An Integrated Approach to Early Childhood Education and Care

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Introduction

This study was commissioned by the OECD and UNESCO as a state-of-the-art paper on policy development and implementation of integrated or coordinated services of early childhood education and care within a systemic perspective. This report offers a comparative perspective on the main policy issues pertinent to both developed and developing countries, focusing on practical implications and mechanisms that will be useful for policy makers, particularly those in developing countries.

A preliminary version[1] was presented at the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science International Conference on Early Childhood Education and Care, in Stockholm, 13th to15th June, 2001, as a contribution to the workshop "Toward a systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation". It refers to the preparation, based on a previous study (Haddad, 1997), of a blueprint to be used as a reference regarding the change of paradigm and the challenges we have faced as a result – in terms of practical implications for policies and programmes – in the search for an integrated ECEC system.

The present version focuses on the application of this blueprint in a comparative analysis of information about ECEC both from developing and developed countries. The countries covered include the first group of countries participating in the OECD Thematic Review, namely Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, and a set of countries invited by UNESCO: Brazil, Cambodia, China, Vietnam, Gambia, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda.

The main sources of information used to prepare this paper are the following: the documents prepared for the OECD Thematic Review (Country Background Reports, Country notes, Comparative Reports and the publication *Starting Strong);* the documents of EFA Assessment Country Reports 2000; papers produced by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development; information collected by UNESCO from the developing countries above, as well as interviews with the delegates of these countries participating in the Stockholm Conference; publications on comparative cross-national research projects covering some of the above countries (Olmsted and Weikart, 1989; Lamb et al, 1992; Cochran, 1993).

The paper's five parts encompass issues related to convergent and divergent trends among developed and developing countries; the cultural and historical background of Early Childhood Education and Care or ECEC; the paradigm shift towards integrated or coordinated ECEC systems; practical challenges of coordination and integration related to policy and programme implementation; and benefits and concerns regarding the process of integration.

Concerning terminology, while the various options include Early Childhood Care and Education, Early Childhood Care and Development and Early Childhood Development, this paper refers to the area as ECEC, Early Childhood Education and Care, a deliberate choice made to reflect the field's long struggle for identity against a set of ideological, political and economic forces acting to weaken and inhibit its development, as presented in the second chapter.

[1] Published by Childcare Resource and Research Unit. See Haddad, 2001 in the references.

I An overview of ECEC integrated policies in developed and developing countries

This section presents an overview of the current situation and recent changes in ECEC policy in the countries covered, within the perspective of integration. It aims to set out a scenario for moves towards greater integration in some countries; the identification of the origins and main rationales supporting the split between care and education, and the main challenges and pitfalls surrounding integration in the different contexts, which are discussed in the next chapters.

The countries covered in this study exhibit general ECEC policy trends including more effective participation of the public sector in the supply and expansion of the public services provided and in monitoring, controlling and evaluating the services; a growing recognition of early childhood education as part of basic education and, therefore, more active participation of the educational sector in taking over ECEC services and targeting older children. Paradoxically, a growing tendency towards privatisation and/or co-operation with the private sector has also emerged, especially among former socialist countries (including the Czech Republic and Cambodia) and countries that have retained a socialist orientation (China and Vietnam). All these countries, which had for decades made considerable efforts to develop comprehensive, state-funded ECEC systems, have since the 1990s been moving towards a more typical market economy approach.

Moreover, as the next section will show, ECEC policies and practices, despite notable advances, still widely reflect the parallelism resulting from the historical rupture between childcare and early childhood education. One of the greatest impediments to progress is the broad conceptual gap that persists between early childhood education and care for children under three.

Convergent and divergent trends among developed countries

Country policies range from an extreme of viewing responsibility for young children as a private issue to the other extreme of regarding it as a public question. Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and Australia have traditionally shown the former tendency. These countries are typically neutral over the need to reconcile employment and family responsibility; they offer little support for children under three, targeting only children or families considered "in need"; and encourage early admission of children in formal school. In short, they present a weak ECEC system.

The United States has neither a national child/family policy nor a coherent national ECEC policy. Its highly fragmented ECEC delivery system is not responsive to the dramatic social and demographic changes that have occurred in society. Until recently, access to public services in Britain and the United States has been limited to low-income families or children deemed “at risk”. Furthermore, coverage is often part-time, and low and moderate-income working mothers tend to experience real difficulties of access.

The Dutch government became aware in the early 1990s of the need to increase ECEC facilities and promote the equal status of women in the work force, and began looking into aligning family policy with the provision of ECEC services. Between 1990 and 1996 an incentive policy for childcare led to a quadrupling of the Netherlands’ ECEC capacity. However, in real terms, it has meant a coverage level of only 14 percent of children under four, although more than half the three-year-olds regularly use publicly subsidised play groups.

Of the four countries, Britain has changed the most, reversing a long tradition of state inattention to early childhood-related matters. New government policies have brought about a wide range of reforms addressing early childhood, the family and the world of work, as well as substantial investment in ECEC services. A clear employment-oriented strategy toward increasing female labour force participation has been adopted for which the expansion of ECEC services is seen as a necessary condition. Among the main initiatives taken are: educational provision for all four-year-

olds and an increase in the number of places for three-year-olds; a National Childcare Strategy to be implemented through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships; a compensatory programme called *Sure Start* targeting children under three and their families in disadvantaged areas; new sources of funding for early childhood; and a plan to develop and implement a framework for qualifications and training in the early years education, childcare and play group sectors (The United Kindgom, 2000, p. 53).

New government policy also called for the transfer of responsibility for childcare services from the Department of Health to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). However, the administrative responsibility is still divided within the DfEE into the Early Years Division and the Childcare Unit, a disjointed view of early childhood services that has resulted in the adoption of distinct policy strategies between the two sectors. While early childhood education provision is increasingly seen as an entitlement for children, the DfEE still takes a more universal approach to three- and four-year-olds, giving preference to school-based, part-time provision. Childcare is a fee-paying service linked to parental employment, focusing on children from birth to age 14 with working parents. Indirect funding mechanisms are preferred, and little educational support is available for children under three. Despite important advances, policies for early childhood education and childcare are still distinct, and this does not help to strengthen the ECEC system. A wide gap remains between care and education, and the fragmented view of ECEC must give way to an integrated approach.

Portugal has also presented notable changes in recent years. The national government has led a massive effort to coordinate and expand diverse forms of pre-school provision for young children. Early childhood provision has become a public concern central to the political agenda at both the national and local levels, where substantial investments have been made to improve access. High quality ECEC is increasingly seen as a vital foundation for lifelong learning, and the status and qualification level of pre-school teachers has been raised. Moreover, the two main ministries responsible for ECEC programme and provision, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, have reached agreement to share responsibilities whereby Education is responsible for the definition and coordination of educational policy for three-to-six-year-olds while Labour and Solidarity is responsible for children from birth to age three, providing support for families and extended day coverage for all ECEC services (Ministry of Education of Portugal, 2000).

Nevertheless, important inconsistencies remain. A pattern of parallel administrative organisations still predominates in ECEC policy, with different responsibilities given to diverse ministries and non-governmental organisations, creating multiple levels of decision-making and execution and impeding progress and the full implementation of a coordinated and integrated policy. Besides, the division of provision into social and educational sectors, strongly based on traditional beliefs regarding responsibility for the care of young children, maintains the gap in access and quality provision for children under three. Although female labour force participation is high in Portugal, which has the largest proportion of full-time working mothers with young children in the European Union (EC Childcare Network, 1996), there is a strong belief in the society in general and even among women themselves that a mother's primary role should be to care for her children and family, particularly for children from birth to age three. The consequences so far have been a significant lack of centre-based provision for this age group, great parental demand for longer opening hours and intense pressure on women to reconcile work and family responsibilities. The legal definition of pre-school as beginning at three years of age and the absence of any role for the Ministry of Education concerning this age group conspire against a unified view of child and early childhood services.

In the Czech Republic, following a tendency observed in most former communist countries, a return to family care and private provision has been evident since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, leading to another type of state participation in the ECEC system. Maternity leave was lengthened to four years, leading to a drastic reduction of provision for the zero-to-three age group from 20 percent in 1989 to almost

total extinction. Moreover, the state monopoly on education was abolished, increasing the incentive for private and church organisations to establish kindergartens for three-to-six-year-olds, although the voluntary sector is still extremely small. Changes in the political and economic orientation also produced a step backward in terms of unified administration. Efforts in 1960 to unify the ECEC system, when the School Act classified crèches, kindergartens, combined crèches and kindergartens and asylum houses as pre-school facilities under the auspices of the educational system, have been undermined. After 1991, the responsibility for ECEC policy and provision was divided among three ministries: the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, responsible for kindergartens and special kindergartens; the Ministry of Health, responsible for crèches serving children aged zero to three; and the Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for therapeutic childcare centres. However, since most kindergartens still function on a full-time basis, in response to a large proportion of working mothers, the family support function still exists.

The Nordic countries have shown the opposite tendency, building a model of shared responsibility between the family and state. Pursuing the dual purpose of supporting children's development and promoting equal opportunities for men and women to participate in the work force, ECEC services are integrated into a more comprehensive social policy, with both social and educational functions. Access is a right enshrined in legislation, and provision covers a much wider age group than three-to-six years. Most services are full day and take place in centres, and historical differences between the day-care centre and the kindergarten have practically gone.

In this block of countries, Sweden has shown the most radical change with the transfer of ECEC services from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to the Ministry of Education and Science in 1996. Since then, the main reforms include the following: legislation on childcare was integrated into the School Act; supervisory responsibility was transferred to the National Agency for Education; pre-school classes for six-year-olds were introduced as a separate, voluntary school form "to make possible the development of new working approaches and activities in cooperation between pre-school and school"; pre-school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues were given the right to teach in schools; the curriculum for compulsory school was revised to incorporate the pre-school class and leisure-time centre; and a national curriculum was approved for children aged between one and five in which pre-school is defined as the first step in lifelong learning (Ministry of Education and Science of Sweden, 1999).

Changes and trends among developing countries

China

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, ECEC has developed rapidly as a function of the socialistic political and economic system, the women's liberation movement, family planning and, more recently, the implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education law (Zhengao, 1993). Despite a drastic fluctuation in the number of ECEC facilities over the last 40 years, China has accomplished a great deal in this area with the development of a highly complex and diverse ECEC system.

ECEC programmes were often of three types: nurseries or infant schools for under three-year-olds; kindergartens for age three to six-seven and pre-primary classes for six-seven-year-olds, with great variation between urban and rural areas. During the four decades of development, nurseries had been established mainly in large and medium-sizes cities, usually linked to manufacturing and mining enterprises and factories, government institutions such as universities, and neighbourhoods. Female workers had 90 days of maternity leave with full pay, and some jobs also allowed up to one year of leave with 70 percent pay. This helps explain why most nurseries run by enterprises and factories catered for older children. Neighbourhood nurseries were set up to meet the specific needs of many parents, especially those who lived far from the workplace. They were scattered across a city to facilitate the parents' choice, and they were flexible in terms of when the parents could deliver and pick up their children. Most neighbourhood

nurseries were collectively owned, and the workers tended to show more initiative and enthusiasm than they did for other types of programmes.

Local education departments regulated most kindergartens. Often they were full-day programmes, while some were boarding schools or offered half-day service. They could be sponsored by the Board of Education, factories, the army, universities, neighbourhoods in urban areas, rural villages or individuals. Pre-primary classes were usually one-year preparatory programmes attached to ordinary primary schools. They were more developed in cities than in rural areas and have shown rapid growth in recent decades.

Although in theory kindergarten and infant school had distinct functions and served different age groups, in practice this separation was not so precise. Many kindergartens and infant schools operated under the same roof. Small kindergartens, especially in rural areas, functioned more as baby-sitting services than educational institutions; some also offered board, and, due to a lack of infant schools, many kindergartens also enrolled children from as young as two. Although nurseries were coordinated by the Ministry of Health and kindergarten and pre-school classes were run by the Ministry of Education, the principle of integrated responsibility among different ministries emerged as early as 1956, so that various types of nurseries and kindergartens were to be managed under unified guidance.

A variety of programmes, both pre-service and in-service, featured in the training of ECEC workers. Nursery educators received training through the public health departments of various localities, usually short-term courses at junior level, while kindergarten teachers had training at four possible levels: junior middle, senior middle, college or university (B.A.), and postgraduate (M.A.), under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The agencies responsible issued a considerable number of documents to support and regulate the development of the ECEC institutions and teacher-training programmes.

The transition from a planned economy to a market economy, and China's renewed cooperation with international organisations have brought significant changes to the country's ECEC system. The previous emphasis on collective socialisation and women's liberation has given way to a greater appreciation of early childhood education as the first stage of lifelong learning. As a result, enterprise-run kindergartens have been dissolved or transferred to local educational departments. The new direction is also evident in the types of services offered, in how they are coordinated, in their target populations and in the funding of the system.

In China today, ECEC policy and provision revolves around the Ninth Five-Year Plan for Educational Development, following the guidelines of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. For example, it was decided that nurseries with childcare as their main purpose would be placed under the jurisdiction of education departments at various governmental levels. Another decision was to view pre-school education as an important component of basic education, so that three-to-five-year-olds were to be widely assured access to kindergartens in large and medium-sized cities, while in rural areas the proportion of children receiving education in the one-year pre-primary classes was to be raised to 70 percent. It was also decided that non-state entities should be the main providers of nurseries and kindergartens, supplemented by institutions funded by governmental bodies, enterprises and institutions, communities and individual citizens. The funds were to be raised by the providers through multiple channels. Finally, steps have been taken to provide better guidance to ECEC providers in rural areas, especially in poor regions and those inhabited by ethnic minorities. Pilot projects on expanding non-formal pre-school education are under way in many such areas, resulting in a nearly 23 percent increase in access for three-to-five-year-olds to at least one year of pre-school education. The government also hopes to strengthen initial and in-service training for pre-school teachers (China EFA Assessment Report, 2000).

