator in her absence in the centre. Additional fund for remuneration of the helper is also needed. They suggested increasing the salary of the facilitator as per the salary of primary level teacher, following the basis of ILO’s principles.

DEO personnel, trainers and NGO representatives opined that the sustainability of ECD centers depends upon the active involvement of facilitators, CMC and community people. So to make them actively involved in the program, training seems to be essential. It was also reported that DEO and Seto Gurans National Child Development Services were jointly providing facilitators’ training in the districts.

Facilitators and NGO trainers expressed the need of an advocacy program as a basic requirement for the sustainability of ECD program. Advocacy programs are needed not only for community people at the grassroots level but also to the people at the central level and at the district or implementation level. ECD program should be made as a campaign like “Welcome to School Program” launched by government for grade 1.

Day meal was considered as a requirement for the sustainability of ECD program. It helps in the smooth operation of ECD centers. The facilitators also opined that day meal for the children should be regularly provided in the ECD center. It motivates children to be regular in the centre.

Monitoring mechanism is another basic requirement for the sustainable development of ECD programs. In Tanahu, a seven member task force was formed including representatives from Seto Gurans, teachers’ association, and DDC for monitoring and supervision. It was known as Prarambhik Bal Bikash Karyadal. As reported by NGO representatives and facilitators the task force was actively involved in the district to manage ECD programs. It was also involved in monitoring.

**Case Study: Morang**

There are altogether 307 school-based and 228 community-based ECD centers in Morang district. The community-based ECD centers are supported by DEO and INGOs. Plan Nepal has 58 centers working through CBOs. Seto Gurans National Child Development Services is using the ECD quota made available by DEO and Plan Nepal. The total number of VDC in Morang is 65. There are 35 centers that are being run in community’s initiation.
There was variation in the duration of ECD programs conducted in school-based, community-based and boarding schools. The school-based program is known as Shishu Kaksha which is that of one year. The community-based ECD program’s duration is that of 2 years whereas the boarding school is conducting 3 year’s pre-primary level (Nursery, lower KG and upper KG). Pre-primary program was given to the school because the parents felt the need of the activities before going to school.

There is an impression that the ECD program is better conducted by INGOs than by the government (DEO). According to one of the NGOs working in ECD, NGOs and INGOs in Morang are working as models. Information collected through different sources were analyzed and presented under the subheadings as mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability.

Under the case study there were different types of information collected using various research tools. FGDs were organized with ECD facilitators, representatives of PABSON (Private and Boarding Schools’ Association of Nepal) teachers and head teachers; district education personnel including RPs and SSs. One community-based ECD program run by Seto Gurans National Child Development Services was also observed by the team. Morang PABSON helped in organizing a discussion program on ECD programs and the probable support to implement ECD programs in private schools. Similarly, the LDO helped in managing group discussion with social workers and representatives of the political parties. Different district-level stake holders such as LDO, UNICEF field officer, Education Manager of Save the children US and Program Officer of Plan Nepal were interviewed for collection of information. This case study is developed based on the objectives of the study. So, focus is made on the three aspects of ECD program: Mainstreaming, Inter-sectoral Coordination and Sustainability.

**Mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming is needed for record keeping and better management of the ECD centers. Mainstreaming is also necessary for the sustainability of the ECD programs conducted by INGOs once the INGO’s project is over. According to the DEO, the ECD programs that are conducted by INGOs could be called effective they are based on the norms of the government. He also mentioned that a program cannot be called effective only by the high budget allocated for it.

**Importance**

Mainstreaming is necessary for smooth operation of ECD programs. The ECD centers should be categorized on the basis of geographical and political division and support should be provided accordingly. If such type of categorization is made then any type of ECD centre, whether school-based or the community-based, will not be disadvantaged. LDO, representatives of UNICEF, SC US and NGO expressed that it was difficult to conduct ECD program in scattered settlements. As they suggested, a policy should be formulated to give emphasis on providing ECD services on pocket wise basis to conduct ECD programs in such areas. In order to do this task the mainstreaming of ECD program is necessary.
**Situation**
According to the NGO representatives, there is lack of uniformity in ECD program in the district. Lack of coordination between the public and private sector is the root cause of duplication of the program. Schools are willing to establish ECD centers just because the products of the centers will be enrolled in that school.

UNICEF representatives working in Morang appreciated the ECD model applied in Ilam. They also suggested the researchers to review the ECD approach adopted in Ilam. They said that they wanted to replicate Ilam’s model in Morang but somehow it is not happening.

The DEO was of the view that school-based ECD program is better than the community-based one. The main reason for supporting the school-based was that the pre-primary level children’s regularity was high in school because they accompanied with their elders studying in the same school. But Plan did not agree it. They opined that DEO was saying such thing just to support the school by providing more teachers after the pre-primary level is established there.