Under the National Plan of Action and China's Programme for Education Reform and Development, enrolments in kindergartens and pre-primary classes increased

significantly from 1991 to 1997, reaching 47 percent in 1997, exceeding the target of 45 percent. Moreover, in remote, poor and minority areas, different forms of early childhood development (ECD) activities, such as seasonal classes, weekend classes and playgroups, are conducted at the family and community level.

Cambodia

In 1980, after decades of war, the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) began overhauling the country's pre-school system as part of an overall reform of the education system. Little information is available from the communist period, but it appears that Cambodia had an extensive crèche and nursery school network in factories and enterprises linked to the former Ministry of Industry, with technical collaboration from the education and health ministries. Quality control was assigned to the unions, which considered the services to be satisfactory. At the start of the 1990s, when Cambodia shifted towards a market economy, most of these crèches and nursery schools were closed. Private ECEC services, including those sponsored by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have emerged since 1998, with priority given to preparing five-to-six-year-olds for primary schooling.

Enrolments began rising in response to the government's commitment to EFA and associated national education goals. To improve the quality of ECD in pre-schools, a cooperation agreement was established among MOEYS, other concerned ministries and NGOs, including expanding services to additional private and community-based pre-schools and developing curricula and manuals to serve the present pre-school model (Cambodia, 2000).

According to information from the delegate, the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien (Thailand 1990) changed views on early childhood care and education, which began to be considered an important and integral component of the educational system. A growing awareness emerged of "the need to support families and communities in their role as the child's first and most important educators" (Cambodia 2001, p. 12). As a consequence, a new ministry was created in 1993, the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs (MOWVA), to support the development of the community-based "ECCD groups" project and parental education.

Currently, MOEYS and MOWVA are the ministries directly involved with ECEC services. The Ministry of Education is responsible for pre-schools (for three-to-five-year-olds) and pre-primary classes in primary schools (for five-to-six-year-olds). These formal pre-school programmes are categorised into four groups: run by the government, private sector, factories/enterprise and the community, and together cover only 6.32% of the three-to-five-year-olds (Cambodia, 2000). MOWVA's main function is to support the "development of the community-based ECCD groups project" for children up to age six and "non-formal education" (NFE) for adults and out-of-school young people in disadvantaged areas. All projects are designed according to a holistic approach to child development, addressing a broad range of children's needs. Since NFE is a natural entry point for information for mothers and other caregivers, it is considered potentially part of the ECCD field. In this perspective, government pays less attention to the needs of working mothers, and few measures have been presented to reconcile family and professional responsibilities. Rather, considerable importance is being given to parental education within adult literacy and non-formal education programmes, which also target the improvement of childcare and child-rearing at home.

The government has therefore made education, including that of the young child, a top priority and it has mandated MOEYS to take over responsibility for it. In June 2000, for the first time, MOEYS formally articulated a comprehensive "Policy on ECE" stating its aims and objectives, its legal and development basis and the overall network of responses within which it operates. According to the Cambodia report, this policy "reads like a breakthrough because it situates ECE/pre-school within its wider context (ECCD) and the MOEYS within its network of cooperation ... and could in fact be the first step towards a national policy for ECCD" (Information from the delegate).

The above phrase clearly expresses that ECCD is a wider category than ECE and ECD, possibly covering both terms, and therefore includes a wide range of programmes (formal and non-formal early childhood education, community and home-based programmes, and parental education) capable of promoting lifelong learning and child development by empowering community members as agents of change.

However, again, two different policies have emerged for children from zero to six years old: early childhood education for the over threes on the one hand and childcare for under threes and all disadvantaged children up to age six on the other. MOEYS is responsible for the education of all pre-school children from age three to the primary school level, while attention to the under threes comes about only through cooperation with the ministries and agencies (MOWVA, MOH and MORD, the Ministry of Rural Development) responsible for providing services to these children.

Moreover, the Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC), established in 1995 to coordinate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), is the sector responsible for coordinating the national ECCD policy with the other ministries concerned. It is outside the Ministry of Education, and its delegate says the CNCC has no power to make changes. A plan now under negotiation is the creation of a National Committee of ECEC under MOEYS's office that will define a sustainable national ECEC policy.

Vietnam

Like China, Vietnam has a tradition of well-articulated ECEC policy and programmes. The national ECEC policy is based on the principles of children's rights, joint responsibility between family and state, and protection of mothers and infants. All services are integrated into the national education system, which sets out the educational guidelines for programme content and teacher training. The policy also calls for a detailed funding system under which parental contributions and donations from international organisations and NGOs supplement the state budget allocation, which is still the main financial source.

Crèches and nursery schools are an important part of the welfare policy for both their social and educational functions – notably, preparing children for general education, cooperating with parents for greater effectiveness, and advising parents on child-rearing. Priority is given to working parents, in particular those with five-year-old children who need preparation for primary education.

Services vary widely to suit local conditions, including public crèches for children three months to three years old; public nursery schools for three-to-five-year-olds; home-based day care; part-time nursery schools for five-year-olds, and guided recreation groups for three-to-five-year-olds. Crèches and nursery schools operate on full time, six days a week, while in rural areas, most are only part-time, usually operating in the morning. The educational approach focuses on children's overall development, with great efforts being made to provide health care on a more regular basis and to fight malnutrition.

However, the current coverage levels of 10 percent for under threes, 44 percent for three-to-fives and 77 percent for five-year-olds reflect new orientations in ECEC policy. Vietnam, like Cambodia, has an EFA policy aimed at extending ECD to all eligible children, bringing about important changes to the overall ECEC system.

The government is moving away from providing centre-based ECEC for under threes, reducing the crèche system and promoting the development of family day care for this age group. The focus has shifted to viewing kindergarten for three-to-five-year-olds as the first stage of basic education, with a resulting increase of enrolments in kindergartens for this age group from 26.7 percent in 1990 to 40.1 percent in 1999. To increase access, the Ministry of Education and Training, with government approval, has allowed the establishment of non-public kindergartens, resulting in an increase in enrolments in these services from 9.1 percent in 1990 to 19.1 percent in 1999, almost equalling enrolments in public kindergartens. Finally, special attention is given to five-

year-old children in preparation for entrance to primary education, and the number of this age group in pre-school classes (26 weeks and 33 sessions) increased from 68.6 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 1999.

Brazil

ECEC is a right guaranteed by Brazil's 1988 constitution, which recognises it as an extension of the universal right to education for children from zero to six years old, and as a right of children of working parents (both men and women). A systematic transfer of childcare services from the welfare to the educational system was begun in 1996, under the LDB -- Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (National Education Bases and Guidelines Law), which covers constitutional principles relating to education. The LDB redefines *crèche* and *pre-school* in terms of age group (crèche for age zero to three and pre-school for four-to-six-year-olds) and establishes that early childhood education (i.e., for children aged zero to six) is the first stage of basic education and should be integrated into the education system. It considers that ECEC consists of both care and education in respect to the child's overall development and determines that all services should have legal authorisation to function. Moreover, it defines childcare workers as teachers and stipulates a minimum educational qualification of secondary level at a teacher training school while recommending university level as the ideal. The importance of an integrated policy of education, social welfare and health is reaffirmed in a later resolution of the National Educational Council (Craidy, 2000).

Considerable advances in subsequent ECEC policy were to be expected under the new legislation. However, five years after its passage, the LDB has yet to be fully implemented. Few states and municipalities have set out the rules necessary for incorporating ECEC services into the education system. Only a few teacher training schools have introduced qualifying courses for the ECEC teacher. No regulations exist for in-service training called for under the law for lay educators who already work in ECEC institutions. Furthermore, no clearly defined funding sources have been set forth for the ECEC system, nor does the Ministry of Education have a policy supporting implementation of the law by state and local authorities.

In the realm of social welfare, developments are even more worrying, especially considering that almost all federal funds allocated for ECEC are classified under social welfare, amid expectations that the Ministry of Social Welfare will channel the financial resources currently directed towards crèches and pre-schools to so-called "alternative models", or cheaper means of welfare assistance.

According to Rosemberg (2000), the neo-liberal orientation adopted by the government elected in 1994, which also included a partnership with the World Bank, is the main reason for the absence of a national ECEC policy or any provision from the current Ministry of Education. Since the educational reform foreseen by the World Bank, among other measures, proclaimed public investment in elementary education as an absolute priority and the re-adoption of proposals for ECCE programmes with low public investment, the slowing or interruption of ECCE programme development and implementation was unavoidable. This affected the training of childcare workers and the expansion of services, which showed almost no growth in the 1995-99 period.

In the face of such inertia on the part of the federal government, a civic organisation, the Movimento Interforuns de Educação Infantil do Brasil-MIEIB (Brazilian ECEC Interforums Movement), arose spontaneously in the mid-1990s as an important social force to protect advances and monitor new regulations in the field.

An important consequence of the transfer of childcare services to the educational system is that they began to be registered by the School Census, the main source of data on education in Brazil. It registers only formal programmes in the educational sector, omitting those run by welfare, health or other organisations. The first Early Childhood Census, which also was influenced by the MIEIB in its formulation, was carried out during the year 2000, and preliminary results show that nearly one million children from zero to three years old and 4.8 million children from four to six years old are

attending crèche and pre-school respectively, or 10 percent and 51 percent of the total population of the respective age groups (Brasil, 2001).

African countries

As for Africa, with the exception of Kenya, a lack of information on the development of ECEC before the 1990s has hampered the identification of changes and trends. However, the information gathered indicates growing state participation in early childhood, largely reflecting the targets set out by the WCEFA. Many initiatives have been taken to expand early childhood services, improve their quality and train educators. A vigorous campaign to call the attention of stakeholders and communities as a whole to the issue is also under way.

Senegal

In Senegal, the Ministry of Early Childhood and Family (MCEF) was created as a consequence of a strong political will to invest in early childhood education. Its main function is to implement a coverage policy of ECE as defined by the state, in cooperation with other partners, especially from the private sector. This ministry also takes care of the ECD sub-component of the Ten-Year Plan for Education and Training in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. A key target of this project is to offer 50 percent of pre-school children the possibility of physical, moral and aesthetic education to help ensure their success in primary school.

To achieve this target, the private sector should increase its efforts by creating new types of facilities and helping the state to build 415 new nursery schools; giving pedagogical and logistical support to existing pre-kindergarten facilities (for one-to-two-year-olds) and kindergartens (for three-to-six-year-olds) as a means of improving their status; encouraging research into adapting educational activities to cultural identity; and promoting a less expensive physical setting and cheaper teaching materials while increasing the number of educators (Senegal EFA Assessment Report, 2000).

To improve access and diminish inequality among different regions, the new policy focuses on creating community-based centres that integrate health, education and nutrition in a holistic approach to child development, replacing the costlier traditional pre-school centre inherited from French colonial times. The most innovative ECE created along these lines is the *case des tout-petits*, planned to be set up in 14,000 villages around the country.

A *case des tout-petits* is an ECE centre catering for children aged zero to six with the objective of providing a successful education that is in touch with their social and cultural roots. The centre is equipped with toys and other pedagogical materials to encourage children to develop their imaginations and to prepare them for scientific knowledge and modern life. An educator from the community introduces the games and materials and a "grandmother" handles reading, storytelling, legends, parables, proverbs and guessing games in complementary sections. Besides its educational dimension, the centre also has health and nutritional components.

Uganda

An ECEC policy began to emerge in Uganda in 1993 in response to the Education Policy Review Commission Report, which observed a lack of government control over the quality of the curriculum, teaching methods, facilities, age of entry, quality of teachers and pre-school charges levied (Uganda EFA Assessment Report, 2000). The report set out recommendations and guidelines to be followed to achieve EFA goals and targets. Since then, the government has committed itself to seeing early childhood education as crucial to the holistic development of the individual, a foundation for basic education, and the right of every child in the country and not the privilege of a few. A campaign has been launched to sensitise stakeholders and raise the quality of teachers, with the aims of improving the quality of existing institutions, day-care centres (for zero-to-one-year-olds), kindergartens (one-to-two-year-olds) and nurseries (three-to-

five-year-olds) which are mostly private, and ensuring access for a greater number of children. A pre-primary section was established within the Primary Education Department to monitor, evaluate and advocate for ECE, and a new National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education has been produced.

According to the Uganda EFA Report (2000), the responsibility for pre-schools was transferred from the Ministry of Culture and Social Services to the Ministry of Education and Sports in 1980, when the ECD period was recognised as extending up to age eight and the recommended age of entry to pre-primary school was set at three. In 2000, the number of registered pre-primary schools was 770 with an enrolment of 63,563 children, accounting for 2.9 percent of the population of three-to-five-year-olds, one of the lowest rates among the countries covered. ECD for the zero-to-three age group is expected to be undertaken by family and community, basically by mothers, since "childcare is one of the basic domestic responsibilities especially for women as mothers", the report says. Parents are also expected to contribute at the pre-primary school level concerning social aspects, learning experiences and the learning environment, school construction work, purchase of school materials and payment of their children's tuition fees.