**Barriers**
A problem in mainstreaming is that there is variation in the duration of ECD programs conducted in school-based, community-based and boarding schools. The DEO said that private schools enroll children in Nursery classes without considering the age. Schools imitated boarding schools and demanded for pre-primary level. Private boarding schools and public schools have taken pre-primary classes as downward extension of primary education.

In the DEO’s view curriculum is a barrier in mainstreaming the ECD program. In order to bring boarding schools in the mainstreaming uniform curriculum should be used by all types of ECD program. Localized curriculum should be introduced. At present, the boarding schools are not strictly following the government’s curriculum. As the DEO mentioned, private schools give more emphasis on English as medium of instruction and add extra textbooks that resulted into less child-friendly environment. It is difficult to make the boarding schools ready to follow the uniform curriculum.

**Requirements**
The government should not be guided by the donors in the implementation of the program in order to remove duplication. According to SCF/Morang, the government should take out the concept of nursery and kindergarten from private schools in order to bring uniformity in ECD program. SCF staff working in ECD sector said that DEO should not give permission to open ECD centre in such places where there already exists such centre. The government should go with one-door system to meet the standard of ECD centers.

Awareness is necessary for the mainstreaming of the ECD program. The Children Welfare Committee can work in the area of ECD. ECD facilitators were of the view that as there were village child health workers working for improving maternal and child health, such appointment
could be made in ECD as well for raising awareness among the parents about the need of holistic development of the children. Boarding schools should be made aware of ECD to make ECD program as child focused. According to Plan/Nepal working in Morang, the boarding schools give emphasis only on uniform. Joyful environment is not created in such pre-primary level. So, they should be made aware of it.

The LDO said that the ECD centers that were operated in schools should be detached from schools because the school administration was not paying much attention to the centre. NGOs such as Seto Gurans National Child Development Services gave emphasis on the community-based ECD centre. They were of the opinion that there was psycho-social development of children in the community-based ECD program. But the findings of the discussion conducted jointly between Seto Gurans, facilitators, teachers and PABSON representatives was that all type of ECD programs (community-based, school-based and boarding school-based) with quality service are required to meet the target of the country.

Uniformity in training modality, as suggested by most of the respondents, could be instrumental for mainstreaming the program. Although there are different training packages used to train the facilitators in ECD programs conducted by NGOs, INGOs and the government, more or less they are the same. But the only difference in the training is that of resources. In the training conducted by NGOs and INGOs the resources used in the training may be more compared to that of the training conducted by DEO. Majority of the respondents suggested for uniform guidelines for conducting the training for the facilitators. Private school teachers agreed that facilitators’ training would be helpful in managing ECD programs as per the ECD centers conducted by DOE. Private schools should give recognition to the teacher trained in ECD programs.

Management of technical human resources for the development of the training package is important for mainstreaming the program as suggested by NGO and INGO personnel. UNICEF was of the view that the government is not providing adequate fund for ECD training. Basically the INGOs are contributing in it. The government should increase budget in this regard. A training centre in the district is required. Only training conducted by Seto Gurans National Child Development Services cannot fulfill the need. SCF commented that training is provided for training’s sake only. In other words, transfer of training skills by the facilitators is very minimal. The FGD participants also suggested providing ECD training not only to the facilitator but to all the school teachers. In school-based ECD centers and boarding schools the teachers replace the facilitator in the latter’s absence. So, training should be provided to all the primary level teachers.

Others
DEO expressed that initiation of ECD course in boarding schools may be possible because of the pre-primary classes being already conducted in the schools. There are also facilitators/teachers available in boarding schools.
Inter-sectoral coordination

Importance
Coordination is needed between central, district and VDC levels. There is need of central-level coordination. A program cannot be effective until coordination effort is made from the central level. The ECD program implementers (including NGOs) should have representation at the central level. An executive post should be created at the national level to look after ECD activities.

As reported by the respondents, since there are different organizations conducting different ECD programs on their own way, coordination between the government and INGOs is also needed. LDO, DEO and supervisors agreed the need of coordination between ECD policy makers and the ministries conducting programs for children. There are different ministries such as Women and Children, Local Development and Health that are directly related to children. The respondents suggested a provision of a central level committee under the chairpersonship of the Ministry of Education to coordinate overall ECD activities of different ministries. The LDO suggested for the political representation in the coordination committee. It is good if the education minister is included, otherwise the education secretary can chair the committee. Ministries such as Local Development, Women and Children, and Health should be involved as members of the committee. Plan/Nepal said that such ministries should collaborate in developing policies on human resources and physical development of ECD centre. This will help in meeting the target of establishing 74000 ECD centers in the country by 2015.

Situation
Coordination between different organizations working in ECD was found lacking. According to the INGO representatives, the government support is lacking in coordinating the ECD programs. For example, the government representatives had made a visit to Morang district but they did not give feedback regarding coordinating the ECD organizations. It means that the government is not trying to bring improvement in the inter-sectoral coordination of ECD program. DEO is the one that should come strongly in coordination matter. NGOs that are conducting the programs of INGOs also felt the lack of coordination between the INGOs and policy makers (central level).

Barriers
There is provision of only one focal person at the DEO. He is laden with so much responsibility (other than ECD matters) that he cannot impart sufficient time for ECD.

Networking of the organizations involved in ECD is lacking. As a result, there is duplication in the ECD programs. Some of the communities are having many ECD programs whereas others are deprived of such program. UNICEF representatives said that Plan and World Vision’s program are duplicated in one of the VDCs of Morang. But donor agencies were not concerned about it.

Requirements
The DEO and NGO gave emphasis on the establishment of a separate section of ECD at DEO to look after overall ECD activities of the district. The FGD participants, teachers and facilitators,
emphasized the need of including the representative of PABSON, teachers and facilitators in district level committee working for ECD section. There should be a section chief and a support staff be made available to fulfill the ECD activities. Later, more people (2) should be appointed to fulfill the overall responsibility of ECD. SCF/US also emphasized the need of appointing a person at DEO to look after the ECD activities in the district. This will help to lessen the burden of the focal person at DEO.

But the NGO was of the view that different ECD cells at DEO, CDO and VDC should be established to look after the ECD activities in different levels. The FGD participants gave emphasis on mobilizing the local-level organizations in ECD activities. They said that a VDC-level child welfare committee under chairpersonship of the VDC chairperson should be formed. There is also need of networking of the organizations working in the area of ECD in VDC level.

The UNICEF representatives suggested for the formation of a board under DDC for the coordination. The board’s office should be established at DDC. The focal person of DEO should have active involvement in it. A committee in VDC should be formed and Mothers’ Groups and CBOs should be involved in it. Coordination is also needed for providing ECD facilities in remote areas. The donors and local NGOs working in remote areas should be identified so that the expertise of the local NGOs could be utilized.

Consideration should be made on children’s population in the community while giving permission to establish ECD centre. District authorities expressed that institutions working in the field of child services should conduct activities related to children.

District authorities suggested that as there are already 22 ministries in the government, a cell related to children could be formed in each ministry. There should be coordination between ministry and the cell. The ministry should give directions to district line office to follow ECD guidelines. The LDO suggested that DEO should coordinate in implementing the program related to ECD because ECD is related to education and health of children. DEO is the chairperson of the Education Committee in DDC so it should coordinate the ECD program of the district. DEO is also the chairperson in the District Child Development Board. A coordination cell should be established in the district level in chairpersonship of the DEO.

Coordination at the local level is a must in order to implement the program effectively. As facilitators, teachers, trainers and NGO representatives observed, the VDC chairperson should chair the coordinating committee. The VDC should allocate certain percentage of the local development budget to ECD activities. The FGD participants emphasized the involvement of local level institutions like VDC, CBOs and INGOs in ECD. They said that 20 percent of the financial contribution should be made from the local level. Until and unless investment is not made by the local people they will not be serious about the ECD program. As they suggested, there should be variation in the local contribution as per the poverty level of the people. Coordination between the government, INGOs and NGOs is required. A full-fledged ECD section at the district might serve this purpose.
According to the NGO representatives, there should be access of ECD services to all children. The number of children in an ECD centre should be made flexible based on the topography, remoteness, settlement, etc. Special facilities such as no fee charge should be there for the economically and socially disadvantaged children. Almost all the respondents suggested for district-level mapping of ECD centre. One of the representatives of Plan Nepal expressed:

Government should not establish ECD centers like sowing corn (*Kanika chharne*) i.e., there is no meaning of increasing just the number of ECD centers. Quality should exist.

**Sustainability**

*Importance*

The DEO highlighted the importance of the school-based ECD centre. He was of the view that school-based ECD program was more sustainable than the community-based ones. The school-based ECD centers are supported by the school itself. Schools have their own resources and ECD being a part of the school it (ECD program) is being supported. The facilitator as a school teacher also gets regular salary. The amount of the facilitator’s salary is high compared to that of the community-based centre as the school adds some amount to facilitator’s salary that is provided by DEO. Children’s regularity helps in the sustainability of the program. The ECD children enrolled in school accompany with their elders to and from school.