Gambia

Until recently, ECD in Gambia was not a policy priority. The first pre-school enrolment survey was conducted on the occasion of the EFA 2000 Assessment, which showed an increase in the number of early childhood centres from 125 in 1995 to 265 in 1998 as a result of increasing participation of women in economic activities, a growing awareness of the value of an early start to education and intensive advocacy of ECD. Nevertheless, the gross enrolment rate (GER) of 17.7 percent of three-to-six-year-olds enrolled in pre-school education indicates a serious shortfall in provision.

Diverse interests, motives, orientations, qualifications, funding sources and coordination systems have led to wide disparities in the type, quality and location of ECEC facilities. In urban areas, centres are mostly private and fee paying, while in rural areas they are community-based and supported by NGOs (Jatta, 1999). Recognising the need to support and augment traditional childcare practices, the Department of Community Development has since 1979 assisted many rural communities to establish community-based Day-Care Centres (DCDs).

According to information from the delegate, the Department of Community Development signed a memorandum of agreement under which communities are required to form committees to run day-care centres on behalf of parents; to contribute cash and/or food supplies; to participate in self -help projects, e.g., building facilities for children; to provide personnel, e.g., facilitators, cooks and child minders; and to take decisions on matters affecting the centres.

The Department of State for Education (DOSE) has no direct involvement in establishing ECEC centres or equipping and staffing them. Nonetheless, realising the importance of the early years in the later development of the child, the government has committed itself to actively supporting and facilitating the growth of this important educational sector. Since 1988, it has sought to ensure that all establishments catering for young children observe acceptable standards. A regulatory mechanism is in place that sets standards for the establishment of facilities and for their financing and staffing. DOSE is also responsible for expanding training opportunities for pre-school facilitators, coordinating donor activities and evaluating the impact of the services on child development.

In collaboration with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the government has launched initiatives aimed at increasing the effectiveness of privately run nursery schools, including a diagnostic evaluation of pre-schools in 1992 and a National Seminar on ECCD in 1993 based on funding assessments. Seeking to encourage rights-based programming strategies, UNICEF has formulated an integrated approach called Early Child Care for Survival Growth and Development (ECC-SGD), which stresses a holistic view of the child and has implications for greater cross-sectorial collaboration

in identifying children's needs and developing sustainable strategies for addressing their problems. Key actors in the different sectors of social development are expected to think out the implications of this approach together. Accordingly, a multi-sectorial committee was formed, the Task Force Committee on ECC-SGD, which coordinates, implements and monitors programmes related to child development, convening representatives from bodies such as the Department of Community Development, UNICEF, DOSE, CCF, Gambia College, Association of Early Childhood Educators and other government sectors.

The main difficulties encountered by the coordinating mechanism have been logistical, such as convening meetings and ensuring attendance, including transportation; and motivational, particularly in keeping the committee working.

Kenya

Among the African countries, Kenya seems to enjoy the longest tradition of ECEC policy development (Kipkorir, 1993; Kipkorir and Njenga, 1997). Since gaining independence, Kenya has expanded its pre-school education programme throughout the country in response to socio-economic changes and also to the late President Jomo Kenyatta's call for "Harambee", meaning self-help in nation-building. In essence, Harambee means that when a community defines a need, it creates a programme to address it. In ECEC this approach resulted in the creation of pre-schools in many villages because parents wanted them. They found a location for the centre and chose a woman to care for three-to-six-year-olds. As a result, ECEC in Kenya serves the entire cross-section of social, economic, cultural and geographical groups.

In 1966 the Ministry of Culture and Social Services became responsible for the coordination, training and supervision of pre-school education. It registered and supervised centres and offered training courses for nursery school teachers. Before the 1970s, pre-schools had no organised curriculum or support materials, and many of the teachers were untrained. Many "borrowed" formal teaching methods from those used in the primary schools with older children. To improve this situation, the Kenyan government, with the assistance of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, created the Pre-school Education Project in 1971, based at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE). The project aimed to improve the quality of pre-school education through the development of a viable training system and the formulation of curricula and other support materials for use by trainers, teachers and children.

The transfer of responsibility for ECEC policy and programmes to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOE) in 1980, coupled with a move to decentralise the government in 1983, contributed greatly to further developments in the field. District and local governments have taken on the main responsibility for ongoing support of pre-school education, while the MOE is involved in setting policy guidelines for early childhood programmes, registering pre-schools, coordinating government grants and funds from external donors, and providing early childhood personnel at all levels.

A National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) was established in 1984 at KIE to coordinate and continue the development of training programmes, and to provide a national support system for early childhood education. To facilitate decentralisation, District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECEs) were set up in 1985, offering coordination and training for ECEC programmes, community mobilisation and development of localised ECEC curricula.

Training has remained one of the most important functions of the NACECE/DICECE programme. Trainers take a nine-month introductory course that includes residential and field components. Teacher training involves a two-year in-service course which has six residential sessions (during school holidays) alternating with field sessions during term time.

Some features of Kenya's ECEC system stand out. One is its emphasis on reviving, respecting, fostering and developing the country's rich and varied cultures.

Kenya is made up of many ethnic groups with both similar and highly different cultures, traditions, social norms, values and beliefs. Curriculum development has been designed both to reflect the norms and values of Kenya as a nation as well as to focus on the special needs of children from different cultural settings. Centralised "Guidelines for Pre-school Education" were published in 1984 under the Pre-school Education project calling for a participatory approach involving trainers, parents and local communities as a means of guaranteeing local cultural diversity.

Another feature is its policy of encouraging partnerships at all levels. Parents and local communities are the most important partners, starting and managing more than 75 percent of the ECEC in the country. They provide land and funds for the construction and maintenance of the physical facilities, as well as furniture, materials and labour, and they pay the teachers' salaries. Local authorities complement the work of the community, picking up the costs (equipment, furnishings and teachers' salaries) of running pre-schools in towns. Voluntary organisations, religious bodies and companies have also been deeply involved. Decentralisation is another unique feature of the programme, allowing communities to develop appropriate, affordable and relevant services without external pressure or competition, and at their own pace.

However, some shortcomings exist. According to Kenya's EFA Assessment Report (2000), although the government aimed at raising the GER in ECCD from 35 percent of three-to-five-year- olds in 1990 to 50 percent by 2000, the GER has remained at an average of 34 percent. Children under three are not covered by ECEC policy, whether home-based or centre-based. Despite a need to develop ECEC programmes as well as to establish suitable activities for these age groups, the government's main objective is to strengthen childcare in the family.

Although 80 percent of ECEC centres are public, they are funded and managed by local parents and communities, and most of the teachers are employed by the parents with low salaries and irregular pay. Professionalisation requires that a reasonable and regular salary be provided for the teachers, especially after they have been trained and certified.

Significant gaps remain between the pre-school and primary levels, making the transition from one institution to another difficult. A number of dimensions such as curriculum, teacher attitudes and practices and level of formality are involved. The major features of the pre-schools are free movement, a friendly teacher approach and a positive attitude, as well as flexibility in the subjects and lower teacher-student ratios, while primary school teachers are more authoritative, following a subject-oriented teaching approach, with a prescribed, formal curriculum that is orientated towards examinations. Intensive, conscious efforts are needed at both levels to help bridge these gaps (Evans, 1997b).

Moreover, low government funding of ECD programmes; diverse ECD curricula offered by other stakeholders such as Montessori and Madrassa; and inadequate training and orientation of other categories of caregivers, especially parents and field officers, are also barriers to further development mentioned by the delegate.

Finally, disadvantaged children such as the handicapped, street children, those from slums, nomadic children, refugees and those of displaced families do not have their needs assessed. However, the same source said that expanding access, particularly for children from disadvantaged households and marginalised communities, is an alternative approach to ECD being piloted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health focusing on community education.

II ECEC systems: historical and cultural background

An understanding of the historical and cultural background of ECEC services is important for the analysis of their present position and for the implementation of a policy favouring integration.

The history of early childhood care and education around the world, analysed from the point of view of an integrated approach, has seen two phenomena to be discussed here. One relates to the parallel development of different types of institutions for young children. The other, less evident, relates to the political, cultural and economic events that marked world history during particular periods and heavily influenced the adoption of more or less integrated approaches to early childhood education and care. These events include the Cold War, the cultural revolution of the 1960s and '70s, and globalisation.

The appearance of different care and education services

Background Reports and other information gathered about developed countries show that at least two kinds of service for the young child appeared at more or less the same time with a view to meeting different needs and aspirations.

One caters for households that demand extra-family childcare for various reasons, mostly lack of resources or the need to work outside the home, associated with poverty and/or single-parent homes. Crèches, day nurseries, family day-care centres and other facilities were created, along with other social programmes such as those concerned with maternal assistance, abandoned children, adoption, medical assistance for poor mothers, and improved housing. The providers were wealthy women, social and private institutions, women's organisations or religious groups. Because the 19th century was a period of great interest in maternity and had high ideals of family conduct, these providers were also concerned with promoting the ideology of the family. Teaching poor women to be good housewives and to take good care of their children were among their main emphases (Haddad, 1989).

The other kind of service was geared towards implementing well-conceived educational projects inspired by the philosophies of their respective founders, usually based on models of education for the young child that included concepts of childhood and education and stipulated how care and educational settings should be organised. This group includes, among others, projects inspired by Oberlin (*salles d'asile*), Robert Owen (*infant school*), Froebel (*kindergarten*) and Montessori (*casas del bambini*).

These ECEC projects, which enjoyed varying degrees of success around the world, were committed to spreading the philosophies of their founders. Some also had associated teacher-training centres. Typically, the countries that adopted them participated in information networks that included exchange of experiences, conferences and exchange programmes, and shared production and dissemination of teaching materials and bulletins. The Froebelian kindergarten programme probably spread most rapidly throughout the world, reaching northern, western and eastern Europe, North and South America and Asia during the period 1860 to 1900. The Froebel Kindergarten Society and teacher training colleges were also present in many places.

Some pioneering kindergartens were established in Brazil in the 1870s as a result of American influence. They were located in the best neighbourhoods, catered to an upper-class clientele, and functioned for a few hours a day (Campos, 1992). In China, Japanese institutions profoundly influenced the first kindergartens, including teaching materials and methods. In addition, Japanese teachers were employed in the few training schools for kindergarten teachers established in the first decade of the 20th century (Zhengao, 1993).

The first nursery school in Kenya was established for European children in Nairobi in 1942, when the country was under British administration (1920-63). The first nursery school for African children was built in 1948. These services developed along racial lines (African, Asian and Caucasian) prevailing in the country during the colonial period.

Bruce (1987) refers to the ideas defended by pioneers such as Froebel, Steiner and Montessori as the "early childhood tradition", since they lay the foundation of what is considered sound early childhood theory and practice. She also reminds us that each

philosophy was concerned with respect for individual needs, the concept of community, the reduction of poverty, and world citizenship. Most of these educational projects encompassed care along with education, which helps explain the observations of researchers regarding the lack of clear distinctions between "care-focused" and "education-focused" institutions for young children. Through an analysis of international exhibitions held between 1850 and 1920, Kuhlmann (1990, 1996) found that crèches, *salles d'asile*, kindergartens and infant and nursery schools were institutions linked variously to education, health or welfare, and were held up as symbols of progress and modernity.

Caldwell (1989), a great defender of the integration of care and education, argues that an integrated view of ECEC institutions lay at the heart of the early traditions. She states that Montessori's original project in Rome, the plans of Robert Owen in Scotland and the ideas of the MacMillan sisters are all perfect examples of the integration of educational and social welfare models and objectives.

In sum, ample evidence shows that the care and educational functions of these projects were intertwined. Shortly before World War I, under the guidance of Margaret and Rachel McMillan, nursery schools were established in the slum districts of London to help improve the physical and mental condition of children living there. The aim of these institutions was to make up for possible neglect of the children at home and to provide early schooling and care (Compton's Encyclopaedia Online, 1998). Again, according to the UK Background Report, Owen recognised from the beginning the need to support families, to enable parents to focus on their work knowing their children were receiving high quality care and education (Bertran and Pascal, 2000, p. 7).

The first kindergarten created by Froebel in 1940, in Blankenburg, catered for children aged one to seven from different socio-economic backgrounds, and was open daily from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm (Liebschner, 1991). Moreover, the Kindergarten Movement after Froebel's death did not conceive these institutions as being solely for the middle and upper classes. In Sweden, for example, in the first quarter of last century, the popular kindergartens (*folkbarnträdgårdar*) focused on children from less favoured families and were aimed at teaching "the children of the poor the importance of saving, contentment, and good taste" (Johansson, 1983).

Caldwell (1989) argues that the current division of ECEC services into childcare and early childhood education has legitimate historical origins. Conflicting ideologies of the Cold War left clearly distinguishable marks on the services that evolved. Thus, early childhood education referred to educational services designed for "normal" children from intact, middle-class families, provided in a school or centre for a few hours a day and considered non-essential by society at large. Childcare, for its part, referred to services provided under a social welfare programme, established to serve children from lower-class families with some type of social pathology (homes broken by death or divorce, or managed by mothers who were mentally or physically ill, incompetent or simply unavailable because they worked outside the home). Seen as a service for mothers rather than children, such care was often called "custodial", and the activities provided for the children were orientated towards good behaviour and health.

A definition of day care in the 1960 edition of the Child Welfare League of America's Standards for Day Care Services illustrates this schism (Caldwell, 1989, p. 70-1):

> *"Day-care service has to be differentiated from nursery school or kindergarten, and from extended school services and other programs for school-age children offered as part of elementary school systems. These have education of young children as their main purpose. The primary purpose of a day-care service is the care and protection of children. This purpose, the reasons for which a child and family may need it, and the responsibility shared with parents distinguish a day-care service from educational programs."*

The Cold War and the split between care and education

The period that followed World War II saw the first reorientation on a world scale of programmes for young children, interrupting progress that up to that point had been spontaneous. New conceptions, goals and forms were gradually introduced that differentiated and delimited the functions of the two blocks of services. The split between childcare and early childhood education services was accentuated during this period, and legitimised in capitalist-oriented countries as a movement away from the principles underlying the "collective care" of communist countries.

Although communist societies began providing full-time services for young children as part of the revolutionary programme, it was only from the 1950s that crèches and kindergartens had expanded sufficiently to be seen as a threat to the capitalist political system.

In China, revolutionary cadres established services for young children as early as 1927, when the first revolutionary bases were established. By 1945, prior to liberation, a complex system of public child care had already been established, including a network of nursery schools, public crèches and kindergartens, which operated in various ways, such as boarding programmes, day nurseries run by the children's mothers through labour exchange schemes, breast-feeding rooms and pre-school classes attached to primary schools (Zhengao, 1993). However, a large-scale network of ECEC services did not come about until the Women's Federation and the trade unions advocated the establishment of day-care centres for its workers.

In 1956, seven years after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the policy guidelines for ECEC stated:

> *"With the progressive development of economic and cultural construction of the country, there will be more and more women joining productive and social work. In order to help working mothers take care of and educate their children, nurseries and kindergartens should be developed accordingly. In cities they should be sponsored and run by factories and mines, enterprises, institutions, social organizations and the communities. In the countryside, agricultural production cooperatives should be encouraged to run their nurseries and kindergartens (mainly seasonal ones for the time being). The public health and educational departments should strive to run well a small number of kindergartens, serving as demonstration models" (Zhengao, 1993, p. 89).*

As a consequence, services increased 40-fold in a single year. From 1957 to 1958 the number of services grew from 16,420 to 695,297, with enrolment jumping from 1.1 to 29.5 million children.

According to Lee (1992), child care for China's infants and children was important not only because it reduced the burden of work in the home and child-care responsibilities of female workers and staff, but also because it permitted them to participate in political, cultural and technical studies related to the building of the new China. In this sense, not only did this period see an overnight multiplication of ECEC facilities, but it also produced great changes in traditional family life and the family unit. "Families no longer ate together and children were no longer of highest priority" (p. 360). To reach China's new productivity goals, women left their homes to join or organise neighbourhood production teams, service stations and neighbourhood dining halls.

In Vietnam, a new era began with the 1945 Revolution, which put an end to the French colonial regime, bringing with it far-reaching changes in family life, the status of women, childcare and children's education. The Constitution of 1946, reinforced by that of 1988, gave women the same rights as men in political, economic, cultural and social matters and in family life. The Vietnam Women's Union, founded in 1946, did a great deal to enhance the political and social status of women. Beyond women's

equality and liberation, Vietnamese national policy supporting the development of crèches and nursery schools was clearly built on the principle of joint responsibility shared by family, state and society (Trong et al., 1993, p. 587).

According to the Czech Republic's Country Note, "equalisation of gender roles, and making it possible for mothers to work outside of home, was also part of the official ideology of the state. In former Czechoslovakia, communist party goals for the pre-school system were also linked to the interests of ideologically influencing new generations. In particular, the ideology of early collective education was related to an official distrust of the family, which, as a private institution, was difficult for the state to control and direct" (p. 11).

In contrast, and in opposition to the principles of collective early childhood education associated with women's liberation for the work force, the West favoured mechanisms underlining the importance of the family and the ideals of maternity as the only way to guarantee the child's mental and psychological health. The "ideology of the family", a longstanding view that the education and upbringing of young children is a private affair and not a public responsibility, was bolstered by scientific evidence. Studies found that maternal separation and the institutionalisation of the young child caused profound harm to early development. The United States and Britain were in the forefront of this campaign. Besides refusing to adopt measures to support families with children under pre-school age, these countries also influenced the direction of early childhood policies in the Third World. For example, the US War on Poverty of the 1960s, which included attention to deprived and disadvantaged children, and the development of compensatory education programmes, had a tremendous impact on Brazilian educational policies. As a result, pre-school education began to be fostered as a means of preventing later failure (Campos, 1992).

The clearest symptom of the ideological divide emerges when family and state are at odds over responsibility for the care and education of younger children. When ECEC is regarded as the sole domain of the family or the mother, public responsibility is minimal or limited. Two sharply different rationales have arisen as a result. Under the first, society's role is considered limited to intervention for exceptional cases, such as for children who are endangered by a "lack" of family care. Under the second, formal education is considered the only legitimate use for state resources.

These rationales led to a split system of ECEC, which became divided into "care-focused" and "education-focused" blocks of services, with separate and disconnected systems of clientele admission, administrative responsibilities, functioning, types of setting, programmes, funding, staffing and training.

Table 1. Childcare vs. pre-school education: A split ECEC system

Childcare	Pre-school education
Care-focused	Education-focused
Families in need	Children
Welfare or health	Education
Full-time/all year	Part-time/term basis
Centre/home	Centre/School
Private funding	State funding
Lay workers (child minders, childcare assistants)	Trained professionals (pre-school teachers)
Poor conditions (low pay, long hours, little training)	Better conditions
Wider age range (0-6,7 years)	Pre-primary 4,5-6 years
Low coverage	Higher coverage

The "childcare block" is more oriented to children and families in need, is generally linked to welfare or health sectors, and operates mainly on a full time basis,

all year round, in a centre or home. The "pre-school education block" is more oriented to enhancing children's skills and knowledge, is generally linked to education, operates mainly on a part-time and term basis, in a centre or school. Differences in terms of coverage, age range, state funding and professional training and working conditions are also evident. In the first block, the tendency is towards coverage of a wider age range, but with less possibility of access, weaker state participation in terms of public funds and poorer professional working conditions in terms of salary, working day and training. In the second block, the focus is on the child's age prior to starting primary school, access is easier and professionals have better working conditions.

The cultural revolution and the expansion of childcare

Separate streams for education and care shaped the ECEC systems of countries influenced by Western political ideology or dominated by capitalist powers until at least the mid-1960s. New tendencies emerged with the social movements of the 1960s and '70s – feminist, black power, student, hippie etc. – considered by some as a "cultural revolution" (Morin, 1986). These tendencies were the second milestone affecting the course of ECEC systems, bringing about new conceptions and forms of extra-family care.

While the ideologies of the Cold War provoked a movement away from the integration of care and education, the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s and '70s had an opposite effect on the ECEC system. The social movements of the period, by showing indignation over social inequality, prejudice, imperialism, the Vietnam War, the consolidation of culture and science as a means of domination, social repression and violence against women, heralded a new order of power and cultural relationships. In many countries the period is marked by greater state investment in childcare, as well as by a revision of the psychological, sociological, economic and political meanings of these services. The French experience of *crèches sauvages* (organised by the users themselves) that emerged after May 1968 is a good example. Part of the anti-authoritarian and collective practices of radical, revolutionary groups, the *crèches sauvages* helped transform practices, beliefs and dogmas related to childhood. They introduced an original conception of the child as a potentiality that adults find difficult to fully comprehend because of their presumptive prior knowledge (Mozère and Aubert, 1981, p. 22).

The feminist movement that spread throughout the world at this time played a special role in the revision of the meaning of childcare by associating it with issues such as maternity, paternity and changed domestic roles. The concept of childcare was extended to include a space for socialisation, a real possibility for women to share in the care of their children. Regardless of their economic background and their need to work outside the home, the feminists placed the focus on the rights of all women, challenging the view that childcare services should be restricted to disadvantaged families or poor working mothers.

In Brazil the 1970s saw the birth of various social movements resulting from the political opening that followed the long period of dictatorship ushered in by the 1964 military coup. The Movement of Fight for Crèches (MFC) officially established in 1979 was among several forces that demanded state participation in solving social problems. The MFC opposed the custodial, charitable tradition, and, with its new perspective on rights, changed the conception of the crèche. For the first time in the country's history, the crèche was designated as an educational programme, a family right, a state duty and a free public service. In Sao Paulo, where the movement began, the state's response was highly significant. It set up a programme to expand public crèches, and the Secretary of Social Welfare was made responsible for the construction of new buildings, admission of new workers and the maintenance and administration of services. From 1979 to 1990, the number of public crèches directly administered by the county increased from four to 273, boosting enrolments from 600 to 32,929 children. (Rosemberg et al., 1991).

The end of the 1960s also saw a reorientation of ECEC policies in the Scandinavian countries, characterised by a revision of the conception of extra-family

care and significant public investment in this area. The increasing number of women entering the workforce partially explains this reorientation, but pressure from feminist organisations struggling for gender equality was among the most important determining factors.

In fact, Sweden has been a pioneer in public policy for gender equality since 1968 when the government submitted a report to the United Nations about the situation of women, presenting a radical vision of gender roles and demanding the abolition of barriers separating men from women. Although other Nordic countries emulated this initiative, the Swedish government was the only one that went so far as to stipulate that men and women are equally responsible for the economic support, care and supervision of the child (Haas, 1993).

The political parties allied to the Social Democratic Party as well as the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions supported the expansion of the public ECEC system for all children, including those under the age of three, and as a condition of women's right to equality with men.

> *"Child care is of decisive importance for equality between man and woman. ... The foundations of equality are laid in working life. Good child care is a prerequisite for both men and women to be able to earn a living on equal terms" (Broberg, 1989, p. 1:29).*

An increase of nearly 300% in attendance in Sweden's full-time day-care centres from 1965 to 1970 gave testimony to the consolidation of a public system of ECEC linked to the welfare sector and fully integrated into the social policy of supporting families with young children (Sweden, 1985).

Two important aspects of this period warrant consideration. One is that the expansion of childcare services in the industrialised countries from the late 1960s stemmed in part from an endogenous and spontaneous social movement, in contrast to the communist countries where women's liberation and full-time crèches and kindergartens were considered an integral part of the revolutionary project. In sum, the feminist movement, at a time of considerable social mobilisation, opened up new extra-parental possibilities for the upbringing of the young child. The demand for crèches as a non-philanthropic, educational service seen as a right shared by children and their mothers and families gave this social mechanism new meaning and legitimacy. The new conceptual framework was the embryo of what is now called ECEC, the precursor to the modern model of out-of-home care with professional and educational components, capable of meeting both the child's needs for care and education as well as the social, occupational and family needs of women.

The second aspect is that it was the social sector far more than the educational sector that embraced this movement at policy implementation level. This observation is important because an integrated approach requires an appropriate locus to support its development. The social sector (welfare, social affairs, etc) has served this purpose by addressing the crucial questions of modern life, questions to which the educational sector has not always been able or willing to answer. With varying degrees of success, the social sector has sought solutions to the innumerable demands associated with childcare programmes, such as attention to the under-threes, full-time provision and family involvement. Paradoxically, the social sector has also nourished an embryonic broader conception of education by providing settings for children that differ from formal school in terms of physical space, child-adult ratio, human atmosphere and activities.

Changes in the view of the family, childhood and services for small children

Changes in the conceptions of families and childhood have brought new elements to the meaning of services for young children, leading to new terminologies, policies and programmes. In industrialised countries, the progressive increase in the number of

women with young children participating in the workforce may be one of the most profound changes of the last few decades. This phenomenon emerged alongside other changes in the family structure, such as an abrupt erosion of extended families, a sharp decline in birth rates and the rise of single-parent families. As a result of these changes, socialisation settings within the household diminished sharply, and a corresponding need developed for extra-parental care in alternative settings concerned with the socialisation and education of the young child.

The transformation of the family also brought about changes in the nature of relationships. The traditional family comprising father, mother and children began to give way to a variety of forms -- couples without children, single parents with children, single parents with children that live with divorced or widowed parents, and so on. As women began participating intensely and increasingly effectively in the economic, political and social spheres, and the mother's role in different family groups began to grow significantly, the need arose for a review of women's traditional tasks in the domestic arena, as well as a redefinition of men's role in reproduction and child-rearing.

From a macro-social perspective, institutions for childcare and education have been identified as the most effective means of reconciling social, occupational and family responsibilities, helping to promote equal opportunity between men and women and supporting the role of parents in the family. It was in this context that the socialising function of ECEC institutions began entering political and scientific debate. Underlying this tendency was the idea that the care and socialisation of the young child are tasks to be shared between family and state.

The socialising function therefore saw a general historical shift from the domestic arena towards the larger social sphere. Childcare was no longer attributed exclusively to the family, but began to be considered an important social means for promoting human development, one that was to be guaranteed by the public authorities. The creation of the European Commission Network on Childcare in 1986 is an example of this historical change, and reflects the great importance given to childcare in all that relates to work, gender equality and the family responsibilities of men and women. The conception of childcare adopted by the Network is broad and "covers the many and varied measures that are needed to enable employment and the upbringing of children to be combined in a way that promotes equality between women and men, the best use of parents' skills and abilities and the well-being and development of children" (EC Childcare Network, 1992, p.6).

A qualitative jump towards integration was sealed by the recognition of the multiple functions of ECEC. Promoting the child's development in all aspects -- physical, affective, moral, intellectual and spiritual; fostering children's well-being by providing a safe, pleasant, joyful and stimulating atmosphere as well as creating opportunities for relationships with other children and adults; enabling parents to combine professional and family activities; promoting equality between men and women; optimising people's ability to fulfil their parental roles. All of these functions are as important as learning.