INGOs and NGOs were of the view that community-based ECD centers are more effective than the school-based. DEO-supported school-based ECD program are not effective because of the lack of appropriate ECD practice in the school. One of the reasons for the lack of sustainability of community-based ECD centre is that unaware and economically poor parents prefer to enroll their children in primary level rather than in ECD centers because primary level is free to all. Such parents do not understand the meaning of holistic development of children in ECD. Regarding school-based ECD program, UNICEF representatives said that schools should be allowed to conduct ECD program only if they fulfill the basic requirements and minimum standards fixed by the government.

*Situation*

The LDO said that INGOs working in the area of ECD were providing more facilities to the facilitators compared to that of the private school and community-based ECD centers. The DEO seemed dissatisfied with the government’s activities regarding providing fund to the ECD centers.

Monitoring and supervision is a must for the sustainability of the program. But this is the most difficult task. LDO, DEO and representatives of Plan, Save the children and UNICEF observed that monitoring was poor in both the community-based and school-based centers. There is lack of human resources at DEO to monitor and supervise more than 600 centers in Morang district. NGOs cannot do monitoring regularly.
As child birth is a continuous phenomenon, the ECD program also should be sustainable. Out of the 585 quotas for the district almost half of the quotas were distributed for schools. There were less than half (out of 585) community-based centers. Variation was reported in the operation of the centers due to different reasons such as different budget allocation for the ECD program, more budget allocation by the Plan Nepal, additional facilities like Tiffin and dresses to the children and additional remuneration to the facilitators than government supported ECD centers.

**Barriers**

Facilitators during their FGD reported that they were overloaded as they had to spend full day at the centre. They have to work 10 hours a day instead of 4 hours as per their appointment. It was reported that trained facilitators were not willing to continue their service in ECD center. It seemed that there was regular turn over of the facilitators working in this field. Due to the lack of job guarantee they quit the job. Some of them quit the job when they get married.

According to the LDO, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services is the main organization to conduct ECD training in Morang district in coordination with DEO. But there is no uniformity in the training provided within the district. Lack of ECD trainer was one of the main problems in coordinating the training programs in the districts. Although everything including training is mentioned in the guidelines, it was not in implementation. NGO persons claimed that, if the sole responsibility of training is given to DEO, quality may not be maintained. According to the NGO, ECD centers are conducted not in demand of the communities but in their own initiative. However, there were 35 centers that were being run in community’s initiation. It is due to the lack of coordination between different organizations that the problem of sustainability and conceptual clarity existed.

Due to the lack of advocacy the ECD programs were not conducted with ECD concept. Parents were found to expect the type of education and teaching methodology used in school from the ECD centre. The Executive Director of Seto Gurans National Child Development Services said that the PABSON people and facilitators had understood the meaning of ECD whereas parents have not understood it.

**Requirements**

Facilitators and teachers in FGD expressed that, government should allocate budget for the financial resources required for the ECD centers. Moreover, certain percentage of the VDC/municipality’s budget and resources should be allocated for ECD. LDO, DEO and NGO (SETO Gurans) opined that there should be a system of basket funding for the management of financial resources of ECD. All the ministries working for children’s development should collect money in this basket. Policy should clarify the need of support from INGOs. Child development should go in right-based approach.

The LDO raised the question whether it would be possible to continue the support provided to the facilitators even after the program is handed over to the government. So the government should make INGOs and NGOs strictly follow the government norms while conducting ECD
centers. The government should also think of increasing the salary of the facilitators of the community-based ECD centre. FGD participants unanimously expressed:

The community-based ECD programs supported by the DEO were regarded as third class’ program [they may have meant ‘program not recognized by the community or lower graded program]. Facilitators working in these centers were called the third persons because the community-based facilitators are disadvantaged from facilities.

The facilitators get a minimal amount (Rs. 1000 monthly) as incentive. Plan personnel said that at least primary school level teacher’s salary should be provided to them. It is a matter of human rights that the facilitators were working for 6 hours daily and get only Rs. 1000 monthly. Similarly, NGO representatives and school teachers in FGD expressed that getting this minimal salary/remuneration for the services to children, which is a difficult task, is the violation of labor right.

The LDO felt that ECD centre is the base for public schools. So, if ECD centers could be managed properly then quality education could be provided in public schools. As majority of the respondents accepted, community participation is required for sustainability of the program. Similarly, parents’ involvement in the programs in different ways is a must.

Respondents also suggested that a cascade model of training should be developed for facilitator’s training. District-level ECD trainers should be developed by the centre and VDC level trainers and training to the facilitators should be organized by the district. Continuous follow-up training should be provided based on demand-driven approach. Cluster-based training could be provided for which finance should be managed by the government.

The government should provide the committed amount of Rs. 9000 to each ECD center. The government was providing just Rs. 1800 instead of Rs. 9000 to the ECD centre in Morang. The NGO also expected government support for the sustainability of ECD centers. The NGO persons expressed that such support should be continuously provided to the ECD centers. As SCF representative expressed if the government is going to provide the salary of the facilitator then there is no need of matching fund or if a lump sum of Rs. 100 thousand is provided to each ECD centre then the centre will be self-sustained.

SCF/US gave emphasis on the guidelines or standards that need to be developed for ECD physical facilities. The government should provide physical facility to the community-based centers but the land should be managed by the centre itself.

As LDO and social workers expressed, the government support should be provided on need-based approach. For this purpose the district should be divided into financially sound and dependable and financial support should be provided accordingly by the government.

A policy on making the resources available should be formulated. A policy on providing certain percentage of the income of the local resources such as Forestry Consumer’s Committee to ECD
program should be made. This will help in the sustainability of ECD program. If the budget is still not sufficient for ECD then the government should support the rest of the money. The DEO was of the view that the VDC should not be given the responsibility of ECD in the present context of lack of elected members in the village. In case of the sustainability of ECD program government cannot work alone. As DEO expressed, the gap or variation between different organizations affects in the sustainability of the program. All the organizations conducting ECD programs should come under a single system for their sustainability.

ECD centers can sustain if incentives are provided to the children. Tiffin and nutrition for the disadvantaged and remote area children should be provided in the ECD centers. NGO representatives made the following remarks with respect to the problems of sustainability of ECD programs:

| Those who can pay the school fee send their children to boarding school. Children who come to school-based ECD centre are those who can afford to send their children only to public schools. Children who are sent to CB centre are from those parents who cannot afford for their children’s education. |

NGO, UNICEF and Save the Children alliance representatives opined that advocacy is needed especially in remote areas for the sustainability of ECD program. As poverty is the root cause of the barriers in the developmental activities, income generation as well as awareness program should be conducted for the disadvantaged groups. UNICEF also stressed the need of awareness for the sustainability of the program. Incentives and scholarships also should be provided to the ECD children of the remote areas. Facilities should be provided to the facilitators and female teachers. As the respondents suggested, equal values should be given to the facilitators working in school, community-based and private schools.

Plan and NGO people favored awareness program as a means for the sustainability of ECD programs. It was reported that some of the community-based ECD centers were closed down because of the lack of awareness. The respondents expressed that the communities should be mobilized in the awareness program.

Consideration of child rights should be made on children’s learning while conducting the ECD program. The LDO took the task assigned for the children positively. He said that it is not that children who are told to do some task is child labor. It is helping them to learn about something. Until and unless people do not feel problem they do not learn to solve problem.

UNICEF suggested for the establishment of a child club for preserving children’s rights. SCF/US suggested for the formulation of code of conduct for children. Such code of conduct should include safety at the centre, teaching-learning materials required for children, teaching-learning in joyful manner, health and nutrition, and no ethnic and racial discrimination.

According to the NGO, as mentioned in the guideline, community-based ECD centre is better
than the school-based. The ideal one will be the community-based if resources could be made available. Community-based ECD centre is required for those who are not able to go to school. In such a community, this centre may be upgraded to primary school. ECD center in such a community may be an inspiration for the community people for their children’s education.

Regarding sustainability of the community-based ECD program, social workers and ECD facilitators expressed as follows:

| The community-based centers should be self-sustained after three years of its establishment. If the centers have to arrange resources on their own then there is no meaning of taking leadership of the centre by the government. In most of the cases the Mother’s Group is supporting the centre for its sustainability instead of adequate support by the government. |

UNICEF was of the view that the community should take ownership of the community-based ECD program. Plan/Nepal said that an agreement should be made between the INGO and DEO about sustainability of the program before conducting the program in the district. This will help to sustain the program even after the INGOs stop supporting the program.

The boarding schools are economically sound and so there is no sustainability problem as such. But they could be made more sustainable if training is provided to the teachers teaching in the pre-primary level. The government should make the boarding schools strictly follow the ECD guidelines of the government. Majority of the respondents opined that in case of sustainability of the community-based ECD centre the government should provide technical and financial support to them. Support should be provided in development of physical infrastructure. For this purpose, there should be 80 percent support of the government and 20 percent support of the school or community for the development of physical facilities of the ECD centre.

According to the NGO, the responsibility of providing the basic needs of ECD is that of the government. A board should be formed and every decision should be made in the board meeting. Regarding physical facility the government should declare that certain minimum standard should be met. The government should make guidelines in conducting ECD program so that certain standard will be maintained in ECD centers.