Thanks to new developments in the field, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and research on the sociology of childhood, the new view of childhood as an important phase of life in its own right is gaining ground. Children are valued as individuals, groups and communities, and as having their own culture, rights and voice, entitled to take part in the choice and planning of activities or to participate, according to their level of maturity, in the evaluation of the institutions they attend.

With the new view of childhood, ECEC institutions are also places where children can live in the "here and now", a move away from the traditional teaching and learning approach of ECEC and school. The focus has shifted from the concerns of working mothers to the best interests of children within a broader context.

Together, the new conceptions of the family, childhood and services for young children cast doubt not only on the existence of parallel systems but also on the different terminologies they use. The adoption of a term such as Early Childhood Education and Care, as well as the trend in many countries towards unifying these

services under a single administration, herald a new era in the history of services for young children.

Globalisation and the return to compensatory programmes

World events during the late 1980s and early '90s sparked rapid political and economic changes that have had a great impact on policies concerning the care and education for children.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ushered in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, provoking general disarray in the communist world. By 1991 the Soviet Union had broken up, bringing about a decline of the socialist model which had placed considerable emphasis on providing a solid system of institutionalised childcare. Even the communist governments that survived, such as China and Vietnam, have adopted open market economies, leading to a reorientation of their services for young children.

The decline of communism spurred globalisation and a shift towards open market economies, forcefully imposing neo-liberal rules on developing countries, manifested in widespread privatisation of public enterprises, an emphasis on consumption, cuts in spending on education, health and housing, and a weakening of state-guaranteed labour rights. Global consequences of the new order have included an unprecedented concentration of wealth and an increase in unemployment and social exclusion, mainly because of the weakening or demise of the welfare state. The social impact of globalisation has been more severe in Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe with rising poverty, economic and social inequality, social exclusion, "employment" in the informal sector and a reduced ability of low-income populations to pay for services. As an example, half of Brazil's economically active population was employed in the informal sector in 2000.

In the attempt to counter these impacts, governments and international organisations have begun to support "compensatory" programmes including those for the care, education and development of small children (Myers, 2000). Due to its tremendous impact on ECEC systems, globalisation will be considered here as the third great world event affecting ECEC policies. While the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s and '70s produced a momentum toward integrating care and education, the forces of globalisation have had the opposite effect of retarding the move towards unified services, by tending to minimise state participation. Cuts in social expenditures have overturned many conquests in the welfare arena including women's rights. Globalisation has also brought about a tendency to ignore internal conflicts, social demands and specific country histories while encouraging uniform values and behaviour and shared economic and cultural patterns.

The current status of ECEC policy in most countries reflects the transition to a new order, under which radical societal changes, in particular in attitudes towards the family and childhood, have forced a review of the structure and functions of services for small children with the aim of unifying their social and educational targets. Forces for and against integration coexist. Countries strongly influenced by social-democratic ideologies, such as the Nordic countries, led the move towards convergence, while those with dominant liberal or market-economy ideologies have shown resistance to viewing childhood-related matters as a public social issue in which the state has an important role to play. Developing countries, striving to comply with the constraints of structural adjustment programmes and reeling under the burden of poverty, have tended to abdicate control over ECEC policies and follow the guidelines imposed by international organisations.

III The paradigm shift towards integrated or coordinated ECEC systems

This chapter argues for a broad theoretical framework with sound conceptual definitions to support an integrated or coordinated approach to ECEC systems and their implementation.

The need for a sound definition of ECEC

The term "early childhood education and care" (ECEC), used in the OECD Thematic Review, marked a giant step in the history of the field. The term reflects a broad, holistic, integrated and coherent approach. Its use of the conjunction "and" presumes new attitudes and understandings, notably the acknowledgement that all types of services that provide education and care to children under school age, whether coordinated or not, belong to the same field. In sum, there is no point in treating them separately. Another implication of the term is a shared desire to identify, comprehend and overcome the barriers that have hitherto obstructed unified action in the field of early childhood -- in its philosophy, objectives, management and regulation.

As mentioned earlier, related terms such as ECCD, ECD and ECC-SGD have been used to refer to this field, especially in literature related to developing countries. The variety of terms is a potential problem because parallel actions can result, creating barriers to joint efforts to strengthen the field. Therefore, a solid definition of ECEC which adequately reflects, acknowledges and reinforces accumulated knowledge in the field is of paramount importance.

The definition of ECEC contained in the OECD's *Starting Strong* was built on the above premises and is equally suitable for both developed and developing countries. It includes all arrangements for the care and education of children from birth to compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding or operating hours. It considers related concerns such as family support, gender equality, health, lifelong learning, employment and social integration policies, addressing the field's multiple dimensions. It addresses issues concerning the child's transition from home to ECEC, compulsory school and out-of-school provision. It advocates the close association of care and education with a view to eradicating the historical split between "child care" and "early childhood education". Above all, it espouses convergent actions across the board – in policy, programmes and research.

Thus the term ECEC suggests a shift in approach and objectives from *selective and exclusive* to *universal and inclusive*. ECEC is not the prerogative of a specific subset of children or families, but the right of all children and families. The term also bestows legitimacy on the system by embracing the qualities of integration, unity, continuity, comprehensiveness and coherence, in contrast to that which was disintegrated, divided, discontinuous, fragmented and inconsistent.

The need for broader theoretical frameworks

The paradigm shift from a *selective and exclusive* approach to ECEC to one that is *universal and inclusive* has also resulted in the expansion of the concept, with some important implications: the correlated areas have greater visibility, underscoring the multidimensional nature of the field; the boundaries between disciplines are obscured; and the interdependence of the disciplines, rather than simple cause-and-effect relationships, will henceforth inform decisions and actions. Thus, systemic approaches are needed to address the multiplicity of factors (cultural, historical, political, sociological, psychological, pedagogical and physical) on a common grounding. Some theoretical frameworks have supported this perspective, such as Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1972, 1974, 1979) and Moncrieff Cochran's framework linking macro-level causes and mediating influences with policy and programme outcomes (1993).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development states that a social phenomenon should be analysed with reference to the ecological context in which it occurs. Thus, the integration of care and education should be seen as the result of ongoing interaction involving direct and indirect forces affecting children in their most meaningful environments, in this case ECEC and family settings. One of Bronfenbrenner's major contributions to the field is his multi-level analysis of context in terms of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems.

According to Brofenbrenner, the analysis of ECEC as a context of human development must consider not only the child's micro-system (activities, relationships and roles present in the immediate setting of a child's interaction), but also other relevant variables, such as the meso-system (the relationship between the ECEC settings and the family and interconnections among the several settings through which a child passes during his/her childhood), and the exo-system (legislation, policies and forces that regulate and structure the ECEC system, as well as the parents' professional world and the social networks of both parents and children). Finally, the macro-system -- the political, economic and cultural forces that guide public ECEC policies – plays a part. These forces include cultural and societal belief systems related to responsibility for the care and education of young children and acceptance of ECEC programmes; values and attitudes regarding young mothers' participation in the labour market; the division of duties between the sexes within the family; legislation related to parental leave; generally accepted educational goals for different age groups, and the age at which compulsory schooling begins.

The ecological perspective on care and education requires interaction with each of the systemic levels, recognising the range of possible different meanings depending on the level of reference. For example, the concept of care at the level of the micro-system may encompass the set of activities associated with the protection and support every child needs in everyday life -- feeding, washing, changing, protecting and consoling -- and which occur through direct social relationships. But since the actions involved in caring are integrated with the actions of educating, many scholars insist that the relationship between care and education is indissoluble. At the "exo" level, however, care is an element of ECEC policy closely linked to the parents' world of work or study, the conquest of gender equality and the overall need to support and empower families in their parental roles. Educational systems have rarely paid attention to these dimensions, while the ecological perspective reveals that care and education are inextricably linked.

At the macro level, the integrated approach becomes even more complex, given the pervasive influence of social, cultural, economic and political forces generating beliefs and assumptions that dictate "the way things should be done" (Garbarino, 1982). Therefore, this level warrants greater attention.

Cochran (1993), in *The International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs*, presents a brilliant examination of the macro-system's impact on ECEC policies and programmes as a combination of causal factors and mediating influences. A particular combination of demographic, economic, cultural and social factors – so-called "causal factors" such as urbanisation and industrialisation, changes in family structures, a declining birth rate, poverty and a shrinking workforce – create a demand for the development of ECEC policies and programmes. However, a variety of outcomes can result in terms of policies and programmes, even when the causal factors are similar. The dissimilarities in outcomes are the result of different "mediating influences", the most important of which Cochran listed as socio-cultural values, beliefs and norms traditionally held by the family and religion; social-political and economic ideologies; state welfare models; and national wealth. Intervening between the causal factors and the policy and programme outcomes, the mediating influences "operate as filters, screening out policy and program alternatives that are incompatible with them" (p. 629).

Cochran analysed selected dimensions of policies and programmes in 29 countries, forming a *continuum* ranging from one extreme to the other (see Figure 2). His aim was to create a national profile of each country by locating it at a particular point on each of these dimensions, then connecting the points. The resulting profile

offers a kind of "bird's-eye view" of a more or less integrated system of ECEC policies and programmes operating in a given country (p. 645).

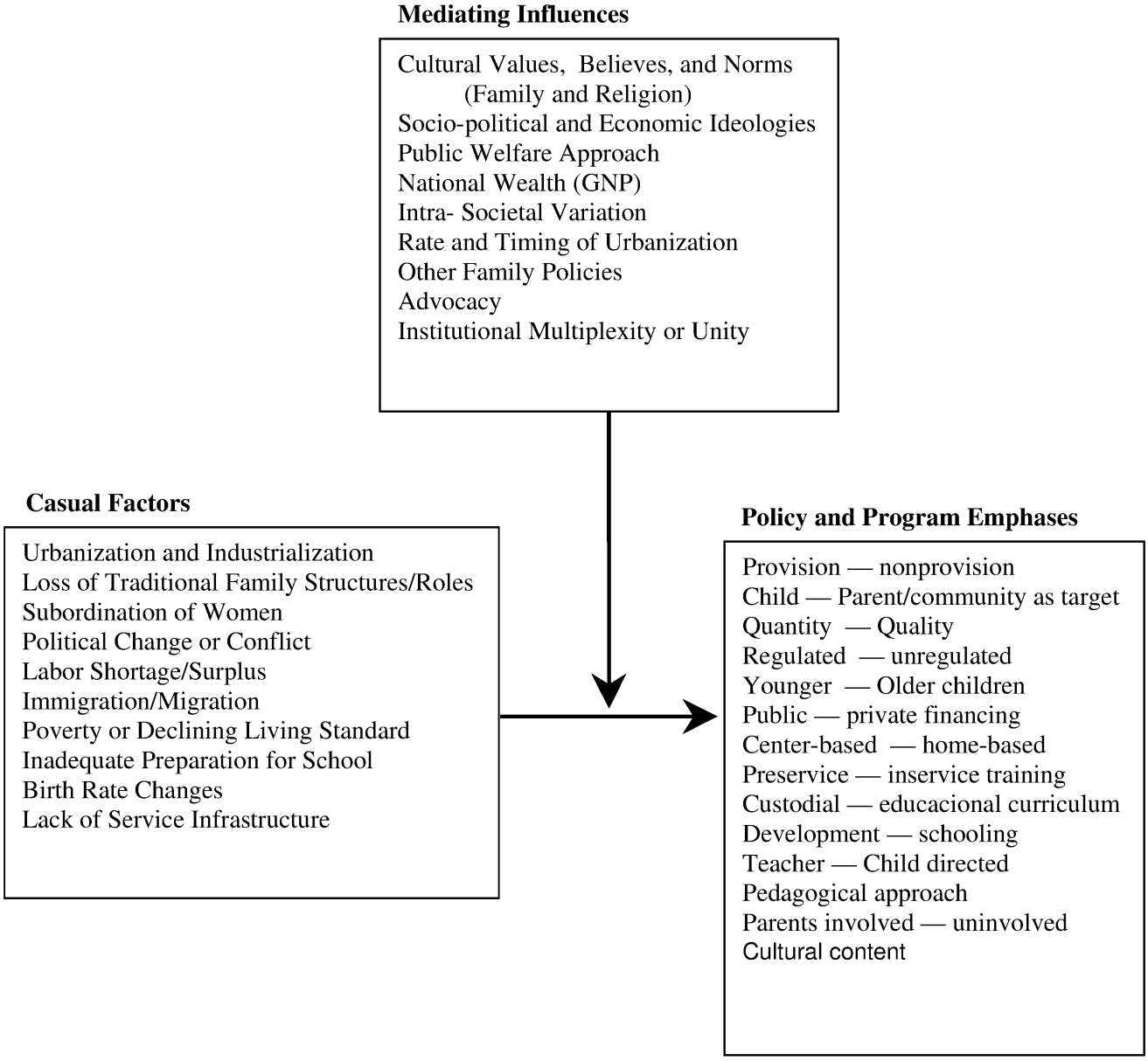
To understand the cultural imperatives underlying the development of policies and changes in programmes, Cochran examined how individual societies resolve value tensions that are to some degree universal, that is, that transcend particular cultures. Two of the four universal tensions he explored have been selected here as key elements of the design of an integrated system of early childhood education and care: *the importance of the family versus the state*, and *child development versus preparation for schooling*.