Monitoring part also could be included while making chain between the VDC and DEO. Responsibility should be given to those wards where the ECD centers exist. But the person who monitors should have the reporting skill. Monitoring support should be provided from different levels such as ward, VDC, DEO, DOE and Ministry. According to the NGO monitoring should be channelized. Respondents suggested that a monitoring mechanism should be developed in different levels from district to VDC and ward levels/centre levels. Monitoring of the ECD program conducted in private schools should be made. UNICEF people said that an assessment of ECD program being conducted in private schools should be made. The same mechanism should be used to monitor all types of ECD programs. In LDO’s view, monitoring and supervision is working well in the communities where there is domination of pahadiyas (people from hills). The monitoring system is not working well in madhesi (original people of Terai) communities. There
should be a committee formed for monitoring and supervision where people from different organizations should have representation. But the responsibility of monitoring such program should be taken by the DEO. UNICEF expected an integrated (NGO, INGO and DEO) type of monitoring system in district level. In VDC level the local NGOs and GOs should collaborate in monitoring. SCF stressed the need of monitoring effective in all types of school (including private schools).

**Others**
DEO should work in collaboration with the ECD training providing institutes in providing training for the purpose of quality improvement in the training.

NGO people said that there should be a system of reward and punishment for the survival of ECD centers. ECD programs should be conducted as a national campaign like ‘Welcome to School Program’.

**Case Study: Sunsari**
There are about 400 ECD centers run by different organizations in Sunsari district. Different types of ECD programs were found conducted by UNICEF, World Vision, Plan and District Education Office in Sunsari district. Both the community-based and school-based ECD programs were conducted in the district. The research team used different research methods to collect information from various stakeholders. Interviews were taken with the DEO, ECD focal person, and program officer and section officer working at DACAW office. FGDs were conducted with the facilitators and District Education Office staff. Because of strikes in Terai, the team had to face problems of contacting the people and organizing discussion programs with the respondents. Information with respect to ECD programs collected through different sources were organized under three headings such as mainstreaming, inter-sectoral coordination and sustainability of the program; and discussed and interpreted as per the objectives of the study.

**Mainstreaming**

**Importance**
According to the focal person at the DEO, the school-based ECD program provides more facilities such as physical facility and guard and so people such program. As the ECD program conducted by government and others differ, a need of one-door system was suggested by the focal person and DACAW information officer. Such one-door system should be mentioned in the Education Act.

According to the DACAW information officer at DDC, the district had tried for mainstreaming in the regional seminar organized in Ilam. The concept of basket funding and indicators for ECD were defined in the seminar. But such things could not come into practice. He also said that a
policy of mainstreaming is required. As there is variation in ECD services provided by INGOs and DEO, there is need of mainstreaming. It is in the DACAW’s program that the facilitator’s salary is provided through VDC. But it has not been taken positively by the SMC. The RP also emphasized on the system of basket-funding in district level.

Situation
The DEO was not able to conduct community-based ECD program due to the lack of fund. The government had established ECD centers in the community where the NER was low but did not provide physical facility. As reported by the focal person, community-based ECD centers were not possible in such areas. He gave emphasis on the school-based ECD program. The facilitators also said that there is lack of physical facility in the community-based ECD centers. Focal person and DACAW officer agreed that the community-based ECD centre was appropriate but learning environment should be different from that of school in ECD centre.

People were found attracted towards the ECD programs that of INGO as more facilities were provided to the children. The DEO personnel said that there is attraction in INGOs’ program because tiffin is provided to the children. As they reported, physical facility was good and fencing was made in the ECD centre. So, parents were found to be attracted towards INGO’s run ECD programs.

Barriers
The different types of ECD programs such as community-based, school-based and boarding school conducted were providing ECD services on their own. So the DEO was of the view that the existence of all the three types of ECD programs is okay if certain standard is maintained. Certain guidelines should be followed by all types of ECD centers. As variation in the program was found as being run by different organizations, mainstreaming was found to be the problem in ECD programs.

It was found that there already existed a committee formed under the DDC where INGOs, NGOs and DEO were included. The DEO disclosed the fact that the organizations involved in ECD were reluctant to attend the meeting at the District Education Office. The reason may be that they were giving less importance to such meetings.

Requirements
In case of the already existing community-based centers a basket fund that of DEO, World Vision, UNICEF and Plan should be created and the disadvantaged centers should be supported. According to the focal person a separate desk that takes care of ECD should be formed at DEO. A focal person and a technical assistant should be provided to this section. The focal person said that there should not be political representation in the committee formed to mainstream the ECD programs. The DEO also talked about a separate section officer to look after ECD activities at DE Office.

Same infrastructure is required for all types of ECD programs conducted by different organizations for mainstreaming of the program. The policy should include directions to all the ECD centers to implement program on the holistic development of the children.
Inter-sectoral Coordination

Importance
Inter-sectoral coordination is necessary to provide ECD facilities to a mass of children. It is through such coordination that the disadvantaged children of poor communities could be benefited.

Situation
INGOs such as DACAW were supporting the government by adopting the DEO quota. The DACAW officer at DDC said that DACAW demands quota that is required in its program conducted in wards to DEO. At first, the community demands the program at DEO and then DACAW supports the community. The DACAW pointed out the lack of coordination in local and national level. In this context, the DEO should lead the coordination process. But the resource person (RP) at DEO said that there is good coordination between INGOs and DEO. The DEO hires technical persons from Seto Gurans National Child Development Services for training. Plan Nepal has separate system of organizing training according to its need. It conducts training through DEO and Seto Gurans.

Barriers
Support to the community-based ECD program was lacking. The resource person also said that NGOs’ support to the children of the community-based ECD centre is minimal. Coordination was lacking between different organizations conducting ECD program. As a result, there was duplication of the program. Such duplication could not cover the disadvantaged communities.

Requirements
The resource person emphasized the establishment of an ECD division in the MOES and a committee comprising of joint-secretaries. The secretary of MOES should be the chairperson of this committee. As the secretary of the MOES may be busy s/he should not be involved in this committee. In case of involving the minister in the committee, s/he would not have such idea that there is not need of including her/him in the committee.

DECAW officer expressed that in the district level, a committee should be formed under DDC where all the local INGOs should be its member. The DEO said that a division at the DOE should be formed. The DEO should coordinate with the INGOs’ activities. The DACAW officer also felt the need of ECD section in the district under DEO. The facilitators should be involved in this section. In case of access of ECD program in remote areas, there should be a system of getting permission from DEO to conduct ECD program in the community. Such compulsion of taking permission should be made because DEO has all the data including NER of the district and the centre could be established in a required place. Even the INGOs should take permission from DEO to conduct the program. An expert should be appointed in the VDC to look after the ECD program.
The DACAW information officer mentioned that VDC should allocate certain budget for ECD centers. The officer emphasized the need of organizing a discussion on bringing all the ECD organizations under one umbrella. A board or a committee on ECD should be established in DEO. The responsibility of monitoring and supervision should be given to DEO involving NGO and other related organizations in the committee.

In order to fulfill a target of establishing 74000 ECD centers by 2015, a system of mapping ECD centers should be developed. The demand that has been made by VDC for the ECD centre should be verified with the mapping. The supply of ECD quotas should be based on the demand of the community. First of all, survey of the children below 5 years of age should be made. The record of child birth should be an on-going process so that the ECD program could be implemented.

The focal person was of the view that training should be made mandatory for the teachers of boarding school who teach in pre-primary section. The boarding school must allocate budget for the training and the government also should assist in this regard. The training should be residential. The DEO has expertise in conducting training so such responsibility should be given to it.

School-based ECD centre is looked after by the resource centre of the school. There is need of coordination of the community-based ECD centre. The outstanding school in the community should coordinate the community-based ECD centers.

So, there is need of supporting the community-based centers by NGOs and INGOs. There should be a system of registering the NGOs and INGOs in the VDC or DDC in order to make coordination easy.

**Sustainability**

**Importance**
Both the community-based and school-based ECD centers have importance in providing ECD services. The community-based ECD centers are providing services to the unreached groups. Those who cannot afford for their children’s education in private school send their children to the community-based centers. So, such type of ECD program is mainly concentrated in rural areas. In city areas people usually send children to the school-based ECD centers.

**Situation**
There is no uniformity in the ECD services provided to children. For example, in the ECD program conducted by the private schools, the eight years completers join grade one. But in the community-based ECD program the ECD completers join Nursery class in private school.

The focal person was of the view that the community-based ECD centre does not work in urban areas. Even those who have low income such as laborers send their children to boarding school. So sustainability problem of community-based ECD centre in city areas exist.
The respondents said that the ECD program is functioning well. In some communities the school-based is functioning well whereas in other communities the community-based ECD program is functioning well. But a single teacher involved in both ECD and school in the school-based ECD program is not good. A facilitator cannot fulfill dual responsibility of taking care of ECD children and primary school children.

The Focal person said that there were 400 centers in the district but only 200 were functioning properly. As he reported, however, VDC considers the centers functioning. The reality was different in the sense that RPs could not visit ECD centers of the village and the centers were not included in paper. It was so because of the lack of record system in the district. It was further reported that the centers were not functioning due to the lack of policies on sustainability and monitoring of ECD centre. According to the RP, it is impossible to take care of the 400 centers of the districts by a single focal person. So far, the RPs was monitoring the centers. But it was impossible to monitor all the centers.

In case of the community-based ECD centre the government was supposed to provide Rs. 9000 each year to the centre for three years as matching fund. But so far only Rs. 1800 is provided.