Cochran describes the opposition of family and state as a "tension between cultural ideology and political ideology", given that ECEC issues lie at the intersection of family privacy and public affairs (p. 646). The United States and Britain (until recently) are excellent examples of societies that have strongly favoured the family against the state, inhibiting the development of any kind of public ECEC policy. Childcare-related tasks have been seen as the responsibility of the individual, or, to be more specific, the mother. At the opposite extreme are countries that have or have had a collective orientation, such as China, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. These countries invested in public ECEC programs with the aim of socialising each new generation, considered to be the domain of the state, not the family. Scandinavia's public ECEC systems fall somewhere between these two extremes, striking a balance between public and private domains. In the Nordic countries, the dominant ideology emphasises cooperation between the family and the wider society with regard to responsibility for the care, education and socialisation of the young child.

The second tension, *child development versus preparation for schooling*, pits a holistic view of childcare calling for the balanced development of all the child's capacities against the desire to prepare children for the cognitive and social challenges of primary school. Countries such as Britain, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have traditionally placed great emphasis on the schooling aspect of education, while the Nordic countries have put development ahead of schooling.

Although Cochran does not suggest a direct relationship between these two tensions, I believe that the emphasis on either development or schooling is closely determined by the way in which public policies on early childhood are defined in each society, especially with regard to responsibility for the socialisation of young children. If the responsibility falls on the family, or is left to market forces, the state's obligation is removed at this level. Consequently, the ECEC system is more likely to give priority to the teaching-learning aspect of education and accept early admission to primary schooling. If matters related to early childhood are seen as a social investment, for which the whole of society is committed to contributing, the ECEC system is more likely to cover a wider age range, and to focus on the overall development of the child, since it is explicitly conceived as an important context for child socialisation.

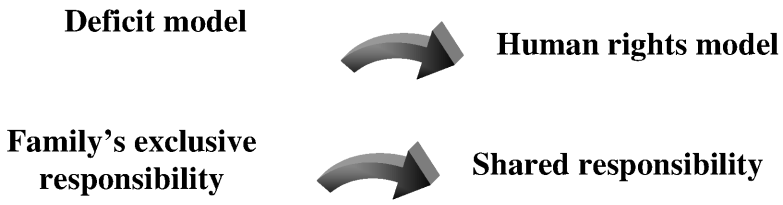
Figure 2
A Framework Linking Macro-level Causes and Mediating Influences with Policy and Programme Outcomes



An integrated approach to ECEC

I propose an approach to an integrated ECEC system based on a *third model*[2], built by removing the inconsistencies of previous models of childcare and early childhood education, recognising their positive qualities, and adding a new element – the legitimisation of out-of-home child socialisation – which lends a dynamic and evolutionary meaning to the whole.

[2] It is worth pointing out that here the word model does not mean a method to be followed, but a set of interrelated dynamic elements with its own logic of cause and effects and which responds to the complexity of the field.



This element stems from the paradigm shift in responsibility for ECEC from the family alone to society at large, from a deficit model to a model based on human rights, with important implications for the ECEC concept. The legitimisation of out-of-home child socialisation creates a bond between care and education, while changing their meanings. The lack of such a bond causes a rupture to the whole, resulting in parallel systems and discontinuity among services. This rupture does not necessarily imply an absence of various components, but rather a different set of meanings attached to ECEC services, traditionally with the emphasis alternating between "compensatory" care and schooling, obfuscating the broader concept of education.

As an overall result of the move towards *shared responsibility* and a *human rights model*, a significant portion of the upbringing process has become a public concern, falling within the realm of human rights, with enormous implications for the development of ECEC policies and programmes. First, the shift requires a redefinition of public (state) and private (family) relationships concerning children's affairs. Second, it entails recognition of the right of the child to be cared for and socialised in a wider social context than that of the family. Third, it calls for the recognition of the family's right to share the care and education of the child with society. Finally, it demands recognition that childcare is a professional task which, along with education in a broader sense, constitutes a new way of promoting the child's development.

The implication of this approach for ECEC policies and programmes will be discussed further in Section IV.

The need for a sound definition of integrated services

In the international literature, the term "integration" is used to describe the process of creating a network of services that work together, and is seen as a means of improving effectiveness while reducing public costs. In the field of ECEC, integration refers to a coordinated policy for children under which kindred sectors such as social welfare, school systems, the family, employment and health services work together in integrated networks (OECD, 1998 a and b, 2001).

Among advocators of Early Childhood Development, integration is seen as the single most effective way to help poor children, families, communities and nations break the inter-generational cycle of poverty. To address all of the child's basic needs, early childhood development programmes must provide food, protection and health care in addition to affection, intellectual stimulation, supportive human interaction and opportunities and activities that promote learning (Young, 1996). Integration is also seen as an attempt to create a synergy of people and resources drawn from the various sectors related to early childhood development such as health, nutrition, education and other services (Evans, 1997a, 2000).

I propose a view of integration that goes beyond the local, administrative and programme dimensions and brings to the fore changes of attitude regarding the role of the state in children's care, socialisation and education. Such changes generate a broader definition of ECEC institutions in terms of age span served, multiple functions and diversity, as well as the expansion of the concepts of care and education to include a contextual view of child development, as well as attention to the transitional periods (not only in relation to the school system, but also from birth to ECEC). These changes in perspective should lead to the formation of policy networks across ministries, departments and sectors that reflect the interconnectedness of early childhood services and family life.

IV Practical challenges of coordination and integration

Views about childhood, responsibility for the care and education of young children, the purposes of ECEC institutions and ECEC policy and programme implementation are correlated with the practical aspects such as government involvement, delivery, financing, starting age of compulsory schooling, coverage and age range, length of operation during the day and year, types of services, flexibility and availability for different groups, staffing (profile and conditions), pedagogical approach and parental involvement.

This section explores the main practical implications of the paradigm shift towards integration in terms of policy and programme implementation. Based on Cochran's framework, I have selected some basic features to discuss the major policy and programme challenges and pitfalls facing states and ministries responsible for ECEC as they go about integrating care and education within a wider perspective.

Policy implementation

State responsibility

Family's exclusive responsibility  **shared responsibility**

The paradigm shift from a family's exclusive responsibility to a shared responsibility presupposes a greater state role in providing for a wider age range and focusing on the whole development of the child. Whether responsibility falls more heavily on the family or the state, or is shared equally, depends on cultural values, beliefs and norms regarding the role of mothers and other family members in the socialisation of young children, as well as on socio-political and economic ideologies. Although ECEC is increasingly viewed as a shared responsibility, in many countries the state is still reluctant to intervene in the family domain, especially when it comes to investing in children under three and providing full-time coverage.

In socialist countries or former communist societies, including those of China, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Czech Republic, where ECEC was formerly a major responsibility of the state, the role of the state toward children under three has changed dramatically with the shift towards a market economy. Several Eastern European governments have modified policies affecting the earliest years, extending parental leaves and providing or increasing cash subsidies to families with young children, which may signal a disposition to return the primary responsibility for child-rearing to the family (Myers, 2000). In Africa, governments have paid little attention to this age group, which has traditionally been viewed as the responsibility of families and communities. In Brazil, since the transfer of childcare centres to the education sector, the Ministry of Education has paid no attention to the earlier years.

The challenge is to attain greater state participation including provision for all the years from birth to entry into formal schooling, both to fortify the ECEC field and to guarantee the integration of care and education.

Administrative auspices

Split model  **Unified model**

An integrated approach calls for a unified model with either coordinated or single administration, and coherence in terms of objectives, operations, regulation, funding, admission criteria, hours of functioning and so on, moving away from split models in which overlapping responsibilities have traditionally led to inconsistencies among services.

The traditional split between education on the one hand and welfare or health sectors on the other persists in most countries, both in the minority world (e.g., Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States) and in the majority world (e.g., Cambodia, China, Gambia and Senegal). This split does not enhance the ECEC system, nor does it help the child's transition from one service to another. Although the division is normally according to age range, younger children being in the welfare or health sector and older children in education, the historical split between the social and educational dimensions and organisation of ECEC accounts for the overlapping of ages found in some countries (e.g., Australia, Portugal, Belgium, the United States and, until recently, Brazil and Britain). Such differences in objectives have heavily influenced the organisation of ECEC services in each sector in terms of target, regulation, funding, delivery, admission criteria, hours of functioning, staffing and so on.

A strong trend among countries emerging from a split provision system is the expanding role of the education sector in supplying public services. In some cases younger children previously served by the welfare system are admitted to the school system. For example, since the end of the 1980s, Belgium's *écoles maternelles* have admitted children from age 2½, previously excluded from the education sector (EC Childcare Network, 1996). As a result, this age group receives unequal attention, since children of the same age may be served by different systems, with huge differences in terms of admission criteria, hours of functioning, volume of services offered, staff and so on.

In other cases, the heightened role of the educational sector has resulted in the transfer of services previously provided by the welfare sector to the educational system, sometimes without a careful review of whether the latter is capable of accommodating the diverse needs of families and children. This has been the case in Britain and Brazil, where such a transfer has been taking place since the mid-1990s.

The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) boast the oldest tradition of unified services for young children under the same administration, namely the welfare sector, although in Denmark and Finland six-year-olds are also entitled to attend a free, voluntary kindergarten or pre-school class at primary schools within the education system. Sweden has fully integrated the services under the auspices of education since 1996.

Target population

Selective  **Universal**

An integrated approach to ECEC, recognising the rights of all children and all families, seeks to provide universal services, rejecting a selective approach that focuses on families deemed "at risk" and/or children at the older end of the ECEC age range.

In most countries, recognition is growing of the role the government can play in expanding access toward full coverage for the age group prior to primary school. In countries such as Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Britain, all children have a legal right to attend free school-based classes from the ages of 2½, three or four years. Other countries, such as Portugal, have set targets of full enrolment for at least two years before the beginning of compulsory schooling.

However, the quest for full coverage with the aim of providing equal educational opportunity – focusing solely on children's rights – may entail a lack of attention to younger children and the need for full-time provision, undermining the ideal of universal provision. For example, in some cities in Brazil, the transfer of services to the educational sector has brought about a reduction in full-time coverage for four- to six-year-old children attending day-care centres, in the light of the universal education approach.

Full-time provision is available on a firm basis only where ECEC has the dual purpose of supporting children's development and promoting equal opportunities for men and women to participate in the work force and society. This is the case in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, as well as in the Czech Republic, Vietnam and China, although significant changes have been observed in the latter three where emphasis on the under threes has diminished with the shift towards a market economy.

By contrast, in many countries the traditional polarisation between services aimed at the older child and those targeting special groups of families and/or children considered to be "in need" still predominates. In Australia, "at risk" children and children of working mothers have higher priority access to childcare services. In Britain and the United States, access to public services has been limited to low-income families or children deemed "at risk", often on a part-time basis.

Compensatory programmes proposed for developing countries seem to accentuate this polarisation even further, since they have tended to provide different sets of activities for younger and older children. As part of the basic education strategy of the WCEFA and UNICEF's Early Childhood Care for Survival Growth and Development (ECC-SGD), two different priorities have emerged in developing countries: that of empowering early childhood education, aimed at three- to five/six-year-olds to guarantee full access to primary school, and that of promoting the child's survival, growth and development, by empowering early childhood development through family and community interventions.

The challenge for all countries is to strengthen the ECEC field by pursuing universal provision for all age groups and unified objectives in a context of social, economic and cultural diversity.

Age range

Narrow age range  **Wide age range**

The quest for an integrated ECEC policy must be concerned with the entire period during which the child is dependent on adult supervision. When access and quality vary for different groups of under-threes, the system is bound to remain incoherent and fragmented. A shortage of public services for this age group is often justified by the high cost of centre-based provision, which requires higher staff ratios and environmental arrangements than those needed for older children. In most countries, coverage is much greater for the older children, while transition periods are characterised by abrupt gaps.

State-subsidised provision for under-threes is most highly developed in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, which have a long tradition of public support for ECEC as part of broader gender equity and family policies. These countries, as well as Norway, also have the highest rates of social expenditure, with spending on family benefits amounting to about 3.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), well above the OECD average of about two percent (OECD, 2001). By contrast, as noted by Myers (2000), state support for families with young children (i.e., parental leave, sick leave, child allowances, housing subsidies) is rare in the majority world, where responsibility for the first years falls heavily, sometimes exclusively, on the family in general and women in particular. A split system of childcare for the under-threes and early childhood education for older children has persisted. This split can be traced to the Jomtien Declaration's stress on ECEC as an integral part of basic education, while at the same time international organisations (UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank) have emphasised family and community as the most important childcare environment for the early years.

The challenge is to achieve a unified view of ECEC and full cooperation among sectors concerned with employment, family support, health, welfare and education, as well as among the services, including school and out-of-school, so as to guarantee

coherence and continuity of provision throughout the period beginning before birth and continuing after entry into primary education.

Financing

Private  **Public**

Strong public commitment is needed to make ECEC accessible and affordable to all who want it, which presupposes effective state involvement in the financing of services. Among the OECD countries, available data suggest that public spending on ECEC in terms of percentage of GDP tends to be highest in the Nordic countries and lowest in Australia, Britain and the United States. Countries with comparatively low public expenditure such as Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States have increased spending significantly over the past five years. Nevertheless, public investment in ECEC is unequal, especially across age groups. A growing tendency to make access to ECEC a statutory right for the over-threes contrasts with limited public funding for under-threes, which gives parents few options for out-of-home care and education for the younger children.

Besides, in countries where care and education of young children is predominantly seen as the private concern of individual families, public responsibility is often taken up by private enterprise, and as a result the cost falls largely on the family. It is no coincidence that in Australia, Britain and the United States the public-private mix is greater, for-profit providers for children under five are more common and parents' fees cover most of the cost, although in the two latter countries these fees are heavily subsidised by the government. In the United States, where ECEC is under-funded relative to other publicly funded education programmes and social services, parents pay an average of 60 percent of the costs at a time in their lives when their earnings are likely to be the lowest (OECD, 2001).

In the absence of comprehensive data on national funding for ECEC in developing countries, some evidence shows that when funding for ECEC is linked to an educational budget it invariably must compete with other levels of education. Brazil's government gives priority to primary education, which gets three-fifths of the funds set aside for basic education, which is 25 percent of the total municipal budget. The remaining two-fifths of the education budget is shared out among ECEC, youth and adult education, plus other expenditures. In Kenya, the government allocates less than one percent of the education ministry's budget for pre-school education. Most of the costs of ECEC are borne by parents, whose budgets are increasingly squeezed by competing household expenses.

Since 1990, donors, UN agencies, foundations, international NGOs, banks and governments have stepped up investments in early childhood programmes in developing countries. The two main reasons for this increase are, first, the Jomtien Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child brought pressure to bear on signatories to adopt a broader definition of attention to children (Myers, 2000); and second, an accumulation of arguments regarding the long-term value of investing in ECCD programmes combined persuasively with the belief that low-cost models could produce the desired benefits (Evans, 2000). The World Bank is the top international donor, lending nearly one billion dollars in support of ECCD projects over the 1990s.

Others include the Inter-American Development Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, Bernard van Leer, the Aga Khan and the Soros Foundation. Myers (2000) says the increase in funding has brought new opportunities, since support is now available for medium and even large-scale projects, and it is no longer limited to centre-based pre-school education but has broadened to include parent education and a variety of non-formal approaches. Moreover, as noted by Evans (2000), since low-cost programmes are not necessarily the best, a systematic evaluation should be carried out to find the best balance between cost and quality -- mindful, however, that banks' investments are loans, not grants, which means they must be paid back.

Programme implementation

The integration of ECEC has implications for programme implementation, affecting, for example, the types of services provided, staffing, setting, pedagogical approach and parental involvement.

Types of service

Family-oriented or school-oriented  **Client-oriented approach**

The polarisation between catering for family needs and preparing children for school entry has dominated ECEC in the past. A natural result of an integrated approach committed to meeting a wide range of needs and interests of both children and families would be a more "client-oriented" approach, with correspondingly greater diversification in types of provision, opening hours, fees etc.

In some countries, despite widespread provision and high levels of coverage, the services available are uniform and limited in scope. This tends to be the case when services are based on the school system, since most of them are closed during the summer holidays and other periods when parents are working. Resistance within the educational system to recognising the need for ECEC services in support of working parents, hence to accommodating irregular or longer hours of attendance, may indicate a narrow concept of ECEC.

Home-care arrangements aimed at complementing services provided for children and families may be useful as a system expands towards universal provision. On the other hand, if they are seen as a substitute for centre-based services, this may indicate a return to a family-centred ideology.

If a variety of uncoordinated services are available, families may have difficulties choosing among them, and valuable resources may be wasted in the overlaps. On the other hand, a tendency towards uniformity may conflict with the need to tailor ECEC programmes to cultural, geographical, economic, familial and age differences (Myers, 2000).

Diversity that is planned and offered under a broader concept of ECEC may be appropriate to family needs. In many cases, decentralisation of government services helps facilitate adjustments to local needs and circumstances. Some Nordic countries, for example, have a strong tradition of self-government based on the principle that citizens' needs are best determined and met locally.

The challenge is to develop a system with unified objectives that offers a diversity of services. When parents have a wider range of choice and programmes are flexible, services are more effective. A more universal approach that offers a choice among high quality and flexible services – full-time or part-time, centre-based or family-based, play groups or open pre-schools, for under-threes, over threes or mixed-age groups, as well as out-of-school services – is likely to benefit children and support parents, both those who work and those who stay at home.

Setting

Institutional patterns  **A space for children**

An integrated approach to ECEC that seeks to legitimise the socialisation of children outside the home calls for services that will increasingly be seen as an integral part of family and community life. Children will find themselves in setting that encourage them to live in the here and now. Instead of rigid, uniform institutional environments, flexible

settings will allow children to develop in an atmosphere that is both centre-based and family-like.

ECEC settings offering new socialising experiences for children should be in tune with new realities such as smaller families; more working couples; more lone-parent families, usually led by the mother; more working mothers; and immigration and cultural pluralism.

The care and education environment created using an integrated approach seeks to enable young children, from very early on, to interact with other children and other adults and learn through these relationships; to feel good, loved and respected, and develop constructive attitudes and thinking patterns; to make choices, carry out projects, engage in good experiences and mixed-age activities, communicate their actions, and be involved to some extent in decisions affecting themselves; to move and play freely, take a nap when tired, eat when hungry, be alone when they feel like it, seek adult support and protection when they feel insecure, and so on.

An ECEC setting, while remaining true to a long-term ideal of preparing children for school and the future, should be first and foremost a space in which the culture of childhood is encouraged to thrive, where it is moreover the adults who learn about the children's world, and where ideas are exchanged about mutual discoveries.

Pedagogical approach

Fragmented view of child → **Whole child**

Childcare settings in welfare systems, traditionally care-oriented and employing staff with low education levels, have tended to have a weak pedagogical emphasis, especially for younger children. On the other hand, most pre-school settings have been shaped by a school-oriented, subject-matter approach based on the school system.

Settings that overcompensate for the presumed deficiencies of home environments out of fear that disadvantaged children will fail at school are just as harmful as those that bow to pressure from a school-based agenda by emphasising the teaching of specific skills and knowledge in the early years. In both cases something of central importance is overlooked: the individual child, with his or her own greatness, strengths and potential.

Although progress has been made in broadening pedagogical frameworks to include children under three -- strengthening conceptual links across age groups and settings to promote continuity in learning; and focusing broadly on children's holistic development and well-being, rather than on narrow literacy and numeracy objectives – much remains to be done to reach the whole child.

Education should not be considered in a fragmented way or only in terms of learning. It is far more complex, encompassing the whole human being, not only cognition, health and nutrition, but also the spirit, emotions, culture, expression, and so forth, with reference to nature, community, city, country and region. The true greatness and value of education resides in its embrace of the whole human being within a planetary whole.

But such an amplified conception of education cannot come about until the adult understands that the heightened sensitivity inherent in children is their basic equipment connecting them to the whole; that it is through expressing their minds, emotions and sentiments, as well as their physical bodies, that children demonstrate their needs and express their inner knowledge; and that another dimension of time and space exists in the adult-child relationship.

Adults who do not understand these realities will be unable to grasp the essence of education -- what it is to learn and to teach; the basic value of childhood and its own

kind of wisdom; and finally, who the individual child is, not from the adult's point of view but from the child's.

The great challenge is to create an ECEC pedagogy for children up to age six/seven that fosters a childhood culture, protecting and respecting children as individuals who constitute groups and communities with their own rights, potentials, abilities and forms of expression.

Staffing

Child socialisation as a private matter  **Child socialisation as a professional task**

When child socialisation is no longer seen as a private matter but as a professional task, the idea that childcare and education is the exclusive domain of women with no need for professional skills is left behind. An integrated approach presupposes qualified, well-paid professionals of both sexes and a professional profile that fulfils both educational and social functions. However, the welfare system still tends to employ less well-trained and less well-paid workers in poorer working conditions, especially in services for the under threes, compared with the education system catering for older children.

An integrated approach to staffing for children under six/seven requires a profile that is neither like that of a formal, adult-oriented primary school teacher whose main function is to teach subject matter, nor that of a substitute mother who simply cares for children while the parents are out. An approach integrating care and education requires a new profile to reflect the multiple functions of ECEC. An overall rethinking of the educator's role is needed in the creation and implementation of a pedagogy specific to ECEC. The training of those who care for and educate young children cannot focus only on the accumulation of information. The initial training, in addition to imparting a comprehensive knowledge of pedagogy and psychology, childhood socialisation and the child's cultural context coupled with a great deal of practical experience, must lead prospective ECEC staff to contemplate the education of the child's body, emotions and feelings, through art, speech, storytelling, singing and the ability to enchant. A rational, fragmented education does not arouse the child's soul.

Good training is the most important vehicle for creating a work force that is compatible with the goals of an integrated approach and coherent programme implementation. Varying philosophies and expectations about what ECEC should bring to children have been a barrier to integration.

Parent involvement

Parents as having no rights  **Parents as partners**

The concept of shared responsibility between state and family implies a growing recognition of parents as valuable partners and greater participation of the family in the programme as a whole. The concept, however, is not as simple in practice as it is on paper. Experience shows that the relationship between staff and family may be conflictual, with the two sides in competition and subject to feelings of jealousy, guilt and lack of respect. An integrated approach presupposes stronger staff-parent partnerships based on dialogue, trust, respect, shared cultural knowledge and traditions as well as on the active and systematic participation of the family in the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation.

An integrated approach also sees ECEC settings as far more than a valuable support system for parents who need to work, study and engage in social life, but as an important meeting place for the family and community, where people can develop

social support networks and ties with other families and community members and where both children and adults have an interest and a "voice" in decision-making.

Once it is firmly recognised that parents have a right to share responsibility for the socialisation of their young children, they can expect to receive relevant information about different ECEC options available in their community, their rights and duties, and their children's experiences. They can expect to be welcome to visit the setting and be there with their children. They can expect to feel free to express their opinions and make suggestions, take an active part in the programmes and contribute effectively to the life of the ECEC setting. And they can expect support during the transitions from home to ECEC and from ECEC to primary school.

On the other hand, asking parents to provide services, to substitute for professionals, to volunteer regularly in extracurricular activities or to provide extra funding would suggest a bias concerning parental involvement.

V The process of integration: benefits and concerns

The benefits of an integrated approach

ECEC services aimed at providing quality, continuity, flexibility and diversity according to an inclusive approach offer countless benefits to families, children, women, men, communities and society in general. They broaden children's experiences, expanding their affective references and building their identities and understanding of the world. ECEC experiences also reinforce learning and communication skills, and encourage meaningful activities and relationships. They provide opportunities for children to socialise with their peers and with adults and to learn what it means to be a citizen. They also provide meaningful support for family functioning by providing frequent occasions for socialisation and the exchange of experiences, and by joining professional activity with family responsibility, thus enhancing the parents' involvement. For society, ECEC has great potential as a mechanism for fostering social and gender equality, as well as for promoting social cohesion by providing underprivileged families with opportunities to build support networks and informal contacts.

Advantages and risks of integration under the aegis of education

Consolidating ECEC administration under the aegis of education has some advantages: it facilitates the development of coherent policy for regulation, funding, training and service delivery across the different phases of the educational system; it encourages cooperation between ECEC and primary school staff; and it assures pedagogical continuity in the transition from one education level to the next. Furthermore, it makes universal eligibility to public ECEC services more likely. The downside, however, is that as ECEC becomes more fully integrated into compulsory schooling, the services may become more "school-like" in terms of opening hours, staffing, adult-child ratio, pedagogy and physical setting, and at the same time more isolated from child welfare, health and related areas.

Sweden is the only OECD country participating in the review that has fully integrated all its early childhood services and compulsory schools into the education system under the Ministry of Education. Happily, the risks noted above do not seem to threaten the system. According to the Swedish Background Report, the transfer to the education sector has not affected the ECEC policy at its foundations. ECEC continues to be an important part of the family support system alongside parental leave insurance and child allowance systems; the overarching goals remain of fostering democracy, equality, solidarity and responsibility; and the dual focus on education and care set by the 1968 National Commission on Child Care was reinforced by the 1998 National Curriculum. Moreover, this transfer has raised new issues, such as "the right for all

children from an early age to take part in preschool, irrespective of if parents work or not" (Gunnarsson et al., 1999, p. 11). The government took a positive step in proposing a free service for four- and five-year-olds in pre-school classes for three hours a day in order to assure equity for all children in this age group. The next step towards full integration will be to extend this right to younger children.

In other experiences of integration, for example in Brazil and Spain, the transition to the education system has resulted in a greater emphasis on the schooling aspect of childcare; neglect of the need for provision for the under-threes; provision on a full-time basis, specially for over-threes; and failure to recognise the historical role of the welfare system in this area. It may be surmised that the success of the Swedish experience is directly related to the context within which it was developed, since the transfer of ECEC services to the Ministry of Education took place 30 years after the creation of the first national commission tasked with planning a unified system. It is worth noting that in Sweden, as well as in Denmark and Norway, moves towards integration started in the mid-1960s, when all services, under the auspices of the welfare sector, were unified as a means of providing universal education and care.

The Spanish government began grouping services under the Ministry of Education in 1990, and has yet to eliminate inconsistencies between the under-threes cycle previously linked to the welfare sector and the over-threes cycle traditionally in the education sector. Huge differences remain in terms of coverage, opening hours, admission criteria, staffing (both working hours and qualifications) and adult-child ratio. In the absence of a policy to expand provision to the first cycle, three-year-olds were incorporated into the second cycle, with no revision of either cycle.