**Barriers/Problems**
The focal person was deprived of the facilities. He was not paid for his extra work. The RP emphasized on the facilities to be provided to the focal person. The focal person used to get Rs. 1000 for the monitoring. Now such facility is cut off. Such facility should be continued for the effectiveness of the program. The focal person emphasized on including monitoring and physical development in the Local Self-governance Act. The responsibilities of VDC and DDC towards ECD should be mentioned in the Act. The organizations working in the local-level should also address ECD.

**Requirements**
The DACAW officer at DDC pointed out the need of awareness program for the sustainability of the ECD program. Until and unless the local people realize responsibility, ECD program cannot sustain. The RP and the facilitators raised the issue of community awareness for the sustainability of ECD programs and supported the need of ownership by the community.

According to the focal person, a basket fund of donors and government should be established at DDC. The budget allocated for education by VDC should be spent on teacher quota. The DEO should tell VDC to allocate budget in the priority areas given by DEO. DEO and RPs expressed the need of basket funding in the district in order to manage financial resources for ECD programs. The DEO said that if an ECD centre is to be conducted in a school then a fixed amount (at least one lakh) of matching fund should be created.

DACAW at DDC showed his satisfaction about the present incentive (Rs. 1000) given to the facilitator. He said that it is sufficient for those who are working for pocket money because most
of the facilitators are economically sustained. But the resource person and the focal person at DEO said that the money that is provided to the facilitator is minimal. The facilitators also talked about bringing uniformity in the program by providing equal salary to the facilitators of different types of ECD centers.

For the sustainability of the ECD centre as pointed out by the RP, formation of Village Education Committee and development of Village Education Plan was necessary. In other words village education committee should try to address the issue of ECD programs through village education plan. The responsibility of ECD centers should be given to the VDC because DEO cannot handle a large number of centers.

DACAW officer at DDC regarded education as child right. Children without birth certificate are not allowed to get enrolled in school. As suggested by him, the minimum charge for the birth certificate should be lowered to Rs. 10. So after such provision the number of new born was 1100 in the year 2005. DDC also registered the names of those who do not have citizenship. This helped to increase the number of child birth registration and helped in school admission. The focal person said that the role of safe-guarding the child rights should come under the district child welfare committee but it is not effectively working. UNICEF has established child club in schools. Child development aspect should be addressed in women development committee, and non-formal education section of DEO.

As DACAW officer said, there is misuse of child clubs. Even the human rights organizations and the political organizations were misusing their power. So there is a need of conducting civic awareness programs in the districts.

The ECD centers of the boarding schools should be given certain norms of ECD. The DEO should check from time to time whether the centers are following the norms or not. The RP said that school-based ECD program was more sustainable as school has budget from different sources and such budget could be used for the development of ECD program.

In order to make the ECD program sustainable, focal person said that only those that have fulfilled the basic physical requirement should be given permission to conduct ECD program. The local donors should be encouraged to contribute in ECD activities. The DACAW officer further mentioned that the ECD centre should be named after the donor. The RP also said that there is lack of physical facilities in community-based ECD programs.

A monitoring unit should be established in the VDC. The secretary of the VDC cannot take care of all the nine wards. Until and unless the political appointment is made monitoring by the VDC is not possible.

Conceptual clarity of providing ECD service to certain age group and its importance should be disseminated broadly to almost all the stakeholders ranging from parents to policy makers.
The government is increasing the number of ECD but the budget is decreasing. The focal person also gave emphasis on increasing the salary of the facilitator. There should be a facilitator quota for the school-based ECD centre. The Local Self-governance (LSG) Act says that salary to the facilitator should be provided through VDC but it is not in practice.

Reflection on Case Studies
Mainstreaming is necessary for the smooth operation of ECD programs. It also helps to reduce duplication of programs. When the duplication of program is lessened then more children including the deprived and disadvantaged will be benefited from such programs.

The organizations conducting the ECD programs are organizing their programs on their own way. Coordination is lacking between such organizations. They are aware of the need of coordination but so far no such initiative has been taken to this direction. District mapping of ECD centers is necessary to avoid duplication and provide effective services. Government should make the NGOs and INGOs strictly follow the government norms while conducting ECD centers. This will help in bringing uniformity in ECD programs.

Sustainability of the ECD program is necessary to provide long-term services to the children. Although there is a system of matching fund provided by the government, the community-based ECD centers are unable to generate fund. So the idea of matching fund does not work in all aspects. Government support should be provided in need-based approach. Both the community-based and school-based ECD centers are required to fulfill the need of the country. But focus should be made on the psycho-social development of children while conducting ECD program in school. Monitoring is a mechanism that helps in bringing qualitative improvement. It also helps in sustaining the ECD program.