The situation is the same in Brazil, whose ECEC system was unified under the education sector in 1996. Aside from continuing inconsistencies among services, the transfer to education brought about an abrupt segmentation of services by age (crèches for zero to three and pre-schools for four to six), in contrast to the traditional division by goal (full-time crèches for poor families and part-time for four- to six-year-olds). In some cities this shift was followed by a radical reduction in the attention given to children under three, and in the provision of full-time care for children in general in the name of universal education. Both cases illustrate the great challenge entailed in developing a unified policy that guarantees the dual social and educational function of ECEC.

What makes Scandinavian countries' ECEC system successful?

The relative success of the ECEC systems in Denmark, Norway and Sweden can be attributed largely to these countries' approach to dealing with issues involving the care and education of the young child. These include conflicts between the family and the state over responsibility for the child's socialisation; work versus family responsibilities; and the dichotomy between care and education. With high employment rates for men and women, generous parental leaves of absence and high-quality childcare systems, these countries are among the most responsive to the needs of families and their children in contemporary society. Given the outstanding political and philosophical comprehensiveness of their ECEC systems, satisfactorily in place over a relatively long period, a closer look at some of the features of their integrated policies and implementation processes is warranted.

Scandinavian countries have been developing a highly professional and state-funded ECEC system for more than 30 years. Local and federal intervention in the area of early childhood socialisation is ideologically grounded in strong egalitarian traditions common to the Nordic welfare states. ECEC policies are universally available to all children and families who want them. In the late 1960s, all three countries had State Commissions recommending the integration of ECEC programmes at many levels. Day-care centres and kindergartens were to have the same social and educational objectives, employ the same kinds of professionals, target the same clientele and develop pedagogical activities based on the same principles. To integrate the actions of caring for and educating children, it was decided that trained teachers should work with all age

groups, including the very young, and that all professionals, trained or not, responsible for children would have the same functions. In Sweden and Norway, as a mark of this transition, new denominations for ECEC institutions other than crèche and kindergartens were adopted.

Also during this period, services that previously were largely managed by the private sector became a public responsibility. Still today, the state-sponsored ECEC system is not totally financed by public funds, with some participation by the private sector, more in Denmark and Norway than in Sweden. But none of these countries has any for-profit schemes.

Under the new integrated policy, new ECEC services could be developed to meet the diverse needs of children and families in a changing society while remaining faithful to the established principles and philosophy. The pre-school age range covers the period from birth to the start of primary school, which used to be at seven, later than in most European countries, where the general tendency is age 6. The age range of children requiring special care is also broader than usual, starting before birth and including the first years of primary school, a policy that justifies close association with other social family support policies. Policies on parental leave, ECEC and out-of-school services have always been planned in relation to each other, except in Norway, which started to develop out-of-school services later.

The three countries have also adopted a more heterogeneous, age-integrated approach to providing ECEC services as part of the goal of promoting the social competencies of children and validating the culture of childhood. This is another remarkable characteristic of the pedagogical guidelines of these countries, that they encourage self-expression and recognise that children relate to and perceive the world in qualitatively different ways from adults. In a shift in pedagogical approach, instead of the adult controlling and taking decisions related to the child's everyday life, the ECEC programmes treat children as thinking and autonomous individuals who can give their opinions on issues that affect them.

Physical spaces have gradually shifted from standardised, stratified surroundings to settings that reflect an interactive and personalised, or "home-like" approach. Such settings also reflect a shift in approach from viewing children as passive and fragile to seeing them as more active, autonomous and participative, responsive to different age groupings and an egalitarian adult-child relationship. The physical setting, both internal and external, seeks to offer a variety of situations that promote social interaction, stimulate and challenge children's perceptions, curiosity and imagination, promote their autonomy and independence, and enable them to experience and explore the environment freely, spontaneously and safely.

These countries have made substantial investments in training ECEC professionals. Traditional Froebelian teacher training colleges have been enlarged, while courses are longer and more varied, and brought up to date with new philosophical and practical references. The curriculum includes subjects such as social law, psychology, pedagogy, culture and communication, as well as a considerable period of practical training. Heavy emphasis is placed on cultural and personal training and on the development of the trainees' ability to express themselves in many different ways, solve problems, take on different roles, use creativity and imagination in situations of conflict, be constructively critical and, above all, put themselves in the child's place.

Finally, the ECEC programmes in these countries show a substantial increase in parental involvement. Close cooperation between parents and ECEC workers is considered necessary to guarantee continuity between the child's home life and that of the institution, to ensure that institutional routines and practices respond to the families' interests.

Certainly, none of these changes was achieved overnight, but through considerable discussion and negotiation among public authorities, families and professionals. Nor were they the same in all three countries. Each has been pursuing distinct strategies on ECEC issues, a subject that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Essentially, all displayed the necessary willingness and made the necessary effort to review basic ECEC concepts and to redefine the services accordingly. Expanding public services was seen not only as supporting working families and providing an important resource for lifelong learning, but above all as an important element of a fairer and more humane society. The policy for more egalitarian gender roles, guaranteed employment and services in rural areas, and the universal right of children to development and growth regardless of background underpins this agenda. Moreover, the shift towards full-time universal provision for the whole age range totally redefined the family-state relationship. By conceiving of ECEC as both a public and private concern -- encompassing political values as well as personal morals -- the welfare state introduced a professional dimension to the "caring" aspect of motherhood (Leira, 1989).

The professionalisation of care has also broadened the conception of education far beyond the simple teaching-and-learning aspect. The emerging field of early childhood education and care was initially distinct from an education system that was strongly rooted in a formal teaching tradition. Now a new identity has emerged for ECEC services, based on new models of child socialisation and characterised by a better balance of power in human relationships, especially among family, state and society, men and women, parents/adults and children, children and their peers, and teachers and students. With ECEC settings more attuned to the child's life, complementing other cultural and social environments, providing an affective and "family-like" environment, including a male presence, serving a wider age range and helping to broaden the child's culture, they have finally gone beyond compensating for "family inadequacy" or preparing children for schooling and future life. In short, ECEC has achieved legitimacy in these countries, showing a commitment to promoting human development and evolving a culture of its own.

Establishing a hierarchy of priorities

The ECEC field is relatively new, and the provision of services for young children remains beset by unresolved inconsistencies, in both minority and majority countries. Despite clear advances in the field, integration has scarcely begun. ECEC is still building its identity, reviewing conceptions of the child, childhood, care, education, learning, maternity, paternity and family-state social responsibility, issues that demand a highly complex redefinition of its structure and functions. All efforts should converge on such redefinition and conceptual development as the primary means of resolving contradictions regarding family and state responsibility for young children. The key priorities should be to guarantee the specificity of the field and a commitment to its dual social and educational role. In practical terms, an appropriate framework is needed for this process that does not threaten the success of steps that have already been taken. There is an inherent danger in viewing the education sector as the most appropriate source of guidance for this field or in suggesting that the unification of services under its aegis is the necessary premise for integration.

To avoid these risks it would be prudent to establish a hierarchy of priorities for the process of integrating ECEC services with education. The fundamental first step is to build a specific ECEC culture and identity. The next step is to ensure that the education sector is willing to embrace the multiple dimensions of ECEC. On this basis, a strong and equal partnership can be established between ECEC and the schools.

Conclusion

Two paths, two worlds -- or is convergence possible?

International organisations have used a variety of terms to refer to the early childhood field in developing countries, including ECCD, ECD and ECC-SGD. On the surface these terms may appear interchangeable, but in fact the underlying premises differ from those of the term "early childhood education and care" (ECEC). Each reflects a

somewhat different world perspective, resulting in differences in implementation, as well as in mechanisms for achieving integration. In the name of poverty alleviation and a holistic view of child development -- supported by research on the development of the brain – such terms have subtly altered the concept of early childhood education and care in developing countries, undermining the concept of social responsibility and accentuating the gap between the majority and minority worlds.

While most developed countries have seen a shift towards a view of children's early care and education as a shared responsibility between the family and the state, and not the sole domain of the family (OECD, 2001, p. 40), the literature of international organisations regarding developing countries advocates the following (Arango, 1998; Young, 1996):

- Programmes should be less costly and run by mothers or community leaders;
- Parents and close caregivers (such as older siblings) should be an equal target population;
- Settings should be community or home-based; and
- Private sector involvement should be encouraged.

Such an approach discourages public funding of out-of-home, professional care and education and runs counter to the premises underlying the concept of ECEC as defined in *Starting Strong*. In contrast, the OECD discussion of early childhood education and care consistently assumes governmental responsibility for educational equity, gender equality, social integration and family support (OECD, 2001, p. 56).

UNICEF's integrated approach, called ECC-SGD (Early Childhood Care for Survival Growth and Development), assumes much less responsibility on the part of the state, at least as defined by Baldeh, 1999 (p. 4): "The emerging vision of appropriate early childhood care is home and community based with supportive policy and legislative environments." Setting aside conventional approaches to early childhood education and care -- such as "preparing children for entry into primary school" and "unburdening families from the duties of childcare during the working day" – the UNICEF approach emphasises the "child's total well-being and development both emotionally and intellectually" (UNESCO, 1988, p. 3).

Under this rationale, the key to effective learning lies in providing parents and communities with extra information and integrating existing knowledge, particularly regarding health and nutrition. The question is: "Why impose professional educators, or replace parents?" Alternative strategies are recommended such as exchanges of ideas and methods among mothers; parent-child interaction based on "love", "protection", "sensitivity" and "predictability"; and the enhancement of the mother's own capacities. These elements are presented as essential to creating an "enabling environment" to "support the child's mental development and pave the way for success in later learning" (pp. 7-8). Running counter to the premises underlying the OECD study, the UNICEF approach questions whether out-of-home, publicly funded professional care and education should have a central role.

In addition to the diverging assumptions underlying the terms, the programmes that stem from them are also quite different. According to a member of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (Evans, 1997a) ECD (early child development) programmes are "inclusive of all the activities and interventions which address the needs of young children and help to strengthen the contexts in which they are embedded: the family, the community, and the physical, social, and economic" (p. 6). ECD aims to provide integrated programming that addresses the multiple needs of children, which does not always mean providing services directly to children in centre-based programmes. For example, for the youngest children, the programmes are oriented towards supporting parents in their parental roles and improving their economic situation. The programmes also seek to strengthen the community environment in which children are reared.

In such a context, international organisations may recommend the creation of new ministries and integrated committees as a mechanism for guaranteeing integration among the various sectors responsible for early childhood development. However, time and again during country consultations before and during the Stockholm Conference, June 2001, it became clear that such efforts were disparate and scattered. Delegates referred frequently to lack of power, organisational weakness, coordination failures and lack of monitoring and investment by the ministries directly involved in the ECEC field, such as, for example, the education ministry.

In a world perspective, the most worrying development is some of the ways in which ECEC for developing countries has been reconceived, with corresponding changes in systems and accountability. Not surprisingly, on the UNESCO questionnaire (information requested from the developing countries for this study), some countries including Brazil listed as types of early childhood provision -- in addition to childcare centres, pre-schools and family day care -- programmes related to parents' education, caregivers' training, immunisation, hospitals and health centres, food and nutrition, protection and advocacy of children's rights.

Looking to the future

An effectively integrated ECEC system is a project of societal co-construction based on a new concept of extra-familial care and education as a concern that is at once public and private, a matter of shared family and state responsibility. In the realm of policy development and programme implementation, such a project requires a thorough revision and redefinition of the functions, objectives and operations of the services that have traditionally covered the care and education of young children. Although this project's value base is a profound commitment to children and childhood, its success will depend on the synergy arising from joint attention to the needs of children and their families within the perspective of human development, placing both women and men at the centre of the process.

The unique 1995 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1995), the first on gender and development, stated that human development is a process of enlarging choices for all people, not just for one part of society. It argued that gender issues should be addressed as development issues and as human rights concerns for the simple reason that: "development, if not engendered, is endangered" (p. 23).

The concept of childhood as both a value in itself and a societal responsibility is not new and did not arise suddenly with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is an ancient concept, embraced by many indigenous and tribal communities that see taking care of children as a widely shared duty including by men and elders. This approach is much ampler than maternal care alone. In today's world, the care and education of children calls for shared responsibility encompassing government and society at large. Without their commitment, invariably one side of the boat will be overloaded, with the overload mainly supported by families, most often by mothers. The demands of the external world on the family are many and intense, increasing with the race for technology, rising competition, the ever-present threat of unemployment, professional instability, the diminution of labour rights, and poverty knocking at the door. In such circumstances, can the boat remain afloat?

An integrated ECEC undertaking demands strong political will, government responsibility and a clear awareness of the comprehensiveness of the functions covered. Once this posture has been achieved, an integrated and coordinated ECEC policy should, under government leadership, involve the whole of society in a joint, convergent enterprise.

Most countries have not yet arrived at this stage. Fundamental issues remain unresolved and demand urgent attention from governments, policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and international organisations. One of most important issues is our understanding of the concepts of early childhood education and care, responsibility regarding the socialisation of young children, and diversity of context. The fundamental question remains: What kind of education do we envisage for young children?

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Useful websites

Child Care Information Exchange www.childcareexchange.com

Childcare Resource and Research Unit www.childcarecanada.org

Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education www.ericcece.org

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development www.ecdgroup.com/index.html

Early Childhood Research & Practice www.ecrp.uiuc.edu

Early Childhood Education and Care www.skolverket.se/ecec

Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland www.vn.fi/stm/english

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation www.highscope.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children www.naeyc.org

UNESCO-Early Childhood and Family Education section www.unesco.org/education/educprog/ecf

World Bank www.worldbank.org/children